

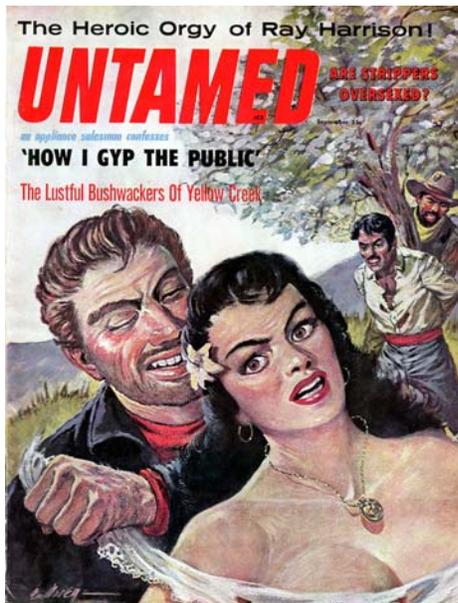
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"The Heroic Orgy of Ray Harrison"

aka "The Orgy That Won Me a Silver Star"

by ex-Pfc. Ray Harrison

From the September 1959 issue of

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(Cover painting by Leo Morey)

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The Heroic Orgy of Ray Harrison!

# UNTAMED

ARE STRIPPERS  
OVERSEXED?

ACE

September / 35c

*an appliance salesman confesses*

**'HOW I GYP THE PUBLIC'**

The Lustful Bushwackers Of Yellow Creek



For 14 hours Alice and Yvonne and me had been drinking and making love. Now they'd have to wait. I had to stop that Kraut patrol



Ray Harrison's  
Heroic 'Ordeal'

## THE ORGY THAT WON ME A SILVER STAR

by ex-Pfc. Ray Harrison

**M**AYBE I WAS drunker then nine million dollars, but I wasn't so drunk I didn't know I was in trouble up to my ears. I sneaked another look out the window of what used to be the *Cheval Noir* cafe, then I turned and grinned across the room at Alice and Yvonne.

It was probably a weak grin, but what the hell, after what the three of us had been up to for the past fourteen hours, it was about all I could do to raise my eyebrows.

I inclined my head toward the window and gave the girls some more of my high school French. "*Allemands!*" I said. "*Boches. Nazis. Compris!*"

They nodded. They looked a little scared, but that was because they weren't as loaded with *vin rose* as I was. Me, all I could do was manage an idiotic thought: how many times guys had said in ribald humor—what a way to die!

I took another look outside. They were still there, all right, darting in and out of the rubble. I counted off six of the Krauts. It was probably a recon patrol, which meant there'd be the rest of a squad around somewhere. I shoved a clip into my carbine and looked across the room again at Alice and Yvonne.

They began to giggle, and for a moment I forgot our party had been interrupted (Continued on page 56)

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# The Orgy That Won Me A Silver Star



(Continued from page 13)

by the 88's and the Kraut patrol outside. I started to get up, but the wine hit me and I sat down again fast. I grinned at the girls and shrugged my shoulders.

They looked at each other and giggled some more. Then they started crawling across the room toward me. "Non! Non!" I groaned. "Pas plus — no more!" I knew my protests were in vain. I could stop a Tiger tank sooner with my bare hands than I could hold off those two alley cats once they got going.

To hell with the Krauts! I thought deliriously. To hell with the war! I held out my arms to Alice and Yvonne . . .

IT WAS ALL the fault of that pencil-pushing captain back at the repple depple that I was in this predicament, anyway. I'd tried to tell the meathead that I couldn't drive a truck, but he insisted I was trying to bug off.

"Listen, Harrison," he barked at me. "You've been scratched from combat duty, but that don't mean you're gonna spend the rest of the war grabbing sack time!"

"Who's looking for sack time?" I protested. "I'm not trying to bug off, Captain. I want to get back to my own outfit!"

He looked at me suspiciously. "As what, company clerk?" He jabbed a pencil at my nose. "You don't fool me, Harrison. The medics say that wound of yours makes you limited service from now on, but I'm here to see you Purple Heart guys don't sit around on your butts. The 67th needs truck drivers. So I say you drive a truck. You got any more questions?"

I was pretty sore, and I had plenty of questions, and if the captain hadn't been wearing a Purple Heart himself, well—anyway, all I did was stick my hand out for my orders.

Hell, I'd had a right to be sore, though. I'd been with the 23rd Regiment of the 2nd Division since the States, had hit Omaha Beach with the Indianheads on D-Day plus 1, and was with them until the 88 fragment had clipped me in the thigh, outside of St. Lo.

I had a lot of buddies in the 23rd. And the more we'd fought and the fewer of us there were left, the more we'd developed a kind of kinship. I hated to lose that now, just because some lousy ammo hauling outfit needed truck drivers.

But I was stuck with the job. After grabbing some hot chow I packed my gear and hitched a ride on a weapons carrier that was going up to the lines. There were two other Purple Hearts going back up with the carrier. One, from the 9th, was joining a QM outfit

attached to the Indianheads, up along the Belgian border somewhere.

I told the guy to give my regards to the 23rd, and swung off the carrier at Tinchebray. The HQ of the 67th truckers was at the north end of town, in what used to be the local bakery. An MP jeep gave me a lift from the center of town, and on the way I got a brief run-down on life in rear echelon.

"Them truckers ain't a bad outfit," the MP corporal advised me. "You get hot chow once a day, and they ain't had a casualty since the first sarge broke a tooth eatin' an almond Hershey bar."

THE CO of the 67th was a mild looking captain who wore glasses and smoked lousy cigars. He glanced at my orders briefly and bawled for the first sarge to come and take me away.

The zebra's name was Bronki and the MP had been right about the tooth. It was one of the front ones on top, and it hung there jaggedly like a fang on a werewolf. I pointed to it and said, "You get clipped with an 88 shell, sarge?"

He snarled at me, which made the effect even more spectacular. "Naw, I got that bitin' the tails off'n wiseguy Pfc's," he said. I followed him into the street and he pointed down the road. "That busted up garage on the right is where the guys are sacked down. Ask for Sergeant Yerby, get yourself stowed away and report back here in 15 minutes."

Sergeant Yerby was a runty guy who figured he had to talk tough because he came from Chicago.

"Okay, Harrison," he said when I'd reported in, "the way we work things here is every truck has a two-man team assigned, and it's up to them two guys to make sure their baby is in shape to roll out of here in two seconds. That means you got to ride the tails of them motor pool grease monkeys to make sure she's always gassed and in top shape. Get it?"

"Got it."

"Okay then, you'll ride shotgun with Grabhorn. Might as well stash your stuff alongside his." Yerby got off his chair and walked to the rear of his office, poked his head through an open door and barked out a command. "Grabhorn! Get your tail in here!"

Grabhorn was a gangling Pfc with big ears and buck teeth. His uniform hung on him like a scarecrow on a stick.

"What's up, Sarge?" he grinned with all his teeth. "Saddlin' up time?"

Yerby nodded in my direction. "This here's Ray Harrison. He's your cellmate from now on."

Grabhorn ambled over and stuck out a skinny hand. "Howdy," he said. "Welcome to the cavalry."

I smiled. "What happened to your last partner? You stab him to death with your hip?"

Grabhorn guffawed at the bum joke. "Naw. Sergeant Yerby here used to ride with me when he was a corporal. But since they made him a buck-tail sergeant he won't saddle up no more. Just sits here and dispatches us pony express boys."

I grinned over at Yerby and started to make a crack, but the phone jangled on his desk and cut me off. Yerby picked it up, listened a moment, said "Check," and replaced the receiver.

"Okay, Harrison," he said. "Get initiated. Grabhorn, you know where the ordnance guys are. Get four six-by's over there on the double and load up for that 105 battery near that big farm with the red roof. You been there before."

Grabhorn bobbed his head. "Let's git, Ray. The mail must go through."

"How come these 105 batteries don't have their own motor pool?" I asked Grabhorn as we drove out to the howitzer position.

"They do," he said. "But us guys are like trouble shooters for more'n a dozen batteries scattered around here. Hell, man, in this outfit I've delivered everything from mail to a general's laundry. It's only in the last couple weeks they put us on call to the artillery boys."

Three days later the call came in from Div Arty that sent me on my Kismet mission to Alice and Yvonne. Of course, that wasn't how it started out, but that's how it wound up—and almost wound me up for good.

SCT. YERBY and I were chewing over the war when the phone rang. It was a couple of minutes after 1800 hours. Yerby talked a while into the mouth-piece, then hung up.

"Jeez," he shook his head. "Here's a bitch of a job. That 105 battery up at the farm is moving up to a new position tonight at 1900. They want three empty six-by's up there to help them move out."

"So what's so tough?" I wondered.

"Hell, when those guys start rollin', it's liable to be three days before they stop and dig in, depending on how fast the line in front of them is moving. Trying to keep up with them you're liable like as not to wind up right in the middle of a hot fight."

I shrugged.

"Okay," Yerby said. "You and Grabhorn go, and take Gibbins and Fine, and Jaffee and Murph. You're the six guys I'll miss the least if you get lost."

"The same to you," I said. We were both grinning.

In 10 minutes we had the three six-by's headed out of Tinchebray on the way up to the howitzer battery. Grabhorn let me drive. I made it to the battery area okay. Only there was no battery. A first looie sitting in a jeep next to a pile of ammo and equipment flagged us down as we drove up to the farm.

"You guys from the 67th?" he asked.

"Sure enough, lieutenant," Grabhorn piped up.

"Who's in charge?" the looie asked. Hell, there wasn't anybody in charge.

But why strain the guy's gut, so I said, "Pfc Harrison, sir, leading the convoy. What happened to the battery?"

"Pulled out half an hour ago. The whole line is moving up fast. You men load up your trucks and join the battery as soon as you can."

"Join 'em where?" I asked.

The looie pointed down a road that wound around past the farmhouse and to the northwest. "Straight down that road. In about a mile and a half you'll come to a burned-out Kraut tank at a crossroad. Turn right and keep on going. You should run into the tail end of the battery's convoy if you redball it."

The battery's motor pool jokers had left enough ammo and junk to fill half a dozen six-by's, not three. It took the better part of an hour to load up, and when we got through you couldn't squeeze another toothpick aboard those trucks.

"All right," I barked finally. "Let's get the troops out of the hot sun." I shoved the six-by into gear and headed for I didn't know where-the-hell.

I'd been driving about 15 minutes when I suddenly remembered something. "Hey," I jabbed Grabhorn's ribs. "Didn't that looie say we'd see a Kraut tank about a mile and a half down this road?"

"Yeah, he sure did, Ray."

"Well hell, we've done better than six miles and I ain't seen any tank."

We both began to worry. Our noses were pointing right to where the front lines were supposed to be, and, now that I thought of it, the crump-crump of artillery had been getting louder as we'd been driving.

"Cripes!" I grumbled. "Just our luck we'll drive right into the Krauts."

Grabhorn ran his tongue over his lips. "Listen, Ray, that looie said turn right at the tank, so why don't we just turn right when we come to a crossroad? That way we'll at least be headin' in the right direction."

"Well, we wouldn't be any worse off," I agreed.

ABOUT FIVE MILES farther on, the road forked sharply to the left and right. I took the right fork and prayed for the best. It was quieter along this road, which wasn't so good, either. We should have been hearing our own artillery.

There wasn't a sign anywhere along the road. Not a piece of equipment, no traffic, nothing. We drove on for 15 more minutes. Then we rounded a sharp bend in the road and we were at the edge of a town. I stopped short and got out to take a look. The rest of the guys dismounted too, and we gathered around.

"Where the blinking hell are we?" Fine spat.

"How the hell should I know?" I growled back at him. I was worried. I didn't like the way this looked at all. Towns that straddled decent roads like this one just didn't hang around empty. Not for long, anyway. Either the Krauts were dug in, or we were, or both sides were after it. And in that case, we were right in the middle.

"You know what?" It was Grabhorn

talking. "I say we ought to haul tail right outta here. Let's go back the way we came and if we don't run into anything we'll go back to Tinchebray and let Yerby worry about what to do with this junk."

I was about to agree with him, when I remembered that most of the "junk" was 105 ammo, and it wasn't so long ago that I was squatting in muddy ditches listening gratefully to the sound of outgoing 105 mail.

"Nobody's hauling tail noplac," I put in. "That 105 battery's going to be looking for this ammo, and we're going to get it to them. Now let's saddle up and move into this town. Maybe somebody here knows something."

It took a little more arguing, but I finally got us moving again. I crawled into the town slowly, with Grabhorn leaning out the window, carbine ready. The town was deserted, apparently, but it had taken a beating not long ago. Most of the houses had absorbed artillery hits, but in the darkness I couldn't tell whether there were any marks of small arms or machine gun fire.

The town square had a big water fountain that wasn't working anymore. The road branched off to the right here. Straight past the water fountain was a row of buildings and shops that formed a dead end at the square. You either circled the water fountain and went out to the left, or turned right at the dead end. I made the right turn.

Only it was the wrong turn.

The shell hole wasn't 10 feet from the corner, and the front end of the six-by dove right into it before the rear end had even completed the turn. Grabhorn and I were thrown against the windshield as the nose of the truck hit bottom.

"Sonvabitch!" Grabhorn said amazedly.

We climbed out of the cab and up the side of the hole. The truck was jammed in deep. We'd never get it out without hauling equipment.

The rest of the crew joined us at the edge of the hole.

"Well, what do we do now?" Murph said.

I shrugged. Frankly, I was licked.

"Listen, Ray," Gibbins said. "What's the use of fooling around in the dark with this ammo when we don't know where we're going? Let's just leave this truck here and head back for Tinchebray with the rest."

I shook my head. "No deal. But I'll tell you what. You guys go back and try to find that 105 battery. Then, you, Grabhorn, get ahold of an empty six-by and come back here. I'll wait and watch this ammo till you get back. We'll switch it to the empty truck and join the others at the battery's new position."

Grabhorn stared at me. "You're gonna stay here by yourself? You loco, Ray? For all you know the Krauts'll be here any minute, if they ain't here already."

"I'll be all right," I said. "Just leave me some extra carbine clips—and beat it."

When they'd gone I took a look around. It wasn't much of a town. Most of the shops were around the square. There was

a bar—the *Cheval Noir* (Black Horse) on one side of the square, around the corner from the truck. A shell had eaten chunks of glass and woodwork out of the front of it, but otherwise it looked to be in fair shape.

I walked inside. Who knows, I thought, there might even be some unbroken bottles down the cellar, and it would be a couple of hours at least till Grabhorn came back—if he ever did come back.

The long mahogany bar was littered with broken glass and wood splinters. I cleared a space with the butt of the carbine and pounded on the bar top. "*Vin ordinaire!*" I thundered. "*Vite-ment!*"

That's when I heard the giggling. At first I thought I was going nuts. I fingered the trigger of the carbine and dropped to the floor, creeping around, trying to locate the source of the noise I'd heard. But it had stopped.

I stood up and went to the bar again. This was no time to let my mind play tricks, I decided. So I tried it again. "*Allons-y! Vin ordinaire!*"

There was no mistaking it this time. Giggles. Then a smothered burp. I grinned despite the worrisome discovery that I wasn't alone. The giggles continued. There was a door behind the bar. I opened it. The giggles got louder. The cellar!

