



9th Armored Division



78th Infantry Division

Russell Richard Hartzell
Private First Class U.S. Army
12 April 1944 – 2 February 1946

Russell was born at home on 24 January 1920 in Alburdis, Pennsylvania. He attended grade school in Alburdis from 1929 to 1937, and then began working for the Traylor Engineering Company. Russell married **Irene Alice Hilbert** (2 November 1920 – 7 May 2001) on 29 October 1938 in Longswamp, Pennsylvania. They established their residence in Mertztown, Pennsylvania. Russell worked for seven years at Traylor Engineering as a Welder Helper until he was drafted into the Army. He was inducted as a Private on 12 April 1944 at New Cumberland, Pennsylvania, and was assigned to the Field Artillery Branch. After undergoing training, Russell was assigned as a Light Truck Driver in Company B, 656th Tank Destroyer Battalion, which had been activated on 3 April 1943 at Camp Bowie, Texas. The Battalion left for the European Theater, arriving in England in December 1944. They later left for France, where they disembarked at Le Havre on 6 February 1944. The Battalion, equipped with the M36 90mm Jackson Tank Destroyer, was attached to 9th Armored Division, 78th Infantry Division. They entered the line near Friesenrath, Germany, on 28 February 1944 to help support the 78th Division's sweep to help Allied Forces encircle the Ruhr Valley in early April 1945, and the Division's subsequent dash eastward to the Mulde River where it turned south and entered Czechoslovakia near St. Sedlo on 6 May 1945. Russell left to return to the States on 23 June 1945, arriving on 2 July 1945. He was then assigned to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, until he was discharged there on 2 February 1946. For his service in the Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns, Russell was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (with two bronze stars) and the World War II Victory Medal. After Russell returned home, he and Irene moved to Zionsville, Pennsylvania, in 1947. They moved again to Macungie, Pennsylvania, in 1948. After his discharge from the Army, Russell first worked in the orchards for Skyhigh Orchards and then, from 1953 until his retirement in 1983, he performed various jobs for Air Products in Trexlertown, Pennsylvania. In 2008, he moved to Lower Macungie Township. Russell and Irene had two children: **Gerald Russell** and **Geraldine Mae**. Russell's parents were **Richard Hartzell**, who died in 1938, and **Elsie Rauch** (3 November 1901 – 2 February 1920).



M36 90 mm Jackson Tank Destroyer