

Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander. By Steven L. Ossad and Don R. Marsh. Lanham, Md.: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2003. ISBN 0-87833-308-8. Maps. Photographs. Illustrations. Notes. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xxiv, 436. \$27.95.

As distinguished historian Martin Blumenson notes in his Foreword, Steven Ossad and veteran Don Marsh have written a biography of General Maurice Rose, the famed American armor commander, "with sensitivity and skill" (p. xii). Rose was raised in Denver, the son of a Jewish businessman (and later rabbi). After serving in World War I, he decided to make a career in the Army and gained distinction in World War II by commanding Combat Command A of the 2nd Armored Division in Sicily and in Normandy, and then serving as Commanding General of the 3rd "Spearhead" Armored Division after the breakout.

Rose was a taciturn and aloof commander, and wore Pattonesque riding breeches and boots, but his subordinates and superiors recognized his abilities and aggressiveness. The 2nd and 3rd were the most powerful U.S. armored divisions, although this was because they retained the tank-heavy regimental organization while later divisions had been reorganized into more balanced battalion units. This led to routinely attaching an infantry regiment for operations but also to detaching combat commands, and, in the Ardennes, Rose was frustrated for several critical days when less than a third of his division was under his control.

Across the Rhine, Rose's division led the VII Corps drive to encircle the Ruhr, and it was near Paderborn that the General was shot down by a German tank commander (of the 507th Königstiger Battalion) in the darkness of 30 March 1945. After exhaustive research, including deductions from the autopsy report and despite inconsistencies, the authors conclude that Rose had dropped his pistol belt and was raising his hands in surrender a second time when he was gunned down. While the Army's investigation concluded that Rose was killed in the confusion of battle, the authors argue "The shooting was unprovoked, deliberate . . . murder" (p. 344).

Rose was hailed as a hero, especially by the Jewish community of Denver, and a subsequent fund-raising campaign there resulted in building the General Rose Memorial Hospital—marred briefly by a dispute about Rose's religious preference. Despite his background, and perhaps sensing possible career discrimination, Rose always listed himself as a Protestant. His first wife was a Mormon, his second an Episcopalian, and religion was not of particular importance to him. He is interred in the U.S. Military Cemetery at Margraten, The Netherlands, under a Latin cross.


Ossad and Marsh have written a discerning work, though some hyperbole creeps in, as, for example, writing that the second Battle of Mons (September 1944) "echoes the fabled victory of Hannibal over the Romans at Cannae" (p. xviii), and the book's subtitle "World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander" might surprise most students of that conflict. Rose's personality is a bit sketchy, if only because of a paucity of written materials. He was killed before he might have drawn conclusions about armored warfare, though Appendix III gives his views about the inadequacies of the M4 and M5 tanks. Nonetheless, Maurice Rose's operations themselves demonstrate the abilities of this aggressive armor commander. This biography gives a fuller sense of the man himself.

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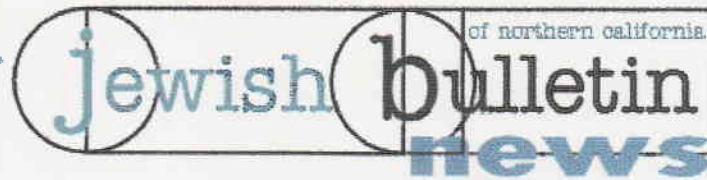
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Tales of bravery and mystery surround WWII Jewish general

DAN PINE

Bulletin Staff

Ike. Patton. MacArthur. They're America's great and gritty generals of World War II. But the list is short a name: Maj. Gen. Maurice Rose, one of the war's unsung heroes and its highest-ranking Jewish military leader.

If Rose and his accomplishments have been neglected (at least as far as the public is concerned), Steven Ossad hopes to hoist the general's banner high with a new authoritative biography.

"Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Forgotten Commander" was a six-year labor of love for Ossad, a San Francisco-based amateur military historian. The meticulously researched and footnoted book follows Rose's career from his Orthodox roots in Colorado, through his exemplary service in World War I, to his exploits fighting the original Axis of Evil across Europe and North Africa.

Most intriguingly, Ossad and his co-author, Don R. Marsh, explore in detail Rose's mysterious martyr's death at the hands of the Germans in the war's waning days.

"It's a military biography of an unknown but intensely interesting hero cut down in his peak," says Ossad, who is also Jewish. "He used up more than twice his nine lives, but he was incapable of sitting back at headquarters. Some considered it foolhardy, but he wanted to be there."

He was there, leading his 3rd Armored Division from one key battle to the next. Among Rose's significant achievements: negotiating the 1943 German surrender in Tunisia; saving the 506th Parachute Infantry (of "Band of Brothers" fame) at the Battle of Carentan; playing a pivotal role at the Battle of the Bulge; and, most impressively, executing the greatest encirclement battle in American history by capturing 360,000 German soldiers in the "Ruhr Pocket," later renamed "The Rose Pocket."

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"Whatever the sphere of activity, the accepted rules for how to proceed don't always apply," says Ossad of Rose's spectacular career. "There are no limits to a man who's driven and lucky."

Ossad's interest in Rose is no midlife whim. His passion for military history can be traced back to his New Jersey boyhood.

"We were surrounded by returning soldiers," he remembers of his youth, "at a time when patriotism was embraced." During World War II, Ossad's father was an officer in the Medical Administration and his uncles had all fought in Europe.

"I used to sit in synagogue as a boy," he adds, "and my dad would point out the vets. Mr. Kaufman flew a Corsair, his brother was in a sub, Mr. Simkin lost a leg in the Battle of the Bulge."

Around the time of Ossad's bar mitzvah, he came across a comic book about a famous Jewish general in World War II, killed while surrendering. That was his first encounter with Gen. Rose, but not the last.

