It's strange almost how holidays or days themselves take on no special meaning once you leave the ones you love. The fellows ordinarily know what the date is but never what day it is. It's as though when you leave your wife and family all of the holidays are shoved into one future day, the day you get back. In civilian life you look forward to each new day, each weekend and many special days you live through every day. But overseas you find the days hurt in proportion to their previous joy, you make yourself forget them and exist in a numbness with your eyes on that day ahead, that day when you get back. It may be years, but these days that bear only numbers must be endured, they must!

Easter and here I sit in France while Erin gets all dressed up and goes to Church all alone. Not is a hell of a situation, in fact anything that keeps me apart from that wonderful wife of mine is sheer hell. Good old love that goes! Easter had little significance for us here, it merely meant going to Church a little earlier to go to confession and the fact that the priest went to the trouble of reading a sermon in French. Of course the usual crowd of "big day" Catholics were there, they will go to church again on Christmas. The rest of the day was typical of any day except for the prevalence of rumors. Church were in Texas about now.

Rumors, and substantial ones, have it that tomorrow is the day we leave. Laundry & dry cleaning have been cut off and there are dozens of other little pertinent signs. Bob and I found out that we would fly as our plane happens to be the tech supply. They took all the necessary parts off our plane to make flyable all of the other grounded aircraft. We will go up by train and possibly come back later to pick up #586. This may be a better deal because it will enable us to see all the country side between here and our next base and also we will be among the first to arrive and accordingly get better situated. Personally I wish our next base were in Paris

We awoke at 7:30 to discover that show was at 6:45 and that a horde of enlistedmen were advancing on our tents to take them from over our heads, which they did as we hastily packed. By noon the whole squadron was ready to go and we weren't to leave until 1900. It was let out that S.A. Digier is to be our destination. And we are to operate off of the same field the 415th is on. Consulting the map we were pleased to find that Digier is only 110 miles from Paris and 50 from Reims. We boarded the train at 6:30 p.m. we officers getting a coach of typical continental style (with two doors to each compartment) while the enlistedmen got "40 + 8" (box car capable of holding 40 hommes or 8 chevaux)

We went rolling across the French countryside today speeding toward St. Dizier, through Valence, Lyon and Dijon. There is one outstanding conclusion that all the fellows mentioned in varying degrees of eloquence "France is extremely and picturesquely beautiful, notably so the rural countryside. Every inch of ground seems cared for and the quaint architecture of the land is, to use a word, lovely! Every vista looks like a painting. I certainly am glad we had to come by train it certainly was worthwhile. The whole trip is along rivers, first we followed the Rhone then the Saone and will end up on the Marne. As I sit and munch C rations I dream of Erin + wish she were here.

This morning we awoke around 0900 to find ourselves rolling into the yards at St. Dizier. We had arrived! We ate a C ration break-fast hobo style in the freight yards and by noon we were unloaded and carted out to the base. As we were putting up our tents I saw two fellows coming toward us from a tent area about 200 yds away, and was I ever surprised and mighty glad to see good ol' Uncle Bob Bates + Dick Finnell, both in the 415th + only 200 yds from our tents.

After finishing the tents I went to the show with Bob and had a long chat with him about what's always on our minds, "our wives". It's great to find a guy who feels the same about marriage as I.

I built a table today and we laid
a floor in the back half of our abode
where the table will go. We have been
told that we are on "24 hour alert" so
we won't get too elaborate in our con-
struction work. While we were work-
ing the P-61's started arriving and
it was quite a sight to see them
come flying in one after another
even if they didn't do a very good
job of flying. There is a huge mess
of B-26's here, a whole French wing
and all day long they drone over head.
We "scrounged" around in the pile
of wrecked planes this afternoon
and found a couple of valves and
also several bomb fin crates, the
metal variety, which make excell-
ent stools and end tables. I wish
this war would end. Back to Erin!

