

Roland T. Marchand, T-40

24 May 1922 – 29 March 2011

(aged 88)



“Boy Who Fled France, Came to Memphis, Hopes He Will Fight Japs”

Roland Marchand is off to fight the Japs - - - or nearly off. He leaves tomorrow and he figures he can take care of at least three or four “the little fellows” at a time.

Or perhaps he’ll be fighting the Nazis (he was in one of their concentration camps on Christmas 1940), but he has set his sights on the Japs.

“I’m five feet three inches - - - not so big - - - about like the japs - - - I can take ‘em”

Roland, 19, after six attempts, has been accepted by the Army. Sgt John Newsom of the Army Recruiting Station in Memphis says he passed his IQ examination in fine shape and he is ready to go.

“Couldn’t Speak English”

Thereon hinged the failure of Roland to get into the Army in five tries. Physically he was all right. But he couldn’t speak English. Press Scimitar readers know him as the youth who fled from France arriving in Memphis last March with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Marchand, 312 N. Watkins. His father went overseas in the AEF in from New Orleans in World War I, married a French girl. Mr. Marchand remained to build up a big business - - - swept away from the Nazis. As soon as they got to

Memphis, Roland started trying to enlist. After the five failures, Roland, thru the interest of Lewis Thomas, YMCA Boys' Work secretary, enrolled at Tech High in the 11th grade. He learned English fast. He went into the ROTC.

And his blue eyes and attractive personality thrilled the girls. He admits it. He insists when the war is over, he's coming back to Memphis and "Marry the girl I love best."

"Poplar at Tech"

He bacame one of the most popular of Tech students. Yesterday at an assembly Prof. J. L. Highsaw, Principal, told the students (Roland happened to be out of school that day):

"Here's a young boy who was born in France and came to America only a year ago. Now he has enlisted in the Army and he is going to fight for his country. He is a good example of what I want all you boys to be."

Professor Highsaw and Mr. Thomas have written letters to the commanding officer of the camp to which Roland will go, stressing his previous experience in Europe as a photographer, his abililty to speak French. Perhaps he'll land in the Intelligence Division. Roland himself says, "I want to fly a bomber and shoot down those little fellows."

Information from The Press Scimitar, Thursday, March 19, 1942.