

Hero Of War Prefers Discharge

(Continued from page one)
Germany last October.

When this reporter first saw Max, he was posing with a fishing pole for a picture. "Are you going fishing, or just getting back?" was the first question, and he put on his broadest smile and replied: "In a few days I'm going to catch up on my fishing and take things easy."

This hero of World War II is one man that enjoyed getting home more than anything else. He had a 7-day rest—or rather an impatient stay—at Fort Bragg while waiting for his discharge papers to clear, and as he expressed it, "being so close home, yet so far away, was even worse than being across the Atlantic." That was his only reference to subjects beyond the United States border, except in answer to a direct question.

The entire Thompson family had waited hourly for the return of Max, and one member of the family said that his mother, Mrs. J. W. Thompson, was often found gazing through the front window down the road to get the first glimpse of her son returning from the battlefields, where he made such an outstanding record.

The family was having breakfast, when Max, accompanied by another soldier, Dewey Metcalf, walked up to the house. Metcalf opened the door and asked: "Do you know this fellow?" And then it was that many prayers were answered as Max waved his discharge papers and threw his arms around his mother.

Max is not the "hard-boiled" rough-and-tumbled sort of fellow you would expect to single-handedly kill 23 Germans. And the number of Nazis wounded by bullets and grenades from this Haywood man's guns will never be known. He is a quiet, unassuming and a mild-mannered fellow.

The entire Thompson family show these same characteristics, and center their thoughts on the single incident of Max getting home. From the soldier's sister-in-law, Mrs. Clarence Thompson, of Durham, more was learned about Max and his family. "His only habit is smoking. He will not drink, and has an even temper. He goes to church and is a Christian." The Thompson home is within a short distance of Mt. Zion Baptist church.

"Smoking once saved his life," she continued. "During the heavy fighting he and a buddy were in a foxhole, covered with a raincoat, trying to light a cigarette, when a shell hit nearby. The shell blew in the sides of the foxhole, and the concussion punctured both of Max's ear drums. A piece of shrapnel from the shell went through his helmet, and had he been standing up, instead of bending over lighting his smoke, the same shrapnel would have killed him."

While Max was putting on his medals for news pictures, his mother told of his school days at Bethel, where he always made good grades, and played basketball. He graduated in 1940 and his favorite subject was mathematics.

"What food does he like best, Mrs. Thompson?"

She laughed loudly, then whispered, "Just plenty of milk and bread. He'll take that in preference to anything else I can cook."

It was mid-afternoon Monday at the Thompson home, and Max took advantage of every opportunity to be friendly with the new dog the family had acquired while he was away. This reporter's guess is that before a week rolls around Max and that dog will be inseparable, and when Max starts catching up on his fishing, that dog will be right along.

"What are you going to do after your deserved rest, and delayed fishing?" the hero was asked.

"I am not making any plans yet,

Hero Brings Back Some Souvenirs From Germany



T/SGT. MAX THOMPSON brought home some material reminders of the tough battles he fought. Across his lap is a Nazi flag he captured, while in the background is a huge red and black German street banner. Spread on the floor are some of the souvenirs he brought back, which includes two cameras, several watches, a clock, two pistols which he is holding, a German parachute, binoculars, a hunting knife, and a pair of knucks.

A Happy Family Welcomes Max Thompson Back Home



THE ENTIRE THOMPSON FAMILY except one brother, Roy, who is in the South Pacific serving in the Navy, greeted Max back Sunday from the war where he became one of the nation's top-ranking heroes. Left to right, are Mrs. Norman Thompson, Miss Vivian Thompson, George Kuykendall, (brother-in-law), Miss Lenella Thompson, T/Sgt. Max Thompson, Bascomb Thompson, recently discharged from the army, Mrs. J. W. Thompson, Norman Thompson, Miss Alene Thompson, and Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Thompson. A special picture for The Mountaineer by Grenell.

except to just hang around here for the present." Max was employed at Champion Paper and Fibre Company when he volunteered and put on his uniform and became an infantryman in November, 1942.

Max has a sense of humor. It was quite in evidence when something was mentioned about his girl

friends. "When I got the Congressional Medal of Honor, the newspapers said I had a wife. I wondered if that was part of the award, because I had never heard of her before."

