

It all starts out at 2 A.M., April 26th. I'm now and was then an aidman with a platoon of Engineers, that's 44 men. We and the two other platoons of "c" company were ordered to take the infantry across the Danube in assault boats, which are nothing more than standard Army row-boats holding 15 men, .3 Engineers and 12 passengers who help in the rowing or rather paddling because they kneel and use canoe paddles. The first wave, that is 8 boats, were to cross the river at 2 A.M. sharp. So at 1:45 they carried the boats to the river's edge, got in, and at 2 they pushed off. I was with boat 5 till they got into the water and I stayed on the bank because they were to come back and make repeated trips till sufficient men were across to hold the other side till a bridge could be erected.

There I sat on the edge of the Danube with my feet hanging over watching the boats cross in the bright moonlight. Most of them got there, emptied their passengers' and the 3 Engineers started to row the boat back when suddenly hell broke loose. It seemed like every gun and machine-gun in the world was firing. The red tracer slugs were whizzing red streaks. I hopped up and kind of flew back about 15 yards to a shallow depression in the ground and flopped on my belly, It was cold and I unfortunately landed in a puddle. For the next two hours I lay there shaking both from the cold and fright. I bet I peed about 20 times during that time. It seemed every time I lifted my head to look for a better place to go a red hot one whizzed over. Finally I decided it was better to get s hot than freeze to death so I jumped up and ran about 100 yards to the other side of a road where there was plenty of dirt between me and the shooting. I alternately lay there and went further back to a stone barn where the boys who were to go over the river waited their turn.

That was all I recall for the morning. In the early afternoon they started shelling with artillery, their infamous 88's. They were trying to hit the ferry we had running taking ammunition, etc., across. After a few landed, again that cry I hate rang out ---- -- Hey, Dock, somebody got it again." So this time I ran twice as fast trying to duck both sniper and 88's. I got to the man and found he had two pieces of steel in his leg and one in the side. The side wound was trivial so once again morphine and dressings. Meanwhile the 88's were falling. One, a dud, that means one that doesn't go off when it hits, landed 10 yards away. Oh! how they scream when they are coming! It's good though, they give you time to hit the dirt sometimes. This guy had 3 buddies a few feet behind him and I asked them to help me carry him back because we'd sure get it staying there. They said no they wouldn't chance running across the field. So I pulled out a gun from under my jacket, which I'm not supposed to have, and ordered them to throw away their guns, etc., and help me. They did and we got back O.K. No sooner was I back when again--- "Hey, Doc!" Two more got it on the bank. So off again I went. Boy, was I pooped and scared! This time one was only cut in the shoulder and I told him to run like hell. The other, some Medic, had a chunk out of his back. Some kind

soul sent an ambulance part way out and we carried him to it. While doing so I heard and felt sniper fire very close but told the other boys it wasn't, because if we dropped the wounded boy it was curtains and I was sure by this time the snipers were lousy shots.

At long last in the evening we were told to go up the hill to a village and rest. Replacements were sent in for us. We got there and from somewhere gotten we had a steak supper. They told us to go into some former Jerry barracks and sleep. I just got into the straw, clothes and all when several explosions hit all around the town.

About 7 A.M. I was at the road, by this time many troops had landed on the other side and as far as I know there were no casualties on my side of the river. When suddenly someone called, "Hey, Medic! Doc, someone go hit!" I gulped but felt I had to go so I took off and ran to the man who had been hit in the buttock. I got to him, lay down alongside of him so I'd not catch any stray slugs and gave him morphine and dressed the wound. I noticed the dirt kicking up a few feet around me and realized the red crosses on white background on my helmet plus my armband wasn't as sacred as I thought so I hollered for a jeep to come out and pick up the wounded by and myself. Finally after what seemed ages a medic jeep coming from only God knows where came out and we put the man on A litter. As we lifted him up to put in the jeep some slugs came so close we had to drop him and hit the dirt. On the second try we got him in and took off like a bat out of hell for cover. I left him with the other Medics to take back at the barn and went back to the road.

A little later it came again---- "Hey, Medic!" This time I knew damn well they were shooting at me so I left my helmet; it's easier running without it and sister I mean run. This time the man was at the river's edge. I got to him and the sniper, I didn't mention before but it was snipers that were doing the damage on my side of the river, started in again. This boy had a slug through the leg and was pleading with me not to let the Jerry get him. So again I hollered for a vehicle. When it came we couldn't get it up to the injured man because of a small swamp so we had to run with the litter, dump him on, scramble aboard and flee. Oh, how unpleasant it feels leaving your back uncovered!

An officer ran in and said they were shelling it and we should get the hell out. We did. I ran so fast and far I wound up with "B" company instead of my own "C" company. Got back in the morning.

When I got the citation there were three others that got it too.

Their's was issued posthumously. The following is part of what the general orders says ----

T/5 CHARLES GROSS # ----- MEDICS For Gallantry in action near Kapfelburq, Germany on 26 APRIL 1945.

During the division's assault crossing of the Danube T/5 GROSS constantly exceeded the requirements of his duty in endangering his life to save those of his comrades. Taking only momentary shelter against particularly withering blasts of fire, he repeatedly ran through shell fire, in order to answer to the familiar cry of "MEDIC!" Time after time T/-5 GROSS aided in the evacuation of wounded men, directing jeeps, leading other aid men to the casualties. His inspiring devotion to the creed of the MEDICAL CORPS is in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces."