

Francis George Ambrose

Compiled by Judy Hansen
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Francis George Ambrose was born the 3rd of October 1901 in American Fork, Utah to Nicholas Martin and Lucy Ann Adams Ambrose.

His siblings were Marillah Rebecca, Alvah Albert, Virgil Martin, Vern John, Lucy M, Edith Ann, and young sister Inez. He completed four years of High School in American Fork, Utah.

He also lived in California and Boulder City, Nevada where he worked as semiskilled miner and mining-machine operator prior to his enlistment.

Francis voluntarily enlisted in the United States Army On the 14th of November 1942 in Salt Lake City, Utah. At his enlistment he was described as 5 feet 5 inches, 150 pound man with grey eyes, brown hair, and a ruddy complexion. He also had a significant scar on his right hand between his thumb and forefinger. He entered his service as a private and his service number was 19171861.

Francis was assigned to company E, 362 Infantry, 91st Division. After a lot of training He left overseas in March 1944 and served three months in Africa and then sent to Italy.



Engraved in a Monument in Grove, Oklahoma dedicated to the U.S. Army 91st Infantry Division an abridgement of the history that S Sgt. Ambrose would have lived through it is written,

“Wild West Division Powder River! Let'er Buck!

As the early battles of World War II involving the United States were being fought, the division was reactivated at Camp White, Oregon on August 15, 1942, under the command of Major General Charles H. Gerhardt. Then, the division, now under Major General William G. Livesay, departed for the European Continent on April 3, 1944. There, on the Italian Front, the 361st Regimental Combat Team was detached to participate in the battles for Rome and the Arno River. It became the first formation of the U.S. Fifth Army to reach the river. In September 1944, the division crossed the Sieve River, outflanked the famous Gothic Line, and captured the Futa Pass. For its part in combat, the division was awarded the North Apennines, Po Valley and Rome-Arno campaign streamers.”

Francis was a brilliant and brave soldier and the battles he was involved in were some of the most grueling in the history of World War II. You can read about these battles in the book that was written by Roy Lorenz Moskop, *“On The Way! The Story of the 91st Division Artillery”* which was solely “dedicated to those members of the 91st Division Artillery who paid for the Victory with their Lives” of which Francis was a member.

In September 1944 during the Gothic Line campaign, the 91st Division fought brilliantly and smashed the most formidable defensive positions in Italy. Francis received the Distinguished Service Cross for the role he played in the Victory which was described in his award as follows:

*Company E, 362nd Infantry Regiment, 91st Infantry Division "Powder River", U.S. Army
Distinguished Service Cross award -*

“The President of the United States of America, authorized by Act of Congress, July 9, 1918, takes pride in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross (Posthumously) to Staff Sergeant Francis G. Ambrose (ASN: 19171861), United States Army, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving with Company E, 362d Infantry Regiment, 91st Infantry Division, in action against enemy forces on 30 September 1944, near La Costa, Italy. When his platoon encountered deadly enemy machine gun fire, Staff Sergeant Ambrose, alone and voluntarily, crossed an open field toward the hostile weapon. Engaging the enemy with accurate rifle fire, he wounded the German leader. Continuing his advance while the enemy made a concerted attempt to kill him, Staff Sergeant Ambrose wounded a second German and forced the remaining four to surrender. Later, when his platoon received heavy machine gun fire during an enemy counterattack, Staff Sergeant Ambrose again moved forward to eliminate the menace. Crawling one hundred yards to an advantageous position, he killed three Germans and silenced their machine gun in a brief fire fight. He was mortally wounded by a sniper's bullet while returning to his platoon. The daring, intrepidity and sheer determination of Staff Sergeant Ambrose were vital factors in his platoon's success, and his inspiring actions exemplify the highest traditions of the military forces of the United States and reflect great credit upon himself, the 91st Infantry Division, and the United States Army.

Awarded posthumously.

Headquarters, Fifth U.S. Army, General Orders No. 4, 6 January 1945.”

Francis George Ambrose died in the line of duty the 30th of September 1944 near La Costa, Italy. He also received the Purple Heart Medal. He is buried and memorialized at the Florence American Cemetery and Memorial in Florence, Città Metropolitana di Firenze, Toscana, Italy. His name is also honored on the Veteran’s Wall in the American Fork, Utah Cemetery.

This story is a combined effort of the Lehi Historical Society and the Stories Behind the Stars project, a national effort of volunteers to write the stories of all 400,000+ of the US WW2 fallen on Fold3. Related to this, there will be a smart phone app that will allow people to visit any war memorial or cemetery, scan the fallen's name and read his/her story.

Sources:

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Utah Military Records

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Italy Find a grave for SSgt Francis George Ambrose

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On the Way – The Story of the 91st Division Artillery

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