

## **The Sullivan Family of Pacolet Mills in WWII**

The Sullivan family of [Pacolet Mills](#) made a heavy contribution to the American victory in World War II. One son, Royce Dean Sullivan, gave his life and another, James Carroll Sullivan, was badly wounded.

### **Royce Dean Sullivan**



Dean was born on September 1, 1918 at Arkwright Mills in SC. He attended [Pacolet Mills Elementary School](#) and before going into the Army he worked in Pacolet Mills.

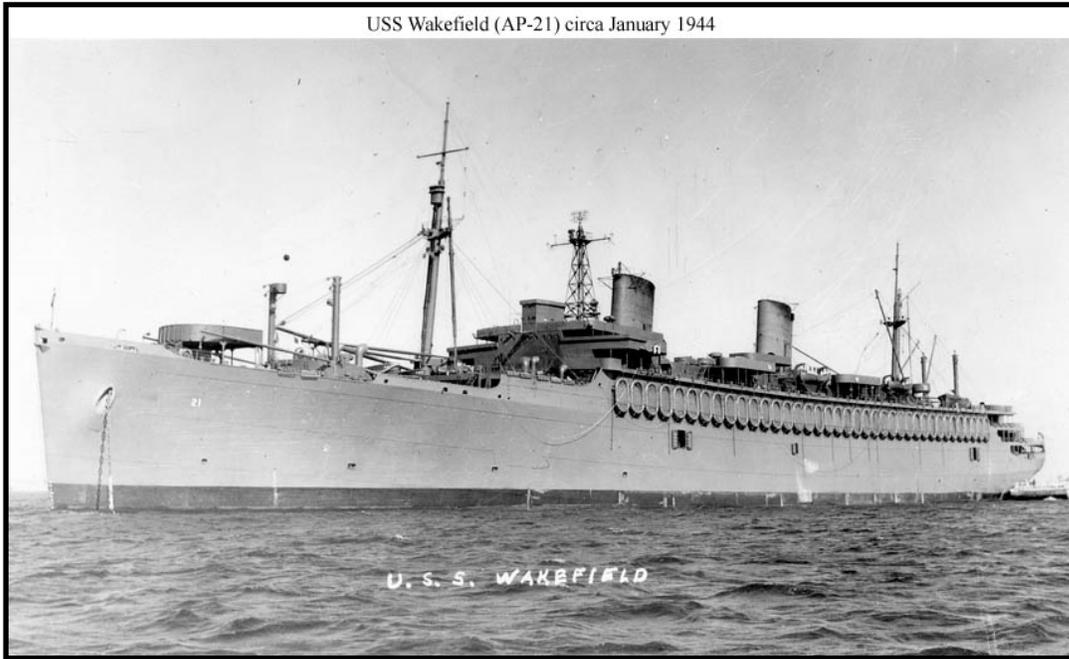
Dean was assigned into the HQ battery, First Battalion, 178th Field Artillery (13th Field Artillery Brigade) at Fort Bragg, N.C. He was put into the wire section as telephone operator and lineman. The wire section's job was to run telephone wire and maintain communications between the various gun batteries and headquarters.

The entire 13th Field Artillery Brigade, consisting of 13th Field Artillery Headquarters, 178th Field Artillery Regiment, 36th Field Artillery Regiment, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, and 1st Observation Battalion, moved and changed station on 26 March 1942 from Fort Bragg to Camp Blanding, Florida, (Near Jacksonville).

In July, the unit was on maneuvers in South Carolina. These maneuvers were called off in the latter part of July 1942 and the unit was ordered to go to Fort Bragg, N.C. to crate equipment and prepare for shipment overseas. The organization went by train to Indiantown, PA, for final preparation for embarkation.

Dean, along with thousands of other American soldiers and sailors, was going to be part of Operation Torch, the invasion of North Africa. This was the first big offensive Allied operation since the War had started.