Years later, as a junior in college, he happened on a book about famous Jews of the WWII era, among them Rose.

Fast-forward another 26 years. Ossad is a successful stock analyst living in the Bay Area. On a business trip to Denver, he came across a hospital named for Rose. The lifelong close encounters proved too seductive, and Ossad finally contacted Jeff Rose, the late general's grandnephew.

At their meeting, the younger Rose took out a collection of memorabilia, which included the very same Maurice Rose comic book Ossad owned as a child. "It was too weird to ignore," he says. In short order, he decided to write a biography of the general.

Ossad went on to contact vets of the 3rd Armored Division. "I went to a 1995 reunion at Valley Forge," he recalls. "There was huge esprit de corps there. They showed me photos, books, clips, shared their memories."

With his background in research, Ossad was ready to charge. But there were few primary resources. Rose was a taciturn man who left a relatively skimpy written record, and his descendants were not 100 percent cooperative.

But he did piece the story together, even traversing the same 930 miles of battleground covered by Rose. He also met a veteran from the 2nd Armored Division, Don R. Marsh, who fought with Rose and had an abiding respect for the late general. He became Ossad's co-author.

Among his conclusions, "The more you get to know him the less inclined one is to love him," says Ossad of Rose. "There was a coldness, a distance." The only one really close to Rose was his widow Virginia, now long dead. Rose's letters to her, a potentially rich source of information, were never made

available.

As for the general's Jewish past, it seems Rose just as soon wanted to forget about it.

"We never found evidence he formally converted," says Ossad, "however he did make declarations as a Christian. He wanted to be a soldier, and he realized he'd never rise to high levels if he were an open Jew."

Rose died March 30, 1945, on the road to Paderborn, Germany, shortly after being captured. With such a high-ranking soldier having been cut down in darkness, and few eyewitnesses, a subsequent war crimes investigation ensued, but many questions remain. He is buried in a U.S. military cemetery in Margraten, Holland.

Ossad is now hard at work on a biography of General Omar Bradley. But Rose will always hold a place of special fascination for him.

"Here's a man in the world of the professional army," says Ossad. "He didn't go to college or West Point; he was Jewish, yet he went from private to general. Rose was born a Jew, and he died a Jew."

"Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Forgotten Commander" by Steven L. Ossad and Don R. Marsh (432 pages, Taylor Trade Publishing, \$27.95).

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Paul DeGaeta — Sep 04, 2003

Some late-summer reading

At the risk of sounding "Oprah-esque," I'd like to recommend a couple of books that have come across my desk recently that might make for some late-summer vacation reading.

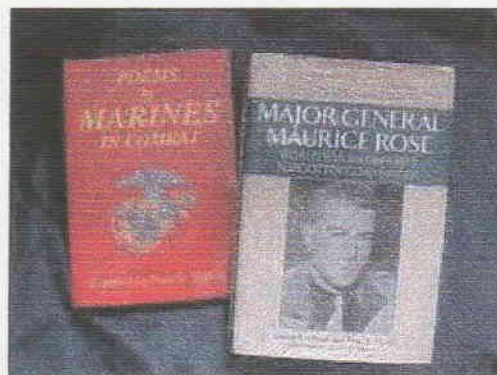
"Poems by Marines in Combat" was compiled by Nancie Saxton of Port Charlotte, who grew up in a Marine Corps home. The Marine Corps, we know, is a very proud service. You never refer to a Marine as an ex-Marine or former Marine because they consider themselves Marines for life. Some of that perspective undoubtedly rubbed off on Nancie, whose father, Richard E. Saxton, served in the 1st and 2nd Marine Divisions, which fought in the Korean War.

Nancie credits her father and a boyfriend, Cpl. Michael P. Prikril, as her inspiration for the book. Prikril's Marine Corps experience came during the Vietnam War.

"Even though I was raised by a Marine and always knew that war was an ugly thing, it didn't hit me as to how ugly war really is until I read Mike's poems," Nancie said. "Mike's poems touched me in such a way that I felt they should be published. Unfortunately, he had only written 10 poems, which was not enough to create a book.

"After a few years, I finally came up with the idea to collect more poems so there would be enough," she said. "The feelings and thoughts of all these Marines are so real, it can't help but touch you right in your heart."

Many of the poems, from World War I through the Gulf War, are intense. Others are whimsical, like one titled "Conscience Lost," in which a Marine buries his conscience in a fruit jar on his parents' farm to remain there until he returns home



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CORRESPONDENT / PAUL DEGAETA
Two new books might appeal to both history lovers and poetry aficionados.

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from the war.

When he gets home, he finds the farm has been sold. On his way to retrieve the jar, he encounters a pretty girl and thinks twice. The poem is a quirky anthem to those forced to grow up in a hurry. Nancie Saxton's book (207 pages) is available for \$22.95 from Nancie Saxton, P.O. Box 495118, Port Charlotte, FL 33949.

"Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander" might appeal to the many World War II armored division veterans in our area, some of whom have been featured in this column. The book, written by Steven L. Ossad and Don R. Marsh, explores a controversial incident in World War II history -- the circumstances that led to the battlefield death of Maurice Rose, commander of the 3rd Armored Division.

Rose was one of the top armored division commanders of World War II. He is perhaps best remembered as the general who commanded the longest single-day armored advance of the last century when he drove more than 100 miles in a push through Germany.

Rose negotiated and took the first large-scale surrender of German forces in Tunisia in 1943. He helped relieve the 101st Airborne Division's 506th Parachute Infantry at Carentan after the Normandy Invasion. His outfit fought valiantly during the Battle of the Bulge, and his forces led the encirclement of the Ruhr Pocket, which resulted in the capture of 350,000 enemy troops.

