

INTERVIEW WITH VERNER ADAMS

Q: How old were you when you were called to the war?

A: 19 years old.

Q: Were you out of high school?

A: I was out of high school less than a year.

Q: What were your feelings when you were called to the war?

A: It did not bother me because my buddies went and I am no different than they are. I went for one reason and that was to keep the war here, instead of us having all our stuff torn up it was done over there. People do not realize what it really is.

Q: How many of your friends went with you to war?

A: None, I left here a lone stranger and I came back a lone stranger.

Q: What was your job in the war?

A: I was a Mortar Sergeant (Weapon Sergeant) in the 66mm mortar in the infantry company on the front line.

Q: What was a Mortar Sergeant?

A: Well, I had 360 mortars 60mm, and a lot of times I had three squads of 30 caliber machine-guns. I was in the weapons platoon in the infantry in the rifle company. We were on the front line all the time.

Q: What were some of the problems you faced during the war?

A: Well I was a POW the Germans captured me.

Q: Were you held in a prison or in a concentration camp?

A: I was in a prison possibly one month out of the four. The rest of the time I was in camps they marched us in a group from one village to another just to keep us in between the lines.

Q: How long were you there?

A: I was prisoner 120 days in the cold part of the winter.

Q: What were you given to eat?

A: They gave us what was called black bread, it was not very big. You would get a thin slice maybe once a day, or even once a week. Then they gave us what was called "grass soup", it looked like they just mowed the lawn and boiled it in water. And that was it. Maybe once in a great while they gave us a boiled potato. And that was very seldom.

Q: Did they give you clothes to wear or did you just wear what you had on?

A: I wore what I had on when I left the United States.

Q: You had to wear that for 120 days?

A: I wore that more than 120 days, I was wearing that on the line too.

Q: How did the Germans treat you?

A: Well, they were kind of rough, just put it that way. They starved us to death, no medical care, nothing to eat, they shoved and beat us around. If you did not do right they would just up and shoot you. So you have a lot of things to look at. I thought a long time before I came out of that building to give up. There was a tank shooting right at the building that could have went down right on top of me before I came out of it.

Q: What were your feelings when the war was over?

A: Well,
I was home on condosolent leave. That day I had went to Terre Haute with my wife and as we were coming back I had got sick, so she had to drive home. So I was sick in bed the day I think it was over. I did not get to celebrate or anything.

Q: What was the one thing you will always remember from the war?

A: Look after yourself, and do not make to good of friends because your buddy or friend was liable to get killed. I seen too much of it happen, it was just that rough.

Q: Would you tell us about the places you have been?

A: As I had said I was a Weapon Sergeant in the weapon platoon. I started out in the 75th division. I went into Camp Grant, up around Chicago. They then sent

me to Fort Leonard Wood Missouri, I took basic training there. Then I went to Texas and Louisiana on maneuvers, from there I went to a camp in Kentucky, and I left my outfit for the 75th division there. They sent me to Maryland and issued me a khaki uniform, that meant the I was going to the Pacific. I did not want to go down to the jungles, so the next day they called me in and took those, and they reissued me the ODs this is a winter wool outfit. I knew than that I would be sent to Europe. I went from that camp to one in Boston Massachusetts and I was shipped out there. When I left there it was one of the biggest convoys I ever went over. When I was out on the ocean any direction I looked all I could see was ships. We were in a sub attack but it did not get us. The ship I was in was a luxury ship that was converted into a troop ship. I asked a guy that was on the ship how many trips it had made he told me it was the 13th trip, I thought "Oh! No that is the wrong number," but I made it. When I came back I had come on a hospital ship and I asked about that ship, I found out it had sank on the next trip it took. Well anyway, I landed in South Hampton in New England, and of course we went through training and everything there. When I left there I went across the channel a few days after D-Day, and I hooked up with the 4th infantry division. I was a replacement, I went on the line and replaced men, and I went right through with this division. I seen different people all the time I could not keep track of who was who because of all the other replacements, and people getting wounded or killed. Our job was to go up and take a particular area, then we would get it, set it up, and wait until another outfit would come in and we would hand it over to them. We would do the same thing again and again, and we went on until we broke through to the open country where the tanks could take off, the tanks and the infantry went together. I slept on the ground or floor because we had no beds. I had holes in the bottom of my shoes, no coat or hat, but I am still here. When I came home no one knew where I had been or even that I had been gone.

Q: Were you married before you went into the war?

A: Yes, I went in at March of 43 November 20, and we then got married. I had a two and three day pass. So that gave me five days to get married and get my feet on the ground. After that I did not come home until after I was discharged. My folks received a letter saying that I was missing in action, and not long after that they received one saying I was a P.O.W. Then a little later they received one saying I was in England in a hospital. When I was in the hospital I only weighed about 100 pounds. I had lost almost half that much the 4 months I was in prison camps. I had found out later that I had brain damage from the lack of minerals and vitamins.

Q: Were you ever shot?

A: I was shot at and hit with shrapnel, but they never got me down.

Q: What were some of the medals you received?

A: I received a few good conduct medals, a POW medal, a victory medal, a French 50 year celebration medal, infantry buttons, discharge patch, a bronze star, and more.

POW motto is "Daisies do not tell."

Verner and his wife, Ruth will be married 50 years on November 20, 1998.