



**Harold  
Williams**

*Army*

## Harold Williams

Jan 23, 1923 - May 22, 2023

**BIRTHPLACE:** Albany, NY

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### SOLDIER DETAILS

**HIGHEST RANK:** Tech Sergeant

**DIVISION:** Army, 1st Infantry Division

**THEATER OF OPERATION:** European

**HONORED BY:** The Eisenhower Foundation

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### BIOGRAPHY

Harold Williams was born January 23, 1923 in New York, He grew up in Valatie, NY, attending public school but dropping out of High School to help earn money for the family. Williams was working farm labor and at the Watervliet Arsenal until he enlisted in the Army in 1941. Williams took basic training at Fort Dix, NJ in June of 1942 and was sent to Europe storming the beach at Normandy. In an article in The United States Army, William remembered that day. Many soldiers in Williams' unit did not survive; the Germans cut down 44 men instantly. German Soldiers waited from the vantage point of a tower where they fired upon vulnerable American Soldiers at Omaha Beach. Dead troops already lined the shoreline as Williams and his fellow soldiers approached. "I don't sleep too good now," said Williams, his voice wavering. "I just look back over all the things that I went through and say God....why? Why did you spare me?" Williams also participated in The Battle of the Bulge. "I guess most of us just wanted to forget it all" he said. "you don't ever really forget it; life has to go on." Williams also engaged in the battles of Huertgen Forest, Elsenborn Ridge and Leipzig before deploying to Czechoslovakia. He fought in four major campaigns and 424 total days of combat. Toward the end of the war, Williams remembers his 1st Infantry Division encroached upon a small village near the French-Belgian border. A boy led Williams and his fellow Soldiers to his family's cottage. The boy's parents asked Williams' commander, if they intended to stay and if they could safely come out. The commander nodded yes, the child's relatives revealed that for two years they had sheltered a Jewish Family from the war. Williams could see two youngsters peering behind a curtain in one of the windows. The Americans had liberated the village, now his unit watched the Jewish family's young two year old daughter walk into the daylight for the first time. Williams was amazed. "I also saw with my own eyes, grown men crying. Williams left Europe mostly unscathed with only a broken finger. His job in the service was a radio operator. Williams returned to American and started a family in Albany, New York.