

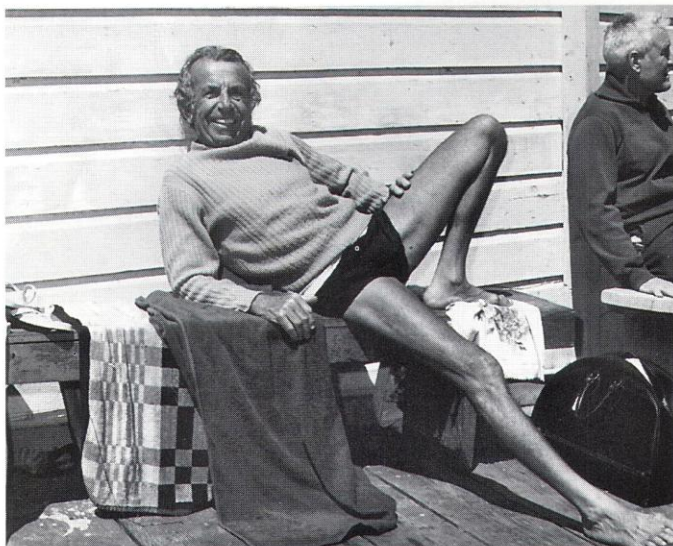
LOU GALLIC | *A Dolphin Legend*

by Chris Kelley

Legend surrounds us at the Club—a single look at the walls in the Staib or Sancimino rooms confirm the stories members tell in the warm haven of the sauna or in the sunshine just outside the weight room. The stories told seem distant and fantastic, embellished by the storyteller to keep an audience more entertained, amused, or rapt. When it comes to the legend of Louis Gallic, however, the facts go beyond any poetic license a Dolphin tale teller could take.

The story begins not in the era of the comparatively bloodless political and social conflict of today, but in an era of submarine nets just outside the Golden Gate, regular blackout alerts and rationing. In Europe and Asia, genocide and a brutal struggle over the destiny of those who survived dominated. The degree of suffering is the same in any age, but the sheer scale of it in those times makes it singular.

A month and three days after D-Day (June 6, 1944), Allied forces were pushing the Germans back through the open fields, hedgerows and small towns of northeastern France. The Germans, though tired and desperate, were fighting a spirited rear-guard action. It was during this time that Gallic's legend began. The eldest corporal in his unit, he had landed in Normandy with fellow members of the 9th U.S. Army, 30th division, 120th regiment.



Now moving into the St. Lo area, his unit continued to press forward. The combat report, by Major General L.S. Hobbs, follows:

"Technician Gallic, assigned to the headquarters of an infantry battalion, was acting as guide for the leading elements of his company's column during an advance. He had moved some distance ahead of the column when he was confronted by an enemy sentry. Technician Gallic immediately demanded the sentry's surrender, and upon his refusal, shot and wounded the German. After the column had moved ahead about fifty yards an enemy machine pistol opened fire from behind a fence and severely wounded Technician Gallic in both legs. At this point other enemy weapons opened fire and due to the intensity of the fire the column withdrew leaving Technician Gallic in a ditch alongside the road."

"Shortly afterwards some German

troops came out of a nearby house and laid mines in the road between him and friendly territory, and in spite of being wounded, Technician Gallic closely observed this procedure. Suddenly one of the enemy soldiers detected that he was still alive and brutally fired two shots at him point blank, hitting him in the neck. When the Germans had moved farther down the road, Technician Gallic painfully pulled himself to the top of a hedgerow and dropped over into an adja-

cent field. Eluding pursuit, he proceeded through enemy groups of soldiers through three fields and contacted friendly units. Although his wounds were becoming more painful, he refused to be evacuated until he had given complete information regarding the activities of the enemy."

Quiet and unassuming when asked about his combat experiences, he shrugged off his actions of July 9, 1944: "I did the same as anyone would have in that situation." The actions Gallic took upon his return home would need similar understatement.

Flown back to England immediately after his heroism in France, he was sent to a specialized hospital in Washington, D.C. Most of the senior physicians there recommended that Lou's most severely wounded leg be amputated, but a young doctor from Colorado saved the leg and oversaw

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