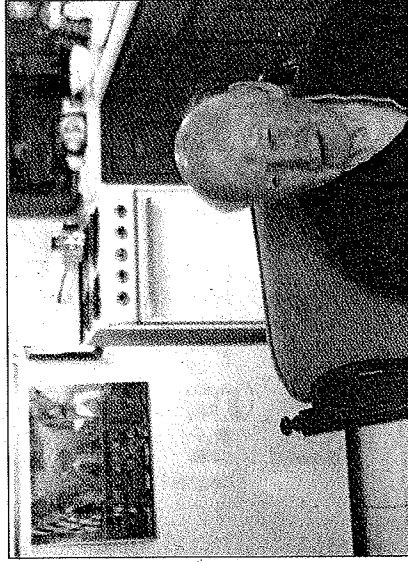


Post 10-2-07

## TOUR OF DUTY



LESLE ADKINS/POST-TRIBUNE  
World War II veteran Glenn Peterson of Valparaiso talks about his experiences. He fought at the Battle of the Bulge.

# Valparaiso veteran remembers combat, sights on native land

■ Glenn Peterson recalls military days in England, France and Germany.

By DIANE KRIEGER SPIVAK  
Post-tribune staff writer

When Glenn Peterson landed in South Wales as a fresh-faced 19-year-old American soldier in 1943 he didn't dream he was walking on soil that was once owned by one of his ancestors.

It was years later that Peterson, of English ancestry, conducted a genealogy research and discovered that the area was one of the landholdings of his ancestor, the Earl of Pembroke, who became a member of the House of Lords in the 1300s.

"The area where I stayed was his land," Peterson said. "I didn't know it at the time."

Like many young guys during the war Peterson's life had taken an abrupt turn just a few months before.

An engineering student at Michigan State University, Peterson was enrolled in ROTC. It was required of all able-bodied male students at the time.

After a few months, he was sent to the infantry.

"I went from a college dormitory to a pup tent in a matter of months," Peterson said.

After landing in Wales, which was relatively safe at the time, Peterson got a four-day pass to London.

"Of course we were bombed there, but we didn't get hit," he said. "We took the subway so we could travel safely. We went to St. Paul's, Buckingham Palace, and Piccadilly Circus. We had wonderful time."

The bombing went on almost daily. Peterson landed at Normandy after the invasion, then was sent by train to the front lines in Northern France.

"We went by a boxcar called, 'Forty and eight,'" Peterson said. It was made to hold 40 men and eight horses, but by this time the cavalry had gone to mechanized travel (tanks), so no horses were transported.

"We faced artillery fire," Peterson said. "We spent nights in a trench. It was a long trench so you could sleep in there."

Banter inside the trenches usually focused on home, but Peterson didn't stay long because he was on the P&D — Pioneer and Demolition — Squad.

"We had a trap set if any German tanks came," Peterson said. "We had land mines attached to a string, and bazookas. We'd each take turns two hours on two hours off."

### Glenn Peterson

Birthdate: April 5, 1923  
Birthplace: Belvidere, Ill.  
Education: Michigan State University; Masters in Engineering, 1952  
Military Service: 1943 to 1945  
Family: Gloria Adams, married 1950; four children  
Employment: Engineer; retired 1988

### Tour of Duty, Taking our Veterans to D.C.

Pines Village Retirement Communities is sending 40 veterans and support personnel on the Tour of Duty, taking our Veterans to D.C. trip Thursday through Monday to see the World War II Memorial, Arlington Cemetery and other historical points of interest. To donate to the tour of Duty call Pines Village, 465-1591.

Germany. "It was one of the coldest winters in Europe," he said. "You couldn't have fires because the enemy could see you."

There were also English-speaking German troops wearing American uniforms to watch out for.

"We identified ourselves using baseball terms," Peterson said.

One sight Peterson can't forget: "We were fighting the German SS," he said. "When we advanced we saw the dead bodies with their SS emblems on their uniforms," Peterson said.

Peterson also remembers joining forces at the Colmar Pocket in France.

"We had the Germans surrounded," he said. "I was running phone line to the front lines. You couldn't duck when you were doing that. I remember passing one of the generals and he had a big heavy shield surrounding where he was standing."

Peterson was in a Paris hospital recovering from shrapnel wounds when he was surprised by an old childhood friend from Fort Wayne, Gene Martin.

"He was fighting in Europe, too, and I don't know how he found me," Peterson said. "We were both in the infantry but in different outfits."

Martin sneaked Peterson out of the hospital for some sight-seeing.

"Through him I got to see Paris," Peterson said.

Contact Diane Krieger Spivak