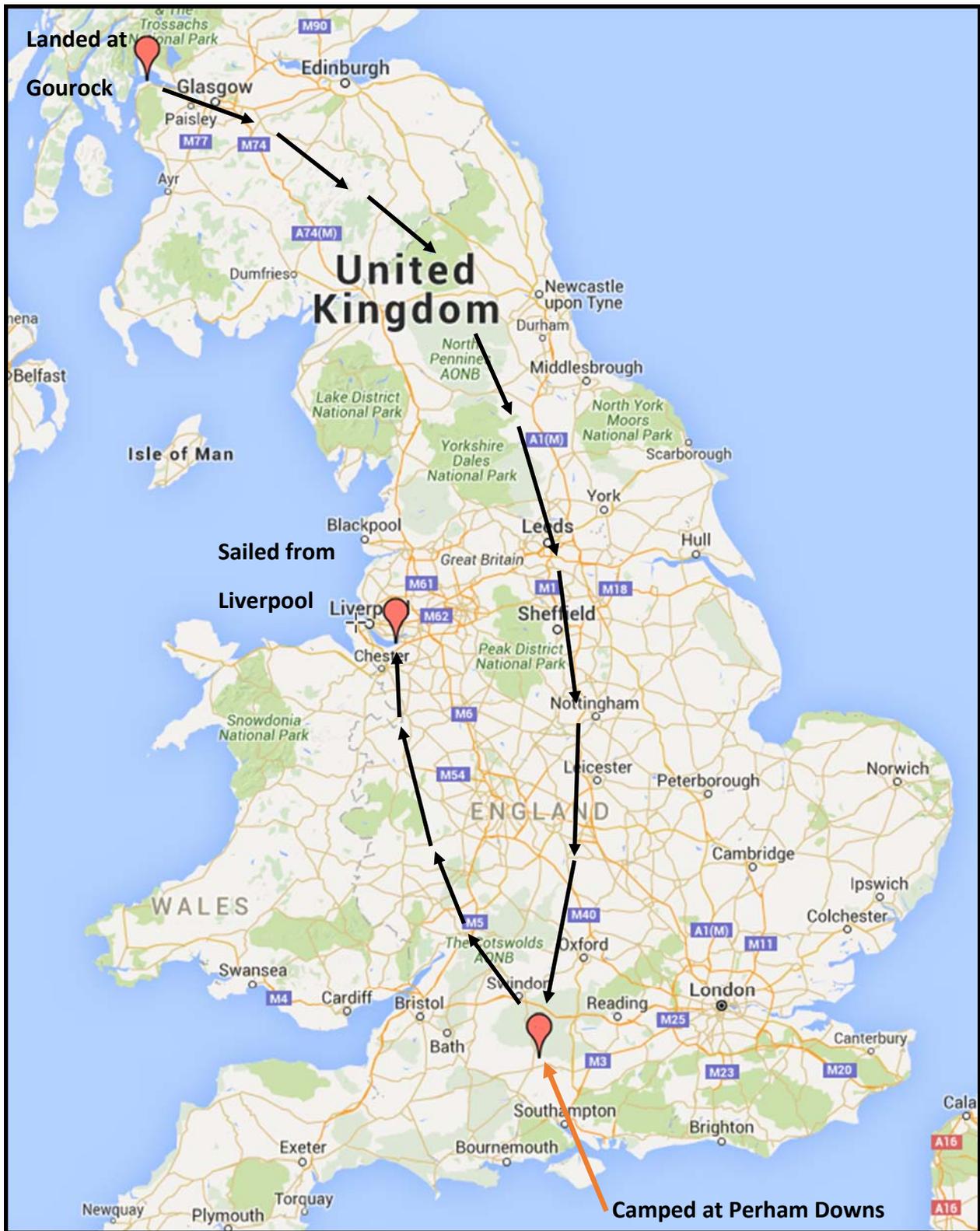
USS Wakefield (AP-21) circa January 1944



