

# Everyone got down on their knees and prayed

By **RICHARD C. DUJARDIN**  
Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

The Rev. Edward Paul Doyle was 36 and an Army chaplain with the 104th infantry division at Camp Carson in Colorado when word of the D-Day Invasion arrived.

The Dominican priest and former Providence College professor says that when news of the invasion reached the camp — "I dare say the first report came from the radio" — he sprang into action, going from barracks to barracks to lead the men in prayer for their compatriots overseas who were putting their lives on the line that day.

In each of the barracks, he says, the scene was much the same. "Everyone got down on their knees and said a prayer with me. It was an emotional moment because we knew it was something that they, too, were going to get into themselves in a very short time."

As it turned out, Father Doyle and the other 15,000 members of the 104th division were landing on the beaches of Cherbourg only two months later. (They had to go in by raft because the beaches were already filled with sunken ships.)

Fighting from the time they landed, they were in Holland and Belgium in October and November



Journal-Bulletin/RUBEN W. PEREZ

**RECALLS SCENE:** The Rev. Edward P. Doyle, 86, was a chaplain with the 104th Infantry Division at Camp Carson, Colorado, on D-Day. Two months later his outfit landed at Cherbourg.

and in Germany by Nov. 9. Known as the Timberwolves, their division saw 195 consecutive days of front line combat, one of the highest numbers of days in contact with the enemy among all the Army divisions.

On April 4, the Dominican priest saw the horrors of the Holocaust first hand as one of the first Americans to walk into the concentration camp of Nordhausen after it had been liberated from the Germans. There Father Doyle saw the results of man's inhumanity to

man: the corpses of 5,000 Jews, their bodies mutilated, and some 1,000 other Jewish prisoners who were barely alive.

Father Doyle, 86, says what he saw there was unforgettable. When he resumed teaching theology and philosophy at Providence College in 1946, those images continued to have an effect on his lectures and classes.

He continues to live at the Dominican priory at PC, while volunteering as a chaplain to patients at the Summit Medical Center, be-

tween North Main Street and Highland Avenue in Providence. He has also become the national chaplain for the Timberwolves, and has attended 40 national reunions.

Ten years after the war, Father Doyle went back to Europe to visit the graves of those who had died in action. Close to 1,500 men from the 104th had been killed in combat, and 76 were missing in action.

As he walked through the cemeteries, he found many stones marked with the words, "unknown, but to God."