

RAYMOND J. (Ray) HUMMEL Private to First Sergeant

Served with distinction in the Hq1 – Battalion Staff Support Section from October 1942 to July 1944, when he was promoted to Hq1 1st Sergeant and served as such until September 1945.



Raymond Hummel was a Hq1 "Hell's Half Acre" survivor (See Chapter II, Combat Operations – Normandy). Ray skillfully organized and commanded the critical blocking position established in a Normandy field that the men with Ray named "Hell's Half Acre."

Ray Hummel was a distinguished member of the "Greatest of the Greatest Generation."

Ray Hummel entered military service in October 1942 as a recruit. He was discharged in 1945, as a veteran First Sergeant. His exceptional transition from recruit to First Sergeant is attributed to his adaptability to military life, willing acceptance of discipline, and his natural leadership abilities.

Ray Hummel's awards and decorations included:

- ?? Bronze Star and Purple Heart medals
- ?? Combat Infantry Badge
- ?? Parachute Qualification Badge with two stars for combat jumps (Normandy and Holland)
- ?? Presidential Unit Citation
- ?? French and Belgian Fourrageres
- ?? Orange Lanyard of the Royal Netherlands Army
- ?? Numerous defense medals including the Victory Medal and the Occupation Medal with Germany Bar

Ray died November 14, 2001 in Moundsville, West Virginia where he resided with his beloved Alice.

Alice Hummel and Ray's WW II comrades provided information for this summary.

A comprehensive perspective of Ray's magnificent leadership emerges from a newspaper article that Alice received shortly after the regiment returned to Nottingham from Normandy. The source and publication of this article is unknown, but eyewitnesses confirm the contents. The article is paraphrased as follows.

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Ray Hummel Did Brilliant Work Early in the Invasion

On June 6, 1944 shortly after the perilous drop into Normandy, Raymond Hummel, a Staff Sergeant, gathered a group of 36 parachutists from Hq1 and companies of the 508th PIR and various other airborne units. As the senior noncommissioned officer, he led the men to the north bank of the Douve River at Beuzeville La Bastille.

The group immediately came under intense machinegun fire from guns covering the approaches to the bridge over the river. They returned the fire and destroyed one of the machineguns and its crew.

Shortly four German tanks heading north from the causeway arrived in the area. Ray attacked the tanks with British gammon grenades. He destroyed one tank and killed its crew.

Later in the day, the group was pinned down by heavy fire from a German Infantry Company. Ray quickly organized a defensive position. It was ideal; fire could be placed upon the approaches to the Beureville Bridge over the Douve River, and on the causeway leading to the Merderet River. Because of the effective interdiction fire on the bridge and causeway by the Hummel group, the Germans had to divert daylight traffic away from these important approaches.

For the next five days, the group armed with only rifles and grenades fought off German attacks, inflicting heavy casualties on the Germans.

Meanwhile, the men engaged German traffic approaching the bridge and causeway, denying them use of the roadway except during darkness.

Inspired by Sgt. Hummel, the group fought off all enemy attacks for five days until June 11, 1944 when they were relieved by elements of the seaborne forces that had landed on the Normandy beaches.

By his determination, heroic example and leadership, Sgt. Hummel held the group intact as a fighting force under the most adverse conditions.

The heavily outnumbered men fought without food or medical attention for the wounded. They buried their dead in temporary graves, and fought valiantly without heavy fire support or heavy weapons.

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Upon returning to Nottingham, Staff Sergeant Hummel was promoted to First Sergeant of Hq1. He held that position for the duration of the war and his military career.

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As Hq1 1st Sgt. Raymond Hummel parachuted into Holland September 17, 1944, and in December 1944, he led the company to Belgium where it helped blunt and destroy the last desperate German attack to preserve the Third Reich.

When the war in Europe ended In May 1945, Sgt. Hummel led Hq1 to Heddernheim, Germany where it performed honor guard and security functions for the Supreme, Allied Expeditionary Forces Headquarters located in Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany.

Ray Hummel was loved and respected by the men of Hq1. He and Alice participated in all Hq1 and 508th PIR Association activities.

Ray was a modest, humble, quiet, cheerful and trustworthy individual. He consistently looked after the men of Hq1, and went out of his way to see that exceptional conduct and meritorious service was recognized and rewarded.

Ray Hummel personally maintained a very low profile, seldom if ever taking credit for his accomplishments. One consequence was the failure of Ray's superiors to recognize his achievements and to reward him commensurately.



Raymond and Alice Hummel

Mrs. Ray (Alice) Hummel resides at 515 10th Street, Apt. 206,
Moundsville, WV 26041-2245

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This Album is Not For Sale

This excerpt from the "We Served Proudly, The Men of Hq1" album contains the recollections of men who in their youth risked their lives in furtherance of our national interests. These memoirs are sacred to them -- especially those events alluding to activities in which comrades lost their lives on the battlefields of Europe.

This album was prepared for perpetual residence in the archives of the Camp Blanding Museum complex, operated by the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, Inc. Starke, Florida. We are grateful for the support and assistance of the Camp Blanding Museum and Historical Associates, and for their kindness in having the museum make our album available to historians, students, researchers and others interested in our background and brief history.

No reproduction or distribution restrictions are imposed or implied for the album or pages thereof – providing such actions are not undertaken for profit.

Copies of the album have been presented to the Hq1 veterans or their survivors that contributed information for the effort. To facilitate reproducing copies of individual memoirs for relatives or friends, the memoirs have been developed as separate entities.

October 19, 2004

~~Georg. Sood~~

Hq1 Album Collator