

Soldiers & Fräuleins

Soldiers and Frauleins

A more or less factual account of the 242nd Regiment's role in the Allied Force's occupation of Austria from May '45 through April '46.

By
Sherm Ruesch

Preface

It's early 1989 and Maxine and I are retired and living in the Sonora Desert of Southern Arizona, what once was Apache country. The desert is almost in full bloom even though states to the north are barely out of snow time. Our trees are in leaf, the cactus are blooming, and roses are at their peak. I'm in my den surrounded by memorabilia of Love Company and of the 242nd Infantry and of Austria after the war in Europe ended early in May of '45.

Recapturing the events of that time in a proper sequence and the environment in which they occurred is a bit difficult. In fact, if it weren't for the numerous letters I wrote home and for Maxine's pack rat tendency, this would be a distorted account. As it is, what follows should be within the limits of what's called poetic license - the truth in GI language, larded up for emphasis and to make it more readable.

Whenever readers who were part of the occupation force at that time do not agree with my observations, I hope they will remember that they are what one man saw and experienced and that only. If their experience was different or their reaction to the same events are quite unlike mine, they are free to say how they saw things. I will understand their views and hope they will mine.

A further comment. Remembering names is not a talent of mine. Some of those used are those I remember well while others are omitted for obvious reasons. Then there are the names of those to whom I owe thanks for their contributions to the volume written in Austria in 1945 and to what follows now in 1989. They will be listed at the end of this piece when I hopefully will have remembered all of them.

Finally, if you read this looking for a supply of horror stories like the alleged Belgian atrocities of WWI or the holocausts of WWII or the lurid sexual escapades of soldiers told after every war, you will be disappointed. Instead, you should come to a service reunion to tell your own whoppers and listen to those of your buddies.

With that said, I proceed.

I
In Retrospect

A review of Men of Love Company recalls a few things that might have been included but were missed. In retrospect, belatedly, here they are.

On the day we departed Camp Gruber, Oklahoma, the following bulletin was circulated in the company's barracks:

Love Company
THE RAINBOW'S FINEST
Camp Gruesome, Okla.

"Good afternoon, men. This is your daily bulletin. Read it and rejoice. It's the last one to be dated at Camp Gruesome.

Greetings to the following men who have been chosen on a non-partisan merit basis as cook's helpers beginning at 0500, 16 November, and ending upon arrival at our (censored) destination. Remember, it's a privilege to serve your buddies in the service. Don't gripe, don't bitch, greet them with a smile and a kind word each time you dish out Johnson's slumgullion.

Brannan, M.B. Dremann, J.W.
Hall, E.J. LiPuma, G.J.
Reed, Berl Larson, H.J.

Now the Battalion Scrub Detail:
This is a select deal. One man from
our 187 has the special honor of
scrubbing Third Battalion H.Q.

Slike is the lucky one!

The Top is losing his voice..
Kindly keep your goddamned ears open so
he doesn't have to shout all the time.

Watch your conduct in the P X
tonight. There's a rough detail on
guard duty there - headed by "Humphrey
Bogart" Snyder.

Boys, we get to sleep late on the
morning of our departure. First call,
0535, reveille 0550, chow 0600, but we
get a break. The Artillery feeds us.

After chow there's one little job
left for us. We G I the barracks for
the 16th time this week, and if the
sonsabitches we leave behind don't
approve, they can shove it!

We really are leaving Gruesome
tomorrow, the Oklahoma Daily
notwithstanding. Like good Rainbow
soldiers we'll entrain with light
packs, field jackets, helmets, and
fatigues, belts and arms, and
ammunition (the chemical warfare and
artillery fire cards). Don't leave
those cards. You can't fight without

them.

On the train, men - The Rainbow
Special, equipped with club and lounge
car facilities - we'll have plenty of
time for poker, craps, etc., etc., with
a break now and then for care and
cleaning of weapons, witty after-dinner
speeches by Sgts. Bak, Benson, Anderson
and Snyder, and other fascinating
items. The Top is going to give ballet
calisthenics at each whistle stop.

Be sure to watch for Hollywood Harry
at the station. He'll be there to bid
us bon voyage."

Squeaky Bob Primiano
Top Kick

As our troop ship pulled out of New
York Harbor and away from its
protection, two of us stood at the rail
looking back at the receding shores, S/
Sgt. George N. Harrison and I. He was
a late arrival in the company
transferred in. He was from Trenton,
New Jersey and had likely come with
others from duty in the Canal Zone. He
pointed to the disappearing Jersey
shores, saying that was where he came
from. Then, after one long last look
full of his memories, he said he didn't
think he would ever get to see it
again. He didn't. He was killed in

action in the forest near Hagenau.

We had meal tickets on the General Black and were entitled to have two meals daily, each time getting the card punched so we couldn't fudge. We could go to early or late breakfast and the same for the afternoon meal. Those who didn't get seasick (mal de mer) enough to be unable to eat at all went to the other extreme. The exhilarating sea air made us hungry constantly, and it didn't take long for us to find an afflicted buddy who couldn't eat and use his ticket to get a third or a fourth meal daily, even though that meant consuming great quantities of navy beans.

Our skilled amateur boxer, Coslow, the Michigan Golden Gloves champion, who fought on board ship and whose whole life outside the army was centered on a boxing career, wound up losing both legs in a mine field at Hagenau. He was invalided home with all his dreams dashed.

Our shipboard beds were hammocks four high, and we slept alternating

from head to toe so no one would have snoring immediately above or below his ears. This seemed fine until I realized that the rifleman above me was the only Love Company GI who had missed the last shower and change of clothes before we left Camp Gruesome, and that his feet were by the ventilator bringing fresh sea air to the hold. The consensus of those nearby was that snoring would be better than sea air fouled with the odor of stinking socks and feet. We hoped he would shower with the rest of us in cold sea water. No such luck, so we made plans for a special remedy when we got to our destination.

At CP2 north of Marseilles we remembered the guy and proceeded as soon as portable showers were installed. We took him bodily to the nearest shower, stripped him, and gave him a GI bath with scrubbing brushes and laundry soap. While he dressed in clean clothes, we burned the stuff he had worn without change for about a full month. I don't recall seeing him after that and guess he secured a transfer. Hopefully, though, he learned a lesson that he remembered wherever he went in the service.

A day or two after FDR's death on 12 April 1945, the 242nd had finished its

part in the taking of Schweinfurt, the ball bearing center that was so essential to the Nazi war effort. The regiment assembled in a public square there and had a memorial service for our fallen leader. My memory of that event has faded, but I still can see the special marching drill of a select group of army officers, all of them West Point graduates. The only one I knew by sight was Major (since Colonel) Smith. They marched, wheeled, turned with precision and ramrod stiffness to the cadence of somber music.

Let me remind readers of this account that the last weeks and days of the conflict in Europe were historic times in world history. Just think about April of 1945. F. D. R. died in Warm Springs, Georgia, on April 12, and Harry S. Truman was sworn in as his successor. That same day in Germany, Buchenwald and Belsen, two of Hitler's most monstrous concentration camps, were liberated and the rest of them followed shortly. The Russians took Vienna on the 13th after some bloody German resistance and last minute Nazi slaughter of innocent bystanders. And how strange human events can be. The first meeting of what was to become the United Nations began in San Francisco on April 25!

On the 27th U.S. and U.S.S.R. troops met and joined as allies on the Elbe River in the German heartland. On the 28th Benito Mussolini's body was strung up in public in Rome after he had been convicted of treason by his own people. And to cap off the month, Adolph Hitler committed suicide in Berlin on the 30th.

These events happened while all the units of the Rainbow Division were involved in mopping German forces to end Hitler's empire that was to have lasted a thousand years.

II

From Combat to Peace????

When I got back from the hospital in France, it was mid-June of 1945, the Company had already been in Salzburg for over a month and they had experienced part of a transition period. The men had gotten accustomed to inactivity, most reluctantly, I'm sure, and had begun to see a period ahead of "hurry up and wait," of uncertainty piled on uncertainty, and of complete frustration. Mine had been easier because I had to be idle and get a bland diet and lots of rest to get over the jaundice. Mine was the duller time I ever had in the army. There was all of that and much, much more.

I'll never know how many moves "I" Company made in Austria because I had only a few brief stays with my old outfit. The rest of the time I was on special duty assignments or detached service in the Third Battalion and in Regimental Headquarters Company until I was transferred late in '45 or early in '46. Even so, they and we had the same frustrations and uncertainties, and from here on all of us in the 242nd Infantry spent our time in Austria, so the scene has to shift to the Regiment and to that country.

Here we were in June of '45 in Salzburg, a storied place with a long, long history, and in the Tirol (they spell it that way) a part of the Alps. What was this country like, its history, its climate, its people and its mores?

It is spectacularly beautiful, and not much of its beauty was destroyed by bombs and shells. The military targets in all of Austria were few and far between. There were railheads, a few important bridges, minimal war industry, and Hitler's aerie at Berchtesgaden (about which more later). It is not an industrial giant. Rather, it's a land of farms and vineyards and winter and summer resorts. We found it often cold, with lots of snow and even more rain. It never seemed hot.

We thought at first that WWII had passed Austria by until we looked around and saw the many old men and women, the younger women, and the many children. The military age men were all gone, and that was the major contribution of this fun loving, friendly, and musical people to Hitler's mad rule over the Germanic peoples of Europe. We had to remember that when we were inclined to judge their morals and their consuming struggle to survive. Added to which,

we had to see how lacking they were in basic supplies of food and clothing and many of the things we Americans regard as necessities that to them were luxuries completely beyond their reach.

Our communications with the Austrians were limited for months to our need for their services on an official basis and to the clandestine meetings of soldiers - both officers and enlisted - with frauleins (more of that later, too).

At this point I go back to records made at the time and relate experiences and thoughts then rather than substitute thoughts of the present.

25 June '45 at Kufstein - Saturday morning after breakfast 18 of us left here on a truck equipped with seats from a Jerry bus. We had been given a trip to Innsbruck and the Brenner Pass, but we decided to make a day of Innsbruck alone, having heard that otherwise we would spend most of the day riding.

The morning was cool, and there were clouds hanging low on the mountains on both sides of the valley. We could see peaks here and there poking above the clouds.

The Inn River is large and full this time of year, and it's a slate grey color from the load of silt it carries. Most of the bridges we

crossed were Engineer Corps jobs, though a few were of old stone or wood and one looked as if it might have been built back in the days of the Holy Roman Empire.

The highway parallels the river all the way. The valley is all green fields, and the hillsides are cultivated wherever possible. Hay and grain were growing in such steep fields that wagons couldn't be used in them. Of course, most of their labor is without benefit of horse-powered or gasoline engine equipment. They plant, cultivate, and harvest by hand. They even use hand rakes to make windrows of hay that's cut with a scythe. There's so much rain they can't let the hay cure in the fields as we do. They make a tripod of sticks or use a single stick to pile hay on above the ground.

Along the road every half-mile or so is a shrine, usually a figure of Christ on the cross, with a roof above it. These seem a bit ridiculous to me, looking almost like billboard advertising of religion. The churches, though, are numerous and uniformly beautiful. They are mostly white stucco and have either needle-like spires or rounded domes like mosques. From any prominence, you can see dozens of them scattered along the valley and up the slopes, and sometimes one is perched alone on an almost inaccessible

hilltop.

At Innsbruck, we boarded a cable car and rode part way up the mountain to a resort hotel. There we entered another car, one that went through the air instead of on the ground. When you lean out of those things and see the frail-looking cables above and the masses of sharp rocks two or three hundred feet below, you feel somewhat insecure. At the second stop we had food at a hotel and then went skiing - that's right, and in late June. I limped for a few days afterward from that first ever ski lesson.

Later, we took the third and last car to the very summit, winding up with a spectacular view of Innsbruck looking like a toy village and of the silver ribbon of the river winding down the valley. Looking toward the horizon to the west and south as far as we could see were jagged, snow covered peaks. Nothing equals them in the States.

III Rainbow "U"

Still 25 June '45 - back at our billets. This was my day to get back to Love Company. I did for all of thirty minutes. A personnel friend came by and told me to pack up and get to Battalion pronto. I did. A truck picked me up, and the driver told me I was going on detached service to a Division tactical school. How come? Where? For how long? We must have travelled over 100 miles to pick up other people, equipment, and instructions before arriving at our destination.

This was my introduction to Pertisau am Achensee and to "Regenbogen U" as the natives called the place. My new room was on the second floor of the Hotel Stefanie, a Lakeside resort hotel only a few miles northeast of Innsbruck. We were to "take our meals" (sounds ritzy, doesn't it) in a plush hotel restaurant. My room is far the best I ever saw in the Tirol. This was a resort of the idle rich.

I was to be administrative first sgt. responsible for all the E M and for taking care of the paperwork. There were to be 300 officers and enlisted attending the school with a staff over 150 (manpower was cheap then). The C O was Major Smith and his

exec. was Lt. Sandercock. Civilians cooked for us. There was a female steno to do work for the major, with a little time left over to help me deal with civilian staff. And this was true, so they told me, the gal was baroness and spoke English well. Some class!

Beside the baroness, there was another different sort of person. A Rumanian refugee who was to do some work for the officers, maybe as a sort of batman. He was a dark complexioned fellow who often dressed and looked the part of a gypsy. I didn't get to see him very often, but my buddies said he did the most thorough job of brown-nosing (they described it more graphically) they had ever seen. In the short time the school was in existence, he ate and drank and partied with a few officers, and he was most supercilious toward plain G I's. George knew his way around. Some of the guys thought he ought to be booted out of the school.

What a day, this 25th of June! Nothing happens. Then all of a sudden I'm whisked away to a shangri-la!

26 June '45 at Pertisau - This morning my duties seemed slight, but this afternoon I was top sgt., mess sgt., and liaison with the civilian workers. The baroness, I found, is a woman of about 40 who lives somewhere in the area with her husband. She was

supposed to be quite charming, though inclined to be somewhat bossy and superior.

Already here the natives laugh about Regenbogen U because of rainbows that have been painted on so many walls in this resort village.

1 July '45 at Pertisau - By now things are beginning to settle into a routine here at Rainbow U. Most of the students have arrived and the staff is filling up. Even the kitchen takes little of my time with Austrian women cooking our meals better than the GI staff ever did.

I had some good experience today. The proprietor of the hotel we're living in has a daughter who came home a few weeks ago after over two years of confinement in Dachau, and I really believed him when he said he hates the Nazis. He made everything he owns available to us and seemed little interested whether he was paid or not. Another owner of a hotel farther north on the lake constantly cried for rent and hid things he thought we might want. The other day I went with the major to look at some office space in his hotel and to hunt for office furniture. He claimed he had nothing, but we found enough new office furniture hid in a cellar storeroom to fill a good sized bank. The major really cooked up a storm.

Had a ride just before dark in one

of the kayaks at the boat dock. There was a sharp breeze, and I clipped along pretty well for a beginner.

5 July '45 - The major came back from a trip to Division, having learned that we will be moving again. This time it's to a place just south of Salzburg. It isn't clear whether the school here will close and someone else take it over or if we'll re-open at the new location.

7 July '45 - Our days here at Pertisau are strictly numbered. Also its clear that we will move out of the Tirol in weeks or months and turn it over to French occupation troops.

It's interesting to see how uniformly EM in the Regiment dislike the French and how much more outspoken the officers are. Last night some French officers and EM came to look the place over and then asked our officers for accommodations for the night. They were polite but finally brought them down to me with what I thought was a clear signal not to spend much time or effort on them. The mess officer said we had only K rations for dinner, though rations had just come in and the storeroom was bulging with food.

