



Combat Infantryman



69th Infantry Division

Douglas Manning Olson
Private First Class U.S. Army
13 February 1943 – 13 April 1946

Douglas was born on 10 August 1922 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where he attended grade school and one year of high school. After he left high school in 1938, Douglas went to work for Bethlehem Steel Company until August 1943. He lived and worked in Allentown, Pennsylvania, as a truck driver for H. Leh Company until he entered the service. Douglas was drafted into the Army in Allentown as a Private on 13 February 1943, and he underwent basic training and training as an Ammunition Handler and Mortar Gunner. He was assigned to Service Company, 242nd Infantry Regiment, 69th Infantry Division. He served in the States until 15 November 1944, at which time he left for the European Theater where he participated in the Central Europe Rhineland Campaign as a 2½ ton Truck Driver, transporting personnel, equipment, and supplies to the front. The Division first deployed to England for a short period of training, and in late January 1945 landed at the French port of Le Havre and quickly advanced into Belgium to relieve the 99th Infantry Division on 12 February 1945 to hold defensive positions in the Siegfried Line. The Division went on the offensive on 27 February, capturing the high ridge east of Prether, and then Schmidheim and Dahlem to the east during March. The Division then crossed the Rhine River and captured the fortress of Ehrenbreitstein. On 5 April, they relieved the 80th Infantry Division in Kassel and then seized Munden and Weissenfels against sharp opposition. On 19 April, they captured Leipzig following a fierce struggle within the city. During the battle for Leipzig, the Division uncovered Leipzig-Thekla, a sub-camp of the Buchenwald concentration camp that held approximately 1,400 prisoners. After Leipzig, they captured Eilenburg on 23 April, and secured the east bank of the Mulde River. Two days later, 69th Division patrols between the Elbe and the Mulde Rivers contacted Russian troops in the vicinity of Riesa and Torgau. In addition to his campaign medals, Douglas earned the Combat Infantryman Badge for his service in the Central Europe Rhineland Campaign. After World War II ended he continued to serve in Europe as part of the Allied Occupation Forces until 28 March 1946, when he left for home and discharge from the Army. He was discharged as a Private First Class on 13 April 1946 at Fort Dix, New Jersey, and he returned to live and work in Allentown. Douglas went to work for the Allentown Call-Chronicle Newspapers in the Composing Room as a Supervisor. After his marriage to **Leona Mae Ibach** (born 24 February 1927) in January 1948, he and Leona lived with her parents and family for almost two years in the Village of East Texas, Pennsylvania, in one of the three original houses built in East Texas by the crossroads in the center of the village. In November 1950, Douglas and Leona moved to Emmaus, Pennsylvania, where they bought a house and settled. Douglas retired from The Morning Call in 1985. He died on 25 November 1991 in Lehigh Valley Hospital Center in Salisbury Township. Douglas is buried near his home in Northwood Cemetery in Emmaus. His parents were **Bertram Olson** (? - ?) and **Madeline Olive Young** (18 March 1897 – 30 May 1979).