

A Remarkable Experience

Probably the most remarkable experience undergone by a Rutgers man in the war with Germany is that of Lieutenant Theodore Rosen, of the class of 1916, who is at present in the Walter Reed Memorial Hospital, Washington, D. C., with his right arm gone, the top of his left thumb shot away, a machine gun bullet through his right cheek, another through his left wrist, and twenty-four body and head wounds from an exploding hand grenade. The lieutenant is totally deaf in his left ear and has only partial sight of his left eye. Surgeons at the hospital say, however, that the sight of the eye will be restored. The machine gun bullet through his cheek tore away four teeth, which have been replaced by a removable bridge.

The medical and surgical men at the hospital do not understand how the young officer survived his wounds. That he lives, it is conceded, is due to the extraordinary ability of the German surgeon at the prison hospital at Longwy, who operated upon him immediately after he was captured. All who have examined the amputated arm agree that it is a masterpiece of surgery.

But Lieutenant Rosen's fate in the hands of the Germans was rendered hard despite the kindness and skill of the surgeons at Longwy, for the German soldiers and orderlies robbed him of 800 francs, a gold watch and chain and all of his clothing. When the armistice became effective, he was delivered to the Americans wrapped in a blanket. Every stitch of his clothing had been stolen.

Lieutenant Rosen suffered his wounds on a volunteer mission. In fact, his position on the staff of the 315th Infantry would have enabled him to pass through the war unscathed, barring, of course, the possibility of shell fire. But disdainful of the comparative safety of regimental headquarters, he volunteered to locate a machine gun nest; persevered when Col. Alden C. Knowles was reluctant to let him go, and finally had his way. He took an orderly with him, and the latter came back unscathed with a brief account of the lieutenant's wounding and capture.

This is what happened on November 4, northeast of the Meuse: A hidden machine

gun nest was holding up the regimental advance and was playing wickedly on the exposed portions of the line. Colonel Knowles called for volunteers to locate the well-camouflaged position, and Rosen, with his orderly, volunteered.

They worked their way with patience and care toward the German lines, the lieutenant in the lead. Creeping and crawling, they finally gained a position where the enemy line was not more than fifteen feet away. But, instead of locating the machine gun nest, they had walked into a trap, for the hidden guns suddenly began to rattle and the first blast found the lieutenant directly in the path of bullets. The orderly, more fortunate, ducked into a shell hole and finally managed to worm his way to safety.

Two of the bullets had struck the lieutenant, one through the right arm, rendering it useless; the other through the left cheek, filling his mouth with blood. He flung himself into a shell hole, transferred his gun from his useless right to his unskilled left hand and blazed away - a pitiful automatic against a whole nest of machine guns. That unequal combat continued as long as there were bullets in the chamber of the automatic. As he exhausted the last clip, Rosen was vaguely aware of a hand grenade arching into the shell hole. He flung up his left arm as a protection to his face, and then the grenade exploded. Rosen recovered consciousness on the operating table at Longwy, and such was his vitality that he pulled through with sufficient strength to even exchange words in German with his captors and observe that the treatment by the surgeons was as careful and considerate as that given their own wounded men.

He remained at Longwy from November 4 until the day after armistice, when his captors decided to convey him to the American forces. When he asked for his clothing none could be found. They with his money and his watch were gone and he never saw them again.

So the young lieutenant, with an arm gone and wounds all over his head and body, came back to his countrymen.

He was removed to Base Hospital No. 2 at Toul, and from there to several

other American hospitals, finally being placed on the hospital ship, Mercy, which delivered him in New York some weeks ago. From New York he was sent to the Walter Reed Hospital at Washington, where he has been ever since. He expects to study law at the University of Pennsylvania next year.