The natives dislike the French troops as much as we do and aren't slow to say so. Even some French civilians who've been working for us at the school act disappointed at the coming change. One told me last night that

their food goes through the stomach like a sieve and that, poor as it is, there's never enough. But our American food, he said, ist sehr gud.

8 July '45 - Yesterday I went to my room at 1700 after a busy day and lay down on my bed for a nap. Nearly an hour later I woke up and looked around the room to see the CO, Major Smith, sitting at my table writing a note. He wanted to give me some late poop about our move and was considerate enough not to waken me. Most officers I've met would have shaken me or yelled until I woke up. He's one of a kind.

7 July '45 - The civilian interpreter, George, has a Mercedes-Benz sport sedan that disappeared this afternoon. The major's driver, Kufahl, was pissed off about it and asked me to go with him to look for it. At the next town, he saw the rear end of it sticking out of a barn. On checking, we found that GI's from the 222nd or 232nd had put it there and said they'd take it back tonight. We fooled with it for an hour with the help of a Jerry but couldn't get it started.

Kufahl stayed with the car and I went back to look for the interpreter to see if he had other keys. That was the first I had ever driven a jeep or any other vehicle in the army, and was that little puddle jumper ever fun!

I did not find George but did find some officers having schnapps. While

I told them about the car, they plied me with some of their drinks and they decided they had to go with me, and the major joined us. On the way, one of them - we had dubbed him Capt. BTO - was yelling all the way about how he'd throw a guard around the barn and catch those "sonsabitches and court martial the shit out of them." The major said, "Now, goddamit Captain, take it a little easy and don't make too big an ass of yourself and the rest of us. You know, I have to live in the same outfit with the sergeant."

The captain didn't do anything but give me a hard time for driving so slowly, so I poured on the gas and steered straight through the chuckholes. The BTO got sick and puked out the side and the rest of us almost died laughing. The Mercedes was finally retrieved, but that wasn't the end of the day. The major stopped by my room briefly to tell me we were all heading back to our units tomorrow. The school was closed.

IV Salzburg

9 July '45 - "I" Company isn't to move until morning. The guys I know look about the same, but there are lots of new faces. A few have shipped out recently, but none came back from hospital since I returned.

Everyone hates to leave this place for they have had a soft deal. The detail as honor guard for Hollywood Harry wasn't hard, and they have had scrumptious billets and good food. The house the CO is located in is quite new and entirely modern. The billets were actually nicer than we had at Pertisau, though altogether we had it better there. We were pretty much our own masters.

The hot poop is that we will be in Salzburg for about two weeks and then move to an assembly area in preparation for going to a port of embarkation. But who really knows? We might just as well be making room for the French and then going again to occupation duty elsewhere than in the Tirol.

My own situation is even more complicated. I have been away from "I" so much that I have no official status in it. I'm an extra thumb. They sent me to the school to solve that problem, and now I'm dumped back in their laps.

10 July '45 - The Company finally

pulled out about noon. I stayed behind with Capt. Cook who was the battalion representative to see that all billets were left in proper shape to satisfy the owners and to be ready for the incoming frogs. We chased up and down the steps of 20 or more three-story house, peering into rooms and talking to landlords. One or two had minor complaints, but most of them wanted to thank us and to cry on our shoulders about the fact the French, whom it seems no one in Europe likes, would be their next tenants. Maybe part of their concern was that most of them believed Moroccan troops were coming, and they fear black men, for the Nazis have fed them with propaganda about how brutish they are.

We had a delightful trip from Kitzbuhel to Salzburg with enough breeze to cut the heat. The sky was clear as we passed beneath the mass of cathedral peaks of the Kaiser Alps, a haven of mountain climbers. There were the usual wooded hills and terraced fields and the lone white house or church perched atop some of them.

In Salzburg the front of our CP faces the Salzach River fifty yards away. It's a large, muddy-looking, turbulent stream with such a powerful current that no one tries to swim in it. Besides, it runs through the city prior to reaching us and is probably a

big sewage dump like most rivers in urban areas.

-11 July '45 - It also rains here in Salzburg. Fact is the Tirol must have swapped weather with the Amazon basin this summer.

One of the former shavetails in the Battalion is in quite a spot. It seems he contracted VD while on pass in Paris or a little later on in Bavaria, and, to make matters worse, he failed to report it to the medics. He will lose the commission he has had for only a few months. What we're speculating about, since he was married just before coming overseas, is how he'll write home to tell his wife the sad story. It's the reverse of the story of a GI in the area who got a letter from his wife back home. She had a baby by another man since he left and the other man had won her affection. This was in a current issue of Stars and Stripes. Tough! Tough!

12 July '45 - Some of the guys have been telling me what's happened while I was away, and most of it is bitching. There has apparently been a most scandalous situation in the kitchen. The men have not been getting enough to eat while the officers have been getting fat, and much food has been smuggled out to civilians (and even given to them openly). The cooks practically tell the guys in the

company to go jump in the lake. Partly, they barter food for stuff to drink, and it's for other purposes. The guys seem afraid to talk to the present CO or to other officers or NCO's.

Some of the officers were recently enlisted men and others - this they say - are bucking to get promoted. Guess I'm too far removed from things in my isolated typing chore to learn first hand whether this is mostly unfounded bitching heightened by the frustration of idleness or is cruel fact crying to be remedied.

13 July '45 - I've learned that Division publicists or historians - whatever they are - expect to review the writings of people in the service before any publication is attempted. That's a crock! The time for censorship is way past, and people should be able to write and publish without having to worry about what the echelons above us in the military think. They want everything to be nice and polite and to reflect credit on everyone and to make all the officers look like wonder men. If my little account is to be published at all, it will be for the outfit as a whole and to reflect their experiences and their sentiments. And when they get dirty deals, I hope to say so.

V
Fraternization

15 July '45 - Yesterday, the 14th, was a landmark day, something for lots of people to celebrate. Yesterday the non-fraternization rule was relaxed. Fact is, it became completely kaput! Just think, the separation between conqueror and conquered is all at once ended. Now one can walk down a street and greet a civilian without someone else in the service yelling "Nazi Lover," questioning your loyalty or your morals. Five or six of us in "I" Company are going to celebrate by fraternizing tonight in our billet with cards and maybe some schnapps (the latter if we can locate any that isn't rotgut).

Seriously, though, it was easily visible today that there had been a radical change, for GI's and frauleins were wandering all over Salzburg together. Last night was the same. Strange that such a rule was dropped on the anniversary of the reactivation of WWII's Rainbow Division, and the same date in history as France's Bastille Day!

Nothing happens for days and days. Then lots of things do. Last night we sat by an open window and were talking when some flares went off and something went over that sounded like a mortar

shell. One of the guys tipped off his chair attempting to duck. Later, there were two or three short machine gun bursts, and we wondered what was up. This morning we learned that some GI down the road had been playing around with weapons. Could have been celebrating the big event of the day. No matter, he was picked up and will be court-martialed, which is right, for that kind of foolishness often costs lives.

16 July '45 - The money situation over here is a funny thing. The Germans (and Austrians) are still using the money that was good during the war, for that is the only money they have. On the other hand, we used occupation marks in Germany and schillings in Austria. Some of the guys picked up a lot of German marks during the war and hung onto it, so now anything that is for sale in Germany or Austria they can buy with it, meaning that what they buy costs them nothing.

The best little deal that I saw was where a group of Germans worked for us and were paid off in occupation schillings. After they were paid, a GI came along and traded his German money for their occupation money. He netted about \$400 at a cost to himself only of the effort to make the exchange. A crazy world.

Social relations between soldiers

and civilians have settled into a normal routine. The first few days of exhibitionism by "Liberated" GI's and frauleins is over, and it is almost now as before the ban was lifted. We speak to the hausfrau and the fraulein in whose house we live, but not much. We often speak to civilians on the street in simple courtesy to people who are no longer the enemy and most of us do a doubletake when a rare Hedy Lamarr passes by just as we did back home. The change is really for the good. It's something like after prohibition when people settled down and forgot what fun it had been to thwart an unpopular law.

19 July '45 - Salzburg - Here at the CP I'm in a room with two other guys in company headquarters.

There are only two beds in the room, rather, two couches made up as a bed. At night we take the mattress off one of the beds and put it on the floor. One guy has a full bed to sleep on, on the mattress on the floor, and the third the bare springs of the sofa. We shift each night. Tonight I get the springs, and I hope we stay up late so I won't have to endure them too long.

One roommate is Postlewait (Posty), our communications sgt. who replaced Frank Frieri. Posty is a serious minded West Virginian, a guy who is slow and calm and steady in speech and

actions, yet he has a dry sense of humor and can, on occasion, move with speed and determination. The other is Eaton, Gordon N. He's 24 and married and has a pretty good college education. He worked as a radio announcer for two or three years, and his last major job was doing the commercials on the Inner Sanctum program.

Have you ever seen any Danny Kaye movies? Kaye is the wackiest person I've ever seen in the movies, and Eaton is the most completely wacky, unpredictable one I've seen in the flesh. The usual type of constant comic becomes dull and monotonous on closer acquaintance because so much is repetitious, but not this guy. I've been around him every day since coming to Salzburg, and he's good for as many laughs now as at first.

The guy is a marvelous imitator. He does the best Roosevelt ever, and though I have heard him do a fireside chat many times, he has not repeated once. He does W.C. Fields, Henry Aldrich, and numerous others. Probably his best is Danny Kaye. But he's more than a mimic. He has a quick, facile mind that is never at rest. He can be a tease, too, and he keeps the frau and the fraulein here in a constant uproar.

One day in the Hardt Mountains, probably in January, we stopped at the

top of a steep hill much in need of a rest. We sat down and shortly were joined by Col. Caum, Capt. DeReus and a few others. Someone in our group started to moan and bitch about foot-soldiering over rugged mountains. Eaton stood with a can of pork loaf in one hand, a "K" cracker in the other and gave out with one of his fireside chats.

He lectured us mock-seriously in that Roosevelt tone of confidence and intimacy. Just imagine these ungrateful GI's bitching about their lot, he said, while the poor, down-trodden defense workers at home were making barely enough to pay income taxes and buy new cars and have only two or three nights a week at night clubs. And they only went out on strike once in a while. On and on he went. You can't imagine how relaxed and refreshed that gang looked by the time he finished. Eyes were glued on while him as he alternately ate and gestured as he talked. There wasn't any more griping as we headed downhill and hit the road to Dimbach.

If you walked around town with Eaton, you had to be prepared both to laugh and be embarrassed, for he couldn't pass a fraulein without going into that Danny Kay 4 F, crazy man routine, drooling, panting, and going through the most fantastic motions. You almost split watching the reaction

of his victims. A minute later he might stop by the river bank and sit down to chat in German with a grandmother who was knitting and tending a little flock of milk goats.

(Eaton soon got the break he had been looking for all our time in Europe. Army is opening a radio network in Austria, and he is to be one of the announcers and to help open the station in Vienna. Couldn't happen to a nicer guy.)

23 July '45 - The latest news around the regiment is about a few cases of VD that have showed up. A short-arm inspection was ordered that produced two more. It seems there have been two displaced women (Polish, they say) here in Mittersill lately. They have been hanging around the mess hall hoping to wangle food. Guess they bargained successfully. Strange! They live in the most squalid conditions and look so disreputable. Now the price all of us have to pay is regular short-arms and VD lectures ad nauseum.

Every once in while someone comes along who knows I've been working on a company history and tells me a new story. Some of them are hair-raising enough that I would get in trouble (and get some others in trouble) if I intended to use them in any way that would identify the participants.

25 July '45 - At Battalion today I heard a good story, a sequel to our time at Pertisau. It's about the Rumanian character named George, the guy who acted as an interpreter and what-not and who made perfect asses of some of the officers. He's the one who got liquor for some of them and hired carpenters and painters for work at the school. He ate with some of the officers and hobnobbed with them as an equal.

Well, George came with us from Pertisau and has been around since, living the life of Riley and brown-nosing to a fair-thee-well. A few nights ago one of the officers, so the story goes, took George to a movie and somewhere for a drink afterwards, and returned with him to his room. A strange officer and accompanying EM were waiting there. They were from the Counter-Intelligence Corps and were there to take poor, innocent George away with them. It seems that George had faked his papers, that he wasn't Rumanian at all in spite of his complexion and attire. In fact, CIC had reason to suspect him, and proof, too, of being part of the Wehrmacht's G-2! Did we ever get a chuckle out of that! Now if something similar developed as to that sophisticated and scheming baroness, the story would be complete.

VI

Neukirchen

3 August '45 - I talked to Eb today (that's Ebenau who was I Company clerk for a long time but is now in personnel work in Battalion) and he told me one job in the offing that would have taken me off special duty and put me in an assigned job somewhere out of I was already filled, so I am still in limbo. He's tried hard to help me, though.

We moved here last night in a heavy rain. Our baggage was lost so I had to hunt around for enough bedding for the night. Posty loaned me his sleeping bag, so I did pretty well.

This morning Neukirchen, our new location, did not look so bad, especially after we had a good breakfast of hotcakes and cereal and saw that the rain was ended. Someone has the idea I need a secluded spot to do my writing, so I have a room on the third floor of the CP all to myself. It's the first time I've unpacked completely, and that may not be a good idea. When you get set and comfortable, someone comes along and tells you to pack up again and get ready to move out.

5 August '45 - I answered the phone in the orderly room, and Battalion wanted to know if Sgt. Ruesch was on pass or present for duty. I told them

I was here and asked why. The answer was that Fury wants to know - that's Division - and that it appeared something was in the wind. It'll probably be special duty or detached service somewhere. I learned yesterday that the Rainbow "U" is to be reopened, this time at Zell am See, a place about 25 miles from here toward Salzburg. Sounds good for it's something to keep me busy and interested. Also, the location is choice, almost as good as Pertisau. If I know the army by now, it won't be anything I anticipate or want.

There's a woman near here who used to live in Salzburg and who has a fancy officer's knife and scabbard that I'd like. Trouble is, she doesn't want money but wants to swap it for food and cigarettes. These people are willing and eager to trade for food, and if you could see what some of them have to eat you wouldn't wonder why.

At every army mess line over here, there seems to be a flock of children around to get any extra food that we don't eat. They stand by the wash line and clean whatever is left from your mess kit. Their parents may have been our enemies, but you still don't enjoy seeing children have to subsist on a little black bread and some thin soup. I hate to think what it will be like in the cities here this winter, so many of

them already are at the point of starvation. And when you see respectable housewives make prostitutes of themselves to get food for their children, it is tragic.

One afternoon in Salzburg I was in Battalion HQ alone when a youngish gal, about 30, came in and asked if she and her little girl could move into her mother's house. That house was one of the Headquarter Company's billets, and the gal's mother had been the only civilian living there. The problem was a sign saying no civilians were allowed. Fortunately Capt. Cook came in and heard the story. He sent me to the house with the gal to take down the sign and check to see if anything had been left behind by the GI's. We got there just as the mother put supper on the table. Supper was a bowl of soup, a hunk of black bread, and some butter the daughter had brought from the rural area where she had been staying.

It was approved for all three of them to stay in the house that we had now left empty. They were so grateful that the mother and daughter invited me to eat with them. I had only a cup of ersatz coffee, horrible stuff. The daughter told me how unpleasant it was living in the Tirol after the Americans left and the French came. She and another young woman wanted a pass to go from one small village to Innsbruck

and back and asked the officer in charge for approval. He said he would give them a pass only if each of them first slept with him.