SUNDAY MORNING,

RETURNS—Mrs. David F. Diehl returned recently to reside in San Antonio for the duration with her mother, Mrs. Margaret Warner, while Flight Officer Diehl is overseas. She is the former Miss Frances Warner of this city.

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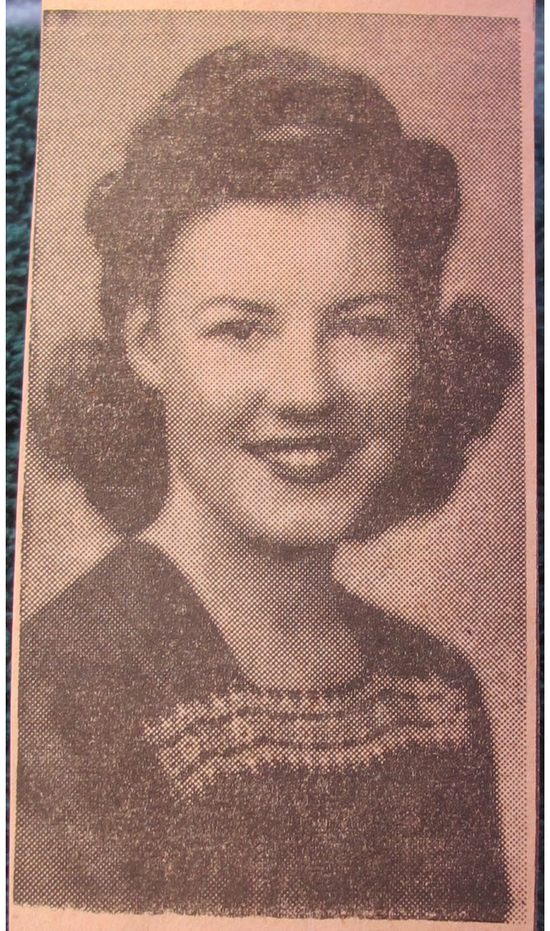
SUNDAY MORNING,



RETURNS—Mrs. David F. Diehl returned recently to reside in San Antonio for the duration with her mother, Mrs. Margaret Warner, while Flight Officer Diehl is overseas. She is the former Miss Frances Warner of this city.

It seems as though we've finally caught up with the war and the nearer it gets the less appealing it is, if ever such an adjective could be used with it. Bob, although he came over a month before us has already earned an air medal. Last night on strafing they got a truck on intruder and it was the first night they weren't met with a serenade of flak. The Murphies came down from the 425 with many tales of combat. One, that their advance guard sent into Frankfort to find accomodations met disaster when an old woman threw a hand grenade into their recon and killed all six. Another member of their party in a jeep literally cut her in half with a tommy gun.

After a routine day of working on the tent, the hordes of French kids and a French lesson by one of them, another day passed into evening when a G.I. truck rolled up in front of our tent and out hopped Bob and Gronberg with a B-24 in parts. We are going to make a stove out of an oxygen bottle. Arge. was driving the truck and he hung around the tent for hours and we had a real bull session. He was a Texan and an old G.I., and accordingly a man with many and interesting tales having to do with his experiences for almost three years. We learned much about war from him. All I have to say about war however is that I'll be glad when its over and I can get back to my luscious ol' Rebel.

While Bob went back to Southern France to bring back the last P-61, Gronberg and I spent most of the day working on our "oxygen bottle" stove. Breaking blades merrily as we hack-sawed. We got a lot done and should have a gasoline stove fairly soon. Good ol' Uncle Bob came over in the afternoon and we had a long bull session about everything but mostly about our wives. Then an angry smoke surges the camp as word came that Broadford has wrecked an airplane, one of our new P-61's. No one was glad to hear that he had broken his arm but almost everyone was a bit P.O'd about his wrecking the aircraft. It's almost definitely a case of a cocky pilot thinking he fairly sizzles. The hell with war, I miss Erin.