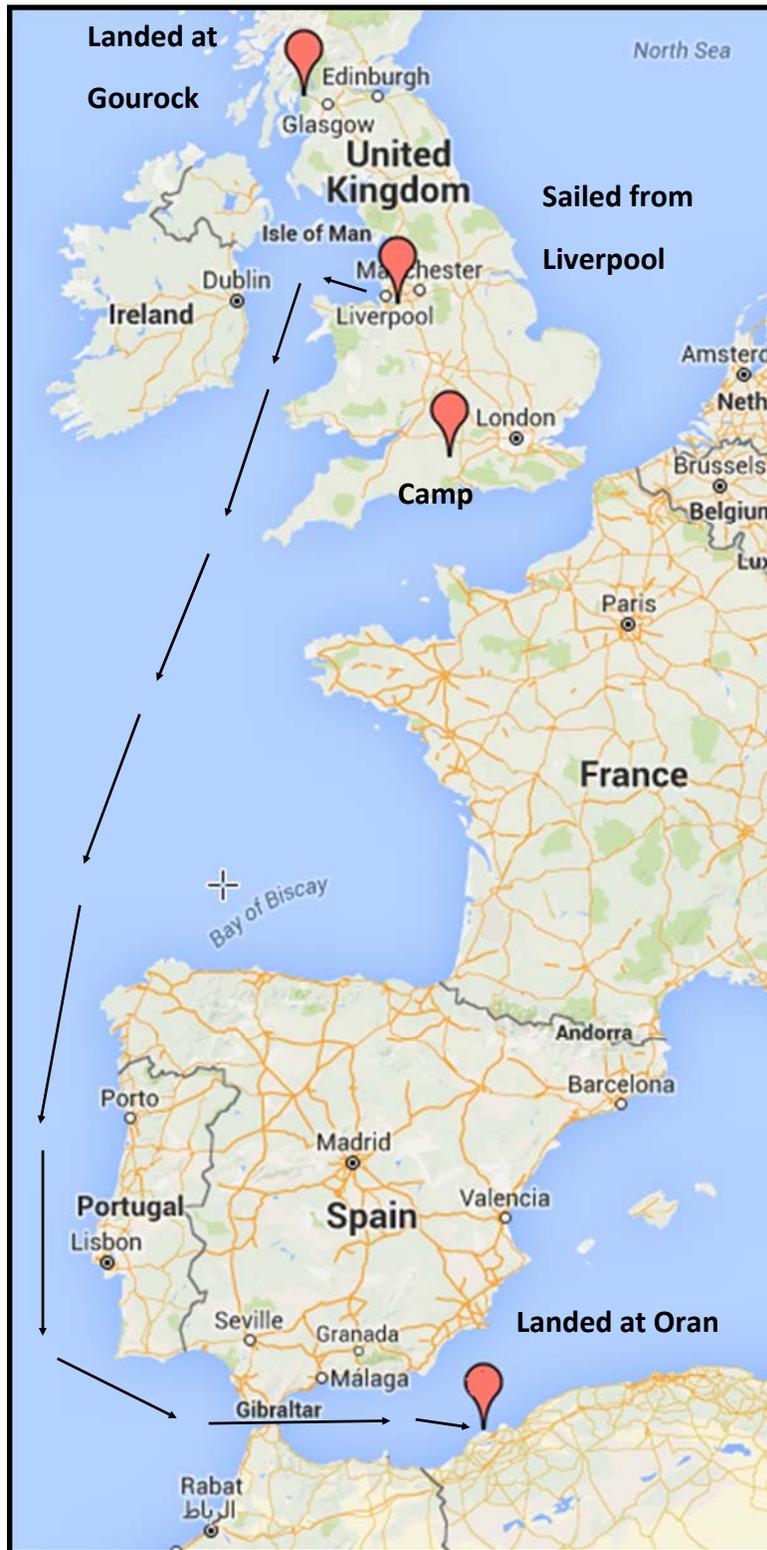
## Overseas Duty

Dean and his unit sailed from Pier 13, New York Harbor, 6 August 1942, on the *U.S.S. Wakefield*. They spent 14 days on the water landing at Gourock, near Glasgow, Scotland, on the 20th of August 1942.



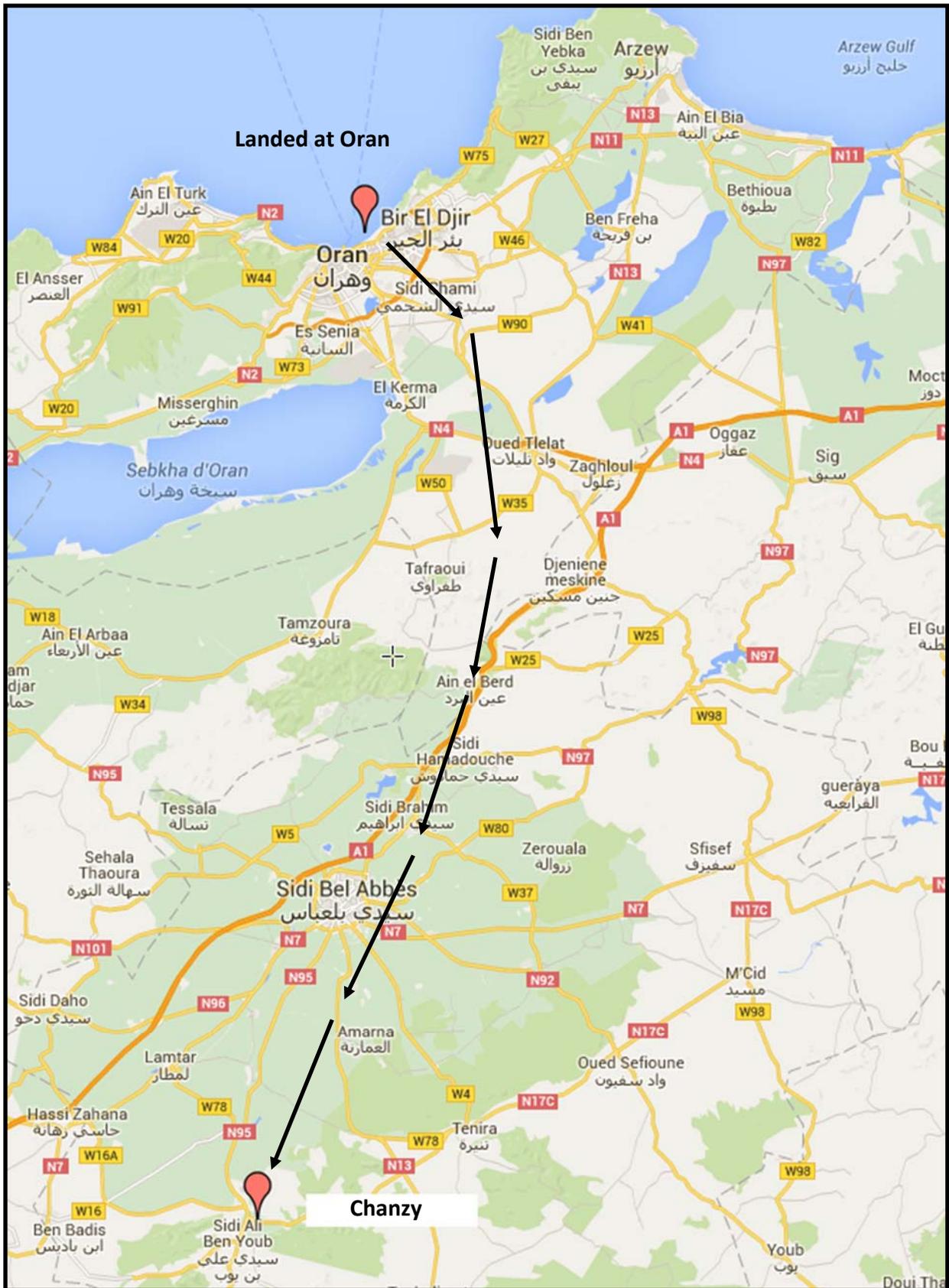


They travelled by train to Perham Downs, Hants, Salisbury Plains, in Southern England and continued training for combat. They received intensive training and conditioning while in England. They sailed from Liverpool, England, on 27 November 1942. It is not know what ship Dean sailed on from Liverpool.