A couple of days later we had food left over from dinner, and I took a plate of it to the two women, along with a package of gum and bar of candy for the child. I watched them eat - they didn't leave a scrap - and then talked with them for awhile. The mother, who spoke no English, brought out a box of family pictures to show me, the usual family album stuff with many moustaches and beards and stiff poses. Then pictures of the daughter and her husband, who was an officer in the Wehrmacht. At the bottom of the box were two carefully framed and wrapped pictures. Would I like to see them? Of course I would. Then I got a surprise.

The pictures were both nude ones of the daughter, one a profile of her kneeling before two candles and the other the same except a front view. I swallowed hard as the mother asked me which one I liked best. I pointed to the profile one, and she said, "ja ja, das ist shone!" They regarded the pictures as art, and I gradually got the idea that they weren't trying to be suggestive or vulgar or to seduce me. They seemed to be ordinary middle class people with a different set of morals

than we have who were proud of their small treasures. Had we stayed in Salzburg, I think I might have gone back to visit with them again, but maybe it's just as well I didn't.

6 August '45 - No dope yet on Snavely (he is the personnel expert whom I have been understudying) and he is still sweating out an emergency furlough. The cock-eyed army system! His father may be dying back in the States, yet they blissfully buck his application back and forth through channels. He should have had an answer days ago and should have been on his way home. There are so many excess people here in the military but no-one seems able to make the decision that is so important to him.

I had a court-martial to write up today that gives me another good reason to gripe. One of the boys in I Company has been on special duty going around Austria with Special Service shows. He's from my home state, and in civilian life he worked in the entertainment business, so he is well qualified for current activities. The other day an MP picked him up in Salzburg wearing a garrison cap when the rules said he should have worn his helmet liner. A delinquency report was made up on him by the provost marshal who should have chucked the report in his round file. Instead, orders were

sent along to the company for a summary court-martial. Can you imagine that? On conviction he will be fined about \$10.00 and will be reduced from pfc to pvt. (He was busted from Sgt. to Pfc awhile back for another minor violation) and his service record will carry the report on the court-martial as if he were a common criminal. That is the kind of picayunish, chicken stuff that makes guys over here want to kick over the traces. Even back in garrison in the States, such an offense called for no more than company punishment and brief restriction or some extra KP duty.

7 August '45 - I was picked up and taken to Regiment in Mittersill where four others hopped onto the truck. Then it was on to Salzburg to Division headquarters. The trip was for an OCS written test that was a simple IQ thing. I was sorry I had applied in the first place, and I think the others were, too. If accepted we wouldn't get back home sooner except to stay in service much longer. And at this point we were enough like other GI's to want out as soon as we had enough points.

We tried to get our driver to stay in Salzburg for the rest of the day, but he said he had a date for the afternoon. So we missed a meal to be sure of a ride.

The trip back was the nicest up the

valley, the first I had travelled the 100 miles when I was not cold or wet or stuck in the back of a covered truck. The whole trip is through deep mountain valleys, along lakes and streams. It's like a continuous Jackson Hole. The same kind of trip in normal times would be great fun because you could stop and eat at a pleasant streamside gasthaus and then stay for the night at a small pension on the way. At Zell am See you could swim and row a canoe along the lakeshore. Then there's horseback riding and hiking up the slopes and even a side trip to Berchtesgaden or on a cable car to a ski lodge in the high country where there's still plenty of snow.

At Mittersill I decided to walk and hitch rides the rest of the way back to Neukirchen. But it took until supper time, mostly walking. Luckily I was just in time for chow, and it was good.

After supper Lt. Tucker, who has been our CO now for some time, called me with word that Capt. Connell wanted me in the personnel office, and he had approved. This time, he said, it was not a detail but would be a transfer out of I Company. That sounds as good to me as it must to Lt. Tucker, who is pleased to get rid of one more excess rating.

VII
Mittersill and Headquarters Company

9 August '45 - Just finished breakfast in this new place with a mostly new bunch of guys. This is Mittersill, about 20 miles down from the mountain where we were at Neukirchen. Yesterday I got instructions to come here just as I company got orders to go back up the mountain to Krimml where they had been stationed before to do guard duty on a small PW camp holding former SS troops, and I suppose that is what they will be doing again.

My deal here isn't clear yet, but I think I will be working as a classification clerk. The present classification man S/ Sgt. Snively, who has been with the 242nd since Camp Gruber. It may be he will soon be discharged and that I am to be trained as his replacement, or it may be there's so much work ahead that I'm just to be his backup.

Our mail situation gets bad in Austria at times. We go for days or weeks without mail and then get lots of letters at once. Now I find the same is true of outgoing mail, that our letters have been kicking around for days and days for lack of a pickup service.

Is this ever wet country! There has been steady rain for three days, and we

can see the Salzach River - it's just in front of our quarters and office - rising steadily. We could be flooded out if the weather doesn't clear soon.

Everyone here is excited about the atomic bomb, but we don't know quite what to think about it. The war in the Pacific should not last long if we have enough of them, but I am frightened that such a Buck Rogers weapon is now real. What in the world would it do in the wrong hands? And even though we have it, such a bomb - that can kill thousands and thousands of people and devastate large areas - seems too terrible and inhuman to use.

Snavely told me just now what my work will be. He also told me I had passed the OCS test and would be called soon for an interview, but that's for the birds by now. I have the steady work ahead that I wanted, and I couldn't possibly do anything that might delay return home and getting out.

There's a good bunch here, 20 company clerks and eight or 10 others, and one officer, Capt. Connell, who seems like a regular guy.

The sun finally came out just about when we thought the river would flood its banks.

We don't have a radio here, and we can hardly wait for each day's news from Asia. The Russians are finally

getting into it, and the second atomic bomb has been dropped on Nagasaki. We would like to follow the news hour by hour. Some of the guys think it will be a matter of only a few days, but others expect a couple of months yet. The Russians have such long supply lines to troops in Manchuria. Besides, the Japs are so enamoured of their rising sun that they aren't likely to let just two bombs make them quit. War still is hell and getting more so in our times.

Other GI's think we're on a gravy train here in headquarters, and I guess we are. We have a five day week with Sundays off and another day during the week. We're on a branch line of the railroad, it is narrow gauge, and will get us up-river to Neukirchen and Krimml and down the valley to Zell am See and Salzburg. With regular time off, we can plan a little and get out on excursions to any part of the Tirol. We can easily get to Salzburg for music programs in the famous Festspielhaus and to the Red Cross and other recreation centers. The trains in Austria are free to all our soldiers, and there is so much military truck traffic that we thumb rides when we can't catch a train.

14 August '45 - Saturday afternoon - the 12th - Sweets (a company clerk) and I hitchhiked to Salzburg, a distance of

80 miles, and made it by 2000. The last ride was about 50 miles in a jeep. The driver was heading for a date, and he drove like a man possessed. We got out of the jeep with a great sigh of relief.

In Salzburg now there is a transient hotel and a transient mess run by the 2nd Corps for any and all soldiers coming to town for a day or two. They have cots set up with GI bedding and there are facilities for shower or bath. Along with the food, about the same as any mess hall, it is a terrific deal for us.

We were too late for a movie but went to a GI club for some beer and then to the Red Cross Club Mirabelle for coffee and doughnuts. Some times the doughnuts are little more than dough and grease, but here they were pretty good. And there was always the chance that a guy might run into an old friend passing through. I never was so lucky.

Sunday we wandered around the city just looking. This place is over 1000 years old. Festung Hohensalzburg (meaning fortress high above the city) still has some walls that old. Now if the army would remove the "off limits" signs at the fortress entrance, we'd enjoy exploring inside.

Word here today is that the war in the Pacific is over. The Japs,

according to Capt. Connell, are now broadcasting the terms of their surrender. We're all trying to figure out some way of celebrating, though there is nothing to drink that's even mildly alcoholic in all of Mittersill. No one cares very much, though. Just the thought it is finally over is good enough.

What I want to do now is to finish the Love Company story and then wait with my buddies for the first chance to catch a boat. For us nothing about the army is important anymore. The whole war is over, and our chief occupation from here on will be waiting, waiting, waiting.

15 August '45 - This is the official V-J Day, and most everyone in the occupation forces has the whole day off. I quit writing too soon yesterday because someone came back from Salzburg last night with a 5-gallon jug of wine, and we all stayed up until 0100 playing poker and drinking all, every last sip, of that wine. It seemed to be pretty good stuff and must have had a bang to it if my head this morning is any indication.

So we all have the day off and I am enroute to Krimml to see old friends in Love Company. What a lovely place Krimml is! It is tucked away in the mountains at the head of a canyon where a waterfall comes cascading down near

the end of the main street. In fact, there are four falls, one below the other, and a few miles upstream is a glacier that forms those waterfalls that in turn form the Salzach River, a main tributary of the mighty Danube.

All the oldtimers here in I Company want to know when the history will be done, and I wish I could give them the answer. They seem to think it will be something different from the official histories of larger military units, and I must get renewed energy to finish it for their benefit. The next time I get to I, the rest of the guys who were in combat will be gone, so I have to manage with the facts I now have.

The annual music festival in Salzburg begins next week and includes operas, symphonies, one play, and several other events. There are top performers in all of them. Chances are though, that we won't get to any of them. Division gets only 50 tickets to each performance, and with the old filter down process, it's likely they will all be gone before getting down to battalion or company level. It isn't even likely that many tickets will get to our regiment.

18 August '45 - This place is a madhouse. The guys are always chattering about something, and lately it's the rumors about when we will all get discharged. To hear them argue,

you would think they hated each other. They use some pretty rugged language, calling each other everything under the sun, but it's still pretty much in fun.

So far I have done little work on my new job. Snively has about an hour's work each day. Sometimes I help him with it and other times he wants to do it alone. Others here haven't a lot more work. Most other GI's in Austrian occupation are in the same boat. There are still five full divisions here so we have to compete for what little work there is. Three of those divisions are to leave before long. Then we can spread out, our quarters should be better, and there ought to be much more work activity for us. If that comes to pass, the major bane of our existence in Europe should be eased. I mean our idleness. If we get busy, we'll have less time to bitch about our lot and less time to listen to and generate rumors. We have hopes for that to happen.

19 August '45 - It is Sunday, and a bunch of us get to go to Berchtesgaden today. I've been waiting for this opportunity. From Salzburg it's only a short ride to Berchtesgaden and Konigsee, that lovely part of the Tirol that Hitler appropriated as his personal retreat and hideout. His castle was at the very top of the mountain, affording a panoramic view of

craggs and of mountain valleys that gave us the impression that we were at the entrance to a magic land.

The bombers that preceded us by months had destroyed all of the castle above ground, and the countless souvenir hunters before us had removed everything of value and had even picked up shards of glass and marble that were sprayed around the area. The few partial walls still standing helped us see some of the views that had made the castle a spectacular place. The subterranean passages for use if Der Fuhrer and his entourage had to seek safety inside the mountain were closed.

(Here in Arizona I have met a retired air force officer who served in the ETO and was shot down on a bombing mission over Germany. The camp was moved to a new location near Munich, and the word was that another move was coming to a spot on the mountain just below Hitler's aerie. The captives didn't take long to get the message. If things went badly for the Third Reich, and Adolph and his staff had to seek sanctuary in the Aerie, Herr Goebles would let the enemy know that if they bombed Berchtesgaden, they would kill many, many American captives before they ever got to Hitler.

When this word got around, my friend and several of the captive air crews worked out an escape plan. It was

successful, and they got back through allied lines. None of them could tolerate the idea of being targets of our own bombers.)

Back at the foot of the mountain, we found our way to another of the Tirol's tremendously beautiful lakes, Konigsee. A motor launch took us all around the lake. Steep slopes surround it on every side. It is the equal of any body of water any of us had ever seen or expect to see.

From Division the word is that we are to move again, this time to a town near Zell am See. An officer has come back from a trip there to look at possible billets and office space. One good thing, he says, is that we will have nicer rooms and that everyone will have a mattress and springs on his bed. That alone would make a move worthwhile. The straw tick I sleep on now is almost as hard as the floor, and the humps and lumps in it do not fit my bones. Besides, the thing is so short I have to curl up all night. I have to be very tired to get to sleep at all, and usually wake up with a sore back. Then there's a further problem of bites that I thought were mosquitoes. Instead, they are bed bug bites and we all are looking for DDT.

21 August '45 - Today at Headquarters Company there was a

drawing to determine who gets to go to Zell am See to see and hear Jane Frohman, and I was one of the lucky ones. There was a special train to take us there, and was it ever worthwhile! There was some preliminary stuff, a hack comedian, plus a GI pianist and a tap dancer. Finally Miss Frohman came out on crutches to the kind of ovation you would expect for a conquering hero. Bender and I had front seats where we could see her well. She must be past thirty and so thin and frail that she looks tiny. What a voice, though. She sings beautifully and gives out with the most charming smile and personality. She won the audience so completely they didn't want to let her go.

The rumor mill is active again. Now it says we may move back to Salzburg or to Graz or way east to Vienna. Will it ever cease?

24 August '45 - Last night turned out not so bad. Bummed around for a while and then got down to the I Company history at about 2100. After a while, Jolley, the M Company clerk who is in the two-man office with me, got out some Iowa popcorn and some Crisco and popped some corn. We didn't have any salt or butter, but the corn was delicious, and the whole crowd was here before he finished. I kept on working part of the time. Then some of the

guys picked up a copy of what I had finished, and they were soon going through it and making comments. We had a noisy time. I got to bed about midnight.

I think I can get a ticket for tonight in Salzburg, so I am going in once more. Then, tomorrow I can stay for a while and check with some publishing firms to see about getting the history printed by one of them and hopefully find how much it will cost. Paper will be the hardest thing to get, and the whole thing may be expensive because of the small number of copies involved (only 400 to 500 copies). I'd hate like everything if it had to be mimeographed.

28 August '45 - Yesterday I came back up here for my day off, hoping to see Capt. Cook and get his reactions to chapters of the history I had left with him, also to get views of the company guys who had looked at it. Didn't find anyone at the company to talk to, so I went up to Battalion. There it was the same and I just about left when Capt. Cook showed up. We went to his room and sat and talked for two hours. It was the most satisfactory conversation I had ever had with an officer. He seemed to forget that he was an officer, and I forgot that I was an enlisted man. We got down on the floor and drew sketches and argued and

discussed points until I was hoarse. He seemed pleased with what I had done so far, said so in flattering terms and didn't try to force his point of view on any part of it. He had suggestions but said I was writing it and it was up to me to decide. He didn't even object when I mentioned a couple of points where I wasn't exactly complimentary in referring to him.

Later on, I talked to Lt. Tucker and Lt. Kelley and to Sgts. Carey and Pellowitz. Altogether I got some good ideas from them and from the captain, and I went back to Mittersill with quite a feeling of accomplishment.

The rumors about points are back in the picture and all relates to the number one needs to be eligible for discharge. It keeps going down to lower totals, but my total hasn't been reached yet and won't be for months to come. So the rumors I am interested in are those relating to where we will be and what we will be doing in the 242nd and in the division. Capt. Connell just came back from Division with word the 42nd will soon be the only remaining outfit in all of Austria. Which means that we will spread out over the whole American sector in Austria. Still, that doesn't tell us where we will be and what we will be doing. It may yet be that we in the 242nd will become part of General Mark

Clark's Vienna Area Command.

2 September '45 - The mess sergeant and the cooks still think they have more to bitch about than the rest of us do. They work every day, and they do regardless of whether the food winds up being good or bad, while all the rest of the occupation troops have less than full time jobs and usually have days off. They make quite a case for themselves. I can still remember, though, all the time during the war when they were comfortably housed in rear areas while we were eating C and K rations and anything we could scrounge along the way. I can remember, too, when part of our food went to buy booze and other goodies. Then there is the time that they made dehydrated foods into almost inedible hash. But maybe I oughtn't to throw stones at them with my role being non-combatant. Maybe it all balances out.

