



Ray A. Horlacher
Private First Class U.S. Army
10 February 1942 – 15 September 1944

Ray was born on 24 September 1923 in Lower Macungie Township in Wescosville, Pennsylvania, where he was raised, went to school, and lived until entering the Army. After attending grammar school, Ray enlisted in the Army as a Private on 10 February 1943 in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and underwent basic and advanced infantry training at Camp McCain, Mississippi, and Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He was then assigned to the 135th Infantry Regiment, 34th Infantry (“Red Bull”) Division, which was assembling in the vicinity of Caledon, Northern Ireland, for intensive training. In December 1942, the Regiment moved to England and, on Christmas Day of 1942, boarded the troop ship *Empress of Australia* and sailed for North Africa, landing at Mers El Kabir, Algeria, on 3 January 1943. The following month, the Regiment



Empress of Australia

assembled near the town of Lavayssiere, and moved by truck over the Atlas Mountains to the vicinity of Maktar to relieve French units. From mid-February to 10 April 1943, the Regiment engaged in combat as they pushed toward and reached Oran, including the battles at Kef-el-Amar Pass, Fondouk Pass, Makatar, Sidi Nsir, Eddekhila and Chougui Pass. On 19 September 1943, the Regiment sailed from Oran to land at the Bay of Salerno, Italy, on 22 Sept. 1943. They then advanced to the north

in Italy, and over the next four months engaged in numerous battles including Benevento, Alife, San Angelo D’Alife, Ciorlano, Colli, Mt. Capraro, and then the famous battle for Cassino which was fought from 24 January to 21 February 1944. After Cassino, they joined the Anzio Beachhead Offensive, and continued northward and fought in the battles for Lanuvio, Tarquinia, San Vincenzo, Cecina, and the Gothic Line in early September 1944. On 15 Sept 1944, the Regiment, in a hard struggle, cleared Margherita, the place where Ray was killed in action. In addition to the campaign medals and Combat Infantryman’s Badge that Ray was awarded, he earned the Purple Heart for his wounds. On 10 December 1948, Ray was re-interred from Italy at Bethany United Methodist Cemetery on South Cedarbrook Road in Wescosville in the same plot as his parents. Ray’s parents were **Harold A. Horlacher** (5 May 1899 – 30 December 1965) and **Carrie E. (Christman)** (18 July 1904 – 12 February 1983).