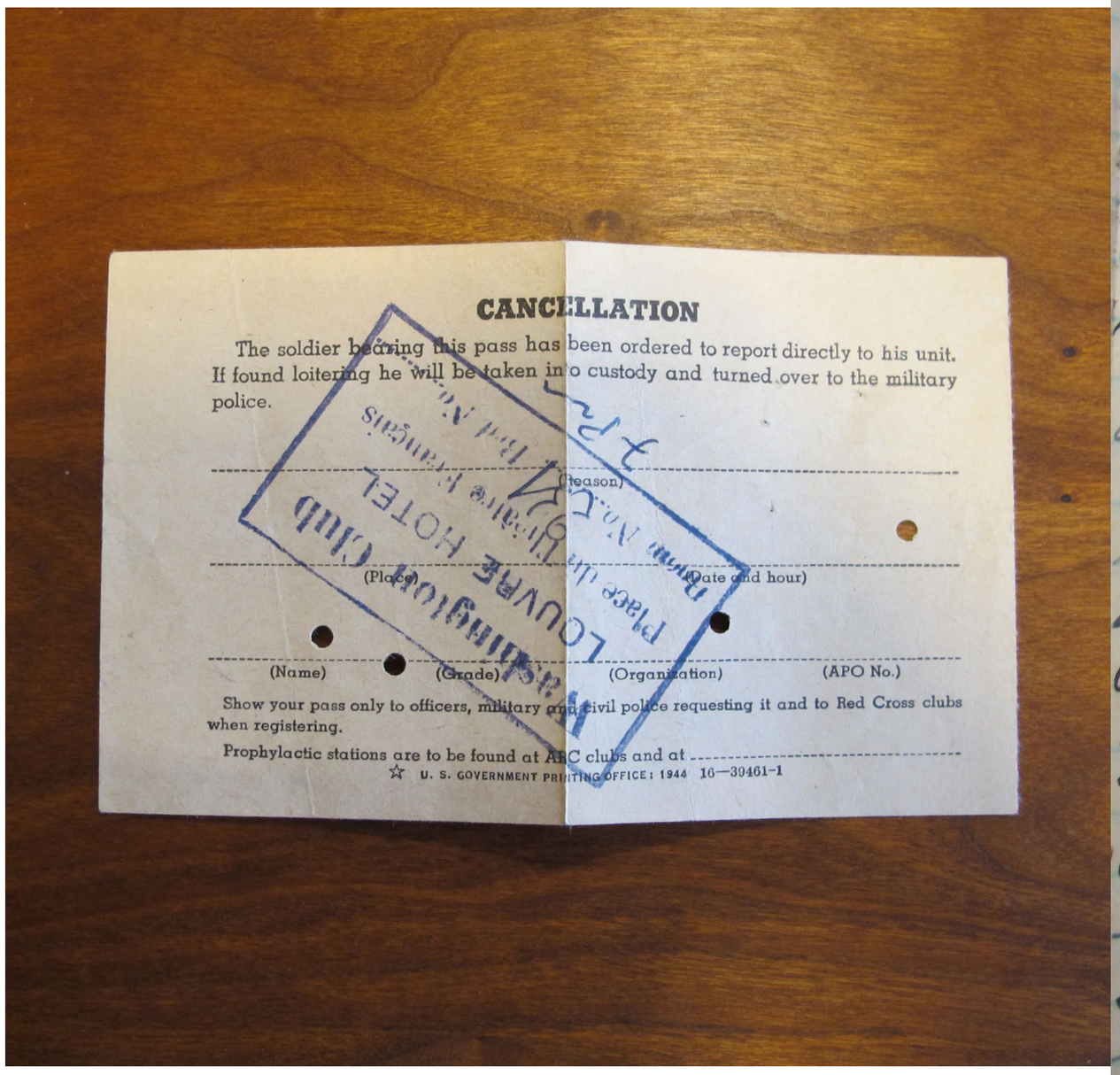
Today was one of those days when everything happens. It started when a B-26 went sputtering around the field with his engine cutting out and trailing smoke over the horizon. A half an hour later a column of smoke shoots up in the sky as an ammunition dump blows up. Then Bob and I went down to fly and had to land because of gas fumes. A little later a P-38 can't get his wheels down and does a beautiful job of a belly landing. A few minutes afterwards as we are taxiing out a "beau" takes off and crashes on single engine a mile from the field. It immediately burned but Konwinski was thrown clear, Junger was killed. It was a shame. That was Junger's second "crash and burning" in a week. To nite Maj Larsen had nose wheel trouble.

