



5th Army Patch



91st Infantry Patch

Sterling Edward Ruff
Sergeant U.S. Army
June 1943 – December 1945

Sterling was born on 9 March 1921 at his home near Mertztown Road on the southwest corner of Lower Macungie Township, Pennsylvania. The family lived at various locations in the township, and Sterling attended grades 1 to 6 in Lower Macungie from 1928 to 1934. The family eventually relocated to Breinigsville, Pennsylvania, circa 1940, where Sterling lived until he was married. In 1938 he went to work for Bethlehem Foundry Corporation, a producer of large castings and weldments, located adjacent to Bethlehem Steel Corporation in Pennsylvania. He worked there as a molder until he went into the Army. On 30 January 1943, Sterling married **Arlene Anna Miller** (born 9 March 1921). He and Arlene initially lived in Brookdale and just six months after they were married, in June 1943, Sterling was drafted into the Army as a Private. He was sent to Camp Adair, just north of Corvallis, Oregon, for basic training. Besides being a training center for four infantry Divisions for overseas deployment, the Army had a hospital at Camp Adair where servicemen who were wounded in the Pacific Theater during World War II were treated. Sterling was assigned to the 91st Infantry Division, 5th Army, and also underwent advanced training at Camp Adair for the Medical Corps. The 91st Division left Camp Adair in April 1944 for Italy, where Sterling served with the Division until he was discharged. The Division initially participated in the battles for Rome and the Arno River, and in September 1944 crossed the Sieve River, outflanked the famous Gothic Line, and captured the Futa Pass. Moving through rocky escarpments and other natural barriers, as well as heavy opposition, the 91st occupied Livernano on 13 October 1944. They then took defensive positions below Pianoro until April 1945, entering Bologna on 21 April, crossing the Po River on the 23rd and the Adige River on the 26th, and reached Treviso on the 29th. All enemy forces in Italy surrendered on 2 May 1945, after which the 91st was assigned occupational duties in the Province of Venezia-Giulia until December 1945, when Sterling returned to the States and was discharged as a Sergeant at Fort Rucker, Alabama. The 91st Division was awarded the North Apennines, Po Valley and Rome-Arno campaign battle streamers. After his discharge in December 1945, Sterling and Arlene purchased a home in Brookdale where he lived until his death on 24 February 1989; Arlene continued to live there until 2000. After Sterling returned home, he rejoined Bethlehem Foundry as a molder until circa 1970 when the foundry was shut down and sold. The new owners relocated operations to Glendon, Pennsylvania, and continued production of industrial-quality oil-fired boilers (the Bethlehem Dynatherm) and other steel fabrications. Sterling continued with the new owners, assembling oil burners in the Glendon shop until he retired in 1984. Sterling and Arlene had a daughter, **Phyllis Elaine** (born 2 July 1946) and a son **Ronald Lee** (born 7 January 1948), who served two four-year enlistments in the Air Force from 1966 to 1974. Sterling died in the Lehigh Valley Hospital and is buried at Zion Lehigh Church Cemetery in Lower Macungie. His parents were **Claude Edward Ruff** (17 August 1895 – 30 January 1973) and **Cora Gertie Miller** (22 June 1897 – 23 March 1981).