

APRIL 4, 1945

By Max Lerner:

Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose, Who Didn't Die in Bed

How He Worked And Acted Under Fire — 'Grace Under Pressure'



I write this to those who still cling to the belief that American generals die in bed. They don't.

Last night I got a jolt when I read of the death of Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose of the 3d Armored Division. Today it didn't help any to read the UP dispatch about how he died. He and some of his staff were cut off by a German tank column and made prisoners by a tank crew, and just as he was handing over his gun, the general was shot.

In the army, you see someone for a few hours under conditions of tension. You may never see him again, but you don't easily forget him. You don't need longer than that to recognize a man.

It was on Mar. 6 or 7 that I met Gen. Rose, the day that the 3d Armored took Cologne. I was with Sydney Olson of *Time* and Howard Smith of CBS, and together we drove cautiously down Cologne's main street, looking for someone who could tell us how much of the city had been cleared.

We stopped at a corner, and just then a jeep (or, as the armored divisions insist on calling it, a "peep") drove up, and a two-star general stepped out. He was handsome, brisk, soldierly, and in his middle 40's, which is pretty good for a major-general. We learned afterward that he had come up from the ranks, which is even better. We had some bantering conversation, and I remember his joking with me about an experience I had had a few days before with a brigadier general when the latter had been wounded in a machine gun ambush. We joked back about its being a hell of a war when it was no longer safe to trail with a general.

We watched him and talked with him as he drove about from one part of his task force to another, getting first-hand reports of the fighting, giving orders directly rather than over the radio. Time after time, as he stood in the middle of the street talking with several officers, an ideal target.

But that was the way he operated. And the men told me it made an enormous difference to them to have the division commander sharing their danger.

After the Rhine crossing, with the war moving at a stepped-up breakthrough pace, Gen. Rose was bound to get into danger and trouble. He did. But the kind of general he was is one of the reasons I shall have enduring respect for American combat leadership in this war. Hemingway once defined courage as "grace under pressure." General Rose had it.

How Gen. Rose Met His Death

Gen. Rose's aide, Maj. Robert Ballinger, told how the general was shot to death by a Nazi tank crew Saturday after he was captured.

"I don't understand, I don't understand," Ballinger said Rose shouted when the German tank commander shrieked an order in German to him as he stood beside his peep with his hands above his head. They decided that the German was telling them to disarm. Rose reached down and, taking his holster off over his head, started to toss his gun on the ground. The Nazis then opened with a machine gun and let the general have it through the head.

At Denver, Rabbi Samuel Rose, 89, commented on the death of his son:

"It is well that since this had to be, it happened in the week of Passover. As Jehovah said, 'When I see the blood, I will pass over

Rose of the 3d Armored Division
you.' He spoke not only to the Jews,
but to all peoples, to Americans, to
Germans, to all peoples.

"And so, may Jehovah accept this
sacrifice, and see the blood and pass
over all peoples for their sins, at
this Passover time. For my son's
sake.

"The Jewish people have demon-
strated their love of liberty and
freedom for all peoples since the
days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
and I am proud that they are still
demonstrating it, in the wars of the
world, at this Passover time—in the
deeds and in the death of my son."

PM