

Corp. Terry Alan Johnson

From Janice Bolinger
The Wall That Heals

Terry Alan Johnson, of Monrovia, lost his life in Dinh Twong, Vietnam, on Nov. 2, 1968. He was the son of Myron E. Johnson and Mary Lou Pease Johnson.

Corp. Johnson enlisted in the U.S. Army on his birthday in 1968. He was a member of the 9th Infantry Division, 5th Battalion, 60th Infantry, B Company. He was a machine gunner in his platoon of infantry rangers that became involved in a firefight with a numerically superior enemy.

Drawing fire upon himself, he saved many lives before falling victim to the arms fire himself.

His body was recovered and returned home to be buried at Mt. Pleasant Cemetery at Hall.

His service awards included the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman Badge, Marksman-Badge, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Army Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnam Gal-

lantry Cross and Army Good Conduct Medal.

The name of Terry Alan Johnson is remembered on The Wall at Panel W39, Line 10.

Family members of Corporal Johnson are requested to contact The Wall That Heals, Morgan County Committee member Janice Bolinger at dlbjeb@comcast.net or 765-349-9862. The committee hopes to make contact with family members of all 12 young men.



'More Than a Name on a Wall'

Twelve young men from Morgan County gave their lives during the Vietnam War. The names of eleven are listed on The Wall at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

As The Wall That Heals will be on display in Morgan County Aug. 15-18, memorial tributes will be printed about each of the 12 so that their service and sacrifice will be remembered. To all the citizens of this community, each one is "More Than A Name On A Wall."

(The title for this article must be credited to a song written by Jimmy Fortune in tribute to those whose names are listed on The Wall.)



May 1944 – World War II at 80

A Mooresville resident is laid to rest after combat in Italy

By Ronald P. May
MCC Contributor

The month of May 1944 was dominated by final preparations for the upcoming amphibious invasion of Northern France scheduled for June 5.

England

Allied bombers dropped heavy bomb loads over coastal and inland areas of Normandy on May 6.

Targets included German naval forces located in French ports, inland troops and airfields used by the German Luftwaffe.

Roads and railroad tracks and communication nodes were also bombed to slow German forces held in reserve from reaching the beaches quickly after the U.S. landings on D-Day.

On May 15, over 130 political and military leaders met at St. Paul's School in Hammersmith, England, for a top-secret joint briefing about D-Day to senior officers.

Attendees included top military leaders Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Lt. Gen. George S. Patton and Gen. Bernard L. Montgomery, as well as British political leaders King George VI and Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

Talks of an Allied invasion between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill that began in late December 1941 moved to an

operational planning stage in 1942.

In March 1943, a combined planning group was established, and by August, the invasion of northwest Europe was tentatively scheduled for May 1944.

President Roosevelt completed the last piece of the big puzzle for D-Day by selecting Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower as the Supreme Allied Commander for Europe.

He was responsible for making sure the complex partnership between the American, British and French military leaders resulted in a successful invasion.

Frenetic final planning filled the first five months of 1944.

By May, Operation Overlord was ready, and June 5 was selected as the date for D-Day.

Italy & PFC Ellis Earl Chowning

Meanwhile, 1,100 miles to the south and west of London, the battle for Monte Cassino in southern Italy finally ended on May 18 in an Allied victory.

More success came less than a week later when Allied forces finally broke out from Anzio, where they had been pinned down since landing there in late January.

Linking up with other U.S. Army divisions from the south, the combined forces making up the Fifth Army set their sights on Rome, 38 miles to the north.

One of the men in the U.S. Army forces moving toward Rome in late May was Pfc. Ellis Earl Chowning, of Mooresville.

Born on June 27, 1925, Chowning graduated from Mooresville High School and then joined the Army in September 1943.

Following his basic training at Camp Gruber in Oklahoma, he returned home and married his high school sweetheart, Maxine.

Chowning boarded a ship in early 1944 and arrived in Italy on April 18.

He was assigned to the 85th Infantry Division, which, for most of April, was kept busy holding defensive positions while facing the heavily entrenched Germans on the Gustav Line.

The 85th Division went on the attack on May 11 and successfully took several towns and villages along the southern most position on the line.

Their work was instrumental in helping open the Anzio beachhead.

For the remainder of the month, the division performed mop-up operations on the small peninsula jutting out from the port city of Gaeta.

While there, according to the May 31 issue of the Daily Reporter, Pfc. Chowning sent a cablegram from Italy to his parents and wife stating that he was doing well.

At the time his family received the encouraging cablegram, however, Chowning had already been dead for six days.

According to Army correspondence, Chowning died in action on May 25.

He had been on Italian soil for less than five weeks.

His wife and parents weren't notified of his death until July 1, when

Hoosier Soldier Killed in Italy



MOORESVILLE, Ind., July 4 (Spl.)—The war department has notified Mrs. Maxine Chowning, of Mooresville, that her husband, Private Ellis Earl Chowning, was killed in action May 25 in Italy. Mr. and Mrs. Chowning were married last fall before the husband went overseas in April. Private Chowning, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ellis Chowning, was born June 27, 1925, and was inducted into the Army September 3, 1943. He received his basic training at Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, and was later sent to Ft. Meade, Maryland. He landed on foreign soil April 18, 1944. Other survivors are two brothers and a sister.

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: A-20 light bombers strike the Pointe du Hoc stronghold at Normandy in May 1944. (U.S. Air Force courtesy photo / Public Domain) // The Mooresville Veterans Memorial just south of Newby Elementary School holds the name of Pfc. Ellis Chowning, along with 23 other former residents who died in World War II. (Ron May photo / MCC) // (The Daily Reporter, July 7, 1944)

His name, along with 23 other Mooresville veterans who died in World War II, is preserved at the Mooresville Veterans Memorial on the campus of Newby Elementary School at Monroe Street and Memorial Drive.

The memorial was built in 1948, the same year that Chowning's remains arrived back in Mooresville, to honor the men who were killed during World Wars I & II.

The memorial replaced the former Community's Service Roll that had fallen into disrepair.

The memorial was rededicated in 1976 and included the names of those who served and died in the Korean and Vietnam wars.

The most recent expansion, in 2008, added the names of those who have died in the more recent War on Terrorism.

India

The month of May also saw success in the war against Japan.

The Japanese attack on Imphal, India, which had begun in March, ended in failure on May 31 as Allied forces defeated the Japanese aggressors who retreated to Burma, having suffered heavy losses.

Japan would not threaten India again.

Next time: June 1944.

Learn more about Ronald P. May and his books at <https://ronaldpmay.com> or contact him at ron@ronaldpmay.com. View his videos on his YouTube channel: World War II History & Stories with Ron May.

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Vote for local mom entrepreneur: Morgan Leigh Miller. Miller was nominated for "Super Mom" a contest by Women's World Magazine to showcase amazing mamas. Voting is free but donations can also be made to benefit The Children's Miracle Network Hospital. Let's support this Martinsville Mama and give her our vote!

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