4 September '45 - Yesterday S/Sgt. Snively got word from Division, through a friend there, that the Red Cross has sent in verification of the basis for his emergency furlough, so he expects to leave by plane within a few days. That means that I will be the classification "expert" for the regiment, even though I'm still green at the job. If that works out, I can keep my stripes and pay.

I'm so dumb. When I got back to my

desk after coffee, there was word I should be at Zell am See by 1400 for an interview. I had told the guy at Rainbow U there weeks ago that I wasn't interested in coming to the school as an instructor because I now had a job I liked at Regiment. He said okay, I could forget the deal. Now he says the school gets the people they want regardless of what their present duties are. Anyone with the more than two years of service that I have should have learned by now not to plan for sure on anything before it is signed, sealed and delivered, and not even then.

6 September '45 - Capt. Connel came by and I told him the results of the interview at Zell am see. He later talked to Regimental S-1 and assured me I would be declared essential in the classification job. Still, Snavelly has no final word yet on his furlough so I am still between a rock and a hard place.

10 September '45 - Snavelly has no word yet on his furlough, and I think the system is damnably slow in giving him a decision one way or the other.

Yesterday I got to go to Salzburg to take some records to Division. Had to work there for a few hours and was too late to get back to Mittersill. So now I have my day off to spend in Salzburg. I borrowed a bike and toured

all over the city, seeing for the first time much of it that I had never seen before. What I had seen before was only slightly damaged by bombs, but this time I saw large areas that had been chewed to bits. There was one raid so unexpected that there were over 3,000 people, all civilians, killed inside five minutes. No one said who did the bombing, and I suppose it could have been either allied planes advancing eastward or Nazi ones in retreat. Whichever, it is one more indication that no one is a non-combatant in today's mechanized warfare.

11 September '45 - We have had quite an evening, and I should get some sleep. Half a dozen guys came down from Krimml, including one who is due to go home on points next week. That called for a long bull session and then a movie about foot soldiers. The latter was fairly good, but it doesn't seem possible to depict how dirty and tired and forlorn a company of infantrymen can become after a while on the line, and the language of the doughfoot (What a name!) would be impossible to put in a movie (How things have changed!) and almost as hard to get into a book. The guy leaving is a staff named Dailey. He's as rough and tough as they come. He was in the Canal Zone for two years

before coming to the Rainbow, and he is one who doesn't care whether school keeps or not. In combat he took more chances, stuck his neck out more, I think, than just about anyone else. All the way across France and Germany he said he didn't expect to come through alive, so what the hell. He was as nearly unafraid as anyone I've ever met. He is cocky, too, and brags some, but I can't help but like and respect him. Oh, and his nickname, one he brought from Panama, is Cathouse.

Lately, our food has been punk, and there has not been much of it. Kind of strange. With so many troops leaving Europe, one would think it should be both plentiful and good. We have even had some K rations and 10-in-ones lately, and I can no longer tolerate K's. I'd rather go without or wait for breakfast until the Red Cross is open for coffee and sinkers.

The whole regiment is in an uproar of speculating. Hot poop came down from Division that all men with more than 47 points will be gone by October. S/Sgt. Snively is headed for Rheims to pick up a large number of low point GI's as replacements, and we are busy identifying everyone in the regiment who is now entitled to head out. A few officers with more than 77 points are also to leave.

All these changes are doing some odd

things. One guy has been a Pfc throughout the war, but a month ago he became assistant to a company supply sergeant, and he will shortly take over the job officially and get the stripes. The bad part is that some of the guys who get the ratings are ones who wouldn't have been considered for them ordinarily and who aren't well qualified anyway. Poor old Clauser is one who was a T/5 for years waiting for the promised job as supply sergeant. Now he's gone and a low-pointer will get the job and the grade, some young kid who probably won't know a tenth of what Clauser does about supplies. But Hank won't be kicking, for he is out of the army by now.

Today I ran onto some more I Company guys who are leaving shortly. One is Scrubby Farrington, another of the Panama guys. I used to resent him. He's another rough, tough, profane, hard drinking sergeant. But I learned to like him as he showed his real character in helping less experienced buddies in combat. He also is fearless.

13 September '45 - We went to a variety show tonight that was a real disappointment, even though there were a few excellent performers, but the supposed stars ruined it all. A german gal with a so-so voice sang "Amerik" songs, trying to be a blues singer,

which she didn't even approximate. An opera singer was surprisingly good, so were a banjo player and a zylophonist. The rest should have stayed at home, and they should have gotten that message from the lack of applause. The show cost us five shillings each and was worth no more than one.

But I shouldn't downgrade those people so much. GI's, especially infantrymen, have to be the crudest, noisiest guys in the world. They make wise cracks and dirty remarks and yell and hoot. It must take real troupers to perform for them without losing patience and a sense of humor. They (we) are like a bunch of dead-end kids. But one trouble is that performers over here have learned only that GI's like vulgar humor, and they don't learn that we also like other things, so often all we get is smut of the crudest kind. It would be great, at least once in a while, to see live performances that were played straight.

15 September '45 - This classification job that is now mine is interesting and fairly important. It works this way. Division calls and asks for an NCO and a baker to go on DS to Rainbow U. I can check through 3,000 IBM punchcards myself, or I can call out to the 20 company clerks in our big workroom if any have GI's who can fill the request. So, one company

clerk says they have an NCO who is in bad with the CO and wants out, and that name gets submitted. Another company has a baker who is qualified but has been neglecting his work because of a "shack job," and his name is also submitted in hopes that a change of scenery might be helpful to him and to his company. The names are sent to Division and the named men are then detailed unless someone objects. Maybe a CO won't want to let a guy go. He can call S-1 with his objections. The S-1 will call the personnel officer, who will check with me, and I give him the straight dope. He will usually then tell the complaining party that it is tough, but the detail has to be filled.

There's a danger in the job, too. Suppose someone has done his company clerk dirt. The clerk can wait for a lousy detail to come up so he can send the offender on it. It can even happen to a junior officer. Suppose an officer has caused trouble for a company clerk or a friend of his. That officer could wind up on a detail to a lumber camp back up in the mountains if the clerk or the T/4 who handles officer details handles it right. The politics of the job are interesting but I think caution is called for in handling some situations. I hope to learn speedily.

Here's a case the company clerk and I handled today. One GI in his company has been an acting squad leader for over five months, including the last month in combat. The company's ratings are filled, so there's been no promotion, and the guy is now due for discharge. We made some calls, found a helpful officer who called the regimental commander. He understood and called the adjutant, who then called me with instructions to cut a special order promoting the guy to his earned grade. We feel mighty good about the deal.

17 September '45 - Went on an errand today with papers for Division and ran onto Eaton late in the day. He's that Danny Kaye guy. Now he is announcing on KOFA, the armed forces network station in our area. He's in seventh heaven writing his own programs as well as broadcasting. Spent the night with him after we went to the Red Cross to hear an outstanding GI Chorus.

Capt. Cook called to see if I would like a job as Third Battalion sgt. major. The present one, my friend Filipkowski, is leaving shortly for the States, and I'm being considered. That might also be interesting so my hat is in the ring. But before the day ended I learned that someone else, who is qualified but is due to leave for discharge, has offered to stay another

year to get the job. Good luck to him.

23 September '45 - Yesterday we took a break to see an excellent show at Service Company put on by a group of Hollanders. Then back to work until supper, and then more work until it was time to hit the sack. There was a poker game on in the room next to mine, so I joined that, and we played until 0100.

We didn't go to bed even then. There was a farewell party down the hall that was really something, and we couldn't pass that up. Youngs and McIntosh, both over 35, along with Staszewski, Mettra, Smitty, and O'Connor, and two or three others, all with high points, were on their way back to the States. They were all pretty well looped by the time we joined, and they tried to get us to catch up with them. We watched and sipped slowly, having fun at their antics. I hadn't laughed so hard in years.

A few guys had already gone to bed, and they were routed out to join the fun. Youngsie did a strip tease for us while everyone sang "Take it off! Take it off!" Ebenau, who had been brought out of bed, stood on a table and gave us his version of a VD lecture. Pretty soon we were singing, and we went through all of these:

Good Old Summertime

The Little Brown Church in the Vale
Sidewalks of New York
Take Me Out to the Ballgame
Over There! Over There!
Praise the Lord and Pass the
Ammunition
The Strawberry Blonde
Down By the Old Millstream
The Caissons Go Rolling Along
Loch Lomond

And there were more. With it all went some horseplay. Someone ended a song with "Roll over, Mabel. It's better on the other side." Then came "Roll me over. Roll me over. Roll me over in the clover. Lay me down and do it again."

Jolley, who had just returned from a furlough in England, greeted everyone with "Cheerio! Cheerio! Keep your pecker up," and assured us all that that was not vulgar but was a standard English greeting. Someone yelled, "Let's sing the penicilin Song," So half of the guys start singing. "The love bug'll get you if you don't watch out."

It was hilariously funny. I got to bed at 0300, and the party was still going strong. At about 0430, they came and woke me and tried to get me out of bed again, without success. They quit then, but I think that Youngs and Mac will remember their going away party for a long time.

24 September '45 - Snavelly is back, long enough to pack and leave for home.

There was heavy rain yesterday afternoon and evening, and it lasted the night. This morning there's new snow low on the hills. It was both beautiful and an ominous forecast. The talk of moving has changed. Someone else moved into the billets picked for us, so we'll stay for a while longer.

It is getting busier here all the time with so much movement both out and in. On top of that is a new development. The regimental sgt. major may leave soon and asked me to take his place. That would be fine. It's an administrative job from which I could learn a great deal. The only trouble is that I'm already busy, and he insists that I would have to spend half time with him to learn the job before he leaves. Seems not long ago I was worried about idle time, but no more.

30 September '45 - Wednesday afternoon Capt. Connell sent me down to Division with some rosters on an outgoing shipment. I took a helper with me and we worked until 2200 and were put up there for the night. Thursday we had to find our own way back to Regiment and arrived too late for chow. Started to catch up on my regular work, but the Capt. came in again with some new records and word that he and I had to head for Salzburg

again. This time we were lucky enough to get late chow, but then there was a meeting that lasted until 2130. We got back here on Friday at noon, and had to get records ready for another shipment. When that was done, records had come in on a batch of replacements. Few dull moments!

1 October '45 - This personnel office has become a hectic place with people shipping both in and out daily, and not in small numbers. Tomorrow we lose over 500, and I still have over half of them to check and verify. We have also processed over 1000 new men into the regiment during the past week. If this keeps up, I will have to go back to wearing specs again. Along with our busy time, we have to move Thursday to new quarters in a small place near Zell am See. Some of the companies have already moved, and we have no mess hall, so we have to resort to those horrible K rations.

All this movement means that I've become one of a handful of old men in the outfit, and here in personnel I'll soon be the senior person on the job. I'm already the oldest member of I Company still around because Capt. Cook has just departed. He was nice enough to stop by to see me and say goodbye on his way out.

We had another party last night for guys leaving this week, along with a

poker game. And there was no liquor. We collected canned stuff from home and made a supper of salmon, shrimp, sardines, jam, cheese spread, crackers, cocoa, and cookies. It was good, and so was the game.

2 October '45 - Just finished a batch of records on guys shipping out in the morning, and everyone is busy typing to get last minute items cleared up and be ready to move to our new location in the morning.

Now all the work is done and one clerk is trying to make a phone call to the town of Lofer over a patched and shakey communications system. About a dozen guys are heckling him. They are merciless when they get started, but what fun. They are all guys worth knowing. There's Woody Fredericks, a real southern gentleman from Georgia. Then there are my Jewish friends, Ebenau and Sharff. We have Bronx and Brooklyn and Jersey boys and some from Pennsylvania and Maryland. Jolley, the Iowa man is a farmer type, quiet and modest and serious. There are the screwballs, also.

Col. Smith came to our office today and spent a few minutes with me. I don't know why unless he wanted another look at someone who may wind up as his sgt. major in Regiment. He's as sharp as you would expect any production of West Point to be. I saw him march in

the formal parade the somber day we saluted FDR. That was all precision and polish and ramrod stiffness. Outside formal occasions like that, he seems a regular fellow, not a stuffed shirt.

VIII
Bruck-Fusch

3 October '45 - We got here by noon and found that the last unit in an outfit to move to a new location gets the leavings. Our office is in a gasthaus 15 minutes' walk from the mess hall. Ten of us will live there and the rest will be nearly half a mile away. We have two dinky little stoves to heat work space for 35 men and the billets for 10 of us. There are no light bulbs, no wood or coal for the two stoves, and there's a sign saying we have to buy our wood. We are blessed (?) with two toilets and one bath for 40 of us.

This is crazy. With the few troops left in Austria now - one division where there were five - it should be possible for us all to have decent billets and work places.

That wood thing is for the birds, and we think we'll take that matter all the way up to Gen. Mark Clark's headquarters, if need be, to get it resolved. It isn't so much the idea of paying out of our own pockets. It's the knowledge that our companies have been guarding SS prisoners on wood cutting details for months, and we ought to have some of it.

5 October '45 - This has been a hectic day. S-1 called to ask for a man who can cook, speak German, and who

has experience in buying food and running a mess, at least company size. It took quite a while to locate such a man without robbing some company's kitchen. Then we had to report to Division on men who had had investigative experience. S-3 called for two German and two Yugoslavian interpreters. Division also called for a silk screen painter, and I didn't know then what that was. We found two of them.

There's a new bunch transferring in today, and we have a small group shipping out. Have to get a strength report up to Division and a special order to cut on promotions, and my name will appear on this one, finally transferring from I to Service Company. We've been so busy around here I haven't even thought of that for weeks.

My bed in our new quarters is a prize. There are no springs, and the thin mattress is held up by three slats. When I waken in the mornings, my head, my ankles, and my feet are sagging, though it still is better and warmer than a straw tick.

With all our work here, the regimental Sgt. major (I'm supposed to replace him in a few weeks when he heads for home) keeps calling to remind me that I haven't been spending half time with him to learn his job.

7 October '45 - A Rainbow U officer came again hunting for instructors, and I have to spend hours with him going over possible candidates. At least I'm off the hook. Then we have to locate more guys for special duty assignments - a clerk for a displaced persons camp who also has experience as a first sgt., more cooks and bakers, and some men with finance experience.

A promotion list that came through from one of the companies burned me up, and I am trying to get it cancelled. The company has had quite a lot of rating vacancies waiting to be filled for weeks, with nothing done. Then the CO sent in a first list of promotions, including a guy who had only been in the division for a few days and had extremely low points. There were 130 men in the company who had been there for six months to nearly two years, and the CO picks one cpl. for sgt. who had been in the company less than a week. After some checking around one of the officers in Regiment phoned the CO and got him to withdraw one name and promote a guy who had been with him for over a year. He bitched but complied.

There's some sentiment for me in no longer being part of I Company, but I like the gang I'm with here in Service Company. The personnel sgt. major and I work together every day of necessity, and it helps that we get along well.

He is Les Leschensky, the son of a minister who was a school teacher before the army. We are both new enough at our jobs that we talk shop a good deal even away from the office.

11 October '45 - It's Indian summer after a cold, stormy week. There's a fresh cleanness in the air that makes one feel good, and it makes this place seem like a mountain paradise. Yet moral standards of the people don't fit the landscape. For instance, Mittersill, the place we left recently, is said to produce more bastard children than any other place in Austria. People have very little to do here in the winter, and bedrooms are apparently quite popular.