Rose wasn't a general who commanded from the rear. In fact, he bested a German soldier in a point-blank shoot-out and took several prisoners when his command jeep accidentally came across them emerging from the woods.

Some suggest that Rose, the son of a Jewish rabbi, took it upon himself to be an avenging angel of sorts against the Nazis, and that is what drove him.

On the evening of March 30, 1945, near Paderborn, Germany, a tank column Rose was leading was ambushed by a superior force. Attempting to make it to a flanking column, Rose's jeep crashed against a Tiger Tank in a narrow part of the road.

A German tanker opened the turret, aimed a machine pistol at Rose and two aides and began screaming at them. The men raised their hands. What happened next -- the tanker opening fire and killing Rose -- is thoroughly explored in this book. Even German veterans who were involved in the battle that night have been interviewed.

Rose became the highest-ranking Jewish officer ever killed in battle. The incident even sparked a war crimes investigation. This book and its findings might be considered the final chapter in the investigation.

"Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander" is a well-researched book about the tragic loss of an American hero in the waning moments of World War II. The book is available for \$27.95 online at Booksamillion.com or Amazon.com.

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HILLEL GOLDBERG: VIEW FROM DENVER

After 58 years, the truth about Gen. Maurice Rose

The most enduring and fruitful name in the Denver Jewish community is Rose. Rose Medical Center has treated tens of thousands of Jews and served hundreds of Jewish doctors, and continues to do so. The sale of the hospital in 1995 yielded Rose Community Foundation, an undreamt of financial boon. But who was Rose?

The life of Major Gen. Maurice Rose is, in critical respects, shrouded in mystery, even in hushed tones of scandal. Was he fit to be the namesake for a Jewish hospital? Did he abandon Judaism? Was he an apostate?

Rose's life is identified with dramatic heroism. Rose was widely regarded at the time of his death at 45 in 1945 as the highest ranking Jew ever to give his life for the US. A resident of Denver from the time he was one, a graduate of East High School, a son of Rabbi Samuel Rose, Maurice Rose was described by no less than Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower as one of the most effective warriors in WW II.

Stoking the Rose legend was his ramrod appearance at 6 feet, 3 inches, 185 pounds, his face shaven twice daily, his fearlessness in battle. Once when he was wounded, he refused to be evacuated and resumed fighting. Another time he escaped from the hospital to get back to battle.

A captain who served under Rose told the *IJN* shortly after his death in 1945, "Even when he fought thru mud and sleet, Rose always managed to look clean and well-groomed. Occasionally, he would fine a sol-

dier for infractions of dress regulations. For talking to a German civilian, violators were fined \$60. For being out of their uniform, officers were fined \$20, enlisted men \$10. For not wearing their steel helmet the fine was \$10. For jackets not being buttoned or zipped, the fine was \$5. Fines went to the Red Cross."

To this day, Rose's 3rd Armored Division holds a record. It should have special resonance with the nation at war in Iraq. Rose advanced his armored division against the Germans 92 miles in a single day (compare to the 10-mile or 30-mile advances in Iraq). This was the longest, enemy-opposed armored drive in history. In WW II, Rose's "Spearhead" division was the first to cross the German border, the first to take a German town, the first to breach the Siegfried line, the first to shoot down an enemy plane from German soil. Many called Rose the finest armored division commander in the US Army. He was neither a college graduate nor a graduate of West Point, but his skills, including a near photographic memory, and his personal courage in battle took him to the top.

Rose was killed in Paderborn, Germany, March 30, 1945. He was the "spearhead" of his Spearhead division. Unlike most generals, who commanded from the rear, Rose wouldn't ask his men to do anything he himself wouldn't do. He commanded from the front. He was his own scout and forward observer. Known for extraordinary bravery, Rose was suddenly surrounded on the march to Berlin. Rose surrendered, but a German teenager shot him point blank in the head.

This, then, was Rose's heroism.

This is the controversy: Was Rose really the highest ranking "Jewish" officer to give his life for this country?

He was born Jewish, to be sure. He was Bar Mitzvah at BMH, back when it was located on 24th and Curtis Sts. When one of his sons was born, Rose had him circumcised. Yet, rumors swirled about Gen. Rose. Had he converted to Christianity? Why was a cross placed over his grave after his tragic death near war's end? Why was a Jewish star, which an intrepid chaplain placed on his grave in place of the cross, then taken down? Why does the cross stand over his grave to this day?

More pertinent questions: How did this Jewish community build a hospital to memorialize its most famous native son if he had renounced his faith?

Most of these questions, which have quietly surfaced without resolution since his death 58 years ago, now have a definitive answer. A biography of Maurice Rose, *Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander*, is about to be published by Taylor Trade Publishing. The authors are Steven L. Ossad and Don R. Marsh. The publishers sent the *IJN* a pre-publication copy.

The authors have admirably scoured the military archives and other pertinent documents (one of which is the *IJN*, which provides virtually all the information for the chapter on Rose's family background



Maurice Rose as he went off to war in WW I. Picture is taken from the *IJN*, May 3, 1945.

and early life). Appropriately, most of the book is dedicated to Rose's military exploits.

The authors argue that Rose's victory in the second Battle of Mons "can be compared to the highest achievements of arms, and echoes the fabled victory of Hannibal over the Romans at Cannae." Rose met his death at the "tip of the lance," at the last moment in the greatest encirclement battle in American history, with 350,000 enemy troops captured. The encirclement, the "Ruhr Pocket," was renamed the "Rose Pocket" in Rose's honor — the only major battle in WW II to be named for an American general.

How could this fearless warrior have died so ignominiously? Has the story been doctored? In fact, an official war crimes investigation into his death was the only such inquiry into the death of an American general in US history, say the authors.

