

Finest Welcome for Corporal Back From Battlefronts Was Glass of Milk

The finest touch to the homecoming of Corp. R. W. Thompson after months of fighting in North Africa and Italy was a glass of milk.

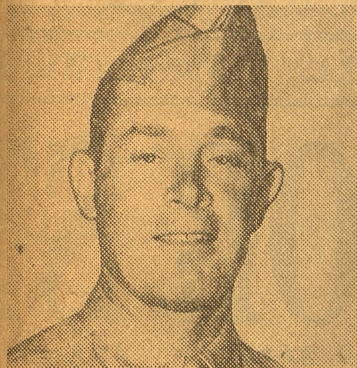
"It was," said Thompson, whose home here is at 2209 Loving, "the first milk I had seen in 27 months, and it was the best stuff I ever tasted."

Women Red Cross workers serving milk and candy bars greeted refugees, hospital cases, limited assignment personnel and soldiers sent home on rotation when their ship docked at New York, Thompson said.

The same kind of welcome met the returned soldiers at other points, but diminished noticeably as they train sped south toward Camp Beauregard, La. The last welcoming group of Red Cross workers they saw was at Chattanooga, Tenn.

"Not that the soldiers expect it," Thompson said, "but it makes you feel kind of good for somebody to meet you and create a little fuss when you come back from overseas."

Thompson was here Wednesday on his way to Fort Sam Houston after fighting for 20 months, through North Africa and to within eight miles of Rome, before he was withdrawn and placed on limited assignment because of hearing impaired by the constant roar of heavy guns. He wears the Purple Heart ribbon and three campaign stars—for the landing in Africa, the battle of Tunisia and the battle of Italy.



—Star-Telegram Photo.
THOMPSON.

As a gunner in the 91st Artillery of the 1st Armored Division in Africa, he took part in the "rat race" that occurred when German tanks overran advanced American units at Faid Pass and drove them back under cruel fire. Thompson's battery managed to get away with the loss of only one gun, after knocking out eight German tanks.

Caught in the fire of two Panzer divisions, a companion battery lost all its guns and equipment. Attached to that battery was Lt. Amon Carter Jr., the only Fort Worth man in the regiment.

At a forward observation post on a mountainside directing his battery's fire, Lieutenant Carter was captured and is now in a German prison camp.

"Lieutenant Carter had a view of the whole mess," Thompson said. "He was the first to see the Ger-

man tanks and warn of their approach."

Thompson's battery helped to turn the tables in the "rat race," driving the Germans back through Faid Pass and eventually out of Tunisia.

Hottest spot in which Thompson found himself was on the bloody Anzio beachhead, where Nazi guns from the surrounding hills could drop shells on any spot they chose.

"Worst thing was the nightly air raids by Jerry that kept us awake," he said. "You could hear the drone of planes, but you couldn't tell where the bombs were going to land."

He was on Anzio four months, and "the happiest bunch in the world was when we broke out of there and headed for Rome."

Thompson's biggest scare was on the approach to Anzio, when the troops huddled below decks with bombs dropping on all sides of their ship.

"There aren't any foxholes on a ship," he grinned.

In Italy, American troops were well supplied and had all they wanted to eat, Thompson said. It was different in Africa.

"Then," he related, "it was C rations three times a day, and water was so scarce we had to scour our mess kits with sand."

Before enlisting in March, 1941, Thompson was a salesman for Armour & Co. here for nearly 15 years. His father, W. R. Thompson, lives at Lubbock.