They grow old here in a hurry, too. Girls seem to mature younger than at home, and at 30 most of them look middle-aged. There are also many who are crippled or deformed. I have seen more women with large, unsightly goiters here in two months than all the rest of my life elsewhere. Young people look fine and healthy, but a hard, rough life in these mountains wears them down early.

Now my half days at Regimental S-1 are being more productive with a chance to do some work instead of just listening and watching Porter do everything. I still would like to know how come I was picked to be his

successor if and when he ships out. Hadn't even met him or the S-1 officer, Lt. Geaney, before the call to spend time with them. It may be that my old CO had something to do about it when he moved to Battalion months ago, and that even Col. Smith was involved. Maybe I can find out from Porter when he departs; that is, if I am still in the picture at that time. I have learned through this deal how speedy and effective the grapevine of GI's around here can be. The morning after my first visit to Regimental S-1, I ran onto the I Company mail clerk who greeted me about now being the asst. sgt. major at Regiment.

Hard to believe, but beginning this day NCO's in the ETO get a small ration of booze along with our officers. We had a drawing a few minutes ago and Les and I won a bottle of whiskey between us. It is the first American whiskey either of us has seen for months.

Les and I scouted around the other day to find a woman to do our laundry, and today we went to pick it up. We're lucky for the woman did an especially good job. Some of them use the soap GI's give them to clean their own laundry, and what comes back is still grimy. We paid her a K ration and a few Austrian shillings. She looks to be about 30 years old and has a daughter of four or five. She wanted

to talk and began telling us her life story - a soldier husband who deserted, the loss of her house in Vienna where she used to live, etc., etc. We managed to duck out after a few minutes and both felt that she was looking hard for a man.

It's difficult for GI's to put themselves in the shoes of these people. So many of their younger men have been gone for months and even years, and a high percentage will never return, either because they were wartime fatalities or because they are in forced labor camps deep in the USSR, with little prospect of ever getting back to Austria. What a tragic deal!

14 October '45 - This Bruck-Fusch village is some place. A week ago there was a dance under military auspices. Total attendees were three Austrian frauleins and over 50 GI's. Another one was scheduled for last night, and it was advertised in town as including beer and sandwiches. So the home folks came out en masse and took over the party. This time the GI's went but came home early while the town's people consumed the beer and sandwiches.

Today is Sunday, and Les got me to go to church with him, the first time for me in months, and on the way back to billets we talked about how good a job the chaplain did. Then we went on

about how we could spend the rest of the day. Someone suggested getting a jeep and riding back in the mountains to hike and explore a bit. Porter came by, and I asked what he thought. Well, you guys have rocks in your head if you think you can wangle a jeep for recreation. Anyway, we went back to Personnel where we found Capt. Connell and mentioned the subject to him. He immediately made a phone call and said we could pick up a jeep in 15 minutes. We hurriedly gathered some snacks from home, plus our saved bottle of American whiskey, and then Bender and Jolley and our driver, Searcy. At 1300 we headed for Gross Glockner, the highest peak in this part of the Tirol. Stowed away were nuts and candy and gum, our bottle of Shenley, three Kodaks, and lots of film.

We started climbing within about 10 kilometers and headed up a steep and narrow road full of switchbacks. Pretty soon we went around a bend and were stopped by a 20-foot snowdrift. We parked the jeep and headed up and up, climbing over crags and snowdrifts for a full hour. We got to a peak at 8,000 feet. It wasn't Gross Glockner but it was a grand viewpoint. We stopped and took pictures for a while. Then we hunted for flowers, especially hoping for edelweiss and gentian, but no luck.

Before heading back down the slope, we got out the bottle and each had a healthy snort. That one drink at high altitude was as effective as several would have been down in the valley. We laughed and yelled, the echoes coming back at us again and again, and then rolled and tumbled over snow banks like little kids. At the jeep, all but the driver had another shot to keep us warm for the ride back. We made it just in time for chow, and then hit the sack early for it had been a marvelous day.

16 October '45 - More shipments in and out and more promotions to process. It's fun to be so busy and good to get the feeling of knowing the job. That's especially true with the promotions when you can catch proposed ones that aren't legit. One officer, he's new in his job, tried to slip some ratings past us in Personnel or he really didn't know the ropes himself. So you go through the rules enough to let him know he can't swing it. He'll leave cursing you under his breath, but the next submission will be within the limits. The personnel officer or S-1 or most any other experienced officer could have set him straight, but he thought he could give us enough of a snow job to get what he wanted.

This was my day to carry food to our housemaid, a deal that started in Mittersill. A couple of Austrian girls

came along and offered to do housework for us in return for food and lodging and whatever else they could get. We got official approval for food for them, and gave them an empty room on the top floor. They make beds, sweep and dust, do minor sewing repairs and other odd jobs. There are 12 of us in this building, so each of us gets the food detail every 12 days. We're glad to get out of the housework.

We just learned that one of the gals is German, not Austrian, so we fired her and got a teenager from Bruck so plain that she won't likely be bothered.

18 October '45 - This personnel work really is interesting. Les and I got from Division the point ranges and the number of men to go out on shipment. Then we go over the records of men in the regiment and pick those to go. We do it as fairly as we know how, but I think once in a while how we could juggle the lists to favor friends and delay the departure of any we wanted to give a hard time. Nobody has complained yet, and we feel good about our work.

There are a few guys in the regiment who think they can brown-nose their way onto a shipping order ahead of schedule. One cook is the worst. He used to be obnoxious if I came to the kitchen and asked for a can of milk or

extra coffee. Now he's found out what my job is. He makes a point of giving me larger helpings in the chow line. In an aside the other day he told me they had plenty of milk and sugar and coffee any time I might want any. Though I don't bite, he is after me every day to get him a promotion from T/5 to T/4 and to get his record changed to show he is qualified as a mess sgt. No way.

Later, after a much needed bath, I returned to the office to get some work done. There were several of the guys around and an attractive young lady, a civilian. She is looking for an American soldier. He got her pregnant, according to her story, and promised to marry her, but his outfit moved and he hasn't returned. She says he was a Rainbow GI and thinks he was in the 242nd. She is showing pictures of the guy and describing him. She is German and says she has to leave Austria - no passport - and return to her home in Bremen. It's rather pitiful in a way, but she is probably as much at fault in the situation as the GI, though she looks like a rather nice person. She is telling her story calmly and with no apparent embarrassment to a room full of men. Some deal!

22 October '45 - When we left here yesterday, we were headed for a production in Salzburg called

Rosalinda. On arriving at the Festspielhaus, we found it to be an American version of Straus' operetta, Die Fledermaus. Some of the guys wanted to leave and hunt up a movie, but others prevailed, fortunately. It is a hilarious musical we all enjoyed. Some American versions of it come out pretty dull because they miss the gay comedy in the original version, but this one was done as well as those produced in Europe.

The Festspielhaus is a beautiful opera building taken over by the army. That's bad enough but some screwball Special Services operator added insult to injury by re-naming it the Roxy. It's hard to guess the comments of music loving Austrians about the new name and the gaudy marquee that has been added.

24 October '45 - Things have slowed down a bit, and I have some time to get back to the Love Company history. Only have a few pages more to get it to the end of the war. It doesn't seem too likely that I'll get the occupation part done over here, and I have some qualms about it, anyway.

Last winter in Germany I broke a movable dental bridge I've worn for a long time. I got it to a dental officer before leaving for the hospital back in France. He promised I'd get it back within two or three weeks. Last

week, for about the 10th time, I followed up on it. Seems it was lost and found again and that I should get it back soon. Later, I got a call from a dental technician at the medical station. He told me the army doesn't do that work for us anymore. However, he'll be willing to do it on the side for me for \$100. That bugs me.

Heating the personnel office has been a big problem for us. There's a Jerry stove, probably homemade, that provides little heat. It is made of tile and brick and plaster with a beehive shaped dome that is supposed to radiate the heat but doesn't. Two of us decided to move it out to make room for a GI stove. Trouble is it collapsed into lots of pieces. We moved it with a broom, a dust pan, and a wash tub at which point the owner of the place came in, and we thought she would have the whole MG detachment on our heads. The storm blew over, though, and we now have a stove that heats.

Supper was better than usual with roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy. A side dish of sauerkraut didn't fit too well, but we ate it. Then there was coffee and dessert, peanut butter ice cream made from powdered milk, a real delicacy.

30 October '45 - There was a dance last night and the guys came back all

burned up. We have three Red Cross gals, and they were at the dance. Some of the men asked them to dance, and they each refused. This had happened before with these gals, but tonight was worse. One of them said, "Go dance with those frauleins over there." No one was drunk or out of order in any way. Right afterwards, too, some officers showed up, and the Red Cross gals were quite ready to dance with them. These gals are stationed right here in the same town with us, yet in all the time I've been in the personnel office not one has ever been inside it. When we walk down the street and meet one of them, most of us speak out of politeness, but they don't respond.

1 November '45 - Time is stretching out over here. Seems much longer than the actual months since we left Camp Gruesome, almost a year now. And how much longer will it be? Who knows?

This was my first full day understudying the regimental sgt. major's job, and it was a bit disappointing. I had expected to be so busy I wouldn't have time to draw a deep breath, but Porter didn't have much to do and neither did I. Then he got a jeep and came up here to Personnel to see Capt. Connell about new rules governing how and when we could send money home. Later, we went up to the castle where the regimental

commander, Col. Caum, has his CP. The place was one of Goering's summer homes, and it is swanky. I met the Col. (I gather that was part of the reason for going there) and he was very nice, wishing me well when ("if" and "when") I succeed Porter.

This afternoon Porter and I went over the ration returns from the companies, and he showed me what he does with them. That was the day. I could have done much more, for part of the time I just twiddled my thumbs as things were reviewed that I already knew.

After work I went with Porter and Zimmerman to Service Company to eat. Then via Zell am See to see the Eddie Rickenbacker movie - a good one - after which I returned to Bruck where Les and I went with a group to the Red Cross. On the way I was the butt of their jokes - too good for their company now that I had moved to S-1. They are a fine bunch, and I really wish I were continuing to work with them in the same office.

5 November '45 - Feel like Porter's man Friday which I have been now for several days. Guess he and Lt. Geaney are right in feeling that this is the best and quickest way for me to learn all the details. And Porter said today that he is to go on a furlough the 15th; also that he will leave for home

immediately after returning from that.

Here's at least some of what I did today: Gave our pass and furlough man a draft of letter orders sending a man to Denmark to visit his parents; checked with Personnel on the records of two men leaving in the morning on home and dependency discharges; got transportation for them as far as Munich; called the GI at Division about a man we sent to the MP's who has been crying to come back to the good old Rainbow; called the battalions with their quotas of men to furnish for some details with USFA and Division; checked on some vehicle accident reports not properly completed; called S-3 to find out how to process some papers they sent over; checked to see that Personnel gets the roster of 70 men for FA to the AG Section at Division; got off a few VD reports to the provost marshal so the infected women can be picked up and treated; and so on and on all day. Details, details. None difficult to handle but requiring time.

The other day I joined a German class meeting at our Eight-Ball Tavern. A German teacher will instruct us for an hour each night, Monday through Saturday. She is young and ambitious and is a good instructor. Hope I can find time each evening to stick with it so my grammar and punctuation won't be so atrocious.

7 November '45 - Went to Personnel to check some things and ran onto Cline and Guthrie, the guys who took my place as classification specialists. They had a problem with some requisitions on expected manpower losses for some time ahead. They didn't know how to complete them, and I had fun playing the role of the old-timer who knows it all. I bluffed my way through the thing though I had never done those forms before. Later Les said they told him Ruesch certainly knows his personnel procedures.

Yesterday I went down to Salzburg with the first of the Love Company manuscript for the printer, and it was a visit that accomplished much, much more than I expected. They will start setting type and, if I can keep feeding copy to them, they should have the job done, printing and binding included, by the time I can expect to head back to the States. That would be something! Also, the price estimated by the printing shop foreman is much less than I had guessed it would be. Can you imagine a book of 250 pages costing less than \$1 per copy for a total of 400 to 500 copies printed and bound? Now I can add some things to what I planned, like maps, a company roster, and something printed on the inside back and front covers. I'll pay them as the work progresses and get my money

back whenever the books are delivered.

Now I have to skip the German class because so much work has come up. And this despite no shipments in or out for at least two weeks.

12 November '45 - A food crisis has come up in Headquarters Company. It is without doubt the worst food we've had all the time in the ETO. Yesterday most of us took a couple of bites of our supper and then took the rest out to civilians waiting for a handout. Even as starved as they are, it's hard to see how they can stomach it. When we are closer to Service Company at meal times than here, we use all sorts of excuses to eat there where the food is as good as ours is bad. Practically the whole company has complained so often and so bitterly that both Col. Caum and the AG are investigating. It's hard to understand when all the other companies in the regiment are eating better than ever. If it weren't for Red Cross doughnuts and coffee and for our care packages from home, we would be getting thinner by the day.

All companies get the same rations, so there has to be a leak somewhere - like food going out for booze or black market purchases for guys in the mess hall crew or for pussy - maybe for all three. Hope the brass can find out and correct the problem.

Someone from S-3 told us last night

that we are likely to move to Wien shortly, and most of us don't look forward to another move.

Today I'm in Salzburg at Division. Made it down in time to eat at the Hotel Lauche dining room where Division eats. They have the best food they have had in all the time we have been over here, and we have the worst.

Didn't get back to Bruch, too much to do here. So I went to a library of American books and was able to pick up several to show the printer some things I couldn't get across with my limited German and their complete ignorance of English.

15 November '45 - Porter learned today that he would soon be leaving, first on a Swiss furlough and then for discharge, so we switched chairs full time, and it was fun even with someone looking over my shoulder all the time.

The last while I have been reviewing events and wound up feeling that the Army and Navy have done quite a job of re-deployment. If one looks at the big picture, I think there isn't much we can honestly moan about.

New word came down that German military rifles will be available to us to send home at the cost only of the transportation. They are about the same as Springfields we have at home for deer hunting.

On the negative side, a new deal on

promotion of GI's that makes us sore. It makes it impossible for men in jobs above their present ratings to get promotions unless they sign up to stay in service months longer. The trouble is that a regulation issued from the Pentagon, a fairly reasonable one as reported in Stars and Stripes, will make promotions a thing of the past as interpreted at Division, so some of us got together and wrote that paper. Maybe others did also. The result is a re-interpretation of the regulation that is more palatable.

Our move to Wien was supposed to occur about 1 December but has been deferred.

18 November '45 - Porter got away on furlough as planned, and things have been busy since.

A bunch of us from Personnel and S-1 were going to eat supper at our mess until we learned the meal was Spam, so we walked quite a way to Service Company's mess. It was Spam there, too, but it was camouflaged enough so it wasn't too bad. Besides, we learned of an exciting fire the night before. It got close to 25,000 gallons of gas and was put out barely in time to avoid a huge fire and explosion.

19 November '45 - We've begun work on shipping out everyone with 56 or more points left in Regiment.

Our mess hasn't been corrected, so

many of us find other company mess halls where we can eat. Three officers have been trying to make improvements, with no success. As sidewalk superintendents, we knew weeks ago that we could solve the problem with ease. Just remove the whole kitchen crew and start from scratch.

The weather continues clear but cool. There's a full moon. It comes up over these snow-covered mountains and sheds the most marvelous light on them. Mornings are the same. When we go to breakfast early, there is a pastel orange about where the sun comes up and deep blue along the horizon on both sides of that. Beautiful!

23 November '45 - Yesterday was Thanksgiving and I had had work in Salzburg along with a few others from Regiment. We were lucky. Some of us went to the Red Cross and to the Club Mirabelle on the second floor. The place was full of GI's writing letters, plus one at the piano plucking away at a sentimental song with a line about how great things can be "as long as I have you."

