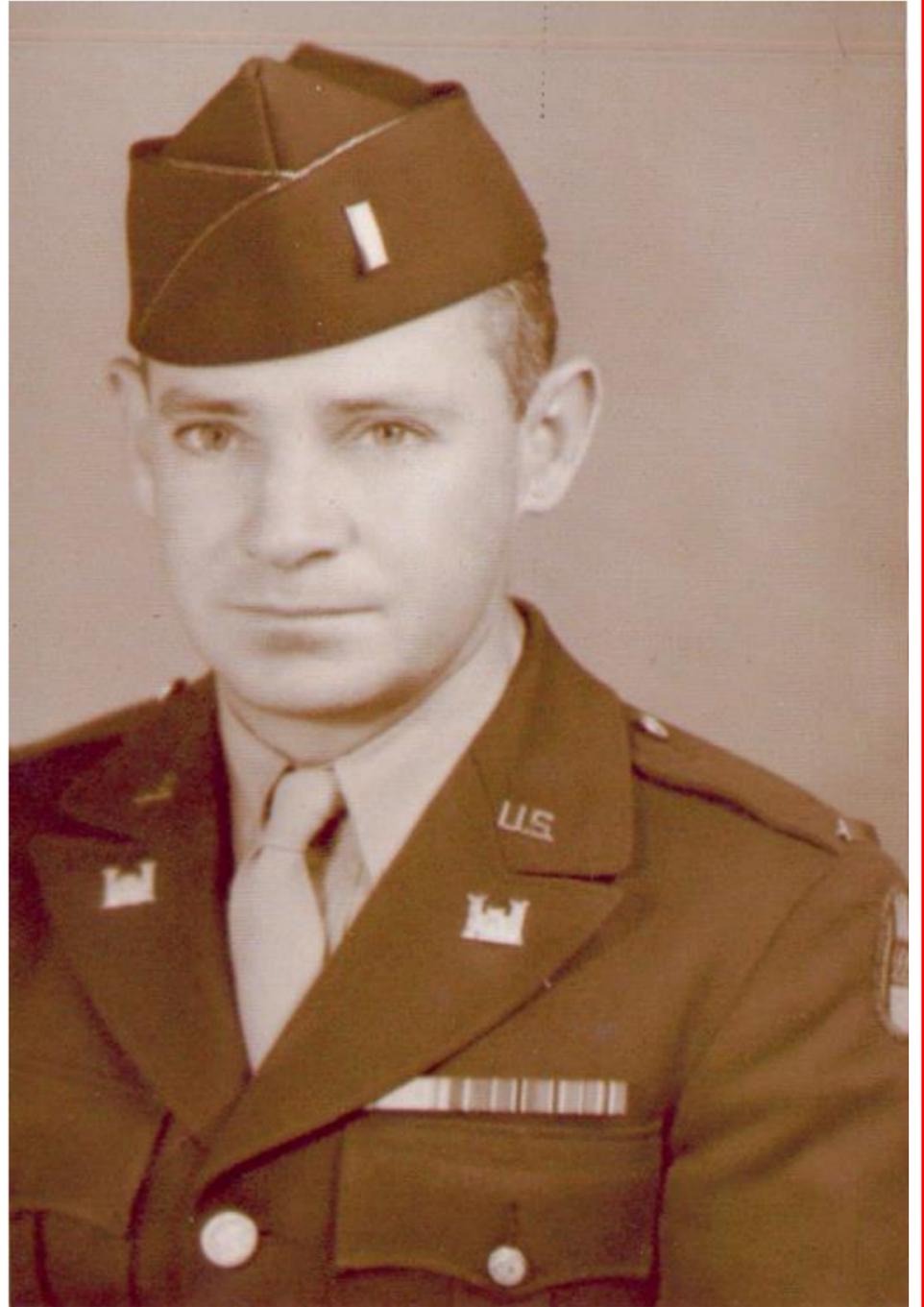




First Lieutenant Gilbert Ray

Before dawn on July 7, 1944, First Lieutenant Gilbert Ray waited with his platoon in a ditch near the Vire River, France. Gilbert's 3rd platoon from Bravo Company, and the remainder of the 105th Engineer Battalion were supporting a 30th Infantry Division assault river crossing.

At 0415 assault boats crossed infantrymen who began establishing a bridgehead on the far shore. Thirty minutes later, Gilbert's platoon moved forward with sections of a footbridge. The Engineers raced to the river and began assembling the footbridge. Shortly after 0500, with the footbridge approximately 20 percent built, two German artillery shells landed in the midst of the Engineers assembling the bridge and destroyed the assembled bridge. Enemy snipers started firing on the Engineers. With many of his men casualties, Lieutenant Ray



Ray, as a Second Lieutenant, before deploying for Europe.



Reverse of 1LT Ray's Silver Star Medal showing the distinctive "split broach" suspension of the Medal's WW2 design.

rallied his remaining men and assembled other Engineers

from a nearby unit. The Engineers had to complete the foot bridge so the infantry could cross the river and neutralize the German snipers and artillery. For 30 minutes, under heavy enemy fire, the Engineers assembled the footbridge and pushed it out into the river. Several times the enemy fire was so severe the Engineers had to stop working and engage the enemy. Throughout this ordeal, Lieutenant Ray exposed himself to enemy small arms and artillery fire, to rally and inspire his men. After 45 minutes of intense combat and construction the foot bridge was complete. As the Engineers stood by to repair the damage caused by artillery fire, the infantry stormed across the bridge and engaged the enemy.

For his calm leadership under fire, First Lieutenant Ray was awarded the Silver Star Medal.