Route from Liverpool to Oran

They sailed from Liverpool, England, on 27 November 1942, and arrived at Oran, Algeria, North Africa, 5 December 1942.



A few days after landing in Oran they moved to a bivouac area near Chanzy, 18 miles from Sidi Bel Abbas, Algeria. They did practice firing with their large artillery guns on the northern edge of the Sahara Desert near Bedeaux. They did lots of bartering with Arabs for eggs, wine, fruit and nuts.

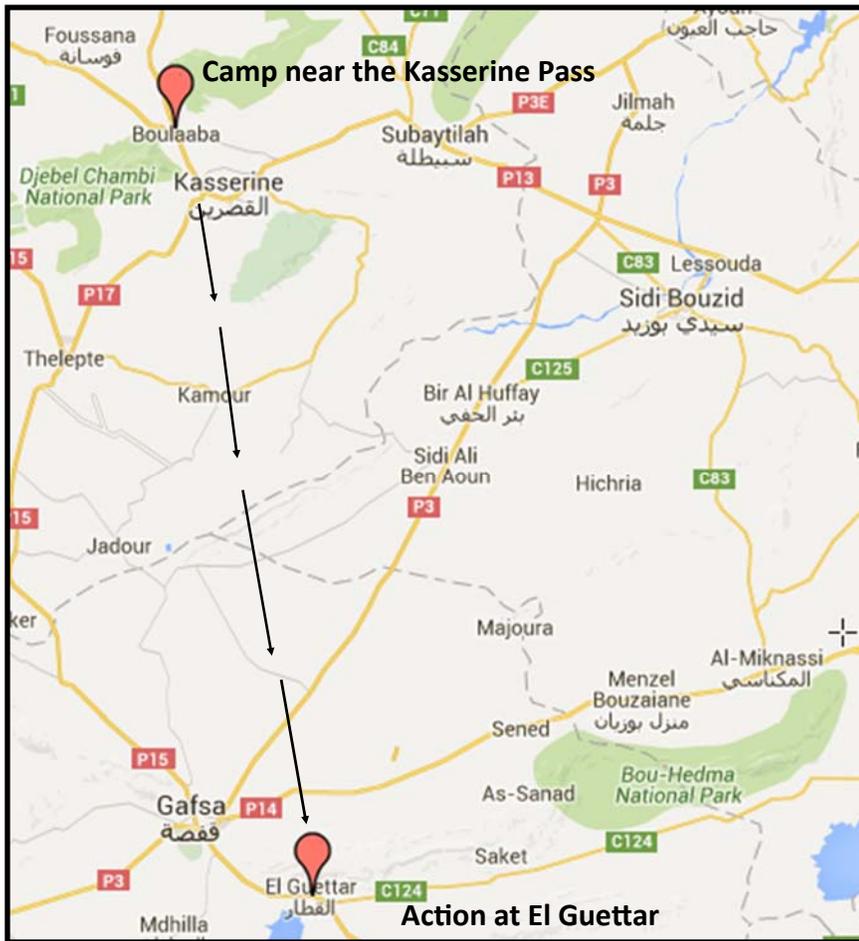


## Combat

They left their camp at Chazny for a long road march to the combat area on 2 March 1943. The unit occupied several defensive positions in the vicinity of the Kasserine Pass. They underwent the first enemy air raid on 12 March 1943, (5 German M.E. 109's - 1 shot down). They began to learn what it was like to live in a fox hole. The first casualties were due to anti-personnel mines (two killed, two wounded).



Dean's artillery unit used 155 mm Howitzers. In this photo, soldiers are setting up one of the big guns prior to firing. A gun like this could hit a target over 9 miles away.



They occupied their first offensive position on 27 March 1943 at El Guettar. Using their big artillery pieces they supported 16th Infantry, 7th Field Artillery, 1st Division. During this time they received heavy artillery fire and numerous dive bombing and strafing attacks.



A crew firing a 155mm Howitzer.



The German opposition they faced consisted of Rommel's 10th and 15th Panzer Divisions supported by Italians. They supported the 34th Division at Fondouk, Tunisia. The Battalion's last offensive action during the Tunisian Campaign was when they fired on Hill 609 and Hill 575 near Beja and Mateur, Tunisia. The Germans and Italians surrendered in North Africa on 13 May 1943. American troops had been involved in the Battle for North Africa for slightly more than 6 months.

After the German surrender, the Battalion remained in camp near Bove, Algeria for nearly a month following the defeat of the German and Italian forces.