We had dinner at Division. We each had a shot of cognac and sat down to what seemed like Thanksgiving dinner at home. Sometimes you do get lucky, but that wasn't the end of the day. There was the trip back to Regiment.

And we lucked out again. First, we

got onto a third class coach, unheated and with hard wooden benches. At the first stop - and you couldn't change cars except at stops - we transferred to a second-class car with cushion seats and heat and no open windows. That was a pleasant ride home.

When we got there, there was mail for us, the first in 13 days.

24 November '45 - A request from Division today took the cake. The second in command there, Gen. Linden, has a castle in Salzburg as his home. He is such an important person that his castle must be well and properly policed. He has had 32 EM and one officer as a detail to guard the place. That wasn't enough, so we had to furnish 4 more men, and it's likely that each of the two other regiments had to do the same. He has civilians working inside the castle and DP's and PW's outside on the grounds. We can't even guess how many people there are altogether. We wonder how big a staff Hollywood Harry, the top big shot of the Division, must have for his even larger castle. One reads about the Ugly Americans in foreign places who create bad images of our country, and it is hard to imagine worse image makers than these.

Our food has finally had a change for the better here at Bruck. We have china dinnerware and have only to furnish our own knives, forks and

spoons. The big change, though, has been bringing local women into the kitchen as cooks. The dirty DP's were kicked out and our regular cooks are gone. The women know how to make decent food with the mostly dehydrated foods. If this continues, there'll be no more bitching from us on food.

26 November '45 - Yesterday an anniversary in the lives of lots of us Rainbow soldiers. One year ago the troop ship Gen. Wm. M. Black pulled away from the pier at West 79th Street, was tugged down the Hudson, through the harbor, and, finally, under its own power sailed eastward toward an uncertain future. We didn't know if we would get to return or not, but that uncertainty is now mostly behind us. Now it is only a matter of time. Some did come back earlier as KIA's. Some were wounded and disabled. Lately many have returned still whole and healthy, and the rest of us should make it in a matter of months. We will not be the same guys who left a year ago; hopefully we will be wiser and better human beings than when we came.

There has been a new bitching item the last while. We were to have showers a week ago, but our one shower broke down. Back at our billets where there is one bathtub for 40 men, it got clogged up. We couldn't find a local plumber to repair it. In desperation we went back to what we had learned

during combat, taking a whore's bath. You heat water in a #10 can, fill your helmet with it, strip down, and take a sponge bath before the water gets cold. You brush your teeth, shave, and have a bath in that single helmet full of water. It is surprisingly effective and refreshing.

We have a typist in our billet, Olivero by name, who is strumming his guitar while the rest of us write letters. He is very good and knows most of the songs that are favorites with us. He's a good kid, too, and has been holding down a hard job for some time without the rating it calls for. We are going to get the rating for him or bust in the effort.

There was a new money policy established over here recently that should help cut down on black market stuff. It also should control gambling right down to nickel and dime poker. For instance, say a guy wins two or three hundred bucks at poker or craps and wants to send it home. If he has already sent home as much as his pay amounted to, which happens often, he can get it home only if the loser makes out and gives him a money order payable to the winner's wife or parents or gal friend. And the loser has to have unused credit for sending money home or he can't make out a money order.

A new warrant officer came in to S-

1, and I had hopes he would take a little of my work to leave me with some free time for writing other than official stuff. No such luck. The Lt. had the same idea and got to the warrant officer first.

29 November '45 - A few days ago I talked to S-1 and asked for a promotion, a first for me. If I hadn't done so, I probably could have waited until discharge with nothing done. And it came fast. The special promotion order was cut and approved a day later.

The work here has grown by the day, and there is no time for any relaxation. The movement out and in is almost constant and there's no let up in piddling little court martials and in the VD problems. I wanted work and got it with a vengeance.

A few of us talked the other night about Christmas coming and about what it would be like if a guy could have that holiday away from army and uniforms and mess halls. Like, wouldn't it be fun, provided you had a little extra food and cigarettes and other things so rare here, to go to an Austrian home and spend a quiet day with plain people, preferably some who could do better with English than we can with German.

There was one guy in the regiment, almost my age, who said he and his wife had wanted to adopt a child or two since they hadn't been able to produce

one of their own. Could there be any possibility to manage such an arrangement with all the red tape involved? Maybe it was a pipe dream, but it was serious.

Weeks ago a GI whom I had known for months came to me even before the official end of the non-fraternization rule. He told me in confidence of what had happened to him. He was of German descent. His parents had come from the Tirol, he had found their home town and had met relatives and made friends and found his sweetheart there. He wanted to get married and needed help to cope with the red tape. We started the process and paper was passed back and forth for weeks. Always there was a stumbling block. And so many people in the army and in military government had to approve and weren't wanting to stick their necks out. It went on and on with no end in sight, and with so many questions those up the line could think of as stalling tactics. It was getting more serious because my friend was very near to being entitled to ship out. He didn't want to re-enlist, and he didn't want to leave her behind. It was also bad because he had word of his father's critical illness. In desperation he signed up for another year. (I lost track of him afterwards but did learn that he was able to get married soon after he re-upped. Maybe that's what it took to get that final approval.)

Yesterday, I ran into Lt. Casazza, who was the Love Company exec. when we got to the ETO. Now he is slated to take the place of Capt. Connell as our personnel officer when the next group of officers ship out. He should do well in that job.

We always are looking for things to moan and groan about, and there's a new one lately. We had to process for shipment out a bunch of low-pointers who had signed up for a new tour of duty and thereby got a home furlough. We could do the same, but we resent anything that looks like it will delay our own departure. I'm surprised some officer hasn't come along to shut us up with "tough shit", and that should happen.

But we can always find other complaints. Right now the water in our part of the Tirol has been certified as being unsafe to drink. It is seriously polluted. Consequently, we get only treated water from Lister bags that is overly dosed with chlorine. We bitch, but so what? We find wine and schnapps and cognac and even American booze as substitutes. Who's bitching?

1 December '45 - It is Saturday, and we are headed for Zell am See to get our pay. That's always a good excuse to get a good meal at Service Company and a chance for me to check again with

the dental lab on my bridge. Those guys at the Lab make me boil. I've waited months to get my repaired bridge, and now they said it may be ready in January. Will I still have to pay \$100 to get my chewing ability back to normal?

We're sending a guy to Paris tomorrow to learn to be a sgt. major, and he is to be back in a month. Hope he makes it and gets back with us so I can head for home when the time comes.

3 December '45 - Got up at 0430 this morning - 4:30 A.M. in civilian time - to help a group of unhappy guys start on a detail to Wien with the MP's and to say goodbye to Capt. Connell who is headed back to California and civilian life.

Right now I need to get a day off to go to Salzburg to see the printer, partly to make a down payment on the printing of Men of Love Company but mostly to get back the first pages in proof copy. The printers don't want any payment until the whole thing is finished, but I have a little cash I can't send home - have sent what's allowed already - and that will become worthless under the currency set-up unless I get rid of it quickly.

8 December '45 - This was a good day. First, I had a look at some proofs on the Love Company story, the first time ever something I wrote has been set in type for printing, and I

felt like a child with a new toy. Then we had the town chimney sweep come to clean our flues. He was dressed in top hat and black coat, formal, just as in fairytales. He was a dirty character but did get our stoves drawing better.

The last thing today was seeing the reaction of Olivero when he got the promotion he had deserved for so long. The other guys seem as pleased as he was.

15 December '45 - Yesterday was a red letter for me. The regimental dentist was in the office in the morning and told me, in passing, that he had checked on my bridge and that it would soon be ready. Later, the dental technician who had tried to get \$100 from me for the job came by and said it was now ready. The officer must have done a reaming job. Anyway, it fit perfectly, and it seemed I could immediately speak better.

Saw Lt. Geaney off on his way back home. He really was a nice guy who suffered only from inexperience.

Got a haircut earlier, and it was an experience. Another GI preceded me and ordered a haircut and shampoo, the works. Okay, I said, give me the same. The other guy I could see in the shop mirror. The shampoo was fine, and then his hair was clipped neatly. But then the barber worked a finger wave in his hair and put a hair net over his head to keep the wave in place. I got

the same treatment and kept worrying for fear someone I knew would come in.

17 December '45 - Last Friday Lt. Kaiser, the new S-1, loaned us his jeep to go into Salzburg to do a few errands at Division and to see one of the season's best performances in the Festspielhaus, the latter being our main reason. We wound up in a loge in the opera house, not realizing that the officer in the same loge with one of our Red Cross gals was from Division. The next day Lt. Kaiser got a call from Division asking what official business some 242nd GI's were on with an army jeep the night before. Our Lt. responded perfectly for us. These men were on official business for S-1, and he would be glad to so certify if there was any problem. The matter ended there since it was common gossip that the officer and the Red Cross gal were shacking up.

19 December '45 - What I am irked about just now is the unreasonableness of the brass at Division. The regiment is down to two-thirds of normal strength, and they continue to take men away from us for the silliest reasons. Our CWO, Smitty, has been working for hours to find new guys for an honor guard. We are hunting here in S-1 and in Personnel for stenos, typists, instructors for Regenbogen U, hotel manager, cooks, and drivers for Division and USFA. We almost wish

something drastic, like a major escape of SS prisoners, would occur so the brass would realize that they can't keep on decimating the regiment without providing replacements. The 242nd has 35,000 prisoners to guard. It has to get 10 carloads of firewood from the forests daily for use in Wien. It also takes care of road blocks, check trains, maintain border patrols, and so on, beside getting our own food and fuel and carrying on other normal functions.

I goofed off on the shipment of a man from here to an MG detachment in Vienna, and an officer in G-1 at Division called and chewed fanny for five minutes on the phone. When something later on in the day showed he pulled the same boner in reverse, I called him back to let him know politely that we were even.

The bath situation was improved when a shower house was opened down by the river, all heated and insulated. Made us want to take a shower every day.

Carey, the Love Company first sgt., came in with some snapshots for me and with an invitation to come up to Krimml during the holidays. Hope I get to make it. It looks like most of the men will get time off at Christmas and New Year's.

26 December '45 - There was good food at nearly all mess halls for Christmas. The other special event was

midnight mass at the cathedral with the famous Vienna Boys' Choir. Nothing quite makes up, though, for absence from home during the holidays.

It. Kaiser came by to alert me on a special trip to Wien early in January to look over the set-up of the 222nd there and make plans for relieving that regiment. He said I'm to go with him on the newly reinstated Mozart Special from Salzburg to Wien. Sounds good, especially since that train includes sleeping cars and a diner.

We learned one night this week that there's another brand of music in Austria beside the formal music of opera, ballet and symphony. It is Tirolean mountain music, a cross between yodelling and yelling and stomping and pirouetting, all with frenzied energy. It was wild and hard for us to accept coming from Austrians.

31 December '45 - One of the guys was kidding a couple of women about Hitler the other day, and that led to a discussion of religion. The women, it developed, were ex-catholics, a rarity here, so we needed to take their comments with a large grain of salt. They alleged that there was an alliance between Hitler and the Vatican and that in Europe the church was bad, that most priests are immoral and mercenary, and that nothing is done except for money or other advantage. Some of us poo-hooded what they were saying but others

thought that our armed forces in Europe generally had a poor opinion of the church. It is so easy to generalize on religion and all sorts of other subjects.

I am down on the cleaning women who work here in S-1. They were pretty good for a while, but they've been spoiled by some of the guys. Each seems to have a GI boyfriend in the area who takes much of their time and attention, and they have become slovenly in their work. They red-head isn't so bad, but the blonde irks me just by showing her face in the door. One day soon I hope to have the pleasure of firing both.

Our mail service is bad again with the load of holiday mail from the States. No incoming mail for nearly two weeks.

These are some lousy comments to make during the holidays, and I have now put them behind me. I'm at Love Company in Krimml for a couple of days that should be fun with the few oldtimers still left here. All the snow melted before Christmas, and the weather stayed mild. We got out and tramped in the hills for some needed physical exercise. Then bull sessions that got pretty lively with the help of some spirits. Poker has been out for some time with the prohibition on sending winnings home.

The holidays were endured more than

enjoyed. We have been away from home too long. Thoughts and many of our conversations were full of nostalgica.

IX

Wien auf der Osterreich

It was now on to Wien to be part of Gen. Mark Clark's Vienna Area Command, without doubt the last of our duty stations in the Osterreich.

Our advance party left Salzburg for Wien on 6 January '46. Had time to look over the working and living quarters we would inherit from the 222nd and to explore for one day the central part of the city, with emphasis on the Ringstrasse and the castles and government buildings and museums and other buildings inside it. This was the crown city of the old Austro-Hungarian empire, long ruled by the Habsburgs. We now had only to close up affairs in the Tirol.

The regiment's military role was mostly in the American zone, but we had access to the British, French and USSR zones. We had DP's and PW's to take care of, and order to maintain in our zone, and paper work as men moved out of and into the regiment regularly.

Billets for much of the 242nd were in a high rise apartment house in the northwest residential part of the city. Next to it was an old mansion that served as the mess hall.

Next morning at breakfast we found the same unappetizing food we had so often in the Tirol. Outside the mansion after a few bites of breakfast, we found things had changed there only

in degree. Instead of a few civilians waiting for our throw-away, here were as many civilians as GI's. They just looked more gaunt and starved and their eyes more hopeless than those before. They were utterly pitiful, and no GI, no matter how much he hated these Germanic people as former enemies, could deny them what we didn't eat.

A day or two of this, and the mess officer and mess sergeant got together on a remedy that had been used in the Tirol. They got Austrian women who could handle dehydrated food and had to pay them only their own food and any leftovers they could scrounge for family at home. The cooks got what they wanted at last in occupation, little duty instead of the daily grind in the kitchen.

With the help of our predecessors, we quickly settled into an occupation routine. And with the further help of an interpreter (an American, Dr. Cranz, who was caught in Wien at the time of the Anschluss) and a Special Services pfc (a Mr. Fixit who could do most anything) we quickly learned our way around the city.

Then we began looking over the possibilities for places to go and things to do when not on duty. Six of us in S-1 wanted to see an opera, and I agreed to go via street car into the city to get tickets. The ride downtown the next day was my first, and

everything was new. So also were the passengers in the streetcar. For example, two GI's sat next in front of me and they were just behind a well dressed, dignified lady in her sixties. Across the aisle were two attractive girls. In loud voices the GI's, just teenagers, began talking about the girls and what they might arrange if they got off at the same stop. Their talk got more and more lewd, for they were sure these Krauts could not speak or understand English. The lady in front of them seemed to get increasingly disturbed as they talked. Finally, she turned partly around so she could face them and with a cold, clear voice told them in perfect English how thoroughly ashamed they should be to give Austrians such a horrible picture of American boys. Many of the people in the car could understand English (they are taught it in city schools) and they heard every word. Two more shamefaced kids I have never seen. They slumped down in their seats and soon got off the car without the girls and with their heads bent low in embarrassment.

Downtown I found the opera house, the Wiener Staats Opera, without any trouble. It was an ornately impressive gothic building. A newer and larger one, the Berg Theatre, was built just before WWII, but it had been bombed or shelled to rubble by vengeful

retreating Nazis or by advancing allied forces. The old one was open, and I went to the ticket office to see if tickets were available for the next night and to ask about prices. The cashier spoke quite good English. Tickets were available for six of us with very good seats, and she gave me the price in Austrian occupation franks, a price within our reach. Then she went on to tell me they preferred payment other than in occupation money. I knew what was coming. "Would you have American cigarettes?" I reached in my overcoat pocket to find one unopened pack of Lucky Strikes. "Miss," I said, "I didn't come prepared to pay with cigarettes, but please tell me how many I need for the six seats." The answer, "Would one pack be all right?" Could I believe my ears? I handed her the single pack and received six reserved seats for the performance the following night of Ipalliachi and Cavalleria Rusticana.

