

# Local Boy Wounded in Tank Destroyer Tells Experience

## PFC Paul Rohloff is home from the war

There's a High School graduate of 1940, home on furlough in our community, who has gone through just about as much of the hell of battle and lived to tell the story, as you'll find anywhere.

PFC Paul F. Rohloff, 23, son of Mrs. John Veurink, served as radio operator with the 99th tank destroyer division on the edge of the Sahara desert in Africa, which fought Herman Goering's panzer division. Then they moved on to Naples, Italy in November 1943, and from there to England. On June 6, 1944, they hit the Normandy beach as part of Gen. Bradley's First Army.

### Surrounded by Germans

His division then fought through Normandy to Cherbourg and down through Central France to St. Lo. One night, Paul's platoon of four tank destroyers (the destroyers are similar to tanks, but have lighter armor, a heavier gun, open top, and are faster), entered a small Belgian town from one end, while the Germans entered it from the other. The first thing the Yanks knew, they were surrounded by German infantry. They killed 30 enemy soldiers and then escaped from the town.

"What other damage did your platoon do in the open fighting,"

Paul said, "We were hit from this 155 howitzer firing at point blank range and the shell coming straight at us. It hit us squarely and killed our driver, the car commander, and the gunner. Then the ammunition in our tank, exploded making a terrific fire which burned the gun loader and myself. One other of our tanks was demolished, but the other two went on and destroyed the howitzer."

### Blinded for 2 Weeks

Here it can be mentioned that Paul was blinded for two weeks, and his face and hands terribly burned, so much so that the nerves and tendons in his hands were burned out, and it has been necessary to rebuild part of his face with plastic surgery.

"Were you knocked unconscious by this explosion," we asked our hero. "No," he replied, "It's funny but I was conscious through it all and whereas my face and hands felt stiff, I felt no pain."

"What happened next?" he was asked. "The hospital corps men picked us two up from the tank, where we still lay, and injected blood plasma into our veins and also nova caine. We were carried in a jeep a mile or so back to a first aid station, where vaseline gauze was placed on our burns. Then they loaded us in an ambulance and carried us about twelve miles back to a field hospital. The hardest part of all was to see our three buddies killed—fellows whom we had teamed with ever since North Africa."

### Tribute to Medical Corps

Right here, Paul stopped to pay a tribute to the unarmed medical corps men, who go about picking up the wounded. "They wear Red Cross arm bands and are not supposed to be fired on, but a bigger percentage of them are killed in action than any body else."

Just because it is interesting to know what happens to wounded soldier, we found out that after two days in the field hospital, Paul was taken 108 miles back to a hospital in Paris. After five days, he was flown to England in an ambulance plane on Sept. 15th, where he was placed in an American hospital. He was treated with penicillin every four hours for six weeks.

Finally, on November 28, Paul was flown to Scotland, where he was taken aboard a large transport plane that carried 18 litters and they were flown back to the U.S.A., where Paul was transferred by plane again to the plastic hospital at Tuscaloosa, Ala.

After his 30 day furlough at home, Paul will return to Tusca-