

Remembering World War II

Iron County Serves in the European Theatre of War

by Jay M. Jones

Seventy-five years ago World War II was winding down. This is the seventh article in a series highlighting contributions of people from Iron County to the war effort. This article focuses on some additional accounts of Iron County servicemen in the European theatre of war.

Previous to the entry of the United States into World War II, Germany had initiated bombing attacks on Great Britain as well as devastating attacks on shipping, expecting the British to surrender in a short period of time.

The British did not surrender, and when the United States entered the war, plans were made to strike back at the Nazi war machine.

One of the first orders of business was to stop the massive destruction of Allied shipping by German U-boat submarines and to replace the shipping capacity which had been lost.

By the end of 1942, over 10 million tons of Allied shipping capacity had been sunk by German U-boats.

Steps were taken to protect ships from U-boats, and Allied ship building ramped up dramatically.

By September 1943, American shipbuilding had rebuilt all of the shipping capacity sunk by the U-boats. By March of 1945, American shipbuilders had produced 10 million tons of shipping capacity above and beyond the amount lost to Nazi torpedos.

Iron ore from Iron County played a part in this accomplishment by providing raw material for steel plates used in constructing some of the ships.

Next, American and British forces landed in North Africa and pushed the German and Italian troops away from that region.

During this time, Private First Class Eugene Lowder of Parowan, who was with the Army Engineer Corps, died on Thanksgiving Day in 1943 in Tunisia from injuries accidentally sustained while operating a light crane.

From North Africa, the Allies made attacks on the island of Sicily and then on mainland Italy.

Fenton Dalley of Cedar City, a pilot of a B-25 Mitchell bomber, was killed in action over Viterbo, Italy on 14 April 1944. Dalley was a radio technician with the Utah National Guard unit that was activated in March 1941. He transferred into the Army Air Corps in July of 1941, and arrived in the Mediterranean Area in February of 1944. He flew 18 combat missions.

Private First Class Mark Wilcock of Parowan was killed in action in Italy on 9 October 1944. Private Wilcock served with Company L, 338th Infantry Regiment, 85th Infantry Division.

In 1944 the Allies launched the D-Day invasion into northern France, and then advanced across France and Belgium into Germany.

As 1945 began, Germany was suffering defeats on all fronts, yet they continued to fight fiercely, inflicting heavy casualties on the advancing armies. Iron County soldiers participated in the battles and also suffered death and injury.

According to Iron County Record accounts, Sergeant Otto Keith Dalley, 20 years old from Summit, was killed in action in Germany on 23 February 1945.



U.S. Army Air Force Waco CG-4A-GN glider at the National Museum of the United States Air Force, at Dayton, Ohio. Wikimedia Commons Photo. This is the type of glider flown by Lt. Elliott Hulet.

Lieutenant Leonard Elliott Hulet from Parowan, a glider pilot in the 9th Air Corps of the First Airborne Army was killed during the crossing of the Rhine River in Germany on 24 March 1945 during Operation Varsity.

Lieutenant Hulet entered military service on 22 October 1941, just prior to America's declaration of war, and became a flight officer in 1943.

Glider pilots had particularly dangerous tasks. Carrying infantrymen and equipment on the glider, they would silently land behind enemy lines to complete missions in advance of a broader attack.

Lieutenant Hulet had previously landed gliders in Operation Overlord at Normandy, in Operation Dragoon in Southern France, and in Operation Market Garden in the Netherlands. Operation Varsity, the last time gliders were used in World War II, resulted in the death of 79 American glider pilots.

Sergeant Jack Moore of Parowan became one of the last Iron County soldiers to lose his life in the European war. He died in Germany on 27 March 1945.

Sergeant Moore began Army service in 1936. After 3 years in the Philippines he returned to the U. S. and was later deployed to Europe. He served with the 15th Infantry, 3rd Division of the US 7th Army. His unit received the Presidential Unit Citation for their actions during the Colmar Pocket battles from 22 January to 6 February 1945.

Lieutenant Eugene Woolf was a forward observer with the 3rd Army Field Artillery. He received a slight hand wound when German planes strafed his column on April 17, 1945. He was hospitalized on April 21 and returned to action before the war in Europe ended in early May.

Garth Esplin from Cedar City, a pilot of a C-47 transport plane, was hit by shrapnel and hospitalized for 5 months.

Stanley Hunt of Beryl was wounded twice. Cressel Sherratt and Antone Lambert also received wounds in some of the concluding battles of World War II in Europe.

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