

Historical Question:

Which Cottonwood Heights resident was a twice-decorated veteran of the Battle of the Bulge during World War II?

Answer:

Kenneth (Kay) Fowkes Butler, born on April 4, 1914 to Charles Leslie and Mary Ann Fowkes Butler. As a boy, Butler had apple fights with the Hinnenkamp boys, using the good fruit of the Hinnenkamp's orchard in Butlerville. One of the Hinnenkamp sons, George, also served in the Navy during World War II. Butler married Helen Bushman in December 1942 and received his basic training at Fort Hood, Texas.

He was a platoon sergeant of a reconnaissance platoon in the 6th Armored Division, one of General Patton's spearheading units of the U.S. Third Army during World War II, known as the "Super Sixth." On May 12, 1945, Butler was awarded the Bronze Star for "meritorious service in connection with military operations against the enemy of the United States in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany during period July 1944 to April 1945." Staff Sergeant Butler "aggressively and successfully led his men in locating and clearing mine fields and enemy pockets of resistance." Butler was also awarded the Purple Heart because of shrapnel that lodged in his shin. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and was part of the second landing on Utah Beach at Normandy two or three days after D-Day.

In December 1944, he wrote his in-laws, who ran the Bushman Drive-in Bakery on 13th East and 33rd South, from the battle front: "Dear Pappy and Mother Bushman, Just a few lines to thank for the nice Christmas box. It was surely good. How are you both enjoying the winter? It hasn't been too cold here yet. But I expect it to turn colder soon. I am just fine. Of course I was a little ill after eating all the candy you sent, but I have recovered. It was so good, I overstuffed myself. I also want to thank you for the way you have helped Helen get the apartment fixed. I certainly do appreciate it and very much. Hoping this letter finds you well and wishing you a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. As always, Kay."