As the Thompson family was assembling for a photographer to make a family-group picture, a two-motored plane flew over the Thompson farm. Max looked up and seemed to enjoy hearing the roar of the motors. "Guess you've heard plenty of those in your 34 months overseas," this reporter suggested. "Oh yes. The prettiest sight I ever saw was when 3,000 large bombers flew over us, and bombed a target only 4 miles ahead."

"Didn't you get nervous, being that close to such an important target and especially with that much ammunition overhead dropping so close?"

"Not much. The earth trembled, and made our trouser legs shake like a heavy wind was blowing, but we had confidence in our airmen. They were destroying the target for us."

About this time some members of the family had brought out the medals and souvenirs and made a display of them on the porch. Max delights in showing a German camera he bought for a cigarette—an extra good camera according to two professional photographers who would have traded for it in a minute had the owner shown any interest. Among the other souvenirs which Max had sent home included a German parachute, two cameras, a clock, three watches, a huge red and black Nazi street banner, a Nazi flag which Max had captured, a pair of binoculars, a small German pistol, a German Lugar automatic and a pair of brass knucks.

"Perhaps you can give some other angles to his experiences that he has not told us," this reporter suggested to Mrs. Thompson.

"He talks about things right here at home with us. The most we know is what we have heard

him tell you newspaper men and others who have visited here. You see, he's trying to forget it all, and there are so many other things for us to talk about, because he has been away so long. This is the first time he has been home, you know, since his father died on June 28, 1944."

In addition to his medal of honor, he has the Bronze Star for conspicuous gallantry, a Russian medal, Glory third class, a presidential unit citation with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Good Conduct medal, the European theatre ribbon, with five battle stars, signified by a silver star and one bronze star, the invasion arrow, and a Purple Heart.

The nation's highest decoration of honor, the Congressional Medal of Honor, was awarded to T. Sgt. Thompson for his work on the battlefield just about a year ago—October 18, 1944. That was the day he continued to bombard a group of Germans after about 100 of his comrades had been killed. He is credited with killing 23 Germans and wounding an unknown number in the battle near Haaren.

Comrades of Sgt. Thompson told the story of his bravery for the army records. T. Sgt. Weldon

Want Ads

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D. Clinton, of Texas, later killed, put this in the records:

"... When the enemy broke through, T. Sgt. Thompson tossed aside his rifle and took up the only weapons that could stop a mass assault. He fired a machine gun until a shell from an enemy tank blasted it out of his hands. All during the day he dragged wounded from the foxholes and carried them back for treatment."

Capt. William E. Russell, Max Thompson's company commander, put testimony into the army records similar to that offered by Sgt. Clinton. Capt. Russell also has been killed since then—in Germany, November 21. But his story of Max Thompson stands. He said: "The enemy broke through a platoon position with tanks. In overrunning the platoon pillboxes, the enemy captured 20 of our men and drove back the others who were not killed or wounded—four men. Sgt. Thompson stepped in alone to stop the troops pouring through."

"The Germans immediately swept the area with machine guns and other automatic fire from the captured pillbox positions and I saw Sgt. Thompson repeatedly enter the fire-swept field to carry wounded from their foxholes to a pillbox we were using as an aid station. Behind a tank, the Germans swarmed the gap in the line."

"Sgt. Thompson went to a machine gun, where the gunner had become a casualty, and faced the attack alone. He fired steadily into the advancing Germans. Then, a direct hit from the enemy tank destroyed the machine gun. He was badly shaken and dazed, but for some reason escaped being wounded. He regained his bearings and staggered to where an abandoned Browning automatic rifle was lying on the ground."

"He stood alone against the enemy force pouring through the gap. His fire halted the leading elements and spurred the follow-up squads. But the Germans were coming through in ever-increasing numbers. He fired into them until his automatic rifle jammed."

"Throwing it aside, he searched for another weapon. He went to a rocket gun which had been dropped by a wounded gunner and turned back the advancing enemy who were coming up behind a light tank. He didn't bother to find a foxhole from which he would fire without being a conspicuous target. He loaded the gun, took careful aim and fired on the tank."

"The rocket scored a direct hit and set the tank on fire. He charged the German riflemen and dispersed them with hand grenades."

During this period the American forces were reorganized, and the reformed line held, although enemy forces still held the three pillboxes seized in the breakthrough of the platoon positions. Waiting until nightfall, Sgt. Thompson led a squad against these positions."

