

## **Sgt. Stanley Simon – Battle of the Bulge Veteran**

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WWII Veteran Sgt. Stanley Simon, 93, grew up in Orangefield, Texas, and walked to school.

“We had good teachers,” he said. “I would help clean the school to get extra money for food. A loaf of bread cost a nickel. If you did not work, you did not eat. No handouts at all. It was the Great Depression.”

With the draft coming in 1940, he joined the Army. Camp Hulan was a Texas National Guard base leased by the U.S. military during WWII, near Palacios, Texas. There, Stanley became a trainer in antiaircraft artillery. He went on to train soldiers at Camp Wallace, Galveston, and then to Tennessee.

“In the Tennessee woods,” he said, “it got so hot we had to drink water from the machine gun jackets. No water up in those hills. One hell of a mess.”

From New York, he sailed on the luxurious RMS Aquitania through the North Sea to South Hampton, England, though not in luxury.

“The Germans had this buzz bomb tearing up England,” Stanley continued. “We lived with the English people in their homes.... Every now and then the siren would go off. We could see and hear the bombs coming.”

D-Day – on June, 6, 1944, Stanley landed on Normandy’s Omaha Beach, Easy Red sector.

“On the way in, our ammunition truck caught fire,” said Stanley. But they got the fire out and began their push into France.

Stanley reflected, “Scary. It wasn’t funny, buddy. Lot of dead on the beach all over. Scary ... Lord have mercy! Our job was to get the German planes off our troops. We took care of that part. Shot a lot of planes down.”



At the same time D-Day unfolded to Germany's west, four years of fierce fighting in the east favored Stalin as he punished Hitler's betrayal and drove the mad Nazis out of Russia, incurring millions of casualties.

In early December, six months after D-Day, as Stalin advanced in the east and the Allies advanced in the West, Adolf Hitler planned to throw a Hail Mary Pass, his last major battle of WWII, his all-or-nothing last-ditch effort to penetrate the Allied western line through the Ardennes forest – history called it the Battle of the Bulge.

U.S. Army intelligence and Ultra had decoded a massive assault coming, but they did not know where or when.

On Dec. 16, 1944, Hitler threw his last Hail Mary. Over 20 divisions of 200,000 soldiers pushed westward through the Ardennes forest attacking 83,000 mostly American soldiers. Hitler wanted to divide and push to Antwerp. From a 75-mile Allied line, to nearly Christmas, the Germans had pushed the Allies westward over 60 miles.

On the map, the German line looked like a “bulge” or cone pointing west, hence, the Battle of the Bulge. It was also one of the coldest winters of record.

Stanley almost lost his feet to frostbite. After recovering in a hospital, he was returned to the front line.

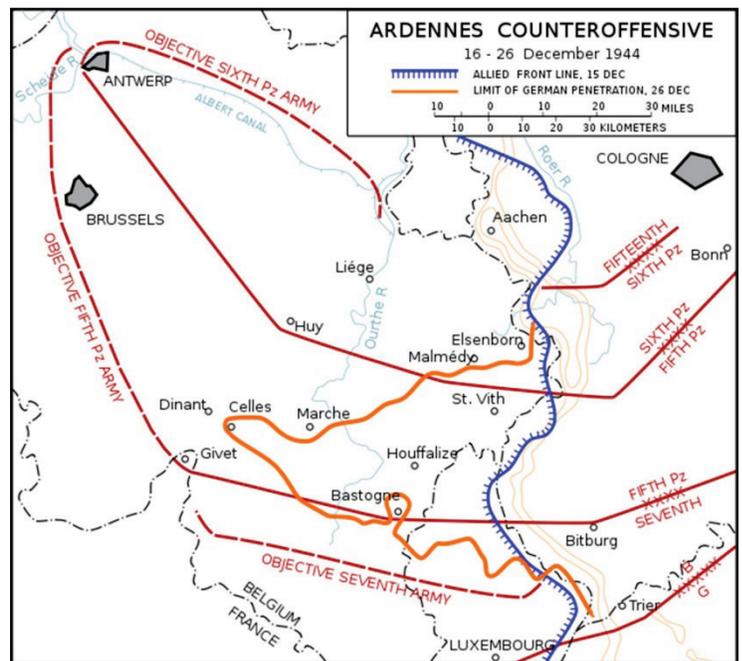
“Time – time stood still,” Stanley said. “There was no ‘time,’ we didn't think about it.” He cannot remember how many days he was there. He can remember K-rations and that he often forgot to eat. Days ran together.