Bob and I decided to see Paris so at 2^30 we took off. Fortunately two visiting Colonels were going up also, in the B-25, so we bummed a ride and in no time at all were circling over the Eiffel Tower. We landed on a field on the outskirts of Paris that at one time had been a German Night Fighter Base and a bus soon had us in the center of the famous "Gay Paree". We procurred a room in the Hotel du Louvre which was at the end of Rue d'l Opera and next to the Louvre. Paris is beautiful and very gay, if one is looking for gaiety of the sexual variety, which we weren't. Tomorrow we shall view the famous monuments of this famed city. Frankly, I'd much rather see, Erin. A city is a city but Erin is my life.

We arose at a lazy hour and strolled through the gardens of the Louvre then along the Seine to the Palace of Justice and Notre Dame. On our way back around noon we went leisurely to soak up this magnificence this beauty that is Paris. It is easy to understand why so many people love Paris so deeply. After lunch we went to the Follies Bergeré and got some tickets for this evening. Then we walked up the famed and infamous "Pigalle" (Pig alley) with its night clubs that never close. And in the evening we went to the Follies Bergeré, which was very good even though it was only an elaborate Burlesque. We are having a good time but I miss Erin too much to appreciate anything.

The phone rang at 5 45 this morning and we hurriedly prepared for our exit from Paris. We boarded the Metro to the Gare d'l Est and finally after frantic [illegible] on our train. [illegible] military personal [illegible] Marne through [illegible] Marne, and got [illegible] cal train too[illegible] flew in the a[illegible] and to check [illegible] Mother (beacon) [illegible] the famous [illegible] ported that the [illegible] lipment. I wish [illegible] thin two months [illegible] with a certain Texan lass on June 13th. I sure miss that sweet of wife of mine. Something awful!

CANCI[illegible]
The soldier bearing this pass has [illegible]
If found loitering he will be taken in [illegible]
police.
(Name) (Grade)
Show your pass only to officers, military a[illegible]
when registering.
Prophylactic stations are to be found at Ab[illegible]
☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRI[illegible]
[illegible]ington Club
[illegible]UVRE HOTEL
Théâtre Français
Bed No. 27
(Place)



CANCELLATION

The soldier bearing this pass has been ordered to report directly to his unit. If found loitering he will be taken into custody and turned over to the military police.

(Reason)

(Place) (Date and hour)

(Name) (Grade) (Organization) (APO No.)

Show your pass only to officers, military and civil police requesting it and to Red Cross clubs when registering.

