

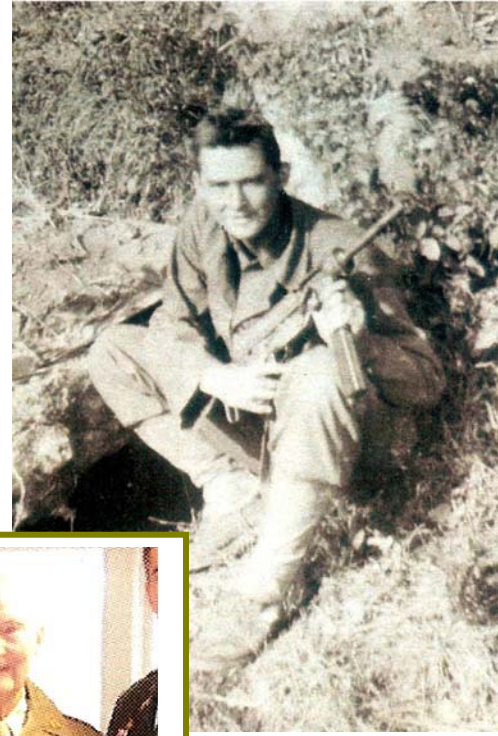
Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution  
Proudly “Spotlights” our August 2011  
Patriot of the Month



**Frank E. Royer**

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Lee's Summit,  
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Frank E. Royer was born in Kansas City, Missouri on February 22, 1925. He was drafted into the Army in 1943, just a couple of months after he turned eighteen. He went to Fort Leavenworth where he was assigned to the Infantry Replacement Training Company and then went for officer training in the Army Specialized Training Program. However, he really wanted to be a pilot, so he took the pilot test at Kessler Air Force Base, Mississippi. After the test, he was told he was not qualified. Instead, he was offered the position of an airplane gunner, but he told them he wasn't interested in that position.

Frank returned to the infantry at Camp McCain, Mississippi where he took basic training again. In April 1944, he went overseas to England. A convoy of over forty-four ships, all carrying soldiers, sailed from the United States to England in eleven days. The ships zigzagged across the Atlantic Ocean and there were no American losses.

Frank landed at Omaha Beach in August 1944. As part of the Infantry Replacement Training Company, he was called up when replacements were needed at Omaha Beach. Infantrymen faced hedgerows that were six feet tall and so massive that tanks could not get through them. The infantrymen dug their foxholes behind the hedgerows.

The city of Brest, France, located on the Atlantic Coast, was the home to a German submarine base and heavily fortified. As a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, their assignment was to capture Brest, France. This turned into a three-week campaign. When it was over 30,000 Germans were captured. Frank was wounded in the battle having taken shrapnel from a German hand grenade and was out about one week. All of France, Belgium and Luxemburg were taken on the northern side of the Bulge.

Frank was part of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, Company K, which was composed of approximately one hundred fifty men. The Germans were defending a crossroads and Company K was ordered to take the crossroad, as it was a primary crossing. There was an eighteen-hour battle and at the end of that battle the entire company was wiped out except for eleven members that were captured. Frank was one of those captured on December 18, 1944.

Frank and the other men that had been captured were marched surrounded by German guards. They slept in barns as they marched to Germany. It took about six days to get to the Prisoner of War camp. There was very little food, basically soup made from potatoes and kohlrabi, which are like red turnips, and German black bread. The men were assigned to work in groups.

Stalag IVB, Mooseburg, Germany was Frank's home for one week. He was put into a boxcar on a train, with many other prisoners. They were in the boxcar for four days and nights. It was so cold that his feet froze during the trip, killing the nerves in his feet. Today he still has a problem with the blood flow in his feet. American planes strafed the train, but his boxcar survived the strafing.

Camp Chemnitz, Germany became Frank's next home. The prisoners were assigned to work groups, with one hundred men to each group.

Camp Chemnitz was bombed many times. Barracks were next to a power plant and there were tunnels under the power plant. When the bombing would begin, the men went into the tunnels and no one was killed.

Camp Chemnitz was close to Russia and the Russians were working their way south. The Germans did not want to be captured by the Russians so when the Russians started bombing the guards left. When the German guards left, the American Prisoners of War began walking to the American lines. Frank was freed on May 8, 1945. It took two days to reach the American lines. The men walked in groups of one hundred, and they were finally given American food.

Frank also served in the African and Middle Eastern campaigns. He was awarded the Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts.

Frank waited for transportation back to England in a camp on the coast of France that consisted of thousands of Prisoners of War. The war was over by the time he arrived in England. He was able to go to London for a week, staying in lodging provided by the USO and taking USO tours around London. Frank left for America, where he arrived in eight days. He was discharged November 4, 1945.

After service, Frank attended the University of Missouri Kansas City where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Administration in 1949. He went to work for General Motors at the Fairfax plant where he scheduled production and became supervisor of shipping distribution. He retired thirty-one years later.

Frank married Bernadette Sibbald and they have been married for forty-three years. Together they have four children, four grandchildren, and one great grandchild. He has been a volunteer at the Veterans Hospital for twenty-two years and a volunteer at St. Lukes Northland Hospital for eleven years. Frank is a member of the American Ex Prisoners of War and a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

In 2008, Frank was awarded the Legion of Honor medal by the French government for his service during World War II at a special ceremony at the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Parkville, Missouri.