

Herbert Volker: 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division 1953-1955 Korea DMZ

My father was born in 1930 and grew up in Hannover Germany during WWII. He and his brother were raised by only their mother. They were against Adolf Hitler and all he stood for. The Hitler Youth Group would find my dad and his brother, beat them up and tell them they better show up to the next meeting and march, but they never went, they always went into hiding. Hannover Germany was over 90% destroyed by bombs and artillery during WWII, since the central rail station for the German troops came through there. On just one day, October 9, 1943, some 261,000 bombs were dropped on the city by Allied forces. They survived and when the American Army 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division came in, they finally felt liberated from Hitler's dictatorship. My dad told his mother that if he should ever get to America he was going sign up for the American Army and pay back the country that helped free them.

Soon after he arrived in America in the latter part of 1952 he did sign up. He was to report for duty April 15, 1953 when my dad and soon to be wife, my mother, had to move up their wedding date because just 4 days later he was to report to camp for basic training and then off to Korea. As fate would have it he was assigned to the same division that came to his rescue in Germany, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment.

He arrived in Korea near the beginning of July 1953 in the Kumwha area and the Iron Triangle MLR/DMZ, north of the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. It was in the last months before the Armistice was signed that the Chinese made their largest push south since the spring of 1951. My dad remembers the Thai Regiment was attached to his regiment at the MLR. The worst night of his life was on the night of July 17-18<sup>th</sup>, a night he has never forgotten. The Chinese were coming at them by the hundreds, wave after wave like ants coming out of a hole. He has never known a fear for his life, like that night. It was either you shoot to kill or be killed. He got hit in the chest over his heart, right hand and left leg calf and he said it burned like hell and was bleeding badly and thought for sure he was going to be killed that night or die from the bleeding. He could see other men being hit and injured, but they all kept on fighting. The night seemed to last forever. My dad did survive and today counts his blessings that he did not see another night like that.

On the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> the fighting was finally winding down and their regiment was beginning to be relieved and it was then that he went to the sergeant to report he had been injured. An important point to make here is that my dad knew very, very little English, he spoke German and having it so soon after WWII and being a German, there were times he thought he was not treated like the American soldiers, but he did not resent it, he understood it. He thinks the sergeant said, "He didn't have time to deal with that", he understood and never mentioned it again and took care of the wounds himself. He had only arrived a few days before and did not yet know the men he was fighting with. It was many years later that his family doctor told him that the shrapnel in his chest must be removed and it was.

My dad remained on the MLR/DMZ Kumwha area through out his time in Korea, except for one week when he went on a very important trip. It was 1954 April 15, exactly one year after he reported for duty, he was given his first and only R&R to go to Seoul Korea, to get his United States Citizenship. Yes, at that point he had been longer in Korea then in the United States. In many respects he was not given the opportunities that the other soldiers were given. He saw a lot of fellow soldiers come and go, but he never left the DMZ. He was always either on guard duty and kept at the readiness for infiltrators or he was put on KP. When the men were going into reserve, he would just be assigned with another group of soldiers coming from another area. There was no R&R or sports or recreation for him. He was transferred from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment to the 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division 32<sup>nd</sup> Regiment and then later again transferred to the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and kept at the DMZ. He never questioned his orders, but did them to the best of his ability and never complained.

My father was so proud to have been able to give back to the country he now calls his own by choosing to join and fight with the American Army, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, also the 7<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions. I am so proud of my father, in his strength to survive all odds, having gone through WWII as a teenager and also fighting in the Korean War and always doing the best he can in all his endeavors. He is now 87 years old and I want to help give him the honor he deserves for his service, but I need your help. We are not looking for medals, like the Purple Heart, we just want to correct the errors in his military record of time spent in Korea. The Army has my father arriving in Korea November 1953 after the Armistice. We have proof that this is wrong. My father was in one of the worst battles that took place during the Korean War and it has left him scared for life, ones you can see and ones you can not. I asked that you please help my father to correct his military record. If anyone remembers a German that could not speak English in the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in July 1953, please contact me. We have one veteran that remembers my dad, but if we can find more or at least one more it would be of great help. Thank you for your service.

Sincerely,

Monica Volker (daughter of Herbert Volker)

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