IT WAS black as the ace of spades down there. I took a chance. "Come on out with your hands up or I'll throw in a grenade."

The giggles stopped. There was hurried whispering. I couldn't hear the words, but it sounded like French to me. And it sounded like dames. My palms began to sweat.

I took another chance. "*Je suis Americain,*" I called softly. "*Americain.*"

That brought them out. A match scraped, then the flickering light of a candle threw crazy shadows on the walls. I stood at the top of the cellar stairs, finger still on the carbine trigger, and waited.

Oh, brother, was it worth waiting for! They came around the corner of the staircase and began walking up towards me. Even in the candlelight I could tell they were stacked like twin models of the original brick firehouse. They were smiling at me—no, leering is more accurate, as they climbed the stairs. They were having a hard time walking up, too, without holding on to the walls.

Crocked, I said to myself. Crocked to the gills. My forehead started to sweat, but my throat got dry. And not from thirst.

I backed away and let them come into the big main room of the bar. They stared at my uniform with foggy eyes. "*Americain?*" one of them said softly, like silk rustling over smooth flesh.

I nodded. "*Oui,*" I managed hoarsely. "*Tu parles Francais,*" said the other. Her voice was husky with the sound of lowdown music in smoke filled rooms, of ice tinkling in glasses, of slow dancing and whispered conversations.

My spine began to tingle.

"*Un petit peu—a little bit,*" I answered.

I knew I was staring openly at where they curved voluptuously out of their low cut blouses, but I didn't figure this was the time or the place for the delicacies of prolonged courtship.

For a moment though, I did come to my senses. Between by lousy French and their worse English, I managed to piece together that the Krauts had pulled out the day before, after we'd shelled the town for a couple of hours, figuring we were about to attack in force. But we hadn't, and the Krauts apparently didn't know yet that we hadn't moved into the town. Nor, apparently, did we know that the Krauts had pulled out.

The Krauts, the way I had it figured, must be one of those *Volksgrnadier* outfits made up of older men and ex-service type troops. A *Panzer* or SS outfit would never have pulled back without at least a rearguard sniper unit to hold up the advance.

Meanwhile, the town was up for grabs to whoever walked in first. I cursed silently. If I'd known this before the other guys had taken off we could have sent word back that the town was unoccupied.

The two French babes were watching me. They'd told me they were a couple of pros who'd worked in a fancy Paris house that closed when the Nazis took over the city. They'd been working in this part of the country as barmaids ever since. How the hell they got into this town, and what they were doing here alone, I never did get straight. But the way I guessed it was that they'd heard the Nazis were moving out and we were moving in, and they'd decided to be the first to set up shop. Then, when they found the town was deserted, they promptly set out to get crocked.

Crocked! The realization hit me suddenly. I pointed to the cellar stairs. "Du vin?" I asked the girls.

They giggled and nodded in unison.

I STARTED for the stairs and stopped. I stared at the babes again. They stared back at me, their lips parted, their eyes inviting me. I felt my throat tighten and my knees turned to jelly. I shook my head to clear it. No. I couldn't do it. Here was a wide open town and somehow I had to get back to our lines and tell somebody about it.

I turned around and headed for the street. My mind was so full of crazy thoughts I never even heard the warning whine. Then the earth exploded in front of me and I felt myself hurled to the floor from the concussion of the HE. Wood, plaster, and flying bits of glass and hot metal flew around me. I felt a sharp blow on the side of my face, and I conked out.

It was the whiff of perfume that brought me around more than anything else. I felt a softness all around me, and the warm scent of woman filled my nostrils. I hated to open my eyes and lose the dream.

When I felt the fingertips caressing my cheek I opened my eyes. This dream I had to see. It was the older one, the one who'd said her name was Alice. My head was in her lap, and she was leaning

over me, and when I opened my eyes and looked up—well, it was something to see, all right.

