

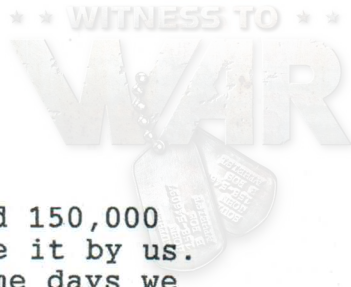


MY MILITARY CAREER

(SOME REMEMBRANCES OF SERVICE IN WORLD WAR II)

by William J. Newman

As recalled in September 1994



MY GERMAN ARMY

We were told we had a whole German army of an estimated 150,000 soldiers trapped in the Ruhr Pocket. You could not prove it by us. There was practically no resistance to our advance. Some days we drew no fire.

It was early May 1945. The weather was magnificent. It felt good to be alive. Rarely did we have to duck German artillery. One sad note. We heard FDR, the president, had died at Warm Springs, GA. another casualty of life and of the war.

A day or two later we stopped with a small stream in front of us. On the other side of the stream a road paralleled the stream and stretched far to our right and left.

We set up defensive positions for the night and slept in the basement of a picturesque farm house about 100 yards from the stream.

The next morning a GI on guard duty woke us around dawn with a shout, "You've got to see this. Come on up and look." Across the stream as far to the left and to the right as you could see were German soldiers lined up on the road in columns 4 across, with all their guns, packs and equipment. They just stood there in formation in silence like they were going to parade before the world.

The general of the German Ruhr Army had pulled all his troops out of combat and overnight had lined them up in such a way that they would not draw our fire in the process of surrendering.

The war in Europe ended for the 95th Infantry Division that day. Rumor had it that in the surrender negotiations the German general offered his troops to the Allies for combat duty. He was reported to have said something like this, " Now the Allies will soon fight the real enemy of us all, the Russian Communist Army. We will keep our guns and fight with you to defeat them." Our high command said, "No deal. You are prisoners of war. You will turn in your guns and all your equipment. You will be sent to prison camps until the Allies decide when you will be sent to your homes."

The 95th Infantry Division sailed to Europe with 13,000 men. We went into combat in early November of 1944 and ended in early May of 1945. In 6 months we lost 16,000 men killed or wounded.