Prophylactic stations are to be found at ARC clubs and at

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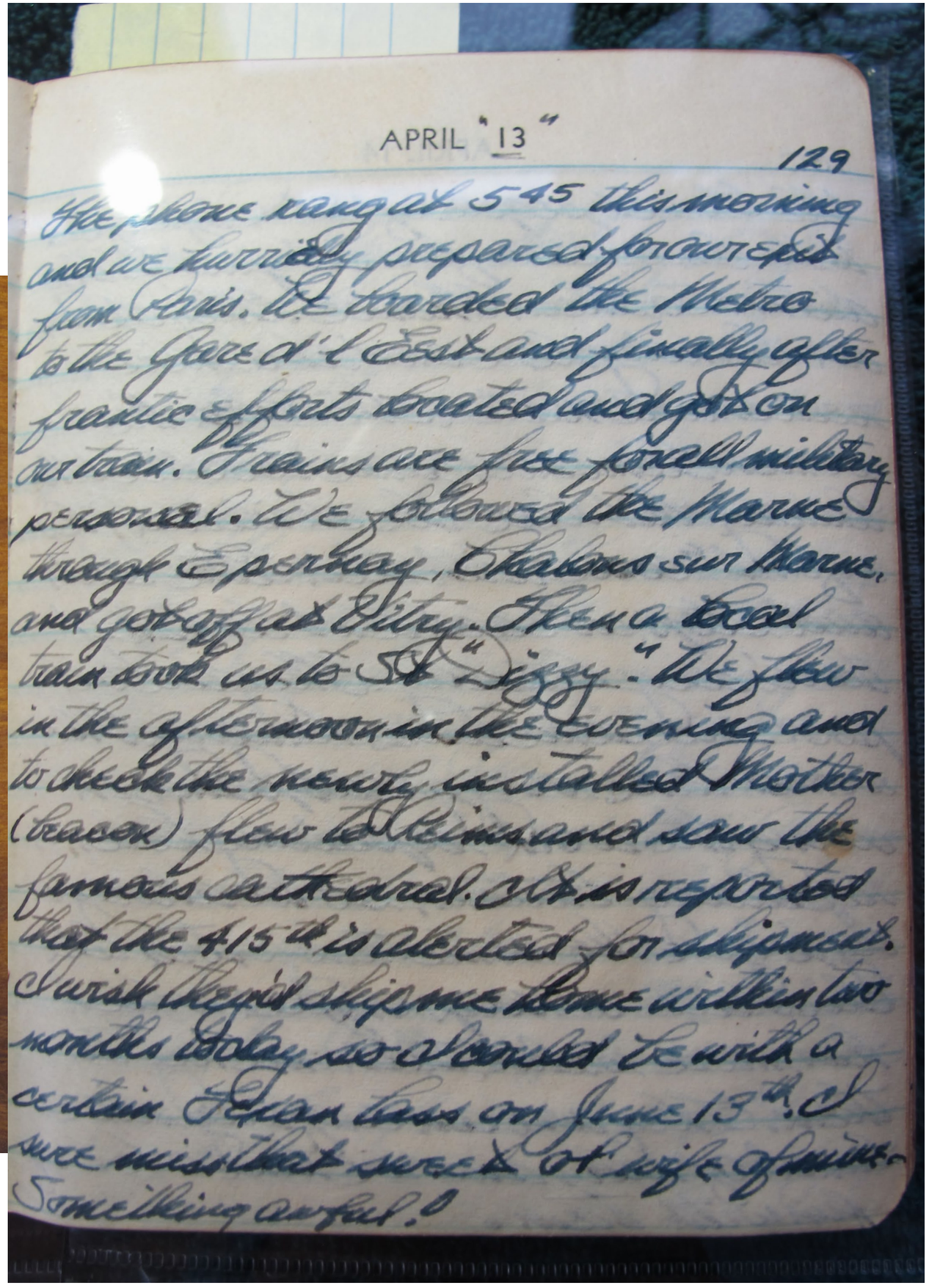
Washington Club
LOUVRE HOTEL
Place du Théâtre Français
Room No. 57
Bd No. 7



APRIL "13"

129

The phone rang at 5 45 this morning and we hurriedly prepared for our exit from Paris. We boarded the Metro to the Gare d'l Eest and finally after frantic efforts located and got on our train. Trains are free for all military personnel. We followed the Marne through Epernay, Chalons sur Marne, and got off at Vitry. Then a local train took us to St "Dizzy." We flew in the afternoon in the evening and to check the newly installed Mother (beacon) flew to Reims and saw the famous cathedral. It is reported that the 415th is alerted for shipment. I wish they'd ship me home within two months today so I could be with a certain Texan lass on June 13th. I sure miss that sweet of wife of mine. Something awful!

The French people of St. Dizier flock to the Americans for work just as they did in Southern France. They do our laundry here and at a more reasonable rate. On Sabbath the women themselves came to collect the laundry but here the children, les enfants "come with their little carts and stops at each tent to ask if there's any laundry. They are all poor and sometimes hungry. The women take very great pains in doing the work, repairing holes, or replacing buttons, so we always try to give the something extra like chocolate or soap or food which has more value than money to them. They are an awfully nice bunch of kids and we have a lot of fun with them.