I groaned and sat up, feeling at myself for damage. There was a knot the size of a walnut on the side of my head. Outside of that I seemed to be okay.

The shelling was still going on. I figured it was Kraut artillery, considering they thought our guys were in the town by now.

The girls had dragged me down the cellar after I'd been knocked out, and in the candlelight I could make out racks and racks of bottles. Full ones. I pulled one off a shelf and broke off the top. The wine cascaded out in foamy red. I held the bottle away from my lips and poured the liquid down my throat. It was great. Cellar-cool and not too sweet.

I climbed back upstairs, still intending to head back for our lines. But one look outside and I knew I'd never make it. The 88 barrage was plastering the town to its foundations. I'd never live to walk through that hail of HE. I shrugged. Fate, I told myself. Kismet. I noticed then that I still held the wine bottle in my hand. I tilted my head back and drained the bottle.

I threw the empty bottle away and walked back down the steps to the cellar. Yvonne and Alice were waiting for me . . .

The barrage must have lifted about dawn, but I couldn't tell for sure. I couldn't tell much of anything by dawn, except that I was as good a man as I'd always hoped I was, even with a couple of bottles of French wine in my gut. And Yvonne and Alice—they were all the French Chamber of Commerce could ever have boasted about.

We started all over again after breakfast. I'd gone upstairs to the truck, which luckily hadn't suffered a direct hit or we'd have been blown to bits, and brought some K rations down to the cellar. Washed down with that *vin rose* they didn't taste half bad. And by this time I'd forgotten all about my idea to get back to the U. S. lines.

I didn't drink too much of the wine any more. I was drunk enough—drunk enough not to give a damn about what I was doing, but not so drunk I couldn't do it.

After the morning session with Alice and Yvonne I fell asleep. The shelling woke me. I looked at my watch. It was 1430. The girls were sitting opposite me, eating more rations. And drinking more wine. I shook my head in admiration. At drinking wine and making love these two undoubtedly had no superiors on earth.

The shelling didn't last long. About half an hour. That was what alerted me. I felt a tingling along my spine, and it had nothing to do with sex. I grabbed the carbine and scooted upstairs. Keeping low, I made it over to the window facing the square.

They were there, as I'd figured. A Kraut patrol, coming in to see why their barrages hadn't been answered from the town. I cursed bitterly. If the Krauts found out now that the town was unoccupied they might move back in force,

and we'd pay plenty to get it, when we could have had it free.

I turned around to tell Yvonne and Alice about the Krauts, and that was when they came after me again.

What the hell, I figured. Twice more, just for old times' sake. And like I said, if the Krauts caught me in the act—what a way to die!

I was lucky. The Krauts—I didn't know how many there were, but I figured not more than a squad—were still skipping around in the ruins when I got back to fighting the war. I shooed the girls downstairs and started to think.

The Krauts must have spotted the truck. But maybe it served to confuse them, made them conclude there were GIs around somewhere. Anyway they hadn't poked around this side of the street so far. But I couldn't count on that much longer.

I LOOKED out the window. There were the two Krauts, still crouching at the water fountain in the square, about 100 feet away. I could have knocked them off easy, but where the hell were all the others? I was able to pick out a third and fourth on the opposite side of the square, and then two more going up the road along which I'd entered the town with the six-by's.

There should be come guys working this side of the square, I reckoned, and ducked my head with that thought. I'd heard the crunch of boots outside. They stopped in front of the bar entrance. I slithered across the floor until I was alongside the doorway, on the side away from where the door would swing open.

Sure enough, the Kraut came in slamming the door open against the wall. Satisfied there was no one behind it, he strode in confidently. I let him get two steps into the room, then gave him the knife hard between the ribs. He grunted and collapsed. I dragged him out of the way and shut the door. I didn't think any of the other Krauts had particularly noticed where'd be gone in, and if they had, they could easily figure he went out through a back exit into the sidestreet.

