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War Department Files

1 LT Ernest J. Kelly, Jr.

Class 75-43

ID: 01184246

Branch of Service: U.S. Army

Hometown: Somerville, MA

Status: DOW 5 May 1945



Served with Battery C, 741st Field Artillery Battalion in Bavaria.

From Gnodstadt we moved about seventy miles to Wermutshau-sen, stayed there two nights, and then occupied six positions in the next eight days. On 17 April our Battalion was officially transferred to the Seventh Army, after having been attached to it since the Battle of the Bulge in December. On 20 April the Battalion made another long march, shifting from the XXI to the VI Corps. We spent three days in position at Owen Teck, and it was while we were here that **Lt. Kelly, our Executive Officer**, was severely wounded by a German civilian. Several other members of the Battery narrowly escaped being hit at the same time, as a dozen or more shots were fired at their vehicle.

The move from Owen Teck was a long one of more than a hundred miles. We crossed the Danube at Dillingen, and went into position at Wei'tingen, back under the XXI Corps once again and in support of the 3rd Infantry Division. The next morning, we were off again, moving several miles to Heretsried. That evening we were shelled for several minutes by one or two enemy guns which had evidently been by-passed by the Infantry in their rapid move forward. Several shells landed near our area, but no casualties or damage resulted.

The next day, 28 April, was a big day for the 741st. As a climax to the rush and constant moving we had done during the last month, we moved three times during the day. At one position the howitzers were scarcely ready to fire when the march order was given. We moved from there to Taffertingen, where we stopped long enough to eat, then moved again to Augsburg, where the position was surveyed, the howitzers put into position, and the battery registered. This was our forty-third combat position of the war. The next morning; all Artillery of the XXI Corps was relieved from general support and reinforcing missions as of 0800 hrs. and our howitzers were march-ordered. The German Army was fast breaking up, and we felt quite certain that this was our last combat position. Finally, at 1200 hrs. 6 May hostilities on the Seventh Army front came to an end with the unconditional surrender of Army Group "G", consisting of the enemy's 1st and 19th Armies to Gen. Devers, Commanding General of the U. S. 6th Army Group.

On 5 May the whole Battery was saddened by the news of the death of Lt. Kelly. His loss was deeply felt, as he had been a popular and efficient Executive, well-liked by the entire Battery for his friendliness, ability, and spirit of cooperation.

With the exception of sporadic fighting in Czechoslovakia on the Russian front, all hostilities came to an end 7 May. The next day, May 8th, was proclaimed V-E Day by President Truman and Prime Minister Churchill. World War II had come to an end in Europe.



Buried in Veterans Cemetery, Somerville, Massachusetts