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The Last Shot and the End of the War

The war ended for me in Frankfurt, May 1945. I was in Langen, Germany, near Frankfurt. They sent me to a hospital in Langen. I don't know why. In that hospital there were Germans and Americans, Russians and all kinds of wounded soldiers. The nurses were friendly with us. They taught us how to sing "Lili Marlene" and asked us to teach them how to sing, "Deep in the Heart of Texas." They only examined me. Then the officer said, "Goss, you go out to the gate and stand guard." The war is now over. The lights are turned on in the town. He said, "You stand guard and make sure nobody comes in or goes out." There were about three of us there at the gate sitting on the bank. There were pretty hedges and grass was growing there. Way off in the distance I saw a power station with a big transformer hanging on it. And I said to the guys, "Do you want to see the lights go out in town?" I put an AP in my rifle and shot at the transformer on the tower. The whole thing started shooting sparks and the lights over the town started to blink and go out one by one. I could see in the darkness the lights blinking off, like drops of dripping water. The lights all went out. I didn't know that there was a German behind me watching. He was all bandaged up from being wounded. He said, "Das ist gute Shiessen!"

From there I went back to camp. I went AWOL (Absent Without Leave) a couple days. When I got back to camp they said, "What is the password." I didn't have a password so I jumped in the back of the next truck going into camp. When I got in, they said, "Hey, Goss! They called your name. You're supposed to ship out today!" So I went in, packed my duffle bag and made it that morning to the truck. They took me to the field where the guys were waiting to ship out. I put up my pup tent and slept in that field for about a week. Lots of guys in tents. The war is over. They put us in a truck and we went to Le Havre, France. We got in a flat bottomed boat called the "Liberty Ship" headed for Norfolk, Virginia. We slept three men to a bunk, each sharing the same bunk for eight hours. Instead of sleeping in the bunk I went up on deck and crawled up into a life boat and slept there, swaying back and forth watching the moon and stars. It took us seven days to sail home. When we arrived in Norfolk they took us to Camp Lucky Strike. I got a leave and took a train to Pittsburgh and called my dad from the Pittsburgh train

station. The phone rang and my mother answered the phone. It was very early in the morning. I said, "I want to speak to Eddy Goss." She said, "OK, just a minute." Pap got on the phone. I said, "Hello Pap, this is Warren. Come down to the station and pick me up." He said, "My Warren is in France. He's not here." I said, "I'm here now Pap." He still didn't believe me. He said, "Where do you live?" I told him. He said, "I'll be right down." He came to the station to pick me up. I'll never forget that. While I was waiting for him, I went into the White Tower Coffee shop in Pittsburgh. There were about three soldiers in there. I had a hamburger and when I went to pay for it the guy said, "It's all paid for. That lady who just left paid for everybody." I didn't know who she was.

When I got home the fight started again with me and my old man. At that time I wasn't fully discharged from the army, I was still on leave. I had received my papers to go fight the Japs. After my leave I was supposed to get back on a ship headed for Japan. When my leave was up I went back to camp. Then they gave me one more leave to go home. After my second leave, I was walking up Scott Avenue to return again, crying like a baby. I knew I couldn't do it again. I couldn't fight anymore. Then the bomb was dropped on Japan and my war was over.