

### SOLDIERS THAT PASS IN THE NIGHT

*"Ships that pass in the night and speak each other in passing, only a signal shown, and a distant voice in the darkness. So on the ocean of life, we pass and speak one another, only a look and a voice, then darkness again and a silence."*  
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

We had been chasing the German's all day. Now we were dug in the middle of a forest through which a road wandered leading to a cluster of buildings some half-mile ahead.

A patrol was ordered to investigate whether or not the Germans were posted in the village, or had retreated further on.

The third platoon Corporal was to lead Classy and me to survey the place looking for roadblocks and any signs of the Germans.

It was, thankfully, a dark, dark night with cloudy skies, no moon or even starlight.

It took nearly an hour, moving slowly, cautiously, and as silently as possible through the edge of the woods along the road. The small clearing with its cluster of buildings looked wholly destitute, a dozen or so dark and silent small shapes.

We slowly, slowly circled the place spying on it from just inside the edge of the surrounding forest. Everything seemed deserted with absolutely no sign of life. We were pretty much convinced the place was empty.

The Corporal said that he and Classy would stay on the entrance road as cover and backup, while I was to enter and examine some of the buildings close up.

I inched my way forward along the road into the village until I reached the first building. I tried to peer into a window, but there was nothing but black darkness and dead silence.

Encouraged that all was serene, I edged forward to the next building, groping my way in the dark. It, too, was as silent and deserted.

So, on to the next one. Nothing there to see or hear either. I thought I'd try one more before heading back.

OOOF! I bumped into something.  
Paralyzed, I didn't move.  
I stopped breathing. I broke out in a cold sweat.  
There was the black shape standing directly before me. I could just discern what looked like a German helmet  
We both stood there ---silent, motionless---frozen in time and space.  
Then, without a word, we each took a step back and turned away.  
Slowly at first, then with increasing speed, I headed back down the road. As I dashed by my comrades I gasped, "There's a German patrol in there!"  
All three of us tore on down the road back towards camp as fast as we could go.

I will forever thank my lucky stars that that German soldier must have been just as surprised and scared as I was and that we both had chosen discretion as the better part of valor.

After we reported to the Sergeant, I sought out the supply clerk and told him I urgently needed a clean pair of underwear pants.

CLFulton  
10/1/05

ONE-OH- THREE

In World War Two our skills were tried  
The ONE-OH-THREE of Cactus pride.  
Through bitter cold and winter snow  
Dodging bullets we fought the foe.

Through Vosges Mountains from St. Die (San DeAy)  
We fought the Germans all the way.  
On through Alsace---that Seigfried wall---  
The ONE-OH-THREE would do it all.

Five hundred miles we mountaineered;  
In our memories war was seared.  
We fought and died. We fought and won.  
We fought until the war was done.

We thank Thee, Lord, for our reprieve.  
For comrades lost we still will grieve.  
Now sixty years that war is gone,  
But those memories linger on.

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