



Soldiering For Freedom: A GI's Account Of World War II (Texas A & M University Military History Series)

Herman J. Obermayer

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Only a small percentage of the sixteen million servicemen called up during World War II saw front-line service. For the others, war involved training, reinforcement depots, tedious assignments, and lots of waiting. Herman J. Obermayer was one of those who earned a combat star without ever coming close enough to a battlefield to hear or see booming guns. Nonetheless, his letters then, and his reflection on them now, reveal important aspects of the war and the wartime world. From school, from basic training, and later from Europe, Obermayer wrote home with vivid descriptions of life in the Army. Reflective and observant, he recorded his views of both French and German reactions to the American occupation force, race relations among enlisted men, and the problems of supplying the troops as they crossed Europe after the Normandy invasion. One of the few people alive today to have seen Hermann Goering, Rudolf Hess, and other leaders of Third Reich, Obermayer wrote compellingly about the Nazis on trial at Nuremberg, describing Goering's leadership qualities when stripped of the symbols of rank. A Jew himself, Obermayer explained his reactions at the trials when he witnessed the first documentary confirmation that six million Jews had been killed in the Holocaust. He knew and wrote about the official U.S. Army hangman at Nuremberg. Readers will find in Obermayer's letters and connective commentary a welcome tendency to look for what went on beneath the surface, a challenging view of how his experiences cast light on today's politics and issues, and an engrossingly human story of war behind the lines.



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