"How could this 'bullet proof' warrior of undeniable courage, who was oblivious to sniper rounds and who crossed bridges that should have blown up under him, get himself shot while surrendering? What is the answer? And not just to the question, how, but also why?

"Perfidious adversary? Cold-blooded killer? Friction of war? Nervous soldier with an itchy trigger finger? A sudden jolt of a tank that triggered an accidental stream of bullets?"

The authors are obsessed with these questions, attentive to every military twist in Rose's storied career. It is surely a legitimate focus, for Rose, "like thousands of others, whom he led to glory... sleeps under a marble cross on foreign soil drenched and liberated by the blood of Americans, some of whom — fewer every day — still walk amongst us unrecognized as giants."

Patriotism and heroism legitimately dominate the book, but it is the telltale "under a marble cross" that concerned the Denver Jewish community as it built a public hospital in his memory. To this, too, the authors turn their careful attention.

The subject was touchy indeed. An unsigned news story of June 14, 1945 in the **IJN**, then under the editorship of the late Robert Gamzey, included this sentence: "This information should forever silence idle tongues and malicious rumor-mongers."

The information was a letter by Rabbi Benjamin J. Elefant* that he had taken down the cross over Rose's temporary grave in Ittenbach, Germany, and replaced it with a Jewish star.

The "idle tongues and malicious rumor-mongers" had claimed that Rose had converted to Christianity. What better evidence than a cross over his grave?

The authors carefully unravel the complexities of Rose's religious identity, of his parents' and his brother's anguish, of his second wife's relation to the Rose family, and of an extraordinary war of conscience between two Jewish chaplains in the European theater. What better sign of the irony and touchiness of the Gen. Rose saga than the double memorial held for him in Denver? The first memorial — the only one mentioned in the **IJN** of that week — was on the eighth day of Passover, some five days after Rose was killed.

It was held at BMH under the guidance of Rabbi C. E. Hillel Kauvar, who had officiated at Maurice Rose's Bar Mitzvah. On the same day, a memorial service was held in the Chapel of the Cathedral, attended by Rose's wife, Virginia, an Episcopalian, and by many of her Christian friends.

Who was Maurice Rose, a Jew or an Episcopalian?

* The **IJN**, June 14, 1945, reprinted the actual postcard sent by Rabbi Elefant's parents, who identify him as Benjamin. The book identifies the rabbi as Abraham, apparently in error.

Rose's grandfather, according to the family history taken down by Robert Gamzey and published in a four-part series in the **IJN** immediately after Rose's death, was a rabbi.

Rose's father, born in 1855, had a hankering to be a soldier, but that never came to be in Eastern Europe. He left Europe, married Katy Brown, went to Connecticut, where both their sons were born. They came to Denver in 1900. Samuel Rose was a dandy who opened a dress design shop on Broadway and attracted the attention of Frederick Bonfils, publisher of the **Denver Post**. The two became fast friends. It was the **Post** (as well as the **Rocky Mountain News**) that later did so much to construct the Gen. Rose legend.

Samuel Rose was an observant Jew, active in the BMH until it moved from 24th and Curtis to 16th and Gaylord in 1919. Sam Rose became part of the congregation organized in the location the BMH had left. This was Beth Joseph. It voted Samuel Rose the title "rabbi" in 1925, apparently out of respect for his piety and learning. He performed weddings for congregants.

Maurice Rose was a fearless lad who once grabbed a gun and used it for target practice — he was eight. He was fascinated by weapons and read widely on wars. When he was only 16, he signed up, lying about his age. He parents retrieved him, but a year later they gave him permission. With the US entrance into WW I, Maurice Rose was one of the first to volunteer from Denver.

His enthusiasm, height, striking appearance, fine oratorical skills, keen intelligence and wide reading took him far, fast. Highly motivated, soon he was overseas, fighting in Europe. Of the 90 medals of honor awarded to men in Army ground units in WW I, nine were awarded to men of his division. Only 18 years old in September, 1918, both Rose and his parents underwent shattering experiences, those of the one unknown to the other.

His parents received the dreaded War Department telegram. "We regret to inform you that your son, Lt. Maurice Rose, has been killed in action." It was a mistake, but the parents didn't know that for two or three weeks. Meanwhile, Rose had been wounded and was hospitalized. There, he declared himself to Captain D. A. Thom of the Medical Corps that he was a Protestant. He made five more such declarations (in 1923, 1927, 1930, 1931 and 1941), variously describing himself as a Protestant, a Methodist or an Episcopalian.

With an exquisite sense for irony, timing and pain, the authors write:

"It is quite possible that he was making his first 'official' declaration of Christian faith at the same time that his parents were mourning, sitting in grief on low stools, their garments torn, the mirrors in the their home covered, while their many friends, both Jews and Gentiles, stopped by to offer words of condolence. The irony of such a coincidence is overwhelming; among some very orthodox Jews when a child

leaves the faith, parents go into mourning. While that did not happen in the Rose family, it is not difficult to imagine the mixture of pain and relief Sam and Katy would have felt had the correcting telegram and news of their son's statement of Christian faith arrived simultaneously. As it was, we don't know when (or if) his parents ever learned of his formal statements.

Why did Rose declare himself a Christian? The authors speculate; they have discovered no letters or writings by Rose on the issue. The authors offer two options: career ambition, and conviction.

The Army Officer Corps was, according to Gen. Patton's biographer, "all white, strongly upper middle class, overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon Protestant, conservative in its political views, and tainted by an institutional anti-Semitism and racial bias."

Perhaps Rose's decision was without psychological dimensions. His first priority was military advancement; his religion stood in his way. This much is clear: At best, Judaism meant next to nothing to Rose. His first wife was a Mormon. He did not even tell his second wife, an Episcopalian, that he had been born Jewish until the day of their marriage. He displayed no particular preference for religious services as a commander. If the services were Protestant, he attended. He never rebuked officers — or showed any other emotion — if anti-Semitic remarks were made in his presence. He named both his sons, one from his first wife and one from his second, after himself — something that Ashkenazi Jews don't do.

