

My father, Rhoderick H. Holliday was born on July 30, 1919 in Brunswick, Georgia. He was the 7th child born to Catherine and Edward Holliday.

He grew up with his siblings and saw the early 20th century. Pop was educated in Brunswick both in elementary school and high school. He was an athlete in school. He was a fullback in football and he always felt that this was important in helping him understand the need for discipline and comradeship.

He saw the after effects of World War One and the Great Depression. These were hard economic times. After his high school graduation he left Brunswick and lived and worked in New York City.

He gained employment with the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. This was an interesting episode in his young life. The hotel had employees from the entire world. This was an opportunity to obtain an idea of the world situation.

While in New York he boxed. He participated in the Golden Gloves, and found it to be helpful in his forthcoming military service,

He met my mother and they were married in February 1942. He entered the Army in March 1942.

His training began with the Armored Force Basic. He was a company clerk and ultimately served as an Assault Gun Crewman. His training also included the Tank Mechanic Course taken at Ft. Knox, Kentucky.

He was assigned to the Fourth Armored Division. His unit was the 37th Tank Battalion. The unit went through intensive training. They trained mainly in the western part of the United States. The unit came under the command of Lt. Colonel Creighton Abrams, a great commander.

The unit embarked for England in January 1944, where they trained until July of 1944. They landed at Utah Beach on 11 July 1944. They entered combat on 17 July driving to and securing the Coutances area on 28 July 1944. The 4th Armored Division then swung south to take Nantes, cutting off the Brittany Peninsula. Turning east, it drove swiftly across France north of the Loire, smashed across the Moselle, 11-13 September.

During this time the 37th Tank Battalion fought fiercely. The Fourth Armored Division was an incredible fighting group of American Soldiers. Their training and spirit led to victory.

On Sept. 14 1944, Sgt. Joseph Sadowski, serving as a tank commander in Company A, 37th Tank Battalion, 4th Armored Division, had his tank disabled by fire. He and his crew dismounted the vehicle except for one man who was trapped inside the burning tank. Despite intense enemy fire, Sgt. Sadowski returned to the tank and attempted to rescue the crewman, but was killed before doing so. For his actions, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor seven months later, on April 23, 1945. He was a close friend of my father's. Sgt. Sadowski was the Division heavy weight champion. My father sparred with him and had the greatest regard for him. Sgt. Sadowski was a resident of Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

The 37th moved on. Companies A and B led by Major William Hunter on September 19 moved south through Reichourt and caught the Germans in the flank. In this engagement nine German tanks were destroyed with a loss of 3 Sherman tanks. A description of the action is attached below.

During this engagement my father was the gunner for Sgt. Griggs the tank commander. They and their fellow crewmates were magnificent.

My father served in tank battles throughout Normandy, Brittany and the Rhine valley campaigns under direct enemy fire. The fighting was intense and a great tribute to the soldiers of the 37th tank battalion.

My father was hospitalized in December 1944, then evacuated to England. His date of separation was 20 Sept 1945.

He was welcomed home, raised his family and was a great guy. He retired from the Postal Service. He was proud of his children and their families and was highly supportive of his two sons who became Air Force Officers; Colonel Terrance Holliday, and myself.

In 2001 I applied for a decoration for my father for his action in the battle at Reichourt La Petite in September 19, 1944. I found a telephone number for one of his closest companions. The gentleman's name was Claude Thacker. I returned one Sunday from Church and received a telephone call. It was Mr. Thacker. Mr. Thacker was a member of the 37th tank Battalion and one of my father's closest friends and comrades. Pop spoke of him many times. He asked me, "Colonel, where do you live?" I answered South Brunswick, NJ. He then said, "That is near where your Dad's best friend Joe Sadowski lived." That being Perth Amboy. He said to me, "Your Dad was a great soldier. We went through a tough time. We beat them. I loved your Dad."

This was just a small part of a tough time. I give my respect and love to my Dad. He fought a tough fight, came home and with my mother, raised his family.

Dad passed away on January 10, 1985 in a veterans hospital.

On Veterans Day, 2018, I incised a star for my father on the marble cenotaph of the American Legion Centennial Memorial, Princeton Junction, New Jersey.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rhoderick M. Holliday, Lt. Col. USAF Ret.