



Giles Fletcher Rasnake

Sergeant Giles F. Rasnake received basic training for the United State Army at Camp Lee, Virginia in September 1941, and advanced infantry training at Camp Walters, San Antonio, Texas. During this time, news of Pearl Harbor was received. Giles then departed from San Francisco, California, and sailed to Honolulu, Hawaii. In January 1942, he was assigned to E Company, 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks in Honolulu. From January to July 1944, Giles was in the battle of Tarawa and Makin Islands; July to September, the battle of Guam; October the battle of Saipan; November 1944 to February 1945, regrouping in new Hebrides; February to March 1945, the battle of Iwo Jima; April to August 1945, the battle of Okinawa. During the Asiatic Pacific Campaign, Giles was on eight different islands. As an infantryman, he participated in five major battles, two of which were face to face with the Japanese. During this campaign he spent over four months on board transport ships moving from island to island. Giles also performed duties as a carpenter, concrete worker, mechanic, cook, and barber. During the fighting on Saipan, E Company dealt with snipers, extreme weather conditions, and clearing the Japanese from caves. His company went in with 108 men and was reduced to only 13 men; a few others were able to swim to safety later. After Saipan, the battalion was to make a five-hour trip to New Hebrides to refit and rest. The trip took 13 days while being chased by the Japanese submarines. E Company was then sent to the island of Okinawa. The men were constantly attacked by Japanese airplanes. The battalion was preparing for further invasion on the Japanese island when the atomic bomb was dropped. His battalion was then ordered to come home when a typhoon hit the islands. Giles remembers trying to keep their tents and equipment from blowing away, while waiting for the ship to arrive. Sergeant Giles F. Rasnake was honorably discharged in October 1945. He was awarded the Bronze Star with Two Oak Leaf Clusters; Combat Infantryman Badge; Expert Marksmanship Badge; and the Good Conduct Medal. Giles had been deployed more than four years without a furlough or talking with any of his family. His parents were James and Alta Rasnake of Cleveland, Virginia, and he had ten brothers and sisters. Soon after returning home, Giles married Geraldine Fields and they made their home in Lebanon, Virginia. They have been married 53 years and have six children, 11 grandchildren, and three great grandchildren. -A Tribute to World War II Veterans of Russell County Virginia. Historical Society of Russell Co., Va., 1999. Lineage for Giles past his parents is undetermined at this point.