The authors observe: "An outsider cannot rise to the pinnacle in a profession where only insiders succeed. It would be hard enough without a West Point ring, a college diploma, and a Reserve commission, but it was certain that an openly practicing Jew could not hope to be a fighting general. In that regard, at least, the New World was the same as the Old. There was only one way. To the outside world, then — whatever the truth lodged deep in his soul — he would no longer be a Jew."

Yet, there is no evidence that Rose underwent any formal conversion to Christianity. And, he insisted that his (non-Jewish) son, named after himself, be circumcised. His letters home, his family reported, contained Hebrew and Yiddish phrases. Was his self-identification as a Christian merely pragmatic? "There are no surviving letters or journals that describe his innermost thoughts," the authors report. This much is clear: By any standard, Rose was hardly the "Jewish hero" that the organizers of the General Maurice Rose Memorial Hospital thought he was.

The organizers, however, did not know that Rose's Army medical records contained six declarations by Rose that he was a Christian. They did not know of even

one such declaration. They might not even have known that his wife was not Jewish at the beginning of their fundraising. After they were deep into the project, they learned that something, at least, was ajar. They had acted in good faith, but were stuck. They rightly feared that if their hero were defrocked, their project would suffer. In fact, it might not even get off the ground. They needed to raise \$1 million — a lot more money than now.

Here is how the stains on Rose's Jewish identity reached them:

Rabbi Benjamin J. Elefant had been in Germany for only a few days

when he heard from another chaplain that "the Jewish general who was killed" was buried just 20 miles away under a cross. Without authorization, Elefant took down the cross and replaced it with a Star of David.

Then Rabbi Elefant wrote his own parents in Warren, Ohio, about the turn of events. They, in turn, wrote Rose's parents. The *IJN* reported the substance of Rabbi Elefant's message to his parents and published it on page 1, June 14, 1945. Rabbi Elefant wrote that he had conducted services at the grave of Gen. Rose, and that "I placed the Star of David over Gen. Rose's grave."

This was supposed to "silence idle tongues and malicious rumor-



General Rose receives the Croix de Guerre

mongers."

But the rumors continued. Jewish publications questioned the use of Maurice Rose as a "Jewish" symbol. Meanwhile, another chaplain, Rabbi Sidney M. Lefkowitz, had met Gen. Rose and had spoken with him for a half hour, during which time Rose never mentioned he was Jewish. When news of the use of Rose as a great Jewish symbol reached Lefkowitz, he was upset.

"Having buried many Jewish boys, and having seen Nordhausen Concentration Camp with his own eyes, he was not inclined to sit idly by while 'the attempt to reconvert General Rose to Judaism' went forward, no matter how good the cause."

Lefkowitz wrote Edward Grusd, editor of a B'nai B'rith national journal.

The Denver organizers of the hospital learned of Lefkowitz's letter. It fell to Max Goldberg to extricate the project. The book identifies Goldberg (my father) as one of the two main leaders of the Rose hospital effort, and the one who had "single-handedly rallied the press and run the publicity for the project." Goldberg persuaded the most well known celebrities of the day to appear *pro bono* as entertainers at a series of fundraising dinners, which provided the funds to build the Gen. Maurice Rose Memorial Hospital. Among the stars Goldberg brought to Denver were Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, Danny Kaye and Bob Hope. Among the notables Goldberg convinced to lend their name to the project were prizefighter Jack Dempsey, Gen. George C. Marshall, journalists Walter Winchell and Damon Runyon, and politicians Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, Colorado Gov. John Vivian and Colorado Sen.

Edwin C. "Big Ed" Johnson.

Goldberg was also the president of the Denver B'nai B'rith chapter, then the largest Jewish organization in the city. Goldberg wrote Grusd diplomatically that Chaplain Lefkowitz's charges "cannot be proven entirely true." Given the state of knowledge of Rose's Jewish identity at the time, that was true. Goldberg appealed on that basis not to sabotage the fundraising for the hospital. "I . . . want to reassure you again," Goldberg wrote Grusd, "that everything we have done has been with the best of intentions and in the best of faith."

The direct appeal worked. Grusd pocketed the Lefkowitz letter. The hospital went forward; the money was raised. When word of the hospital reached Europe, the men in Gen. Rose's division spontaneously raised \$30,000 in one day; they revered their fallen leader. The cornerstone of the General Rose Memorial Hospital was laid on August 30, 1948. Goldberg persuaded Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower to deliver the dedication address.

This, however, was hardly the end of the matter.

The proudly Jewish Rose family could not abide the charges of intermarriage and apostasy, or the lesser facsimiles thereof. Sam Rose died a broken man in July, 1945. Strains between the general's surviving, older brother, Arnold, and the general's ex-wife and his widow grew. There were many occasions for conflict.

The only thing that all sides of the family could agree on was the hospital. Both Gen. Rose's widow and his parents deemed the hospital a fitting memorial to their murdered war hero. However, for the Rose Hospital dedication, Venice Hanson Rose (Gen. Rose's first wife, a Mormon) and 1st Lieutenant Maurice Rose (the general's first son) were not invited. The authors surmise that this was the work of Arnold Rose. More than 50 years later, the son still felt the impact of the slight.

Earlier, when the first anniversary of the death of Gen. Rose approached, Virginia, the general's second wife and widow, secured the address of her late husband's son by his first wife, and wrote him a letter of condolence. He never responded. More than 50 years later, he regretted this, even though he had met Virginia only once and, in fact, recalled being with his own father only once.