St. Sgt. Herbert C. Spivey, of

Hero, His Mother and Dog



T/SGT. MAX THOMPSON begins to take life easy for a while, after 34 months overseas, and engaging in some of the severest fighting of the war. In one day he killed 23 Germans, and wounded an unknown number. This picture made for the Mountaineer by Grenell.

Pruse, Ky., later killed in action, described that attack:

"The enemy was ready for our counterattack. They poured fire from the pillboxes they had captured and the squad was unable to advance. Going forward, alone, Sgt. Thompson crawled 20 yards so that he could get close enough to fire a rifle grenade through the apertures."

"From a kneeling position he fired the grenades and the first two struck the wall and exploded outside. The fragments of one wounded Sgt. Thompson, but he remained here firing at the openings. Then he got one inside. There was an explosion and approximately two squads of Germans ran from the place."

Sgt. Thompson has four brothers, Clarence, who has been with a tobacco firm in Durham for 21 years, Norman, an employee of Champion Paper and Fibre Company, Bascomb, recently discharged from the army after serving in the South Pacific, and now operating the 46-acre Thompson farm, and Roy, a bosun's mate, in the navy in the South Pacific.

There are five sisters, all living in the immediate community, Mrs. George Kuykendall, Mrs. Charles Henson and Misses Olene, Vivian and Luella. All the single sisters live with their mother.

Eighteen Year-Olds Register With Local Board

Registration of 18-year-olds under the selective service system continues and during the month of September the following boys became 18 years of age and are now subject to call for duty in the armed forces:

Dewey Lanning, Waynesville; Ervin Lee Haney, Clyde, R.F.D. No. 1; Buford Edgar Mull, of Waynesville; Walker Glenn Chambers, of Waynesville, R.F.D. No. 2; Walter Felix Woodard, of Clyde, R.F.D. No. 1.

Gene Lloyd Sheehan, of Waynesville, R.F.D. No. 1; Harry Everett Jaynes, of Waynesville; Kenneth Eugene Gaddis, of Waynesville; James WiWley Watson, of Waynesville, R.F.D. No. 1; Charles Alfred Sparks, of Waynesville, R.F.D. No. 1; Claude William Hill, Jr., of Waynesville, R.F.D. No. 1; Oliver Windell Arrington, of Waynesville, R.F.D. No. 1; Charlie H. Moore, of Clyde, R.F.D. No. 1, and Thomas Hoyt Cates, of Waynesville, R.F.D.

Committees Are Named For Drive

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Mrs. Irene Rogers, Hotels, Paul Hyatt and Miss Lou Ella Eller. Court house employees, Bryan Medford. Business houses, L. N. Davis, chairman, T. G. Massie, Miss Fran-

Max Thompson Day To Be Held Canton Saturday

(Continued from page one)

Canton Lions Club with the American Legion and other organizations. Reuben B. Roberts, vice-president of the Paper and Fibre Company, Hyatt, of the Asheville distribution station will, along with the chapter registration station. The Moore General band having 30 talented will be featured in the we 1 as members of the Legion post and veterans wars. The Canton school play under the direction Matthews, will also take the program.

The entire program amplified for the benefit of flow crowd expected to the county and over North Carolina and will cast at 2 o'clock noon was learned from Mayor yesterday.

Capt. Frank Davis in charge of the state guard gun company of Canton, neck with the parade. Jack Barron, representative of the Lions club, is head of committee named to Thompson, his mother, W. Thompson, his brothers and other relatives to the celebration.

C. L. Westmoreland, named chairman of the program. The program will be general chairmanship of veteran of World War I. The Canton merchanting their places of business 1:45 Saturday until the of the program.

In a proclamation Mayor Robinson declared day Haywood County requests the people of County to join the four in paying tribute to Sgt. and his comrades in a large number of expected to attend the from this section of the

ees Ray and Bill J. Howell, Hazelwood business, ley and Mrs. Ralph S. Hazelwood residence, N. Allen, chairman, Knight, Mrs. Claude S. Joe Tate and Mrs. Larry Wayneville residence, Club in charge, Mrs. J. president, acting as chairman, Mrs. Link E. Wayne Rogers and Will

LEGION TO PRESENT

WASHINGTON: The Legion has drawn up enlisted men the same leave rights as officers, spokesman said it proposed to be introduced in the

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