

It is not known the exact number of medals awarded for valor during WW II, but it is a definite fact that the number is far lower than it should be.

air force crews flew ~~on~~ missions after mission with only a 50-50 chance of returning. sailors went into battle overwhelmingly outnumbered. Infantry repeatedly advanced against an invisible enemy.

as a replacement, I joined 4th Infantry Division during the Bo

of Normandy. That part of the country was divided into rectangles by earthen hedgerows with years of brush growing on the tops. The brush made the German Enemy invisible to foot soldiers advancing across open fields. As a result, during the month that I was with the 4th Div., our 100 man squad suffered 300 casualties. As replacements poured in, they soon agreed with the general feeling that it wasn't a question of "if" you were going to get hit,

when, and how badly.

One night our squad occupied a hedgerow in an advanced position with no friendly forces on either side. Consequently guards had to be posted on both sides to prevent surprise flanking attacks. At the right end of the forward hedgerow was an opening to allow passage of farm wagons. A German machine gun had been firing periodically during the night with no effect due to darkness. It became obvious that

come daylight, the 2 right flank guards, posted near the opening, would become clearly visible, and easy targets. I was aware of our situation and was fairly certain my companion was also, but neither one mentioned it. In the morning, the gunner spotted the target and opened fire. My friend was hit in the arm and I was hit in the legs.

The pertinent question arises, why were we willing to expose ourselves

to certain injury or worse? We were not suicidal, nor did we consider our actions heroic. The factual answer in this particular case is, that if we had left our post and taken shelter, a surprise enemy flanking attack could have wiped out our squad.

I believe this basic principle applies to the actions of most G.I.s in combat. Failure to obey order in combat results in serious consequences; however, a much

greater motivation was the know-
that, if failure to perform
duty resulted in unit casualties,
the personal guilt feelings and
contempt of friends would be dea-
This, according to my thinking,
the reason for the extreme rarity
of cowardice or neglect of duty
recorded for millions of servicemen
from all walks of life.

In my mind, the question is
How can peaceful American citizens,
whose main pursuit is comfort and

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luxury, become aggressive
combatants, risking life and limb
without hesitation. In my case,
before going over-seas, I had married
the love of my life, and we had a child
on the way, but when ^{considering} ~~taking on~~ ~~advertising~~ ~~taking on~~
the constant risks of mortal combat
these things did not seem to
seem to take a back seat
~~consideration. That issue~~

For many years after the
of WWII, combat was not talked
about, or even thought about, we
tried to forget it. Somehow, howe

the subject seems to have re-surfaced. Now, more than years later, a memorial has started.

Today, the complete reversal in a persons feelings, actions, ~~and~~ ^{personality} conduct is beyond understanding.

A psychologist might have an explanation, but this beat-up we is still wondering.