The general's remains were removed from Iitenbach, Germany, to a US military cemetery at Margraten, the Netherlands. There he rested under a temporary Star of David. Virginia Rose requested that he be disinterred and reburied in the Arlington National Cemetery. Then she changed her mind. The authors:

"Perhaps, the pain and lingering resentment over how the Jewish community — and the Rose family — had viewed her was still a factor. In fact, Arnold Rose had also made inquiries about the repatriation of her husband's remains, and he knew of her plans to rebury Gen. Rose at Arlington in an Episcopalian ceremony. Perhaps she feared a replay of the controversial 'Jewish' issue . . . or that her husband's grave would become a kind of symbol that by its very nature would exclude her and her son. [Her son was Maurice Roderick Rose, the general's second son and only child by Virginia]."

And so, Major Gen. Maurice Rose remained in Margraten Cemetery. However, the Star of David did



Rev. Samuel Rose, a spiritual leader at Beth Joseph and father of Gen. Maurice Rose, c. 1945, the year his son was killed. He died three months later.

not. The American Battlefield Monuments Commission determined that Maurice Rose had declared himself a Christian beginning on Sept. 26, 1918. The certification of Rose's religion by the Jewish Welfare Board was termed a mistake. At the very least, Virginia Rose's sensibilities, and perhaps Gen. Rose's too, were honored. The authors: "Under the symbol that had united them in marriage, the emblem of the faith that had sustained her through her life, and his death, and under which she would raise their child, he would rest forever."

The records were changed. A permanent Latin Cross was placed over Plot C, Grave #1, Row #1.

Samuel Rose, Gen. Rose's father, was already dead. He couldn't visit the grave. Neither Katy Rose, Gen. Rose's mother, nor Arnold Rose, his brother, ever did.

The final irony is this: The general who, for whatever reason, renounced his religion to the military authorities, who married out of the faith twice and brought his parents and brother much anguish, used his military training, promotions and leadership to play a major role in defeating the worst enemy that the Jewish people has ever known.

'Major Gen. Rose' **THE BOOK**

I am not competent to comment on *Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander* as a work of military history. As an investigation of Maurice Rose Jewish identity, the book is judicious, fair and enterprising in its discovery of pertinent documents. We owe the authors a debt of gratitude for their intrepid sleuthing and sensitive comment on Rose's Jewish identity. One may imagine that it was not a simple task to navigate among the surviving family members.

However, little of Rose's personality, whether Jewish or Christian, emerges. The book provides the facts of the controversy about Rose — an invaluable contribution — but Rose himself remains mostly silent. The authors comment that they discovered no writings by Rose that would have shed light on his inner thoughts. Oral history, however, the authors did not pursue sufficiently. There remain people in Denver who knew Samuel, Katy, Arnold or Maurice Rose. It is unfortunate that the authors did not interview these people. They might well have provided a more well-rounded, psychologically nuanced portrait of Maurice Rose, the Jew, or the apostate Jew.

— Hillel Goldberg



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Alumnus Steven L. Ossad Publishes Book on Jewish WWII General

Steven L. Ossad, who received his M.A. in Philosophy from the GF in 1972, published *Major General Maurice Rose: World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander* in August 2003.

Co-authored with Don R. Marsh, and published by Taylor Trade Publishers, *Major General Maurice Rose* is the first book written on Major Rose, the wartime commander of the 3rd Armored "Spearhead" Division, who played a major role in the invasions of Sicily and Normandy, as well as the Battle of the Bulge.

Although Major Rose is greatly respected by World War II veterans, his contribution to the success of the allied forces has been largely ignored in most history books. In *Major General Maurice Rose*, Ossad and Marsh attempt to correct this oversight, detailing Major Rose's military career, professional triumphs, and private life.

Major Rose, Mr. Ossad has said, was an "up from the ranks, non West Point, Jewish officer," who rose to serve with the three greatest of American Armored Divisions - in Africa and Italy with "Old Ironsides," then with "Hell on Wheels," and finally headed his own 3rd Armored Division "Spearhead." Among his many military decorations are the Distinguished Service Cross, The Bronze Star, and the Purple Heart. He was killed in action on March 30, 1945.

Raised in a New Jersey suburb populated largely with former soldiers, sailors, and marines, Mr. Ossad grew up listening to stories of life in the military. "The story of Maurice Rose found me - not the other way around," he stated. "Over a period of more than forty years, and after a series of eerie coincidences - if that is what they were - during which I encountered threads of the story, I decided to write the biography of this great and unknown hero."

Mr. Ossad received an M.A. in the History of Political Philosophy from the Graduate Faculty in 1972. He credits the New School for Social Research with helping him develop some of the skills required to write *Major General Maurice Rose*. "Learning to become a professional historian, and entering the world of World War II veterans has been a fantastic experience. The grounding I had in academic philosophy - honed at The New School for Social Research in the early 1970s - was a crucial element in writing the book - as

was skepticism of 'official' sources, critical evaluation of documents and reports, distrust of uncorroborated testimony, all of which were constant companions."

In addition to his degree from the Graduate Faculty, Mr. Ossad also holds a B.A. with honors from Wesleyan University, and a M.B.A. from Harvard Business School. Although he worked as a technology analyst on Wall Street for more than 20 years, in January 2002 he left the investment business to become a professional military historian. He is the author of many articles on military figures, leadership, and command failures, which have appeared or are forthcoming in publications such as *Army Magazine*, *World War II Magazine*, *World War II History Magazine*, and *Military History Magazine*.

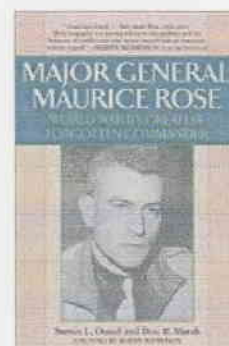
He is currently working on the first independent biography of General Omar N. Bradley. He holds the honorary title of "Citizen Historian" in the 3rd Armored Division Association, and lives with his wife Barbara, and their two daughters in San Francisco.