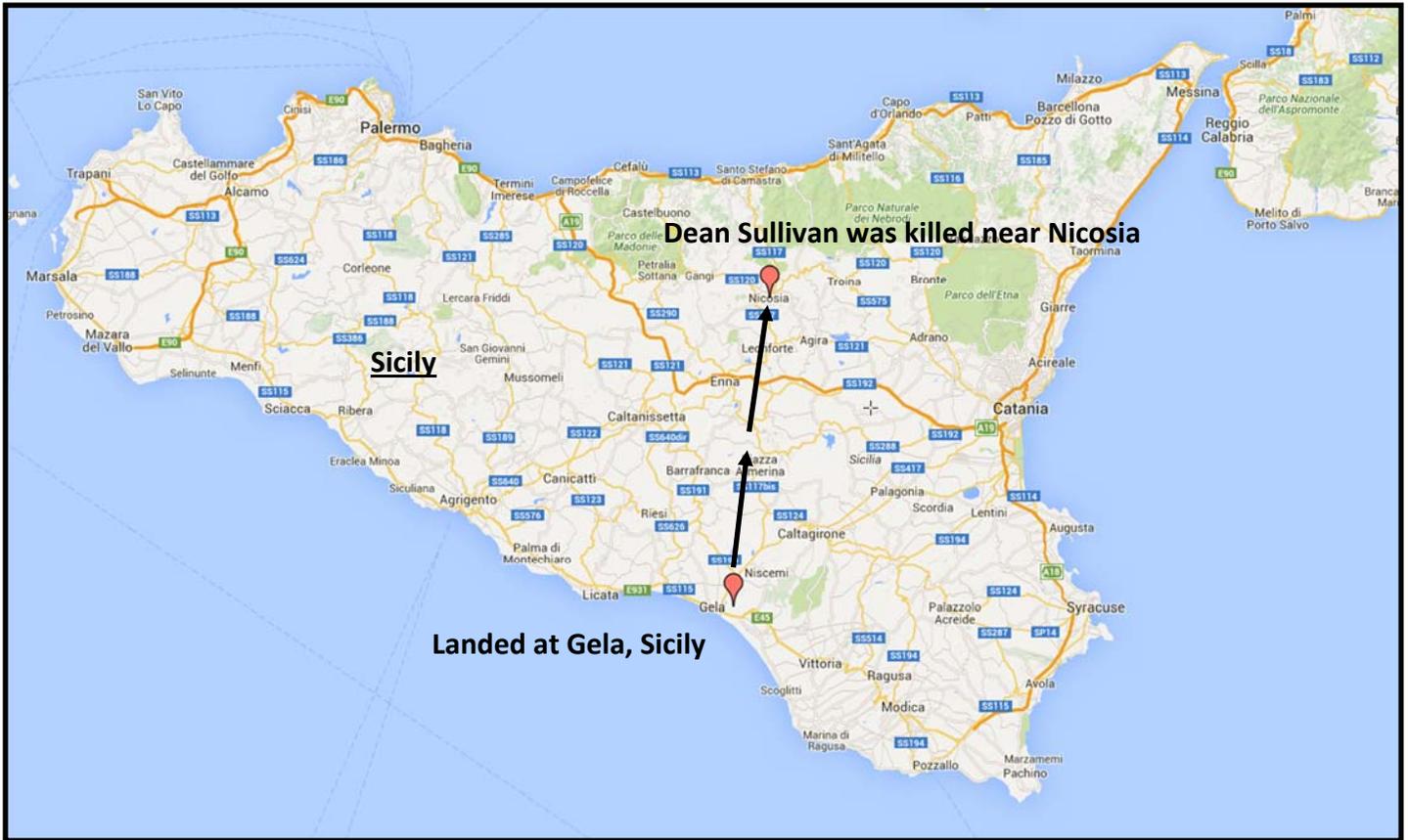


Over 300,000 German and Italian soldiers surrendered in North Africa.



They boarded LSTs at Tunis and sailed for Sicily on 16 July 1943, landing two days later on beach at Gela. After landing, they supported the 45th Division and shortly afterwards the first Division.





On 1 Aug 1943, HQ battery suffered it's most costly enemy air raid. (Twenty casualties, three of whom were killed). **On this date, Royce Dean Sullivan was killed near Nicosia, Sicily from fragments of anti-personnel bombs dropped by six F.W. 190's.**



This is a photo of Focke Wulf 190 fighter-bombers, the type of planes that bombed Dean's unit.

In a matter of day's, Dean's family got the dreaded telegram from the government that began "We regret to inform you...". The following obituaries were published for Dean.

**PVT. SULLIVAN OF  
PACOLET MILLS IS  
LOST IN ACTION**

**First War Casualty Listed  
by Mill as Soldier Is  
Killed In Sicily**

Private Royce Dean Sullivan, 24, son of Mrs. Addie Sullivan of Pacolet Mills, was killed August 1 in an action in Sicily, the war department has advised his mother by telegram.

He was the first of more than 300 residents of the Pacolet Mills community now in the armed forces to be listed as a war casualty. The flag of the mill was flown at half-mast yesterday.

Private Sullivan enlisted in the service January 27, 1940, and had been in service overseas for more than a year. He participated in the invasion of North Africa and, presumably, in the first attacks on Sicily.

He was a former employe of the spinning room in the No. 3 plant at Pacolet Mills.