There certainly are a good bunch of kids around here. All day long on day they have no école or après école they hang around our tent area. They are well mannered and a pitiful lot, many are thin and underfed, few have sufficient clothing or decent shoes but they are happy. We give them all the candy and chocolate we can get our hands on, alongwith food. François and his three buddies are a likeable lot, and little Jacque and his little brother Bernard and adopted brother "Macoroni" (a little Italian). Jacque is a little amiable freckled red head, whenever he sees me he laughs and says "Vous Boche!" and I retort "Non, vous Jap-ons!" Then we both laugh!

It seems as though the local setting for the drama of love is the canal that separates the field from the highway. These "pour amour femmes" or "canal rats" as some uncultured characters aptly termed the stroll alone the banks of said canal "at anyone's convenience," its seems also that from buck privates up to one Major for sure this is famous convenient. Whats joys of life, what culture, what love, what wonderful companionship these men must find along those banks. What fortunes these famed "Ladies of Leisure" must make. The hordes of mosquitos that infest this region must add zest to the non-platonic relationships. Thank God I have a wife like Erin!

The sun really bore down on us today and it was awfully hot. Accordingly Aubill and I decided to investigate the gravel pit on the other side of 415th's area. It is a huge affair approximately 300,000 ft square of water. The temptation of that cool green water was too much, we doffed our clothes and had a most refreshing swim. Later that evening Woody Grange and I went back into the woods with a carbine. The woods were beautiful in the quiet brilliance of the evening and seemingly permeated with the scent of lilacs, possibly the blossoms of some fruit trees. Erin would have enjoyed it so awfully much. I certainly wish she were here.

I started off the day by telling the Doc about the swimming in the gravel pit and asking him if he thought it advisable to test and if necessary "fix" the water therein. He seemed cooperatively interested so I was a bit surprized to see that on the bulletin that came out less than an hour later it was officially put on "off limits". It's O.K. if a guy subjects himself to an almost sure case of V.D. but for the gees who don't go in for such "sport," they can't even have the pleasure of a doubtful case of thypoid. "C'est la guerre!"

Beaucoup mail came in today, at last, and from the appearance of all mail around the 15th of Mar, it had been obliterated by saltwater, possibly a ship wreck. Hey! I love that Gal.

The 415th took off today for Darmstadt south of Frankfurt. I was sorry to see good ol' Uncle Bob Bates go, but I guess we will soon also move in that direction. Rumor has it that we are also to move to that vicinity and supposedly also support the 7th army. The old standby of indications of impending moves was to be found today in the form of a notice that no laundry is to be sent out next week. There seems to be quite a rage of (gastank) boat building in the squadron. The canal between us and the squadron is accordingly affording not only a bed for mosquitos but a definite arena of entertainment. Bob, Dowd + I had a great time in such pursuits. I'd like to pursue my heart.

Howard finally completed a painting and not exactly bashfully let it be viewed by all. It is very good, especially is its contrast in both depth and subject noteworthy. It is a partial and dominating view of a P-61 contrasting with the background which is an eighteenth century chapel complete with grave stones. His technique is good but one which I would deem blotchy. I had a long talk with him along these lines. Bob and I were supposed to fly tonight for the first time but the gas situation prevented us from doing. Bob has to fly however sometime during the middle of the night. "Smitty" issued me my parachute tonight finally.

We were called for a formation at 1:00 this noon out of a rather clear sky. The ... to be told ... ding our adv... y and by ... ll be on sac... and May... ss us wit... t base to th... erated lan... ifference bet... ate. We were ... if the war... . Mixed emo... t "Guzzle" Che... perience any ... "excused." This move will probably mean very much tons as individuals and as a squadron.