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MAJOR GENERAL MAURICE ROSE: World War II's Greatest Forgotten Commander

Steven L. Ossad and Don R. Marsh. Taylor, \$27.95 (432p) ISBN 0878333088

Given the paucity of material General Maurice Rose left behind about anything except his impressive military achievements, this fine biography of a distinguished American commander, the highest-ranking American Jewish officer ever killed in battle, represents a considerable success. Commissioned into the Army during World War I, Rose (b. 1899) was wounded in action at St. Mihiel; then, after a short stint as a traveling salesman, he returned to the peacetime army as a captain. When World War II broke out, he rose rapidly, commanding the first armored formations to hit the beaches in Sicily and Normandy and putting into action his belief that "it was only by visible acts of personal courage and public demonstrations of bravery that a leader can inspire his men and imbue them with fighting spirit." Ashore in France, he was given command of the Third Armored Division and led it ably (if not perfectly) through the Battle of the Bulge and into Germany, where he was killed in action in March, 1945, possibly after surrendering. The authors, a WWII veteran and a military historian, also discuss the question of why Rose, who came from a distinguished family of rabbis, chose to list himself as a Christian with the army, a decision they suggest was motivated by Rose's career ambitions and his laissez-faire attitude towards religious matters. Though the authors' prose is often stilted, they provide a worthy, informative account of a curious and little-documented career. (July)

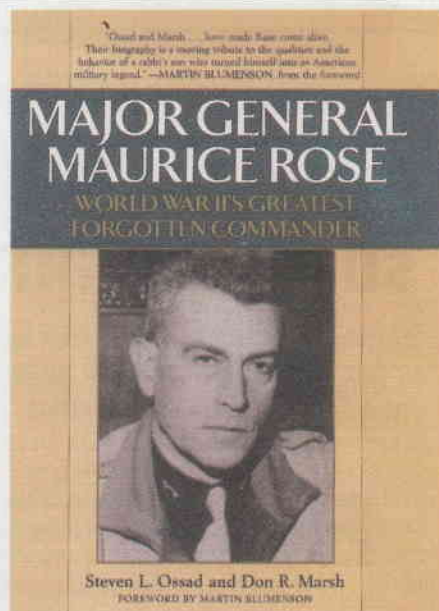


**Major General Maurice Rose:
World War II's Greatest Forgotten
Commander**

**by Steven L. Ossad and
Don R. Marsh**

**Taylor Trade Publishing, Lanham,
Md., 2003, \$27.95.**

IT WAS APPROPRIATE that Maurice Rose was ultimately placed in command of the 3rd Armored Division during World War II. Under his extraordinarily aggressive leadership, it earned the nickname he had given it, "Spearhead," in a series of battles and offensives that contributed significantly to the U.S. Army's advance across Nazi-occupied France, including Mons in September 1944, the Hürtgen Forest in October and the Battle of the Bulge in December. March 1945 saw the climax, as elements of the division



rolled across Germany from Marburg to Paderborn, a distance of about 90 miles, in one day—a record advance for an American division in the face of enemy opposition that still stands. On the night of March 30, however, Rose, always prone to lead from the front, was cut off when his forward elements suffered a sudden reversal by Tiger tanks of the Germans'

507th Heavy Tank Battalion. As he and his two companions raised their hands in surrender, a German tank commander suddenly opened fire with his submachine gun, killing Rose. His two subordinates made a break for it and eventually made their way back to Allied lines.

Rose's command of the Spearhead Division was also appropriate largely because the achievements of his fighting career, from North Africa to Sicily, from Normandy to Germany, stand out like spearheads—but little is known about him in between. *Major General Maurice Rose* represents, first and foremost, marvelous research by writer Steven L. Ossad and one of Rose's soldiers, Don R. Marsh. They had to gather information from a paucity of official documents, newspaper clippings and a lot of impressions from veterans and family members who were still available to flesh out the gaps. Their success in that enterprise has produced an excellent account of one of the U.S. Army's worthiest officers in Europe.

The author's presentation of Rose's story is somewhat uneven, clearly colored by the understandable affection that veteran Marsh has for his own commander. Most of the time the narrative moves along with compelling immediacy. On several occasions, however, the reader may weary of the constant reminders the authors feel compelled to give on what a manly, courageous and dynamic hero Rose was—a straight recounting of his actual deeds makes that clear enough.

In addition to a detailed examination of Rose's death, the authors deal with the most contradictory aspect of his career. The son of a Jewish rabbi, Rose converted to Christianity during World War I. After his death, however, the Jewish community in his home state of Colorado viewed him as a Jewish hero, raised funds for a non-sectarian hospital to be named after him and tried to have a Star of David placed on his grave. His grave was ultimately marked by a cross, but the pain that the controversy regarding his religious identity caused both his immediate Jewish family and his Protestant wife and children left its tragic mark.

One thing that cannot be disputed is that Rose was an outstanding U.S. Army division commander and a kindred spirit to Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr. and Maj. Gen. J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins. *Major General Maurice Rose* pays overdue homage to what he and his troops achieved—and the research that made it possible stands as an equally impressive achievement.

Jon Guttman

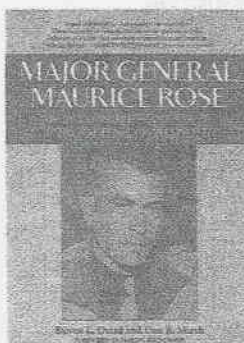
Recent and Recommended

Major General Maurice Rose by Steven L. Ossad and Don R. Marsh, Taylor Trade Publishing, Lanham, Md., 2003, 425 pp., photographs, maps, notes, index, \$27.95, hardcover.

