

A Coincidence?

by Ralph Hudspeth, 398-HQ 3d Battalion

Prior to going overseas, on furlough I went to say goodbye to my father-in-law, Henry Johns, who was Superintendent of the Ordnance at Carnegie-Illinois Steel Co., in Farrell, Pa., during the war. Carnegie-Illinois Steel made army tanks for Chrysler Motors.

Mr. Johns introduced me to Colonel Fould, who had been in charge of the Vichy Arsenal on the Saar River front in France, and who now worked with Mr. Johns in his office. France had capitulated to Germany and Colonel Fould had been forced to leave his country. He had connections with Carnegie-Illinois Steel Co., and had agreed to work for the company if he could come to the U.S., because his wife was an American.

Colonel Fould asked me that if I were shipped to France with my unit, would I please look for his two sons. They were captains in the French Army and had gone underground after France surrendered to Germany. Colonel Fould had not heard from his sons for some time.

As time passed, I questioned any Frenchman I met if they knew of Captain Fould, but no one seemed to have any information. My platoon was stationed at a bridge crossing the Neckar River, and I was told to hold it until the Free French Army arrived. When the Free French Army arrived, I invited the French officer over to my Platoon Headquarters. After exchanging proposed tactics, I asked the French officer if he knew of a Captain Fould. The French officer answered, "Are you kidding—I'm Captain Fould!"

He showed his identification papers to verify and told me that his brother was executed by the Nazis early in 1944 after he was captured while serving with the French forces of the Interior. He, himself, was arrested by the Gestapo in October 1943, but he escaped and joined the Free French Army.

I notified my father-in-law to tell Colonel Fould about his sons. It seemed like a miracle that I would have that chance meeting with Colonel Fould's son.

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