All seven roads through the Ardennes forest converged in Bastogne, and Germany had it surrounded for five days. The cut-off American forces were saved when portions of General Patton's Third Army punched through on Dec. 27.

Stanley does not remember where he was, but a German 88 antiaircraft gun fired on his crew. He lost use of the entire right side of his body for a while, but, thank God, he recovered some. He lost hearing in his right ear. Yet his sight returned, he regained use of his right arm, though some numbness remains, and a piece of shrapnel remains stuck in his neck.

By Jan. 18, the German “bulge” had steadily shrunk as the Allies pushed the Germans back. After this battle, Germany did not recover.

In all, over 600,000 Americans fought with 19,000 killed and over 70,000 wounded, captured or missing. The Germans had nearly 100,000 casualties. Concurring with Churchill, the U.S. Army said, the Battle of the Bulge was “arguably the greatest battle in American military



history” in terms of participation and losses ([Army.mil/botb](http://Army.mil/botb)).

On liberating a Nazi concentration camp, he remembers vividly the cages and barely living men, starved to skin and bone. “I’m not going to tell what the Germans did.”

Stanley received three battle stars for the Battle of the Bulge, Normandy, and the Germany campaigns, among other medals.

After the war and back in the states, he met his beloved Gladys through his aunt and uncle. He remembers like it was yesterday. On their second date, they went dancing at the American Legion in Port Arthur, Texas.

“Boy, she could Jitterbug,” he said. They fell in love.

Gladys got a ring on her 18th birthday. They planned to marry on Nov. 2, but that turned out to be a Holy Day of Obligation – they’ve been devote Catholics all their lives – so they put the wedding off to the next Saturday.

Stanley credits good teachers in high school for his successes. At Standard Alloy, he built up their machine shops as they fabricated all kinds of parts for ships and the oil field.

While on a trip to Chicago to buy a “3A Warner & Swasey” turret lathe, Stanley, a coworker, and company owner Henry LeBlanc were in a second-floor meeting. They could see a street crew below pouring cement.

A Warner Swasey executive with ties to mafia told them, “They buried Jimmy Hoffa in that cement this morning.” That was no joke.

Stanley said emphatically, “And that’s where Hoffa’s at ... in the cement in that highway. And that’s the truth! That man was not lying.” That was 1975, and Stanley has had no doubts since then about Hoffa’s fate.

When Stanley retired from Standard Alloy in 1983 after 38 years, they moved to Frog Pond at Colmesneil and built their house themselves.

“We build everything you see here, son,” said Stanley confidently. “Built a metal shop and a wood shop. Then built everything.” They made the house and all the furniture, doors, cabinets, and bannisters.

After heart surgery years ago and slower today, Stanley still wants build. Gladys has stood beside him all the way, and helped make the house into a home. She helped the local charity Caring Is Sharing for 11 years, and for many years, she was the Eucharistic Minister at Woodville’s Our Lady of the Pines Catholic Church.

His daughter Stana said, “He taught us to take care of business.” Another daughter Glathea nodded and added, “I heard it often, ‘Whatever you pack, you got to be able to carry.’”



On Nov. 9, 2014, Stanley and Gladys will celebrate 68 years of marriage, with four daughters and a son, 12 grandchildren, 21 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great-grandchildren.

Their secret?

“If you love enough, that’s the secret,” said Stanley coolly. That is what both desire for all their children, to the great-great ones and beyond, a long life well lived in faith and love and a model for all of us.



*Stanley and Gladys Simon flanked by their daughters  
and backed by a small portion of their family*