

Veteran recalls key World War II battle

By **JO ANNE McKNIGHT**

Correspondent

Jess Herring, 85, earned 12 combat medals in three major battles in World War II. They, along with other insignia, buttons and a newspaper clipping, are in a gold frame, resting on a nightstand and propped against the wall in his room at Cogburn Health and Rehabilitation Center West, just off Schillinger Road.

Herring is proud of his medals and proud to have served his country from 1943 to 1945. "I was in the U.S. Army, 78th (Division), Lightning Company 109 L," he said.

"I was in Le Havre, France right after D-Day," he said. "And I was in the Battle of the Bulge in Bastogne, Belgium." Bastogne was liberated by the



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Mary and Jess Herring

Allies in late 1944. Hitler was seeking control of the Ardennes with the goal of moving on to Antwerp and cutting off supplies to the Allies and separating the British from American troops.

Those were key battles, but the Battle of Hurtgen Forest in

Get to Know Jess Herring, 85

Birthplace: Holt, Ala. (Tuscaloosa County)

Hometown: Mobile

Family: Wife, Mary; daughter, Colette Herring; son, Charly Herring (Karen); granddaughters, Kari and Jessica Herring

Germany, just before the Battle of the Bulge, is the one that stands out the most in Herring's mind.

"It was the biggest cold, the worst in 50 years," he said of what was to become the longest battle on German ground during the war and the long-