

Red Reynolds' War Stories

"This time around, none of us will survive," recently observed an army buddy of Lloyd "Red" Reynolds, a lowly infantry rifleman who sadly lost many close friends in bloody battles breaching the muddy, vaunted Siegfried Line (German Westwall) out of Holland during World War II. But it is not true of Red's indomitable, fun-loving spirit that will live on in the hearts and minds of family and friends, perhaps into eternity. That includes gratitude for serving them and his country in one of the most dangerous, toughest, and dirtiest job of all.

During combat, Red, a tall, slender, spirited, gifted athlete, was given the most important job in the infantry. It was manning the BAR (Browning automatic rifle), the main fire power of a rifle squad.

But his army accomplishments were not Red's main claim to fame. He rightfully was most proud of the job he and Val did after the war. They struggled on a teacher's salary to successfully raise and educate a big, happy family of four gifted girls that he loved to talk about.

As many other comrades will tell you, his squad of twelve men including many replacements was not an ordinary one. It was known as Red Reynolds's squad, platoon, and company. His conscientious but fun loving spirit greatly appreciated by associates sometimes got him in minor trouble with authorities. Once for sneaking out of a hospital for a beer with some Marines, he was demoted, and returned to front line duty with wounds still not healed. But it was only a temporary setback.

Another time Red was hospitalized several weeks with trench foot. Later in life, his enduring of severe physical pain and suffering while still maintaining a healthy spirit set an example for others. Although always a friendly, fun, entertaining comrade, Red, because of his tall size and heavy equipment, was not the easiest guy to dig and share a two-man foxhole with.

Like all combat infantrymen, Red had many interesting stories to tell about the war that he enjoyed sharing with comrades at their annual division reunion, where they also enjoyed exploring various cities around the country. Red and his comrades often concluded that what the world needs today is more of the love, trust, and care for one another that lowly infantry riflemen brothers enjoyed during and after the war. Here are a few of Red's favorite stories.

Just before embarking for overseas duty, Red and comrades were granted a six hour pass to visit New York City. They pooled their money and managed to spend it all at famous night clubs. Five members of Red's squad, all former ASTP (Army Specialized Training Program) college students, are pictured in a photo taken at the Latin Quarter night club. Sadly, Long and Orzekowski were killed in action. Miswald and Reynolds were seriously wounded. Only Lally escaped with minor wounds. A sixth ASTP squad member, Kubler, was also KIA. Answering doubts, the ASTP boys served nobly.

In one of the most dramatic war stories, Red's fellow squad members daringly managed to rescue their beloved squad leader, S/Sgt, Richard Smith, who after being shot thought the head was mistakenly left behind as dead in a failed attack when he could not answer shouts or be reached. After four months in the hospital in England being repaired, Smith was returned to front line duty as a rifleman.

Returning from a mission in the bottom lands along the raging Roer River, the enemy dropped three rounds of mortar fire in on Red and his squad strung out single file. Red while moderately wounded helped get two other seriously wounded comrades to a busy aid station nearby. While perched on straw awaiting medical attention and being comforted by the uninjured, a buddy of Red's who was a bloody mess expressed his feelings, "Don't worry about me, I'm going home; you guys are the unlucky ones. Red concurred.

This happened in the center of the town of Linnich near St. Martinus church, which now houses a big Peace Window Memorial, and a model of it adorned with silver insignia of army divisions that fought in the battle for the town. Later combat engineers blasted holes in the adjoining walls of the row houses to make a safer passageway. At the same time, a group of about 30 local people were secretly living in underground passages under the center of the town situated atop a high bluff along the river.

Once when manning an outpost in no-man's-land as they were packing up at dawn to return to the village of Lindern, a sniper's bullet creased the back of the neck of Red's comrade. It happened just as he bent over to grab some gear Red was handing to him. The previous day when hurriedly entering the village under enemy artillery fire, Red went sprawling. He swears that a dead German soldier stuck out his foot and tripped him. Another time a dead German closed his fingers to cut the phone wire.

These events happened within sight of a large, wounded, old stone crucifix in a roadside shrine dedicated to St. Hubertus, a famous medieval saint. His vision of a crucifix between the antlers of a deer graces the label of Jagermeister Liquor. After the war, a huge stone from the Hurtgen Forest was added to the shrine. It displays a large bronze emblem of Red's 102nd OZARK Infantry Division among many others that participated in the surrounding prolonged, bloody battle. It may be the only war memorial honoring American combat troops left in Germany. On a tour of Germany after the War, Red had his picture taken standing next to the huge Cross. This monument of the Battle of the Hubertkruez is also dedicated to peace, friendship, and reconciliation among former enemies by local veterans and villagers, which Red and Val experienced on their tour.

Another time Red and his platoon were ordered to defend a bridge along the Weser-Elbe Canal at one end of the huge Volkswagen factory to prevent elements of the German von Clausewitz Panzer Division from crossing it. About two in the morning, a dozen enemy King Tiger Tanks approaching the bridge stopped at a "T" intersection before the factory and sent a scout car racing down the road to test the bridge's defenses. When it didn't return after Red and his comrades opened fire and wrecked it, the tanks decided to take the other fork in the road and cross at a lightly defended bridge further west.

While halted along the Elbe River about 50 miles from Berlin waiting for the war to end, Red and his comrades experienced another unusual event. A barge loaded with fine wine and cognac docked next door in front of our sister "K" Company, who quickly captured and shared it. This joyful event convinced the thirsty, weary infantrymen that no doubt, there is a God.

May God bless the soul and spirit of Lloyd 'Red' Reynolds, and may Red continue to enjoy His love and mercyrwl



Model of Peace Window Memorial in St. Martinus Church, Linnich, Germany.



Battle of the Hubertuskreuz War Memorial honors all troops that fought in battle, including Americans.

For more images or details of the battle, search the Internet at Rurfront 1944, Linnich, and Operation Queen 44.



Battle of the Hubertuskreuz Memorial Stone displays Red's OZARK Division Emblem among others.



Part of Red's Infantry Squad on a six hour pass in NYC just before embarking for overseas duty on the Santa Paula, a cruise ship converted into a troop carrier.



Red's Squad Leader, S/Sgt Richard Smith, with captured booze on VE Day, 1945. There is a God.

Typical Thanksgiving Dinner, 1944, in midst of Siegfried Line

