



John William Meck
Corporal T/5 U.S. Army
1 September 1942 – 4 October 1945

John was born on 24 December 1921, in Longswamp, Pennsylvania, where he was also baptized on 18 February 1922. He was the seventh of eight children born to William John Meck (21 March 1881 – 2 March 1942) and Cora Jane (Fenstermaker) Meck (26 July 1881 – 25 July 1944). Sometime after completing elementary school in 1935, John went to work at the East Penn Foundry in Macungie, Pennsylvania, until he enlisted in the Army. He enlisted in Allentown, Pennsylvania, on 1 September 1942. After basic training, John was assigned to the A Battery, 71st Armored Field Artillery Battalion, 5th Armored Division, which had been activated on 9 January 1941, at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and relocated to the Desert Training Center, Mojave Desert, California, on 10 September 1941. The battalion was equipped with 105mm M7 Self Propelled Vehicles, for which John was trained as a driver. They trained there until March 1943, and then relocated to central Tennessee for a year of realistic combat training on terrain closely resembling that of France, Belgium, and Germany. They then moved on to Pine Camp, New York, and Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, for additional training and preparation for overseas deployment. On 11 February 1944, they sailed for and arrived on 24 February in England, where they prepared for landing in Normandy, France. They landed on Utah Beach on 24 July 1944, and moved into combat on 2 August 1944, first driving south to seize the city of Le Mans on 8 August 1944, then turning and fighting their way to the north. They passed through Paris on 30 August 1944, crossed the Oise, Aisne, and Somme Rivers, and reached the Belgian border at Condé on 2 September 1944. They then turned east, crossed the Meuse River on 4 September 1944 at Charleville-Mézières, liberated Luxembourg City six days later, and then deployed along the German border. On 14 September 1944, they penetrated the Siegfried Line at Wallendorf, Germany. During October 1944, they held defensive positions in the Monschau-Höfen sector, entered the Hürtgen Forest area in late November 1944, and pushed the enemy back to the banks of the Roer River in very heavy fighting. On 22 December 1944, they withdrew to Verviers, Belgium, to be placed in 12th Army Group reserve. On 25 February 1945, they crossed the Roer River, drove to the Rhine River, where they crossed at Wesel, Germany, on 30 March 1945. On 12 April 1945, they reached the banks of the Elbe at Tangermünde, moved to Klötze where they wiped out the Von Clausewitz Panzer Division, and again drove to the Elbe in the vicinity of Dannenberg. The division then mopped up in the Ninth Army sector until VE-day in early May 1945. After the German surrender, John remained in Germany as part of the Allied Occupation Forces. He left Germany on 22 July 1945, and arrived back in the States on 31 July 1945, for discharge at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. He was discharged there on 4 October 1945. John was awarded the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal (with a silver star), World War II Victory Medal, American Defense Service Medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, and the Army Good Conduct Medal. John returned home to Longswamp, and resumed working at the foundry in Macungie until his retirement. After he returned home, he married Frances B. Dries of Lower Macungie Township in Longswamp. They raised one child, William John. John died as a result of an automobile accident on 6 July 1954, and was buried in a family plot at Zions Evangelical and Reformed Church Cemetery in Old Zionsville, Pennsylvania. John's cousin, Glenroy Peter Meck, also served in the Army during World War II.



105mm M7
Self Propelled Vehicle