Surviving are his mother; five brothers, Perrin Sullivan of Pacolet Mills, Guy Sullivan of Miami, Fla., J. R. and Carroll Sullivan, in service in Kansas, and J. E. Sullivan, in service overseas; and three sisters, Mrs. Nettie Hodge of Union, Mrs. Eva Mae Thompson of Pacolet Mills and Mrs. Virginia Osborne of Charleston.

This obituary was in the *Spartanburg Herald* on August 23, 1943, shortly after Dean was killed.

**Pvt. R. D. Sullivan**

Funeral services for Pvt. Royce Dean Sullivan, who was killed in Sicily on Aug. 1, 1943, will be held Sunday at 2:30 p.m. at the J. F. Floyd Mortuary, conducted by the Rev. W. T. Tate and the Rev. H. E. Bullington. Interment will be in Goucher Cemetery in Cherokee County with full military honors.

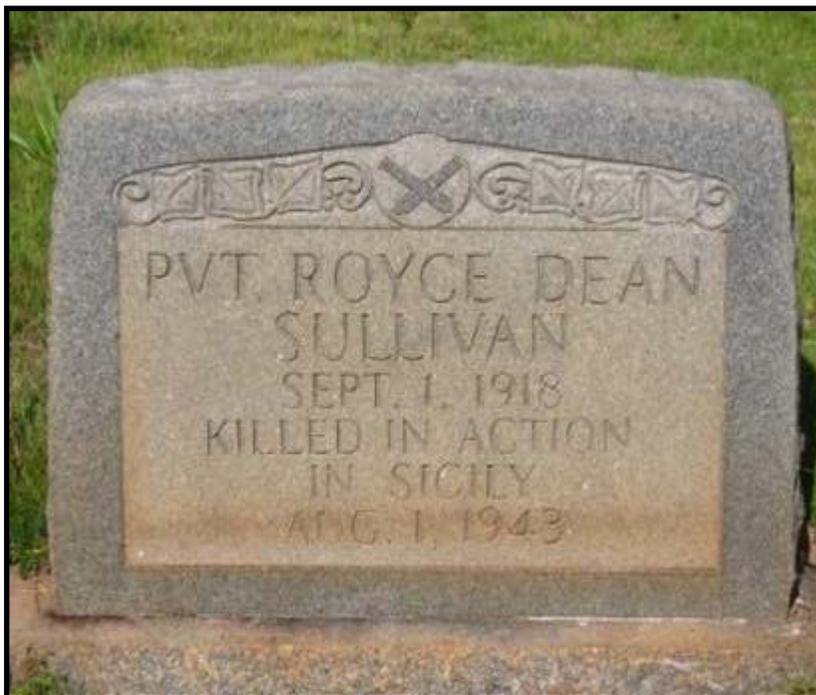
Pvt. Sullivan was born on Sept. 1, 1918, at Arkwright Mill. He enlisted in January, 1941, at Headquarters Battery 178, Field Artillery Battalion, and went overseas in January, 1942. He participated in 3 major battles.

The body arrived in Spartanburg Thursday.

Surviving are his mother, Mrs. Addie Carter Sullivan of Pacolet Mill; 3 sisters, Mrs. Preston Hodge and Mrs. Emmett Thompson, both of Pacolet Mill, and Mrs. J. V. Gement of Charleston; 5 brothers, William G., Perrin J., John R. and James C. Sullivan, all of Pacolet Mill and Cpl. James E. Hodge with the Air Corps overseas.

This obituary was in the *Spartanburg Herald* on August 24, 1948, after Dean's body was returned to the United States for burial.

Dean was buried in the cemetery of the [Goucher Baptist Church](#). Photos of his grave are shown below.



*(Unfortunately, Dean's first name of "Royce" was often wrongly listed as "Boyce" as seen on the footstone". This same error was made on the War monument at Duncan Park.)*

Even after 70 years, the Sullivan family still have reminders of this sad period in their life. One example is the receipt card for the US monument for Dean's grave marker shown below.

ORIGINAL

W.W.II APPLICATION FOR HEADSTONE OR MARKER

CHECK TYPE REQUIRED (See Instructions attached)

SPURRY MARKED GRANITE

FLAT MARBLE MARKER

FLAT GRANITE MARKER

BRICKS MARKER (SEE INSTRUCTIONS)

WARRANTY DATE: 1/13/43

ORDER NO.: 20 44E 427

STATE: S.C. COUNTY: P.O.:

U.S.A. 178th Field Artillery

Pacolet South Carolina

GAUCHER CEMETERY (church)

Pacolet South Carolina

M & R Granite Co. Inc.

Box 1482 Spartanburg, S.C.

DATE OF BIRTH (Civil, Reg. Year): Sept. 1, 1912

DATE OF DEATH (Civil, Reg. Year): Aug. 1, 1943

NAME OF GRANITE: Sullivan

OPERATOR OF GRANITE: Sullivan

DO NOT WRITE HERE

THIS VERIFICATION IS VALID FROM SEP 1940 TO NOV 1948

NO. 7321269

I certify this application is submitted for a stone for the combined death of a veteran.

I hereby agree to assume all responsibility for the removal of this stone promptly upon arrival at destination, and properly place it at the veteran's grave at my expense.