That's what I thought, anyway. I'd just dragged the body behind the bar when the door slammed open again. My head jerked up automatically at the sound. There was a Kraut framed in the doorway, a *Schmeisser* in his hands. Lucky he was more startled to see me than I was him. His burst with the *Schmeisser* was wild, and I squeezed off three slugs from the hip that slammed him out the doorway and crumbled him in the street.

Surprise was still on my side, and I meant to make the most of it. The Krauts didn't know there was only one of me—yet. I leaped to the window and opened up on the Krauts in the square, grateful that I'd thought to take extra clips from the other guys when I'd decided to stay with the truck.

I shot fast, making like a crowd, but I also shot straight. I was cold sober now. The two Krauts who'd been at the fountain I got before they even realized what the shooting was all about. That

made four down. The rest weren't so easy. I let go a couple of rounds at the pair across the square. I didn't get them, but I made them duck into a store.

What bothered me more than anything was that I figured there were still four or five Krauts around I hadn't spotted anywhere. Still, there was no other way into the bar except the front way, so I wasn't worried about being surprised from the rear. But I was worried about grenades.

With that, I decided I'd better get my tail out of there. If the Krauts came at me from two sides at once, they could lob grenades in through the holes in the walls, and I'd be a dead duck. Hiding down the cellar would be just as futile. No, I had to break out, and maybe in a running fight I could make it out of town.

However, if the Krauts could only come in through the front, I could only get out the same way, and by now the Krauts had begun firing into the walls of the *Cheval Noir*. Bullets whined in through the windows and tore holes through the wooden walls. They were firing too high to bother me, though. I was prone on my stomach, peeking out through a crack low in the front wall. Then the sound of running feet came from by right, out of my line of vision. I pressed in close to the wall. A potato masher grenade came flying through the window, but the Kraut had thrown it too hard. It sailed across the room and exploded against the back of the bar.

SPLINTERS FLEW all over the place, but except for a couple of cuts on my face from flying glass, I was okay. Before the smoke settled the Kraut jumped through the doorway, spraying the room with a submachine gun. I was lying on an 180-degree angle from the doorway, and before he got swung around that far I shot him twice through the chest. Five down.

I ran over and grabbed his submachine gun. I'd be needing it. I had three carbine clips left. The Krauts tried rushing me, next. While the rest of the patrol tried to pin me down with rapid fire into the front wall of the *Cheval Noir*, three of the Krauts came charging in a crouch from the side of the square. One was holding a grenade in each hand. Him I'd have to get first.

There was a big hole about halfway up the front wall of the cafe on the side where the Krauts were charging from. I ran low across the room with the sub in my hands, jumped up in front of the hole and cut loose at the Kraut with the grenades. It took three bursts before I got him, and by that time every other man in the patrol had me under fire.

I heard the wood splinter around me as the slugs chewed through the wall. I dropped to the floor as soon as I saw the Kraut fall, but it wasn't soon enough. I felt the slug tear at my leg as I dropped. It burned hot for one screaming second, then I forgot the pain as the other two Krauts came through the door, shooting.

Again, they couldn't have been sure I was the only GI in the cafe, so they came in shooting straight ahead, which

was what saved me. I emptied the Kraut submachine gun at the two bastards. They went spinning across the room. One was still alive and tried to claw for his pistol. I shot him in the face with the carbine.

I felt the blood pumping out of the wound in my leg. I was getting dizzy and nauseous from the wine and the sex and the wound and the blood running out of the dead Krauts sprawled around the floor of the cafe. I'd had it, I knew. I couldn't hold off another rush. And there were still four or five Nazis around the street outside.

But for the moment it was quiet. I shoved my last clip into the carbine, picked a *Schmeisser* out of the blood on the floor, and dragged myself to the wall. There were plenty of bullet holes to peek through now. The street was empty except for the Kraut bodies. At least one of them wasn't dead. One of the two I'd clipped at the fountain was crawling away, across the square, leaving pools of blood behind him. I let him crawl. I had my own troubles.

