

The Intelligencer

Memories, not medals, his legacy

By KATE WILCOX

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He'd rather talk about the time he and his buddies "liberated" a 12-cylinder Mercedes Benz with swastika pennants on the fenders than when his unit liberated concentration camps.

Press him and he might tell you a bit — but just a bit — of what that time was like.

"The women who came out of those camps told us stories that no one could make me repeat," he said. "There were things I saw that I'm not passing on. They're going to die up here," he said, tapping his head.

"I had respect for the Germans for awhile," he said. "Until we liberated the concentration camps. Then the only German I wanted to see was a dead one."

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Three head to court in robbery

A Doylestown Township man, heading home with the night deposit from his store, was attacked in front of his home in March.

By KATE WILCOX

A car jacking probably wasn't the robbery victim's first experience with crime.

After being robbed and beaten in a parking lot in front of the Doylestown Township store, Sack was hospitalized for several days.

The robbery happened on the night of the robbery, with the victim's car jacked and the victim's car jacked.

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Murphy says he'll accept PAC money

Despite a Democratic National Committee ban on PACs and lobbyist money, the local congressman has no plans to change his campaign finance rules.

By KATE WILCOX

Congressman Frank Murphy has never been accused of anything.

But after Bucks County had some very bad news about its campaign financing rules, Murphy says he'll accept PAC money.

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Weather forecast and a small table with weather data.

Article titled 'Rampaging turkey mauls woman' with a sub-headline 'The ornery gobbler's attack ends a Bensalem woman in the emergency room.'

Advertisement for 'SURF'S UP' featuring a yellow sports car and '0% FINANCING' offer from HOLBERTS.

fighting.

Today is the 64th anniversary of the Allied landing in Europe in World War II, better known as D-Day.

“Did I have a sweetheart?” the Northampton Township man said. “I did. She was the girl sitting across the table from me when they were calling our names (for the draft). She looked at me and said, ‘What number are you?’ I was number 108, the second number picked.”

He was in his third year of earning an accounting degree from Camden Commercial College and his sweetheart Frances later became his wife in 1942.

Before the war Sack lived in Collingswood, N.J., and worked for the Bell Telephone Co. After the war, he rejoined Bell and worked there for 40 years. He now lives in Bucks County and had two daughters, one of whom died, four grandchildren and one great-grandson. His grandson, Jesse Campion, recently joined the Rangers and is serving in Iraq.

Sack was drafted Dec. 10, 1940. On Jan. 8, 1941, he entered the service.

After basic training he was sent to Watermill, N.Y., on Long Island with the 113th Infantry. They were stationed there to protect the shore from German saboteurs.

“Then came the fact that we were going overseas,” he said.

Sack volunteered for the Rangers “because of the camaraderie and the closeness of the men in this unit.”

The Rangers are known by their slogan: “Rangers, lead the way.”

This is exactly what they did in battle. Sack was trained to go behind enemy lines to lay communication wires, and to plant booby traps on his way back.

One month before D-Day, Sack went to Achnacarry Castle in Scotland, a British Commando Training Depot.

“We were trained to kill and kill quickly,” is all Sack will say about the commando training. He learned to throw knives and use a garrote.

“We would take a blade of grass to see what degree the wind would blow it,” he said. “Then we learned how to aim according to what way the wind was blowing to get a perfect shot.”

His unit, the 5th Ranger Battalion, landed on Omaha Beach in the second wave of American soldiers under heavy machine-gun fire.

“We were dropped off from LCIs (landing craft infantry) in over 4 feet of water,” he said. “One of the fellows was just about 5 feet tall and he couldn’t swim. So we had to hold his head up out of water while we waded in — complete with a full field pack and life-saving belt, which we proceeded to discard immediately.”

After pushing in over the beach, the next battle was at Cherbourg, a French port city. That battle was the only time Sack came close to being injured.

“While in Cherbourg a sniper tried to shoot me,” he said. “But my friend Fred Olbander, who is now deceased, got him before he could shoot.”

Other than that, despite being in every major battle after the D-Day invasion, Sack was never injured.

“My father always says that he’s not a lucky man,” said his daughter, Kathy Klatzkin of Chalfont. “And then I remind him that the only scratch he got was from jumping into a foxhole.”

At the battle for the French city of Brest, Sack earned his Bronze Star Medal when his unit captured the commander of the German garrison.

He talks about the battles in a matter-of-fact tone, but his blue eyes light up when he gets to stories about Luxembourg. He lived on the second floor of the house of a family that owned a bakery.

“We had fresh bread every day,” he said. This was a far cry from the usual C-rations of vegetable hash and stew.

“At the bar down the street, if you were a GI, the wine was free,” he said. “The bartender would set a glass of wine right in front of you. What are you gonna do? Open your mouth and drink it!”

His unit, the 8th Infantry Division, went through the Battle of the Bulge and helped the British in Operation Market Garden, where British airborne units tried to capture a bridge over the Rhine River at Arnhem, the Netherlands. After the division crossed the Elbe River, it arrived in Ludwigslust, Germany.

Sack’s unit liberated Wobbelin, a satellite camp by Neuengamme, where prisoners were sent from other concentration camps as Allied troops advanced. Neuengamme was where Dr. Ludwig-Werner Haase performed medical experiments on the prisoners.

“Toward the end of the war, we entered the town of Schwerin, Germany,” said Sack. “There we ‘acquired’ a 12-cylinder Mercedes Benz with purple velvet plush upholstery. It had five speeds and two reverse. We never worried about how many miles to the gallon. This car became the personal property of our unit until we left Europe.”

Telling the story Herman Sack appeared to be almost a boyish, troublemaking 27-year-old again.

“I’m glad I was a part of it,” said Sack. “But I’m not glad for what happened afterwards — the memories.”

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