

SILVER STAR MEDAL - Lt. Roland H. Vogt

The following article and picture of General George S. Patton presenting Lt. Roland H. Vogt with the "Silver Star" was taken from "The Third Anniversary Program, 94th Infantry Division, September 15, 1945", printed in Vimperk, Czechoslovakia. The copy of the "Third Anniversary Program" was given to me by Prof. Robert K. Adair, Professor of Physics, Yale University, when visiting us in Phoenix, Az. in January, 1998.

"All Officers and Non-coms from the 94th Infantry Division were called from the front combat lines and assembled in the town square in front of the Hotel deVille, Borg, Germany.

"General Patton gave a blistering, abusive castigation of the 94th Division regarding a large number of non-battle casualties (e.g: "trench foot" from frozen feet) and more (94th) men being captured than any other Division in his 3rd Army (wrongly claimed). He then said he didn't want any Commander who had flubbed a mission to come back alive; that when a Battalion or Regiment got into trouble, its Commander must get right into the midst of the battle and straighten them out or get himself killed in the effort: that's what Field-grade Officers (Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, Majors) were for. The General then complimented the 94th for doing an outstanding job and gave some valuable advice on infantry tactics, etc., but also that we were never to surrender, never retreat. General Patton did take proper steps to curb the enormous incidence of "trench foot" by issuing every man in his Army extra socks and proper footwear. The General then presented Lt. Roland H. Vogt, Company I, 376th Infantry Regiment with the Silver Star Medal. Before dismissing the 94th Division he called for all Battlefield Commissioned Officers to come forward (there were four) and in colorful language said: 'These are the true Combat Officers. You S.,O.B.'s from West Point and O.C.S. should follow their true example of leadership.'"

From "lucky" notes I made while in Czechoslovakia;

The morning of October 6, 1944 my Ballatton C.O., Lt. Col. Ben Thurston, ordered an attack on the village of LaPassuats, France and "I" Company was to lead the, attack. My C.O., Captain Ralph Watkins informed me that my 2nd Platoon was to lead the attack. I was the Platoon leader, a Staff Sargeant at the time, and I sent out two Scouts ahead of my Platoon with the main body of the Battalion's 2,000 men about 200 yards behind. I followed my 2nd Scout who was 150 yards ahead of me and to my surprise, Col. Thurston was right behind me.

The road we followed leading into the hamlet passed over a brook and this was a 7:00 a.m. attack, not quite light but vision was good. As we crossed the stone bridge spanning it, I happened to notice a group of Germans to my right fumbling about, trying to set up their machine gun less than 50 yards away. I whispered to the Col. not to look but there were Germans to our right frantically trying to get their machine gun in operation. I then yelled to my men to hit the dirt pointing out the Germans that were at our right flank. Most of the Platoon flopped on the left side of the dirt viaduct leading from the bridge and began to fire at the machine gunner as more Germans began to pour out of the farm houses, perhaps as many as 75 to 100 or more. As the Germans began to return our fire I grabbed and pulled the Col. down for he was standing up firing like Gen. Custer, and was struck twice before he hit the ground. A few of my men had now reached the buildings in the hamlet and sheltered in them while firing but most of us lay out in the open against the viaduct, firing excitedly at the enemy who were darting about at the machine gun which still had its troubles and was not firing at us as yet.

I called for the Medic and also sent my 3rd Squad around the German's flank to wipe them out. Along with the Col. two of my men to my right and two to my left were hit, the bullet "thunks" being unmistakable. (All four men died before my eyes.)

With the Germans firing at us on three sides, I called Lt. Jacques to try and move the 1st and 3rd Platoons across the brook with the

intention of smothering the Germans. This being done, the Col. was then evacuated as he was covered with blood, wounds in the crotch and penis, other wounds in his right arm and leg. The Col. returned to take command within a week for he wanted to be with his men. We lost more men that day but accomplished our mission, able to fight the enemy, soon pushing them back into their Homeland but the war for us was still young.

Sometime later I was summoned to the office of Col. McClune at Regimental Headquarters to tell me that Col. Thurston had recommended a commendation for me for saving his life. Col. McClune offered me either a Congressional Medal of Honor or a Battlefield Commission. My reply was: "Sir, I'll take the Battlefield Commission -- I can't eat the Congressional Medal." With a slow smile he answered: "I thought you'd say that". Frontline 1st & 2nd Lieutenant casualty rates were extremely high throughout the entire European Front Lines. Gen. Patton's insistence on the Officer's rank being displayed on his helmet didn't help matters any!