ADDIE SULLIVAN 9/2/42

24 WALKER PACOLET

FORM 623

IMPORTANT—Complete Reverse Side



Dean is still remembered by this commemorative display of a flag and his photo at the [Pacolet Museum](#).

We are indebted to the webpage of Mr. George Mindling for the details of Royce Dean Sullivan's time in the army. Mr. Mindling's, father, Glen L. Mindling, kept a Diary of his time in the service. Fortunately, Dean and Glen Mindling were in the same unit and were friends. Glen mentions Dean several times in his Diary and gives an account of his death. You can read Mr. Mindling's very interesting web page at (<http://www.mace-b.com/index.htm>.) This page links to Glen's Diary at (<http://www.mace-b.com/glen/>.)

George Mindling has done a wonderful public service by putting this information online. We would like to express our thanks to him for doing this and for using his information.





Peggy Shull, Dean's niece, recently obtained the picture of Dean shown here. The details of where and when the photo was made are not known.

## **James Carroll Sullivan**

James Sullivan was born in 1922. He survived the War to lead a long and full life. James took part in the most historic event of WWII, the Normandy invasion. He landed at Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Mr. Sullivan's story is well told in the following obituary from the *Spartanburg Herald* on June 20, 2005

**PACOLET, SC-- James Carroll Sullivan, 82, of 291 Sunny Acres Road, went home to be with the Lord on Saturday, June 18, 2005, after a long battle with cancer. Born December 5, 1922, in Clifton, SC, he was a son of the late William Daniel Sullivan and Addie Carter Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan was predeceased by his wife of more than 50 years, Mamie Louise Martin Sullivan. He was educated in Pacolet Schools and remained a life-long resident of Pacolet. He was a member of Pacolet Mills Baptist Church.**

**Mr. Sullivan was a proud veteran of World War II, having served in the Army, Company B, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division, The Blue and Gray. He served nearly six years and was honorable discharged. He received shrapnel wounds from an artillery airburst that resulted in the loss of his right eye, along with other injuries on June 17, 1944, while in Normandy, France. He came across to Omaha Beach from England on a Landing Craft Tank on D-Day, June 6, 1944. While in the Army, he received several medals for his service to his country, including the Purple Heart, of which he was especially proud. He has spoken and has been an honored guest for Veterans Day programs at many area schools throughout the years. He also gave numerous interviews, with one most recently being included in Images of America-Spartanburg County in World War II by Anita Price Davis and James M. Walker. He was a Master Mason and a lifelong member of Trough Shoals Lodge No. 228 A.F.M. He was also a life member of Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States Post No. 9539 and a member of the American Legion Post No. 28. He retired from Pacolet Manufacturing Company after working for 35 years in various capacities, including the Supply Room. Upon retirement, he continued to work for several more years at Tetra Pak in Whitestone. Until recently, he also enjoyed gardening and sharing the fruits of his labors with his family, friends and neighbors.**

**Survivors include three children, Patrick Judson Sullivan and his wife Barbara, Peggy Sullivan Shull and her husband Bill, William Carroll Sullivan and his wife Debby; four grandchildren, Jenny Shull Echols, Jamie Shull, Allison Shull and Kayla Sullivan; two greatgrandchildren, Bradley and Amanda Echols. Also surviving are several sisters and brothers-in-law, Virginia Sullivan, Margaret Hodge, Evelyn and Bob Seals, Joyce Shehan, Tom and Lib Martin, James Pud Martin and Reba Martin; special cousins, Billy and Doris Hogan; special nieces and nephews, Linda Wells, Kay Manus, Harold Dean Sullivan, Kay Sullivan, Jack Sullivan, Dickie Sullivan, Judy Sullivan Moore, Susan Sullivan Hatch, Steve Sullivan; and many others, including his very special friends, Aughtry Loftis Robinson and Jack Jones; and a wonderful church family. He was predeceased by several brothers, Guy Sullivan, Perrin Peg Sullivan, Royce Dean Sullivan, J. R. Sullivan, J. E. Hodge; and four sisters, Lois Sullivan, Eva Mae Thompson, Jenny Osment and Nettie Hodge.**



**James while in service - on left. At a Veteran's Day ceremony - on right.**



**James, center, and two friends, after a very successful rabbit hunt.**

James Carroll Sullivan landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day, and shortly after, he lost his right eye. "It wasn't a picnic," he says.



## War stories: Local veterans remember

By WILL ROTHSCHILD  
Staff Writer

Perhaps nothing is as precious to people who study history as first-person accounts. And war stories, in particular, are an intimate tradition in many families, passed down from grandfather to grandchild, from uncle to nephew, and, increasingly today, from mother to daughter.

This Veterans Day, we honor our local vets by giving some of them the chance to tell their stories.

### James Carroll Sullivan, 80, Pacolet

Army, World War II, landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day

"I hit the beach on June 6, 1944, and I got hit inland June 17. I lost my right eye. And that was after the tough stuff. I was in a foxhole when I got hit by an artillery airburst.

"It wasn't a picnic. I don't care who says they weren't scared, especially on the beach. I was frightened. I came across from England on an LCT (landing craft tank).

