

RAYNHAM FALLEN HERO

PRIVATE JAMES J. PERRY, US ARMY

James J. Perry was born in 1923. He lived in the south end of Raynham and attended Taunton High School.

James enlisted for the duration of the war in the United States Army on June 10, 1944 and was assigned serial number 31469865. James was not married.

After basic training, Private Perry joined the 395 th Infantry Regiment, 99 th Infantry Division at Camp Maxey in Paris Texas. From there, the Regiment took a troop train to Camp Myles Standish in Taunton, Massachusetts. The 99 th Infantry Division boarded ships bound for England on October 10, 1944.

After a short stay in England, the 395 th Regiment disembarked at Le Havre, France on November 3, 1944. They then moved by train, truck and finally by foot to front line positions west of the Siegfried Line near the Belgium – German border in the Ardennes Forest. They soon established defensive positions in Hofen, Germany. Their lines were stretched thin. The 395 th Regiment's front was 6.8 miles, or one front line infantry soldier every 300 feet. The area around Hofen was critical because of the road network that lay behind them.

By the time the German offensive began on December 16, 1944, the 395 th Regiment was in well prepared dug-in defensive positions. These would later prove instrumental in defending themselves from the attacking Germans in what came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. Because of the success of these defensive positions, the Americans were free to maneuver along the north flank of the German's line of advance and inflict disproportionate casualties upon the Germans.

On January 28, 1945, after six weeks of the most intense and relentless combat of the war, in the biggest battle of World War II, the Allies declared the Battle of the Bulge over. The 395 th Regiment held their lines despite the harsh winter weather, the enemy's numerical superiority and their greater numbers of armored units. The regiment's successful defense prevented the Germans from accessing the best routes into the Belgium interior, and seriously delayed their scheduled advance. The 395 th was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their courageous actions.

After a short period off the line, Private Perry's unit continued to advance into Germany in their march towards the Rhine River. They seized several small towns from March 1 to March 5, 1945. Some of these engagements entailed difficult night attacks to avoid open field attacks during daylight. It was during one of these small engagements when Private Perry was killed in action on March 14, 1945.

Private Perry received the following military awards for his honorable service:

Purple Heart Medal with white cross distinguishing device to denote a posthumous award

Presidential Unit Citation

American Campaign Medal

European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal

World War II Victory Medal

Private Perry is buried in the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Hombourg, Belgium. His headstone is located in Plot D, Row 15, Grave 53. Private Perry was 22 at the time of his death.

Private Perry's home is believed to be at 257 South Street East. For this reason, it is appropriate that his FALLEN HERO sign be erected on South Street East at the intersection with Hill Street.