This was my first clear indication of how fully cigarettes replaced money as the medium of exchange. This was not black market. It was normal business everywhere in Austria. Things like cigarettes, mylons, chocolate, GI rations of different types, quality wool clothing instead of the ersatz stuff that didn't keep anyone warm, and various other commodities brought unbelievable prices because they were

so rare in Austria. Cigarettes were the most sought after. A carton that cost military personnel \$.50 would bring up to \$80 and even more on the black market.

I remember in the Tirol I got a banana and an orange at the mess hall at Christmas time and offered them to a child of seven or eight years. She looked puzzled and asked, "Was ist das?" She hadn't ever seen either and didn't know whether to accept them or not.

The next night when five of us went to the opera (one was on duty), we had an extra seat and offered it to a young lady looking wistfully at us. She accepted and we were glad for she spoke fairly good English. In the opera house, we were ushered to the mezzanine and to our seats. They were in a loge. Our guest looked around and whispered "Wunderbar!" Then she pointed to the next loge and said, "In the old days that was the emperor's box." All for the price of one pack of Lucky Strikes! As I tell about it now, in 1989, it seems even more improbable than it did then.

After that first night at the opera, we went again and again, getting seats in the orchestra rather than in a box. The next performance, we arrived early and got to see and sit by such a variety of people as I never have seen in one place since then. There were

bemedalled officers from each of the four powers, the Soviets the most flamboyant by far, and many of them accompanied by a lady partner, few, if any, of whom were wives. And most of them were at least as ornately dressed as their partners - beautiful formals, jewels, mod hair-dos, fancy pumps. Here and there were civilian couples also formally dressed, and they were likely the Quisling types of Austria. Then there were all of us ordinary GI's scattered in groups through the main floor. In back seats and all around the walls were standees in such variety of clothing as was hard to imagine. some in every day business clothes, some in ski outfits (all they owned warm enough for the season), and some in nondescript coveralls and other workmen's attire.

Several of us went to most of the operas performed during the late winter in Wien - The Bartered Bride, Tales of Hoffman, La Boheme, Carmen, the Marriage of Figaro, Tosca - and they were excellent to our untrained ears. They really were. The casts included the top performers in Austria. At nearly every performance, one or more of the standees would faint and have to be carried out, and we were told it was from hunger. The music lovers would miss meals rather than miss a performance of a favorite opera.

Entertainment was so readily

accessible by street car that we got to ballets and symphonies occasionally and to rare plays put on by American companies through Special Services.

Wien must always have been a mecca for the arts, and it hastened to maintain its high standing after the war. The occupying forces of the four powers were the constant beneficiaries of that rather hectic activity. Everything was open to us and at what seemed minimal costs even to GI's. The former palace of Emperor Franz Josef had become an outstanding museum, and the summer residence of empress Maria Theresa with all its formal gardens was the same.

One free afternoon, my friend Les and I toured the emperor's palace and marvelled at the opulent living of absolute rulers. Countless rooms full of ornate furnishings and decorated with paintings of some of the world's great masters.

We walked into one huge bedroom - as large as a ballroom - and stood in the entry way looking at a painting on the opposite wall. Then we looked at each other with the same reaction. Could this be what we thought it was? It was a scene in a forest clearing at the center of which was a nearly nude woman half reclining and looking up at a cloud about to envelop her. The expression on her face was one of rapture. The artist was depicting an

ancient story. It was about the god Jupiter who had a mistress. His wife, Juno, was a jealous woman who kept watching him and trying to prevent his trysts with his mistress, Jo. He got around Juno by going to Jo as a bird or an animal, and in other forms. This time he went to her as a cloud, and the title was, "Jo in the arms of Jupiter." Clever god was Jupiter.

The empress's castle at Schonbrunn outside the city was a modest retreat for her - a mere 1200 rooms.

It wasn't enough in Wien that the city was full of entertainment facilities. Our own Army Special Services and the Red Cross had to add to the picture. The 222nd Regiment had had a night club for GI's that we inherited. We had it remodelled and had a grand re-opening bash. It was the Embassy, and there's quite a story connected with it.

The guy who ran it under a different name for the 222nd also ran it for us. He had to clear everything with me, and on major items I had to get Lt. Kaiser's approval.

This guy ran the new club and did other things. He was a master promoter, arranger, and fixer, a Brooklynite. He was a pfc. (Don't think he was ever at a higher rating.) He told me he lived by himself in a penthouse apartment downtown. He had a housekeeper and a chauffeur-valet. The

civilian car he had was a Mercedes-Benz. He told several of us at S-1 that if we needed or wanted anything in Wien that was obtainable, he could get it for us or tell us how to get it. He went on to say that if any of us should want a date with an opera or ballet star, let him know and he would arrange it. Don't know if anyone took him up on that offer.

He secured waiters and other staff at the Embassy Club whose total compensation was what they ate and the tips they got, the tips being butts or whole cigarettes, if one wanted to act like a big shot. He told me a few days before I left Vienna for home that he was due for discharge soon and that he was torn with the choice he had to make. He said he never, never had it so good back in the States and couldn't think he would ever have the things he had in Wien. I think he needn't have worried. With his numerous skills, it couldn't have taken him long in civilian life to promote what he had here.

It wasn't often on weekdays that we got to go out into the city. You had to have a jeep and that wasn't available to us unless we were on official business or were with an officer. One day Les, Myer, Lt. Carlson, Dr. Cranz, and I went sight seeing. We toured through the French and British zones looking for places to

shop, and were unsuccessful. Then we swung along in the Russian zone toward the Danube River, following directions. At a bridge, we decided to cross, and that was when things got exciting.

In the middle of the bridge, a large Russian vehicle stopped in front of us, and soldiers got out and flagged us down. We looked behind us, and a smaller vehicle blocked us, so we stopped while an officer jumped down from the front vehicle and came to our jeep. He didn't speak English or German, but he let us know with hand signals we had to show our passes. Three of us did but not Dr. Cranz. The Russians did some urging, and he brought out a different card that was in German and had a large swastika on the front. On command two Russian GI's jerked him out of the jeep and hustled him to their vehicle. He screamed frantically: "Don't let them take me! It'll be Siberia and I'll die there! Please, please! For God's sake, don't leave me!"

The Russians signaled us to turn around and go back, but Lt. Carlson drove after them. We followed for a couple of miles until they turned off the road and stopped at some kind of command post where they hurried Dr. C into the building. We followed and raced up a stairway with them. There the burp guns aimed at us made it

clear we couldn't follow farther. Lt. Carlson calmly lit up a cigarette and offered one to each of our guards. They accepted and smiled as they lit up. Then the officers came out with Dr. C between them. We followed again in hot pursuit for several city blocks until they made another stop at a more impressive building.

At the new place, they went immediately to another officer, obviously senior, showed him the swastika card, and chattered at length in Russian. The new officer signaled them to stop, and he turned to Dr. C addressing him in German. After a few words, Dr. C pulled a letter from his pocket and handed it over, all the while talking excitedly in German. The new officer turned to the others and shrugged his shoulders. Then he turned to us and told us in simple German that it had all been a mistake and we were free to go.

The whole story came out on our way back to S-1. Dr. C's passport had expired some months before and he had mailed it to our embassy in Rome. A letter came back as evidence he had a passport that was being renewed. The swastika card was issued to him by the puppet regime during the war. The insignia had been like a red flag to the Russians. Needless to say, Dr. C was profuse in his thanks, especially to Lt. Carlson, for saving him from

Siberia.

The personnel office stayed back near Salzburg at St. Leonhard. Maybe other regimental units were not in Wien, but they were the ones I dealt with mostly, so there was some traffic between east and west. Sgt Groziak came one day on problems with some officer records, so I took him around to places nearby. The First sgt. at Cannon Company had given me a jug of gin and Groziak and Zimmerman and I took it to the Embassy to meet more guys. We had a good bull session going as far back as our time at Gruber. The spirits flowed freely everywhere in the club, and I didn't refuse. Our friends didn't show, but I found some Love Company guys. Result, one guy who needed help to get home and to bed. I paid for it with a bad night and the next day with a big shipment going out.

Hot poop was that our shipment would come up early in March, so Les and I signed up for a Swiss furlough late in February. We had arranged furloughs for plenty of the guys in Regiment and had not had one ourselves. Beside that I had to hurry up and finish Love Company. If my replacement showed up soon, things ought to work out well. If not, things would be rough in the busy times ahead.

Our food got kinda bad from time to time, but we had a system to lick that problem. Food at the transient messes

was especially good so we went there as often as possible acting like transients and getting away with it.

Mail service has also been about the worst yet. Don't suppose there could be a connection - poor food bringing on slow mail, or vice versa.

My successor, Joe Sassano, arrived days ago and has worked out so well that my duties became already much fewer. Also, he liked opera as much as I do. We went to a performance of Carmen last night, the second time for me, and it was much better than the previous one. Micaela was especially good. Cooper and Sassano and I had a jeep tour to Schonbrunn. The next day Langer Zarnic, Benjamin and I went out into the woods for a horseback ride. All of a sudden things are coming up roses. To top it off, I got a message from Col. Caum that sounded bad at first - the guy who phoned said the Col. sounded angry - but turned out well. He knew I would be shipping out soon and wanted to tell me how pleased he was at the job I had done.

Shortly before Les and I left on our Swiss furlough, two of us headed downtown to see a performance of Richard III in English and produced by USO or Special Services. A strong wind was coming up. It was so bad so quickly that the streetcar stopped several blocks short of the theatre. We got out to walk the rest of the way,

but the wind was so bad, we had to return to our billets. The performance was cancelled, a lucky decision, for the whole roof caved in and would have been a catastrophe had the place been full. The next day John Fahrig of the medics told me there was one fatality and a number of people wounded from being hit by falling roof tiles. The whole city was in trouble. Numerous buildings already damaged by bombs collapsed entirely. The transit and auto traffic were blocked and communication generally snarled by the storm. That was not enough. The train from Salzburg - the one on which we were to head for Switzerland - was held up by the Russians. It could have been because two Russian officers forced their way onto the train while drunk and threatened the T/Sgt. who was in charge of it, pulling pistols on him. In the presence of numerous witnesses, he shot both of them, killing one. The sgt. was acquitted at a court martial, a result that did not please the Russians.

The next day we left on the train, the Mozart Special (one leg of what once was the Berlin-Bagdad Express). Took a long time getting all the way to Munich because of layovers, but it was worth the wait. The Germans had already repaired the main station in Munich, and it was a delight for people who had been in areas where shortages

were the main part of life. For the first time in our lives, mine anyway, we had shampoo, haircut, shave and shine, plus a manicure in one chair and at a modest price. Then we had time to explore the downtown area, what had a year earlier been a vast, almost endless sea of rubble, but that had been cleaned up so traffic could move and had been rebuilt to a considerable extent. Finally, we got back to the station in time for a stein of very good German beer before boarding our train into France.

X
The Swiss Furlough

The next day we got off the train at Freiburg our entry place to Switzerland. We had a bite to eat at the huge GI mess hall there, had showers, got assigned bunks, and hit the sack.

Next morning we met the rest of our tour group and got prepped as first-time visitors to Switzerland. There were close to 30 of us representing every part of US forces in Europe, including two army nurses. It was a happy, talkative bunch.

We stayed overnight in 8 or 9 different locations, some in luxurious hotels and some in modest pensions. The entire trip was an adventure into a new world. We toured Berne, the capitol, seeing one of the world's great zoos, and had a chance to shop at beautiful stores where the merchandise was peacetime quality, not the ersatz of wartime Europe. As we started our trip, we learned at the entry station that we could make collect calls back home, and that was something we looked forward to. So, in Berne I placed a call but got the answer back at the hotel that it could not be completed until the next night when we would be at Lucerne and staying at the sumptuous Beau Rivage Hotel (an establishment that in peacetime was the favorite hotel of multimillionaires from all

over the world). The furlough program was started right after the war with only the small, relatively cheap pensions participating, but later on the expensive ones concluded they had better get a small price for some of their rooms and suites rather than have most of them remain empty. That way they could keep most of their staff and maintain their property in good condition rather than let it be deteriorating in mothballs.

My friend Les and I got a huge room together in Lucerne with a king size bed and a bathroom at least the size of most double occupancy hotel rooms. Our liveried bellhop carried our duffel bags to the room, and we followed behind noting how much better he was attired than we were in our combat boots, wool slacks, and Ike jackets. He ushered us into the room, put our simple luggage away and pointed out the small door at the entrance - it looked like a pet's door - where we should leave our boots that night. Then he left, coming back shortly afterwards with huge bath towels draped over his arm, and he inquired if "you gentlemen would like a bath before dinner." We allowed that we would, somewhat awed by his use of "gentlemen" and his pronunciation of "ba- a - ath." But we were speechless when he followed with "and what temperature would you like your ba - a - ath?" That was totally

new for us, but Les met it with "the usual," and that solved the problem.

Dinner was to be served at eight, we found, but the bar would be open well before that hour. So we revelled in this first taste of luxury, managing to head downstairs by seven. We walked rather than take the elevator, enjoying the deep pile on the carpeting. This was the life of the rich and famous!

In the lobby we were directed to a small, intimate bar near the dining room. The bar was long enough for four or five people to sit at stools, and there were three or four tables beside. There was only one customer at the bar, and he and the barman were carrying on a conversation in French, speaking rapidly and fluently. We sat enjoying that novelty (the only French we had heard until then was that of Frenchies trying to manage a little bad English). At a break in their conversation the barman turned to us and said, in perfect Oxford English, "What may I serve you young gentlemen?" We took that in stride this time and gave our orders. While he mixed our drinks, we looked around until the other customer at the bar turned to us and said, "Where are you fellows from in the States?" And his was real American English. We were nonplussed but managed some exchange of pleasantries. Finally we asked him where he was from. His answer was

Glenn's Falls, New York, and then he proceeded to tell us he was in Switzerland on business before France was overrun by the Nazis, and he decided to sit out the war in comfort there rather than to risk the chancy travel involved in getting out of Europe just then. We never found out what kind of especially lucrative business he was in that he could stay in such sumptuous surroundings for at least two full years.

After we had our drink, we joined our tour group in the dining room, and this was more super luxury. The two of us joined eight others, including the Army nurses, at a large table set with expensive linen and with more eating utensils than we had ever seen. Our dinner was served in courses, and there were five waiters serving ten GI's, waiters who stood behind us during the meal to help any who fumbled over which silver to use at each course. We wondered if there were really enough people in the world who could live like this and pay the tab to fill up many such establishments.

One slight sacrifice the Swiss had, a shortage of meat so severe that they had several meatless days each week, and that continued for quite some time after the war ended. Our night at the Beau Rivage was the exception, and that led to some unusual conversation at our table. We were told how fortunate we

were that we were being served beef. As that entree arrived and we found it excellent, we talked about unusual foods. Out of the blue, one of the nurses said quite distinctly, "I wonder how human flesh tastes." There was dead silence for a moment. Then a voice behind me, one of our waiters, said in English, "Really, it's quite bitter." Then the silence was longer. We all turned to look at the waiter and he realized that he had to do some explaining. He was, he told us, an Egyptian in Switzerland as a student in hotel management. As a college student in Cairo, he made friends with a fellow student who was a Bedouin from a desert tribe. At a school break, he invited our waiter to go with him to a special feast. At the meal his friend asked him how he liked the meat which he had found to be bitter. Then he learned that the tribe was celebrating a successful raid far south in the Sudan where they had taken many captives. So, they served some of their captives at the feast.