Whatinhell were Yvonne and Alice doing all this time, I wondered. I pressed a bandage from my aid kit into the wound in my leg. The bullet had caught me sideways in the calf, several inches below the kneecap, and had gone right through. It was a gory mess, but I'd seen enough wounds to know I'd live—if I ever got out of this spot.

I took another look to see what the wounded Kraut was doing. One of his buddies had come out from the store across the square and was helping him. Under the circumstances, this I couldn't tolerate. I shifted into sitting position along the wall, poked the carbine through a hole, and picked off the able-bodied Nazi.

That broke up the show. The other Krauts came charging out of the store, firing wildly. Down the street came three more, running, and shooting as they ran. They passed by the front of the cafe and kept on going across the square. They were running away! I emptied my clip at the fleeing Nazis, and got one more before the rest disappeared around the corner. The Kraut slithered on his face along the cobblestones like he was sliding into second base. He was out by a mile.

IT CAUGHT up with me then. I vomited all over myself, and then I guess I passed out.

I heard the murmur of voices as I started to come out of it later, and I remembered the girls. "Alice. Yvonne," I groaned, still half unconscious.

"Who the hell's Alice and Yvonne?" I heard a voice growl.

"He must mean them two broads we found in the cellar, lieutenant," somebody else said.

I opened my eyes. There was a medic working on my leg. My face felt all puffy, and when I touched the bandages that wound around my head and under my chin I remembered the flying glass and wood splinters. I looked around for the Kraut bodies. No bodies. No girls, either.

"Can you talk, soldier?" It was the lieutenant asking. A nice looking kid; an infantry loolie.

I tried working my jaws. The bandages were loose enough so that I could mumble. "What the hell are you guys doing here?"

The loolie grinned at me. "We're making a war movie, and you're the hero," he said. "What the hell went on here?" he said then. "We talked to the two wounded Krauts we picked up outside, and the two dolls, but none of them made much sense. And where are the rest of your guys?"

I sat up painfully. My lips were dry and my throat sore from the vomiting. "Got a drink?" I croaked.

Somebody handed me a canteen. I took a couple of thin swallows and licked my lips. "There ain't no other guys," I said. "Ain't nobody here but us chickens, mostly dead."

There were four GIs in the room, plus the medic. They all looked at each other, then at me. A four stripe sarge came over and squatted next to me. "Listen, fella," he said quietly, "if some guys bugged off on you, don't protect the yella bastards."

"Nobody bugged off, sarge," I said. And I gave them the whole story—except for the stuff about Yvonne and Alice and me, of course. No sense in eating their hearts out. But I told them about the five truckers trying to get through with the ammo and me waiting with the wrecked truck and the fight that followed.

The lieutenant's eyes glinted. "You always with the truckers, soldier?"

I shook my head. It made me dizzy and I gulped some more water. "I used to be with the 23rd. Got an 88 splinter at St. Lo and they retired me with full pay."

The lieutenant looked at the others. "It could be," he said. "The sonabitch could have done it himself." He turned back to me. "Those two Krauts we picked up said they were in here on an advance patrol, but were attacked by superior numbers and slaughtered. The two dames said you were up here all alone, but we didn't believe them."

"The dames, where'd they go?" I asked.

The loolie leered at me. "The MPs gave them a lift out of town. They were okay."

"They sure were," I sighed.

The medic was finished with the wound. "This guy oughtta get to a hospital, lieutenant," he said. "He's pretty weak."

"Yeah," the loolie grinned. "I'll bet he is."

Well, that was it. Back at the hospital they gave me a cluster for the Purple Heart I'd got at St. Lo, and later I stood up in a parade and a general pinned a Silver Star on my chest.

I still can't help but take out that Silver Star once in a while and wonder what happened to Alice and Yvonne. I meant to look them up after I got out of the hospital, but funny thing. I never did ask them their last names, or the name of that cruddy town. ▶▶