

and Section Leader in action against superior forces: on the night of 26 Feb., '44 and on the night of 5 May, '44.

The second of these actions occurred at about 11 P.M., two miles north of Rantan Island, just off Bougainville. Raymond's boat, leading the section he was commanding, opened fire on two Japanese barges, and was in turn attacked, from another direction, by two more barges, very heavily armed, that had apparently been lying in wait. At the same time, two or more enemy shore batteries on Bougainville opened fire. While the other two PT boats of the section were coming up, Raymond's boat sustained a direct hit at or near the gasoline tank and burst into flames. The inevitable explosion was delayed, it is believed approximately two minutes, by the engineer's pulling the lever that released the fire extinguishing equipment. Raymond gave the order "Abandon ship." Another shell struck the mast, which fell, critically wounding the boat's executive officer, who later died, after being rescued from the sea. All hands had gone over the side on receiving Raymond's order; none saw him leave the boat. He was last seen walking aft, apparently uninjured, to a point abaft amidships.

The boat then exploded, and disappeared completely. It had drifted far enough so that the men in the water were not injured by the concussion. Flaming gasoline was spread on the surrounding water. The other two boats of the section drove off the second pair of Japanese barges (the first pair had either sunk or fled), in an action lasting fifteen minutes, then returned and picked up all the officers and men of Raymond's boat, except Raymond. An area of two square miles was searched that night for three hours by four PT boats, the two of Raymond's section and two from another squadron. At dawn next day the search was resumed by a flying boat under fighter escort. No sign of Raymond was found either in the water or on the beaches near the scene of the action.



DEVERE OLIVER THOMPSON

1936

On graduating in 1940 from Harvard, where he had taken the military training course in artillery, DeVere Thompson, returning to Des Moines, spent much of the summer studying military courses given him by officers of the Iowa National Guard (168th Infantry), which he joined in October. He was commissioned Second Lieutenant, in February, 1941, and transferred to Camp Claiborne, La. Then he went to Fort Benning, Ga., for Officers' Training School and, on graduating, returned to his regiment at Camp Claiborne for field maneuvers. In January, he was ordered to Fort Dix, N. J., and in March, 1942, sent to North Ireland and promoted First Lieutenant. He next spent several months in Scotland with a British-American commando group, preparing for the North African invasion.

About a month after he had landed near Algiers, in the course of a commando raid by a special service brigade consisting of 400 British troops and 200 American, Thompson and the 62 men he commanded were sent ahead to cut German communications between Bizerte and Tunis by holding a bridge and highway over a canal. Eight miles from their objective, this small detachment of Thompson's encountered a superior German force supported by tanks and artillery. Later that day, December 1, 1942, Thompson and a corporal, who had gone ahead to reconnoitre, ran into an ambush in a scrubbed gully and were captured by some Germans of the Afrika Korps.

For nearly ten months, Thompson was a prisoner of war. The Germans flew him in a Junkers transport plane from Africa to Pa-

lermo, in Sicily. After a month in a transit camp near Naples, where he was turned over to the Italians, he was taken to Chieti, near Pescara, and there interned, with about 1200 other officers, British and American, and 400 enlisted men, in Campo Concentramento 21. At the time of the Italian armistice, the Germans took over the camp, to make sure that the prisoners were not liberated. They took the prisoners to another camp. From there, in September, Thompson succeeded in escaping and in making his way South, through the German lines, to his own army, which he rejoined October 31. He was flown back to this country, reaching home November 16, 1943.

He was next sent to Camp Grant, Ill. On February 6, he was assigned to Fort Benning as instructor in the Weapons Section of the Infantry School. He was fatally injured at Fort Benning, April 15, 1944, and died three days later.

It was characteristic of De Vere Thompson that when he got home from Italy, still thin and worn from his captivity and the month of extreme hardship he had endured during his escape, he should have given a long interview to the *Des Moines Tribune*, describing conditions in his prison camp in such a way as to reassure and encourage relatives of fellow Iowans captured during the African campaign, and then that he should have spent hours at the telephone replying to inquiries. As a boy at St. Paul's, he was already known for his quiet tenacity of purpose, for his cheerfulness and warmth of heart.