

'Somewhere in Germany'

Monk Jones went from salesman to anti-tank crew in WWII

By Robbie Schwartz
Staff Writer

His letters often started with "somewhere in France" or "somewhere in Germany."

In 1941, a matter of weeks before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, a 21-year-old Rutledge native by the name of Raymond W. Jones was drafted into service for the impending U.S. entry into World War II.

His civilian occupation: a door-to-door salesman.

Enlisted, he was an anti-tank crewman - part of the "Hell on Wheels"

702nd tank destroyer battalion of the 2nd armored division.

Not originally drafted, "Monk" Jones (as he is affectionately known throughout the county) had to fill in to meet the quota the local draft board had when another man was unable to fight. From there, he went on to Texas to train where he met two very important people: Gen. George Patton and the woman who would later become Mrs. Raymond Jones, Inez Collier.

Jones trained in Texas for a

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Photo by R. SCHWARTZ

Salute Our
Vets
Veterans Day
activities will
begin
Thursday,
Nov. 11 at 11
a.m. at the
Morgan
County
Courthouse



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Morgan County's Raymond 'Monk' Jones (top) still fits in his WWII dress jacket. Above, Jones is pictured somewhere in Germany during WWII.

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Jones trained in Texas for a while under Patton, before the general was re-assigned to duties for WW II. Also while he was in Texas, stopping off to get a Coke at a local diner, Jones tipped his beautiful waitress a quarter for the drink, leaving the "soda jerk" to think that he was a rich man.

He went back a few more times before finally asking the girl out.

After a courtship, Jones got married and soon after, he was off to war.

After almost two years of training in Texas, Jones landed in England in February 1944. Trained as an operator of self-propelled anti-tank gun, he was responsible for

the controls of operations and tactical employment of gun crews and arms. Five months after landing in England, Jones found himself on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day plus four to take part of Operation Cobra.

His journeys took him through Holland, Belgium, and on into Germany.

In Belgium, he took part in the Battle of the Ardennes Forest, or what is commonly referred to now as the Battle of the Bulge.

"I was scared," Jones said about being in battle. "But

you figure that everyone had about the same shot of going home as you did. So you made the best of it."

Jones, due to his 5' 9" stature, was assigned to tank duties and fought all the way through to Germany before a sinus infection forced him to be evacuated from the battle zone just before the war's end.

While in France, Cpl. Jones received the Bronze Star for valor on the battlefield.

On August 23, 1944, Jones was gunner and he and his crew were assigned the mission of blocking a road east of

Le Neubourg.

At dawn, an enemy column approached with a "Panzer" German tank protecting it. It became apparent, according to the citation written by Maj. Gen. E.N. Harmon, that Jones' tank destroyer had to "move across an open field in order to fire effectively at the panther tank."

The citation went on to read, "The alertness and efficiency of Corp. Jones enabled the gun crew to function as a team and accomplish its mission of blocking the road." Jones can remember some times when he was even closer to the Germans than that battle.

"Often, we slept in our vehicles," Jones said. "One time, we slept right next to the Germans and neither of us knew the other was there."

Jones said that it took skill and a lot of luck to make it back home. As a tank destroyer, Jones was in a lighter, faster tank that had less armor than the Panther tanks the Germans used.

But the German tanks were a lot bigger. In the case of the Battle of the Bulge, Jones said that it was the added emotion of the responsibility of going in to try and save members of the 101st Airborne who were hanging on for their lives that overcame the fear.

Jones doesn't talk about his experiences over there much. Most of the knowledge of his journey is found in letters, commendations, and declassified military documents.

But there is one thing that anyone can be certain of.

"I was there to fight for my country and I was proud to do

it."

Once he returned from the war in 1945, Jones took a train straight to Dallas to hunt down his waitress.

Jones was honorably discharged from the military with the final rank of sergeant.

After that train ride to Dallas, Jones and his wife eventually made their way back to Morgan County where Jones started his own insurance agency, which is now Jones, Ewing, Dobbs and Tamplin Insurance Agency.