

NO PHOTO **Collier, C Donald**

**Co C 383rd**



Don Collier was born in Pittsburg, Illinois in 1920 to Cecil Fred Collier and Minnie Myrtle Daniels. At Age 7 the family moved, when they purchased the Henry Lee property just south of Shobonier. 1st through 11th Don attended at Shobonier schools. For 12th grade Don attended Vandalia High school riding to and from Vandalia with his Father who worked at the Johnson, Stevens and Sprinkle Shoe Factory. Don Graduated from High School in 1939 and farmed for Clem Van Zandt for 3 years while living at home.

In October of 1942, Don was drafted into the Army. Don was inducted Oct 14, 1942 at Camp Grant in Chicago. He returned home for a short time and then reported for duty on Oct 18th 1942 at Camp Grant, after two days they shipped out on troop train to Camp Adair near Salem, Oregon. Don was there 1 year for Basic Training, Fort Lewis, Washington for weapons training, Camp Pendleton, California for Amphibious training and back to Oregon to Camp White for deployment. The Deadeyes, 96th Division, 383rd Regiment, 1st Battalion, Company C departed from San Francisco on a Merchant ship to Hawaii, (even in 1943 Pearl Harbor was still a mess), the troops took the "Dole Pineapple Express train" to a tent city erected near Schofield Barracks. From Hawaii, they were transported to Eniwetok Island, Philippines. From this peaceful (at the time) place they went to Leyte on Oct 20th 1944 and were 3rd wave in. They battled for one hill on Leyte for 14 days straight, with many casualties. After several months of mud and battles, Leyte was taken. On April 1st 1945 they landed on Okinawa with no resistance on the beach. April 9th Don collected shrapnel in his leg. It was dressed under heavy fire and he returned to fighting in a few days. On April 12th he was shot in his elbow and flown by plane to Quam for 2 weeks of hospital care. Upon release he was shipped to Saipan on a C-47 Skytrain during really bad weather (my father never like flying again). Don was held at a replacement depot for two weeks and then shipped back to Okinawa fighting. 3 days after he reattached with his Company, Okinawa was captured. The remaining members of the 96th were shipped back to Mindanao for training for the invasion of the Japanese mainland. Bombs Dropped, Japan Surrenders! November of 1945 Don was returned to Camp Grant by way of San Francisco and was honorably discharged 20th December of 1945.

Don and his Dad farmed 112 acres using horses and in 1946 he purchased his first tractor with his Vet Preference Card. In October of 1947 Jake Metzger, the Mail Carrier, got sick and asked Don to substitute for him it turned into almost a year of substitution and in July of 1948 Don got the Shobonier Rural Mail Carrier's job full time. He carried mail and farmed for 32 years. Don married Elnora Busenhart in 1949 and they raised 4 boys on land they purchased adjacent to the south side of his Dads property.