Born in Middletown, Connecticut, and raised in Denver, Colorado, Maurice Rose never attended college, enlisted as a private in the National Guard, and sailed to France in May 1918, as a company commander with the U.S. 89th Infantry Division.

Two and a half decades later, after duty in Panama, brief service as chief of staff to General George S. Patton Jr.'s 2nd Armored Division at Fort Benning, Georgia, and leadership of a combat command in North Africa and Sicily, Rose was back in France commanding the hard-fighting 3rd Armored ("Spearhead") Division of the U.S. First Army and earning a reputation as a fearless warrior. Leading always from the front, the son and grandson of rabbis was known as "a real soldier's soldier" and one of the outstanding armor leaders of World War II.

Yet, after his tragic death on March 30, 1945, when his column was chopped up by Waffen SS panzers on a road near Hamborn, Germany, there was little available for the his-



torical record on Major General Rose except for a few reports and memoranda. Letters to his wife did not survive, and his personal effects were reportedly "lost in a flood in Kansas."

The highest ranking American Jew ever killed in action, he was one of the war's ablest yet almost forgotten officers. It was a daunting prospect for a biographer, but Steven Ossad and Don Marsh persevered, dug, and wrote this fully documented, meticulously detailed, and absorbing study. It is a rewarding and inspiring portrait.

The authors show that, after attracting attention by negotiating a large-scale German surrender in Tunisia in May 1943, "Mustang" Rose was hand-picked to lead the 3rd Armored Division just after the Normandy

breakout. His record during the first two months of the Northwest Europe campaign was a model of battlefield success. During Operation Cobra in late July 1944, Rose served as the catalyst of General Omar N. Bradley's decision to move on Avranches.

Constantly issuing radio orders to "keep pushing, keep moving," General Rose acted as his own scout and forward observer as he rode into battle in his jeep alongside his Sherman tankers and infantrymen. Ever the "old cavalryman," he "rode to the sound of the guns." Like Patton, he knew how to meld effectively armor and supporting artillery and infantry units, as this narrative makes plain. The authors take the reader along with Rose's division—the lance tip of Lt. Gen. Joseph Lawton Collins's VII Corps—as it rolled eastward across France and Belgium, breached the Siegfried Line, endured the static battles in the fall of 1944 and the crucible of the Bulge that winter, and captured Cologne in March 1945.

Tall, handsome, and taciturn, General Rose was always dressed immaculately, even in combat. Collins said that he was "a commanding figure who claimed instant respect from officers and men alike," and General Dwight D. Eisenhower, supreme commander in Europe, called him "one of our bravest and best."

Wolfgang Falck, the Happy Falcon

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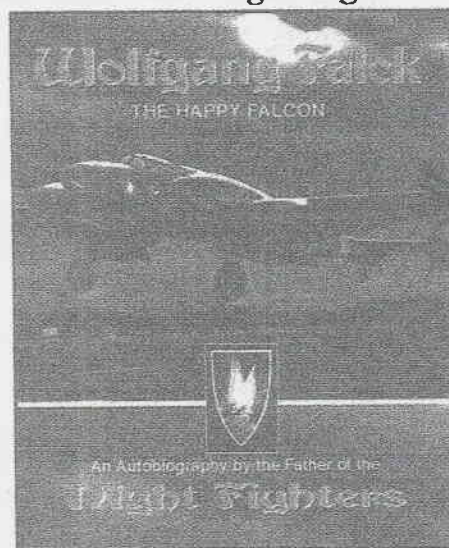
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On March 29, 1945, the day before its commander was killed, the Spearhead Division made the longest enemy-opposed armored drive, more than 150 kilometers, in military history. This resulted in the Ruhr Pocket encirclement, in which more than 350,000 German troops were captured. The action was dubbed the "Rose Pocket" and was the only major action in the war to be named for a U.S. general.

This splendid biography brings General Rose and his division to life, affording popular recognition that is long overdue. Ossad is working on a study of General Bradley, and co-author Marsh served under Rose. The foreword is by respected historian Martin Blumenson.

Air War Over Europe by Chaz Bowyer, Case-mate, Havertown, Pa., 2003, 229 pp., 50 photographs, \$22.95, softcover.

At the height of the world's first-ever aerial campaign over the Western Front in 1917, General Jan Smuts, the doughty South African warrior-statesman, declared, "It is important that we should not only secure air predominance, but secure it on a very large scale; and, having secured it, we should make every effort to maintain it for the future."

And that was what happened just over two decades later, as the Allied and Axis air forces struggled to dominate the skies over Europe, the Mediterranean, Russia, and the Far East in 1939-45. World War II saw clashes of winged armadas on a scale that would have seemed impossible to Smuts and his contemporaries.

The broad sweep of World War II fighter and bomber operations, with focus on the European Theater, has been chronicled by Chaz Bowyer, the author of a host of first-rate books on the history of the Royal Air Force. Detailed yet concise and scholarly yet gripping, this is a masterly study. He explains how the German Luftwaffe attempted initially to conquer the skies, and almost succeeded, until it was defeated by Royal Air Force Hawker Hurricanes and Supermarine Spitfires in the summer of 1940, preserving Western freedom when Great Britain stood alone. Then, both sides launched raids that inflicted great devastation and human suffering, as German bombers blitzed British cities in 1940-42 while RAF Bomber Command Short Stirlings, Handley-Page Halifaxes, and Avro Lancasters returned the favor with costly vengeance.

By the time U.S. Army Air Forces Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses and Consolidated B-24 Liberators achieved momentum with their punishing daylight missions, Germany found itself increasingly defenseless. The Battle of the

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