

WAYNE KUNKEL'S MILITARY MEDICAL HISTORY

PRE-COMBAT

In 1975 the Army had a large fire which destroyed the personnel and medical records stored in the St Louis storage facility. Fortunately for me I had made a claim to the VA when I was discharged for my eyes. In order to investigate my claim the VA requested my medical records at the time of my discharge. My claim was disallowed, but a copy of my medical records was stored with the VA. I made a request of the Department of Veterans Affairs on May 11, 2011 in the hope that they had copies of my medical file. Fortunately because of the claim I had filed in 1946, I was able to get a copy of my army medical file. The file is identified as #CSS 10 009 389.

My file begins with a copy of the physical exam I had on Aug 21, 1943 at the time I was inducted. I passed, but was classified as limited service on two counts; weight and eyesight. I only weighed 142 lbs with a height of 5' 11 1/2". My eyesight was not up to the norm but that didn't prevent me from being sent to an infantry division. However, they did place me in a headquarters company in an anti-tank platoon.

Apparently I did not attend sick call when I was with the 63rd Infantry Division. My first sick call was when I was at Camp Breckenridge on March 9, 1944, for stomach cramps. The second was to have a small cyst removed on March 20, 1944. We were loaded on the troop ship George Washington on April 6, 1944. I was admitted to the Ship's hospital on April 7, 1944 for Influenza. I was released for duty on April 11, 1944. This was just in time to experience a spring storm on the Atlantic with waves higher than the ship.

FRANCE

I have very little memory of my combat injuries so the record provided by the VA was very informative and it filled in the blank spots of what happened in the days following my injuries in France. July 4, 1944 was the day of our big battle to get out of the hedge rows. I remember walking to the aid station for treatment. I was admitted into the battalion or regimental aid station at 12:40 PM to dress minor wounds on my hand and thigh. My wounds were cleaned and sulfanilamide and a dressing was applied. I was released back to duty at 1500 PM.

On July 5th at 2400 PM, I was readmitted back to aid station. Apparently I was unconscious, since I have no memory of this event. In fact I don't remember anything at all about July 5th. I was readmitted 30 hours later with the diagnosis of fatigue and blast concussion (chest). What happened in those 30+ hours is a mystery. Apparently, I was knocked unconscious from a shell or mortar blast and not found right away. I was moved to a collecting station at 0045 July 6th. I arrived at the clearing company at 0130 July 6th and was placed in the NP Ward (?) at the 622 Exhaustion Hospital. My discharge papers indicated that I had amnesia for three days during this period. I believe this is where I was given "blue 88" pills for several days so I could recover from all the stress.

On the 11th of July I was moved to the 261st Medical Battalion. I don't know what treatment I received during this period except for Phenobarbital. On the 13th of July I was sent to the 305th Station Hospital for evaluation and evacuation. On the 14th of July I was received at the 316th Station Hospital, where I was under observation for several days. On the 19th of July I was evacuated to England. In England I was sent to the #4167 Hospital. I was at the 307th Station Hospital for convalescence from blast concussion and battle fatigue and placed in a rehabilitation center. On July 20th the doctor summarized my condition as follows: "Patient was knocked unconscious by blast and when he recovered he was 'irrational and agitated'. Patient will feel somewhat agitated and this is made worse by loud noises. Ears ring occasionally. Has vivid dreams and has required sedation. It may be necessary to transfer to 312th Station Hospital if he does not improve here." Apparently my condition improved enough for me to be placed in training for clerical duty. After I completed clerical training I was returned to duty on August 16th. I was returned to non-combat duty in France at the 16th Replacement Depot at Compiegne about 40 kilometers north of Paris.

There no medical events while I was with the 16th Replacement Depot. On January 10, 1946 I had a dental exam and treatment for Gingivitis when I was with the Stars and Stripes.

DISCHARGE POST WAR

I was discharged on April 29, 1946. The physical exam at discharge showed some interesting facts. My height was 6'1". I had gained two inches while I was in the Army and my weight had increased to 172 lbs, a gain of 30 lbs. My eyesight had diminished to 20/400 RE, 20/300 LE uncorrected. Corrected vision was okay. There were no apparent residual problems from the blast concussion or combat fatigue. Because of these apparent problems a Veterans application for pension or compensation was filed on 5/17/1946 the claim was disallowed on June 9, 1946.

A dental claim was filed on Jan 20, 1947, teeth were examined and no treatment was authorized.