#### INSIDE

◆ WWII veterans from the Carolinas compile their memories in a book. **C1**

The top was open. There was one vehicle on it and a platoon of men.

"It was rough and stormy when we got there. When you got there, you could hear the shells from our Navy ships,

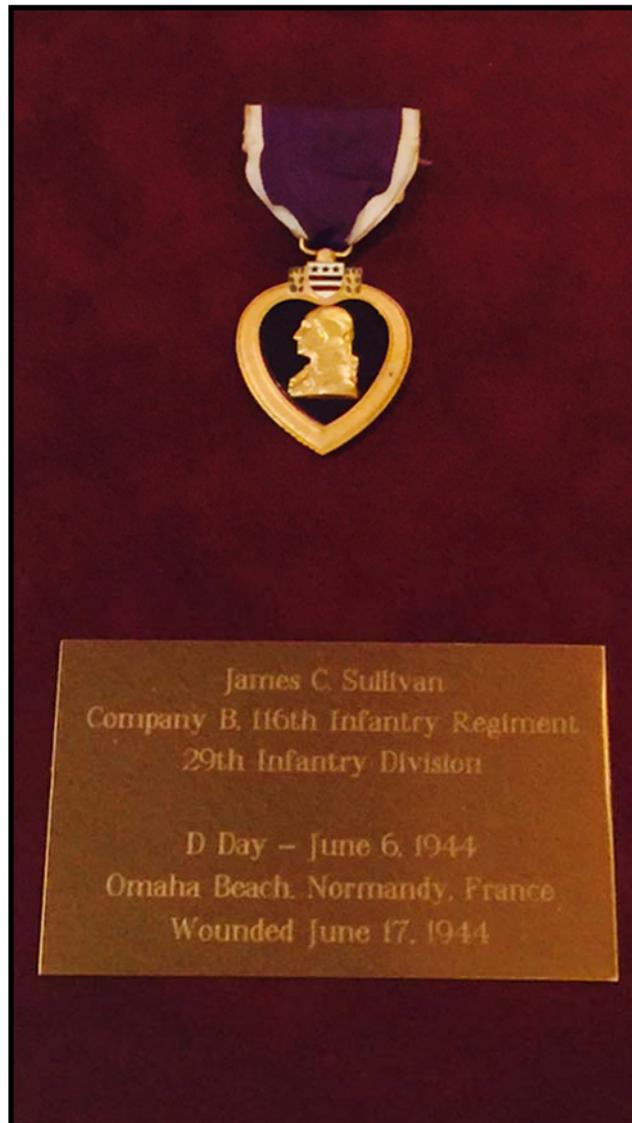
and they would shake you up pretty good.

"The smoke was thick and the Germans were pretty well fortified where we got in, and you could see boats getting hit and people floating by you wounded or dead but you couldn't change course or stop to pick them up.

"The tanks tried to land in the rough water. They were on these big floating devices, but you could see them sink right on the spot. That started you praying a little bit, and you find out if your prayers are being answered when you get onto the beach.

"Sometimes, prayers are answered."

James was interviewed for a Veteran's Day Story in the *Spartanburg Herald* in 2003.



The Purple Heart medal awarded to James Carroll Sullivan due to his wounds in Normandy .



James Carroll Sullivan's Route on D-Day, June 6, 1944.



Soldiers in a landing craft approaching Omaha Beach on D-Day.

Tommy B. Jeevin Jr.  
Paul Camp  
Gene Haine  
John Steen  
Fred Wray King  
Eddie Burkholder  
Lang Milwood  
Dede Milwood  
Tommy Hames w.m.  
David J. Tom Martin

MEMORIAL SERVICE  
OR  
COMMITTAL SERVICE

Grand Lodge of  
Ancient Free Masons  
of South Carolina



# Certificate of Initiation

INTO  
THE AMERICAN LEGION



PRESENTED TO LEGIONNAIRE

JAMES C. SULLIVAN

SPARTANBURG POST NO. 28

certifying participation in an Initiation of Veterans into membership in The American Legion. The validity of this certificate is contingent on the holding of a current membership card of The American Legion.

ATTEST:

Charles D. Pruitt

POST ADJUTANT

Jane E. Campbell

POST COMMANDER



James Carroll Sullivan when young in [Pacolet Mills](#)

**Thanks to Peggy Sullivan Shull for bringing this story to our attention and helping with the details. She is the daughter of James Carroll Sullivan and the niece of Royce Dean Sullivan.**

**We are also indebted to another member of the Sullivan family, Linda Sullivan Wells, for many contributions to this website. Linda is the daughter of Perrin Sullivan, the niece of James and Royce Dean Sullivan and the widow of Don Wells, also a native of Pacolet.**

*(Editor's note: My family has had a connection to the Sullivan family since before WWII. During the War, we lived in North Charleston where my Dad worked in the Charleston Naval Shipyard. Our closest family friends from that time were Julian Osment and his wife Jenny Sullivan Osment. Julian also worked in the Shipyard. They were also from Pacolet and we visited often. Jenny was the sister of Royce Dean and James Carroll. Sadly, Julian, Jenny and Jenny's mom, Addie, were killed in a car wreck in November, 1970. - Gerald Teaster)*