

At 0600 on the 8th of May 1945

The rest of a ^{German} Division is lined up for a parade. The small clearing in ^{the} Forest is rather crowded. Everyone seems to be fit and ready to fight another day. We are in the mountain range near the Czech border and in one of the few remaining pockets of resistance. The General arrives, old enough to be my Grandfather. After the General salutes no order to shoulder arms ^{is given}. With a rather strong voice ~~he~~ he yells at the motionless soldiers "Kameraden der Krieg ist aus" meaning "comrades the war is over". Someone started to drop his rifle and in domino fashion all weapons fell from the present ^{arms} to the ground. This noise I will never forget, because it did not only signal the end of the war with all the blood and sacrifice but also the end of a form of government under which we young fellows grow up.

Let me quote an old saying: "Only the winner writes the history" and it may well be another 50 years before both sides of the gruesome story will be known to ^a generation of people untouched by the horrors of war.

As in Australia we young chaps were worried that we may miss out on going to war. This had nothing whatsoever to do with politics and nothing with getting 3 meals and 1 Mark = 2 Schilling a day. The country was at war and up to them victorious on most fronts. Girls would not look at you unless you volunteered for service. ^{a prize of} 300 smokes it cost me and Mum's signature copied and sent 17 Dec 41 a few days prior to Xmas I was in. We, 16 ^{3/4} years and the average ^{of the unit was} 17 ^{1/2} years young. After a hard 12 Weeks training 3 Weeks by goods train to Russia. My Unit part of a Tank Regt part of a Armoured Infantry Division nearly constantly on the move. In and out of battle's with casualties on both sides in unbelievable quantities. We soon learnt the hard way that our impression from books and films were far from what we now experienced.

Caucasian

In Moves which got us to the fringe of the Caucasus Mountains and to the ^{KALMUKS} steppe south of Stalingrad. ~~at that~~ ~~Kalmuk~~ There we crossed the border into Asia to within 17 Km to Astrakhan on the big inland BAIKAL SEA. Any Soldier can tell you that retreat is the hardest thing to handle and we got plenty of this over the following years. In late Nov 43 the Division was wiped out because covering the retreat of a whole Army with no replenishment of material and manpower. The rest was sent to ^{for replenishing} France with addition of another Panzer Regt formed into a Panzer Division. Again Retreat from the Normandy to the German border. Heavy, 1st war type of stationary battles in the Eifel Mountains. Followed by the battle of Arnhem and the "Battle of the Bulge" In early 45 Retreat from the Rhine River across Germany to the Czechoslovakian border. 15 Times wounded and a few medals is all besides a lot of bad memories what is left of this time. I believe that the saying "you should not talk about it" is wrong. We should tell how bad it was in the hope that it never happen again.

The writer migrated to Australia in 1956 ^{and} in 1958 joined the S/13 VMR after a visit to the unit. Believing that some of the hard earned experience should be passed on to the young troopers. It was also felt that this was in a way a thank you to the country which accepted me as an enemy into their midst. After raising through the ranks to 2nd Lt. transferred from part to fulltime soldiering. Training National Service and Regular Soldiers in Boneville in Infantry and Corp ~~For~~ subjects for the Ordnance Corps. His Platoon won the Col Milford Trophy 13 out of 16 times. After a transfer to Bandiana he filled positions as Vehicle Group offr and Adjutant. He saw service in Viet Nam and was the last soldier ~~at~~ from the local area returning from there. He gets wild if somebody calls him still a bloody New Australian