



JAY SOWERS • The Lima News

Lima resident Elliott Rose talks last week at his Lima home about his experiences serving in the Army in World War II and the Air Force in Korea.

Soldier recalls fight for Ludendorff Bridge

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LIMA — As a 19-year-old soldier during World War II's decisive Battle of the Bulge, Elliott Rose was pretty close to unfolding bits of history — so close at times, he nearly became history himself.

Times such as March 1945. By then, the Germans' 3-month-old Ardennes offensive into Belgium had collapsed, and the Allied forces launched a counteroffensive. Rose's unit, the Army's 284th Engineer Combat Battalion, was among the Americans chasing the Germans out of Belgium when they arrived at Ludendorff Bridge in the city of Remagen, the last remaining bridge across the Rhine River. The retreating Germans had destroyed all the others hoping to thwart the Allies' advance on Berlin.

"It was a railroad bridge, and the Germans didn't get to blow it in time," said Rose, now 86, during a recent interview at his home in Shawnee Township. "The first thing our guys did when they got

SALUTE TO VETERANS

Veterans from World War II and Korea are recognized in the Salute to Veterans column that is published Mondays. To suggest a story, call The Lima News at 419-993-2058 or email info@limanews.com.

there, they started pulling all the wires' attached to the explosives.

The Americans hastily set up defenses and began reinforcing the bridge. All the while, they fended off desperate attempts by the Germans — soldiers, jet fighters, even a band of scuba divers — to destroy it. They also set up pontoon bridges alongside to transfer more troops and supplies — good thing, because the Ludendorff Bridge did fall 10 days later.

Rose's unit was assigned to make sure the road to the bridge remained passable. They also patrolled the riverbank, trading fire with German troops on the