The days in Switzerland were delightful. We had a motor launch on the famous Vierwaldstettersee (the lake of the Four Forests) where William Tell was supposed to have shot an arrow through an apple on his son's head hopefully to gain his freedom. We toured Lucerne and Lausanne and Geneva, rode Swiss trains so fast and efficient

that people checked their watches by the arrival and departure times. In Lausanne I found a place to buy watches. I had about \$100 I had saved to buy gifts in Switzerland and I wanted mostly to buy Maxine a quality Swiss watch. There was a Rolex shop where the watch I wanted was priced at \$75. Maxine still has that watch and it still keeps excellent time. We had an insurance appraisal four years ago and it was appraised at over \$3,000. No built in obsolescence there.

We visited some of the League of Nations buildings in Geneva via bikes and had a boat trip on Lake Geneva. It's a beautiful country and so varied. In the north and east the language is German, on the west French, and Italian in the south, plus a unique language, Romansch, in a small area, a language not spoken anywhere else in the world. But everywhere there are people who speak fluent English.

Our furlough ended, we headed back to the border and to our assembly station in France. We got to our barracks late, dumped our duffel bags and headed for the latrine for a rest stop. There we got a shock. Scattered over the floor of the latrine were copies of a Stars and Stripes paper with a startling headline in red, "Russians attack American Troops." The article said a new war was starting and furloughs and discharges were all being

cancelled. We quickly lost the rosy glow of our grand furlough. Not until the next morning did we learn it was all a hoax, so we lost only one night's sleep in dread of what might come.

The next day, we made it back to Munich where we boarded the Mozart Special and started the long ride back to Vienna. Most of the ride east of Salzburg was through the Russian zone, and we had one more scare at Linz where the train made an unscheduled stop that lasted quite a while. After half an hour of quiet, some well-armed Russians burst through the doorway into our car and went carefully through checking the ID of each passenger. Later, we learned that they were looking for some fugitives trying to get through the Russian zone and into the French or British or American zone in Vienna. They didn't find their quarry, and we got to our destination without further incident.

XI

(Homebound or)
Farewell to Wien and the Osterreich

When the Train stopped in Salzburg on our way back from furlough, Les called Personnel and found that we were already on orders to be shipped out or that we were about to be. We decided to wait a few days until the next one so we'd have a little time to wind up our affairs and get to see some of our friends before leaving. It got to be longer than a few days, but we still made it on the same ship as the earlier departees.

All of my story on Love Company up to the end of the war was at the printers (the occupation story not included), but I had the cover of the book to revise and some of the maps done over. I also paid the printer in Salzburg - about \$470 for the printing and \$80 or \$90 for shipping to me in the States. A guy in the Army's Public Relations Office in Salzburg (I can remember only the nickname "Cote") promised to see that all the copies get mailed to me in Utah. So, that was finished, and I was free to get packed and to do some last minute things before leaving.

Somewhere along our way from Wien, where I can't remember and haven't records, we were trucked to an assembly point where we were met by a strange assembly. They were Austrian women, a

few with infants in their arms. As we off-loaded, they came along looking for their GI boyfriends, and most of them were successful. Then it was all hugs and kisses and the fondling of babes by their fathers. What a sad part of war! The women and their guys were mostly young, some even teenagers, and there seemed to be genuine affection. But they couldn't face up to the situation they had created. Should the girl, with or without child, give up her homeland for a strange new country an ocean away? Should the GI give up his and stay in Austria, learn a new language, try to find a career there? A dilemma. There were a couple of guys I knew who were older and had family back home. They were the saddest of the lot. Shades of Madame Butterfly!

Les had become a real finagler. He learned that we were to cross Austria by train, the Mozart Special we had enjoyed on furlough, so he got berths for us. The rest of us weren't so bad either. We could bum rides from St. Leonhard or St. Gilgen into Salzburg, get into the best of GI cafes as if we were supposed to be there (when they were restricted to personnel on duty in that part of Austria), find good transient hotels to stay at and just take advantage of all the goodies in Salzburg.

Once, though, we went too far. We arranged for cots at the one hotel we

had stayed at before only to find out during the night we were being bitten by bed bugs. We left and found a better place for the next night. The next day we looked up the medics so we could be sure we were free of bugs, and I kept a date with a German physician in one hospital there. Had had a prostrate test earlier and was to get the results here. The GI I checked in with didn't know what "prostate" was, and he began teasing me. "Oh! Oh! Six stripes and you've got a dose." From the background the doctor spoke in his broken English and told the medic what a prostrate gland was and that it had no connection with venereal diseases. I thanked him.

We had to wait and wait, reportedly because our ship hadn't arrived at Le Havre. There was another last visit to Salzburg and two or three last parties with a few friends still left in the area. Then came word that our train was in the yards being cleaned and disinfected. We weren't going the rest of the way in style. We were to have our last ride in France on forty-and-eight cars, the same as our first back in '44. But it was some better. Instead of the 40 men per car the first time, we were to be only 16. They were clean and heated properly. We just got dirty and tired sleeping on the floor for the several days the trip took.

Along the way we had regular stops

for hot meals, even though we had been issued K rations at the outset. We had fun with those rations, throwing them to begging kids as we passed through different cities enroute.

At long last, we reached a camp near Orly Airport. We joined other homebound troops there, went through numerous inspections to check on equipment. Our time was our own, but we were restricted to the camp. No one got to go to Paris or anywhere else. We just sat in the camp and gabbed and generated rumors and got more and more bored until some of Paris got to us. Some of the guys wandered a little ways out of the camp to a wooded area. They came back later to tell us about the unusual show they had seen. We went to have a look for ourselves and lasted in the woods for about five minutes. It seemed that the scum of shills and prostitutes from Paris had found our camp and were putting on the most depraved acts we had ever seen. We didn't stay to see the thing through for fear of losing our food.

Fortunately, we left that camp the next day and got to Camp Phillip Morris on the edge of Le Havre. Then more bored waiting for several days until our last formation, a final "peter parade" in Europe, followed by our boarding the USS Anderson on 7 April '46. Now we are homebound for sure and even have, each of us, our special

orders taking us from Camp Kilmer, N.J., to the different parts of the country for final discharge. Mine reads "The Fort Douglas, Utah, Separation Center #41."

Our voyage across the Atlantic and back to New York was thoroughly uneventful. On arrival, we were hustled down to Camp Kilmer where we had time to cable home about our expected time of arrival at our final discharge station, get some more processing done over again, and wait for the makeup of our troop train. I got assigned to a compartment with a medical officer who was the train commander and who put me in charge of the pullman car we were in.

Our cross country trip went so smoothly that the two of us had much idle time over the four days from Kilmer to Salt Lake City (a lot of stops drew it out somewhat), and we had several long conversations. The officer, a captain, had something on his mind that he got out about halfway across the country. We had talked about our different war experiences somewhat in general. Then the story bothering him came out. He was in a field medical station in Belgium at the time of the Battle of the Bulge, and he talked about the wounded coming in while the fighting was hot and heavy there. One small group of GI's intrigued him. They were not wounded.

They suffered instead from battle shock. He worked with them at length to find out what had disturbed them so much that they were unable to serve longer in the battle, and he assured me that they were completely unfit - unable to fight. Finally, he said, their story came out in full, and it went this way. They were part of a platoon ready to move forward to support other units of their infantry company. A squad came back from the fighting in their sector with 30 wehrmacht prisoners. Their officer, just at that moment, got radio orders to pull ahead and join the main company. He had a problem. What to do with the prisoners? A prisoner stockade had been set up 20 miles to their rear, but they had no vehicles. He took a minute or two to make his decision. Then he called out the four GI's who were the narrators and gave his instructions to them. Take these prisoners back to the stockade and return here to join us in 20 minutes. The men looked at him in disbelief. Take 30 prisoners 20 miles to the rear and return to their platoon, all in 20 minutes and on foot? In puzzlement, they asked their officer to repeat. He did so. They were to take 30 prisoners back to the stockade and return in 20 minutes to join the platoon and head into battle again. Now get going. They headed into thick, heavy woods

about a mile away. They stopped in a clearing and consulted quickly among themselves. Were they to turn the prisoners free and give them a chance to get back to their own lines? No way. So, what else? They didn't have to say it. They just nodded to each other, turned slightly, and mowed down the prisoners with their BAR's. They looked at each other, shuddered, and stumbled back the way they had come, making the round trip, just under 20 minutes.

The captain was convinced the GI's were telling the truth, so he sent them back into France to a fully equipped hospital. At a medical station behind the battle lines there were no facilities for psychological treatment. Maybe they should wind up back in the States to get the kind of treatment they needed. Should he do anything beyond his medical responsibilities? Should he have reported on the infantry officer? He thought not, but it still preyed on his mind, and he was sure the officer and the GI's involved took a long time afterwards before their nightmares ended and they made peace with themselves. He felt that he might wind up himself as a pacifist. The end being sought did not justify the death and destruction, nor the living hell for many of those who survived.

The captain's story made me respond

with one I had heard in the Tirol after I returned to duty there from the hospital in Nancy. I was writing stuff for the Men of Love Company when a lieutenant came along - this was at one of the stations we stayed at along the course of the Salzach River. He found me at the typewriter, and he was curious about what I was doing. I told him, and he said he had a story that should be included. It would add a great deal of interest. Here's how I related it to the medical officer.

Somewhere in the long Salzach River Valley - in a small mountain town - several GI's went hunting one evening for a Bierkeller, looking not for beer but for schnapps. The proprietor said he had none that evening but expected a new supply the next day. Next day they returned and sat with the proprietor sampling his new supply. The Tirolean worked on them to get them to drink more and more. When they were well in their cups he told them of a brutal SS trooper who was hid out in the mountains, a soldier, he said, who had brutalized numerous Tiroleans and killed some of them. He was a "verdamnte nazi." The GI's were gullible. If they could find him, they would take care of the bastard. So the plot thickens. He would be coming down for supplies the next night. If they would come then, he would point him out. They came the next night, had a

plentiful supply of free schnapps, and were shown the SS trooper. They had their rifles, arrested him, took him down to the river, and tortured him. My story teller said they broke nearly every bone in his body and then dumped him, still alive, into the river. He wound up his account by saying he had run into one of the GI's later, who laid out the whole affair for him, admitting that he hadn't been able to sleep since the event.

These stories are included at the end of my account, not as a means of passing judgment on fellow soldiers, but just as a final way of telling what I believe are facts and of expressing my growing belief that wars are futile. In military service, we all are taught to obey orders, and that is drilled into us so much that following orders becomes almost second nature. We bitch and groan when we don't like the state of affairs in which we live, but we obey orders. Those GI's in the Bulge hated their orders, but could see no possible, no honorable way of acting contrary to them. And I think both the officer and they were right under the circumstances. Those on the river bank weren't so justified. Instead they were the dupes of someone who had a grudge and who managed them with the help of plentiful booze into carrying out his personal vengeance. Then, too, these stories show in a small way that harsh things in war, things that are called atrocities when the enemy does them, do happen on our side as well at times.

Both the medical officer and I felt better after we had talked at length about things that disturbed us. After unburdening ourselves, we had other and pleasanter conversations about the people we had served with and the good experiences we had had. And then we were in Denver and starting on our way

across the Rockies to Salt Lake City.

By and large, my memories of WWII and of occupation duty in the Tirol and in Vienna are good memories. There were many rewarding things that happened, and we saw places most of us never expected to see again. We saw old friends leave as the point system dictated. We made new ones as we moved from place to place and as we did special duty and detached service assignments.

There are places in Bavaria and in Austria from one end to the other that will long have a special ring for soldiers in the 242nd and other parts of the 42nd Division. After hostilities ended, some of us spent brief time in the Garmisch-Partenkirchen area and visited the fabulous Chiemsee. We remember place names like Kitzbuhel and Kufstein and oft-visited Salzburg. Whoever was in Pertisau am Achensee or in Zell am See or who got to the ruins of Hitler's aerie at Berchtesgaden or sailed the length of Konigsee could hardly forget what they saw and felt and did there. The list goes on. There were the places high in the alps like Krimml and Mittersill, and those farther down the Salzach Valley like Neukirchen, plus St. Gilgen and St. Leonhardt, close to Salzburg. And there was that lovely region known as the Salzkammergut, one of the gems of all of Europe.

After that the memories go to Wien, or Vienna to westerners. That capitol of the ancient Austro-Hungarian empire that lasted so many centuries as a great power in Europe and finally fell into an unimportant place because of its own internal weaknesses. We saw the unbelievable opulence created in an absolute monarchy - the vast landed estates, the palaces, the summer retreats, the Gothic monuments to the self-gratification of rulers and princes; and we saw, too, the poverty and lack of freedom of their subjects. We saw fine examples of the performing arts and of painting and sculpture of old masters. We saw in passing how one people quickly rose from total defeat to clear up the rubble of war and rebuild while another seemed resigned to live with the rubble for a while and rebuild later.

Of equal interest, we saw some of the differences between the mores of a society that has lasted for many centuries and our much younger one in the western hemisphere. We saw back then how much differently marriage customs had become and how mistresses were an accepted part of the society, and it's conceivable that was one of the influences accounting for the changes in our society in the past 40-odd years.

This could go on and on in the same vein of comparing the then and now and

the here vs. the there, though others are better qualified to do that than I. Enough more to say that we saw much, experienced much, and had an opportunity to learn a great deal and to become a bit wiser in the process.

But looking back now after all these years, I think the best memories are of the people each of us met in service, lived with, fought alongside and had as friends. There were those we met in our first assignment at Gruber on entering the 42nd Division and the 242nd Regiment. In most cases those were the men we were still with until May of '45. Then came the new ones we met as we got shifted from duty to duty during the occupation. We made good friends in both groups, friends who are still sharp in our memories whether or not we get to see them over time and distance.

As an enlisted man, I was often critical of "the brass" above us from shavetail to general, but they are people, too, just as we were in the ranks. Some of them had to learn in combat just as EM did, and more than a few grew tremendously.

The regiment was a cross section of the USA. Some were strong, some weak, but all had the same main objective. They wanted to get the job done, their obligation to democracy, and then wanted out of the military and back to pursuit of their life goals. Only a

very few felt that they had done something so exceptional that they deserved special treatment in the society thereafter.

Perhaps I won't see more than a few of them in the years ahead, but I hope it works out otherwise. No matter what, I can think back and say to myself and to anyone else who is interested -

"What a great bunch they were!"

Credits

It is impossible for me to list the names of all those who contributed to the contents of this volume. There were many, both EM and officers, whose names I have forgotten and some whose names I never knew. My thanks to all of them, and if they read this volume, I hope they will recognize that they are also part of it.

After these many years, however, I owe special thanks to Capt. Jack L. Cook, CO of Love Company. He drew maps and provided a chronology of events that enabled me to present facts rather than guesses. Other officers and NCO's of the Company also contributed. And the many men in Love and in other units of the regiment made contributions, especially in helping me stay at it to the finish. Capt. Cook read the whole manuscript, others read parts, and together they commented and gave approval of my efforts.

Capt. Robert C. Connell, Regimental Personnel Officer, read the manuscript and gave me special advice on the censorship issue and other items connected with printing and publication.

As I left the ETO in April '46, the original volume was still in printing at the Salzburger Nachrichten Zeitung, and a GI friend still in Salzburg agreed to see that the printing was

completed and the copies shipped to me in Salt Lake City, Utah. All I have of his identity is the nickname "Cote." I wish I could still have a chance to thank him.

S.H.R.