

A RAINBOW POW ACCOUNT

by Dr. Morton D. Brooks, Co. C, 242nd Infantry Regiment

Upon reading David Willets' story in the September REVEILLE my memory was brought into focus to that day in January 1945. I was one of the twenty men selected to be in the front-line foxholes that day. During the night we saw the tracer bullets and heard the shots ringing out. In the morning I moved out of the foxhole to the "CP" (Command Post) where Sgt. Todd and David Willetts were manning positions. The picture of me standing on the left side of David in the tank trap which served as the CP came back as sharp as it could have been the same day. While standing beside David I suddenly saw the two holes (entering and exit) appear in his helmet. "You sure were lucky." I said. Also feeling very fortunate myself. After a short while it became clear we would have to leave this location. Our communication was cut off because the lines to our field telephone were cut. Sgt. Todd asked if I could re-connect the field telephone and direct our artillery. When I said "yes" I was sent to do so. It meant following the wire back and attempting to re-connect at each cut in the wire for about 800 yards where it entered a pillbox at the southern end of the Maginot line. When I entered the pillbox the fellow there thought they were liberated. They had spent a very difficult night under fire. Another attempt to connect the phone failed. While attempting to decide what to do one of the men there (a Sgt.) said we have to surrender. I did not want to do that. He indicated that we did not have a choice because when he looked out, he saw a German Tiger Tank coming up the road. He indicated that it would just put its gun nozzle in the pillbox and kill us all. As we marched out, we could see that there was a machine gun emplacement across the road but facing west toward Hatten. We were marched across the road into a trench past the machine gun until things quieted down. Then we were marched back behind the lines to a farm house where we were put in a barn with many other American prisoners.