

Maxwell J. Rosenbaum, PhD

This is the twenty fourth in a series of articles that we hope to publish for years to come. With this series we want to honor Service Members that served our great Nation. As I mentioned in the last article, we need your help to honor these fine Americans. If you have someone you would like us to include, please help us research and develop articles. Our email address is mhamlegionpost113@gmail.com

Max Rosenbaum was born on February 12, 1925 (Lincoln's birthday) in Brooklyn, New York. Max's Childhood was happy and uneventful until 1938 when the family moved to Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

He graduated in 1943 and entered the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). Following basic training at Ft. Knox, KY, Max was informed that the ASTP was no longer available and he would be sent overseas as a light tank driver. After a tense ocean voyage, he arrived in England in March 1943 and was subsequently trained as a tank radio operator. After D-Day, Max joined the 106th Cavalry Group, 121st Squadron Mechanized Reconnaissance during the Normandy break through at St. Louis. The Squadron served as point scouts for General Patton's 3rd Army and fought across northern France until we were detached to the 7th Army (Patton's Italy force) for combat in the Alsace Lorraine.

Max fought in the European Theater of Operations landing on Omaha Beach about a month after D-Day. Max was trained as an assistant driver of what he calls an armored car, a six-wheeled, rubber-tired vehicle equipped with a puny 37mm gun and a light machine gun. Designated the M8 Light Armored Car, the vehicle was nicknamed the Greyhound because it was relatively speedy compared to the other tracked vehicles. According to Max, their mission was one of scouting, probing and identifying the enemy, just as the old horse-mounted cavalry did during the Indian wars. They were to make contact with the enemy, quite often heavily armored German Panzers (tanks), and high-tail it back to allied lines to report strength and position. It was truly a cat and mouse sort of game.

We met trouble one day near a French town called Assviller, Max vividly recalls, the memory fresh as ever now 68 years later. We were sitting quiet just listening when we heard a distinct drone. They knew very soon that the sound was that of a German Panzer column coming their way. And here we were with a little 37mm gun that would often bounce right off the turrets of the huge Nazi Panther and Tiger tanks, Max explained. As luck would have it, their gunner made a very accurate hit on the lead tank as it bore down on the scouts, stopping it in its tracks and holding up the entire force. A quick dash back to safety saved Max and his crew for the moment. In another close call Max's Greyhound took a direct hit from a 20mm round that penetrated a wooden box of hand grenades inside the car. Once again, luck was on his side and the box of grenades didn't explode and cause certain death to the crew.

Max's luck did run out though on December 2, 1944 in an area of France near the German border, just south of Nancy, known as the Foret de Parroy. Max described the region as densely wooded and almost jungle like with only small openings for visibility.



Foret de Parroy-1944

Because of the terrain and the bright idea of someone higher up in echelon, Max's troopers were called on to fight as infantry, though none of his guys had any training to do so. Besides the frustration of no training the weather was often an enemy equal to the Germans. Max tells that the preparation for winter duty during what would become one of the coldest winters in history, was appalling. The troopers didn't have adequate clothing and trying to stay warm in a steel-clad armored car was impossible, worse even than hunkering down through a frigid December night in a well dug slit trench. The cold penetrated into your bones, Max remembers.

It was deep in the Foret de Parroy near the tiny French village of Wimmenau that Max and his buddies came under German artillery fire from the dreaded 88mm rifled cannons that could easily penetrate the heavy armor of a Sherman tank and exit the other side. The troopers were in what they thought was a relatively safe position with their armored cars and tanks parked in a perimeter. When the artillery barrage came the troopers tried their best to make themselves tiny and crawl inside their helmets. But as is often the case following an artillery barrage, an infantry attack is sure to follow so the dismounted drivers and gunners had to be alert. Max carried a lightweight M1 Carbine and soon found himself putting it to use. In any case, Max had found relative shelter in a machine gun nest but an overhead blast from an 88mm artillery round (probably a tree burst) drove chunks of steel shrapnel into the position. Max was hit hard in the shoulder and soon felt himself going into shock which he knew would mean death unless he got medical help... and soon. Most of the guys around him left in a hurry in an effort to save themselves from the devastating fire. However, one guy, Bill Hoyt, stayed back to see to Max. Bill hoisted Max fireman-style and carried him back to an aid station where he received rudimentary care that along with Bill's heroic effort, Max believes saved his life. After a series of bumpy ambulance rides and treatment in various medical facilities Max would spend many months healing and recovering from his wounds. But on December 2, 1944, in the woods of northeast France, World War II ended for Max Rosenbaum. In the years since, Max

has tried to locate his friend Bill who risked his own neck to help him but to no avail. Max doesn't know if Bill survived the war or not. Naturally, Max was awarded the Purple Heart.

A few weeks before the German counterattack, known as the Battle of the Bulge. In a force fight with German forces, Max was severely wounded. That injury incapacitated his right arm and impacted his hearing. After a long convalescence, Max was discharged just before the War in Europe ended in June 1945.

In September of 1945, Max came under the care of the V.A. where he met his life's love, Betty Underwood, in Madison, WI. He entered UW Madison under the G.I. Bill and rehabilitation program of the V.A. He graduated in 1949 with a B.S. degree in Agricultural Microbiology. He then entered the University of Massachusetts, Amherst to receive a M.S. in Public Health and Microbiology.

He then received a position as a research assistant at Yale Medical School and was engaged in early poliovirus cultivation in mammalian tissue culture to enable a vaccine. In 1954, he was employed by the Naval Medical Research Unit #4 whose research was involved with respiratory diseases of naval recruits, namely adenoviruses, influenzae, and common cold. Except for the common cold, significant progress was made with vaccines both killed and live. Max became Chief of the Department of Virology.

Unfortunately, NAMRU#4 was disestablished in 1974. It could have done in Corona virus research before the current pandemic. During his 20-year career at NAMRU#4, Max entered the University of Illinois Chicago Medical School and received a Ph.D. with majors in Microbiology and Biochemistry. Following the disestablishment of NAMRU #4 in 1975 Max received an appointment as a tenured Associate Professor in the Rockford School of Medicine, University of Illinois.

In 1978, Max accepted the appointment at UW-Madison as Biological Safety Officer under the guidelines of the Recombinant DNA program sponsored by the National Institutes of Health as a requirement for receiving financial support for projects involving DNA research.

Max established this office that later incorporated a committee of pre-eminent scientists and public members. This Biosafety Committee also undertook a research project that involved infectious agents or dangerous chemicals which continues this very day. Max retired in 1991 and led an enjoyable life with Betty, relatives and friends. He had profound appreciation for his wife, Betty's support for the 69 plus of love and companionship as we as immediate friends and many relatives.

Please send Max a card or a thank you note to Max Rosenbaum, 8203 Highview Dr, Madison, WI 53719.



I cannot take credit for writing this article Max penned his story, the write up about his experience in World War II was written by Jon Urness. I could not write the story any better than these two have.