We were called for a formation at 1/00 this noon out of a rather clear sky. The squadron was called thus to be told that Monday we are sending our advance party into Germany and by Wednesday all of us shall be on sacred Nazi land. Rudlin and Maj. Gardiner tried to impress us with the contrast of our new base to this, the difference of liberated land and conquered, the difference between friendship and hate. We were warned and of doubt if the warning has been in vain. Mixed emotions struck us all except "Guzzle" Cheff, he was too drunk to experience any emotion and had to be "excused." This move will probably mean very much to us as individuals and as a squadron.

There was a steady stream of armed men moving in the direction of the nearby woods this morning. Apparently everyone has decided that this is a very good time to do a little practice with their .45s. There seem to be three views on our expected movement to Germany. One group (shall them the alarmist) expect anything in the form of treachery from the Boche. Another group can't believe that the Germans are so bad, and don't think it will be any different from being in France. The last group doesn't say anything and shows thus as yet that they are even thinking anything. While flying this afternoon Bob & I had a rough engine and as we watched it smoke we thought certainly that we were going to sensate a C-61 on single engine.

We started packing today, the baggage sent ahead with supply, and the excitement of the intended move is on us. Symbolic of the emotions experienced by the move all the men attached to the Medics has suddenly donned, with studied nonchalance, the white arm band with the "red cross." The B-25 went to our new Base with an advance party and when the plane returned our destination leaked out. We shall be midway between Wurzburg and Nuremberg, which is 30 miles from the front and deeper into Germany than any other mig fighter sqdn. Notable at this point are the number of men who are elligible for leave and a migration for the States has started. We shall fly up in C-47's tomorrow morning. Love you, Erin.

I thought we were going to fly up in a C-47, but I forgot that the ground pounders have to rush ahead, "perhaps to go operational." We left around noon in a convoy of five trucks. It was a nice day and the roads were rough so we jolted merrily along. We passed through Nancy, Metz, and the last town in France was a pretty place called Sarreguemines. We entered Germany at 7 minutes to 5 this evening and proceeded through Homberg to a little town called Landstuhl where we stayed overnight. It is a pretty little town nestled in quiet pine clad hills. I met a fellow in the occupation troops from Cincinnati and we had a long talk. Germany seems awfully peaceful tonight but I sure wish I were in Texas.

We arose at 0600, a bit disgruntled from a track of sleep and jolted sore-ly out of Landstuhl. We passed through a horribly beat Kaiserslautern and crossed the Rhine at Mannheim also a rather dissolute western city. The Germans certainly are seeing destruction. Parts of Germany however are untouched by the war and incidentally very beautiful. Places like Heidelberg and Bavaria in general are very beautiful and make France look seed. After getting lost twice, becoming tired of the dust and sick of K. rations, sore in body and spirit we passed through an utterly destroyed Würzburg and finally arrived at Giebelstadt. The 417th is actually living in building but tonight we are sleeping in operations on the line.

We are really in combat here and I personally believe the squadron is a bit confused by it all. We came back into Geilenkirchen this morning to find that Gronberg and Lambert have been saving a room for us in the house they occupy. We hardly had dumped our "stuff" on the floor when we had to grab our flying equipment and maps and take off for the field again. We are to fly operational again tonight. "B" flights flew last night and met considerable flak. All around us flak or searchlights light the sky periodically. Bob and I fly at 0300 so we have going to hit the sack. Cartmell and Anderson are taking off on the first and their first mission now and on the horizon the red balls of 40 mm flak light the sky.

My sleep was troubled once last night by the sound of apparently a bellyflopping but I didn't fully wake up until I suddenly became aware that it was dawn and Bob + I hadn't flown. It didn't take me long to find out why. Cartmell + Anderson never returned from the flak area, Allen came back on single engine with the other one shot out and Aubell being a bit nervous by it all and an error on the Tower's part landed with his wheels up. No word about Cartmell and Anderson came all day with the exception of a P.C.I. report of an unidentified crash 40 miles south of here. The squadron is in about the poorest condition imaginable. My old boy scout troop had more efficiency than this sorry outfit.

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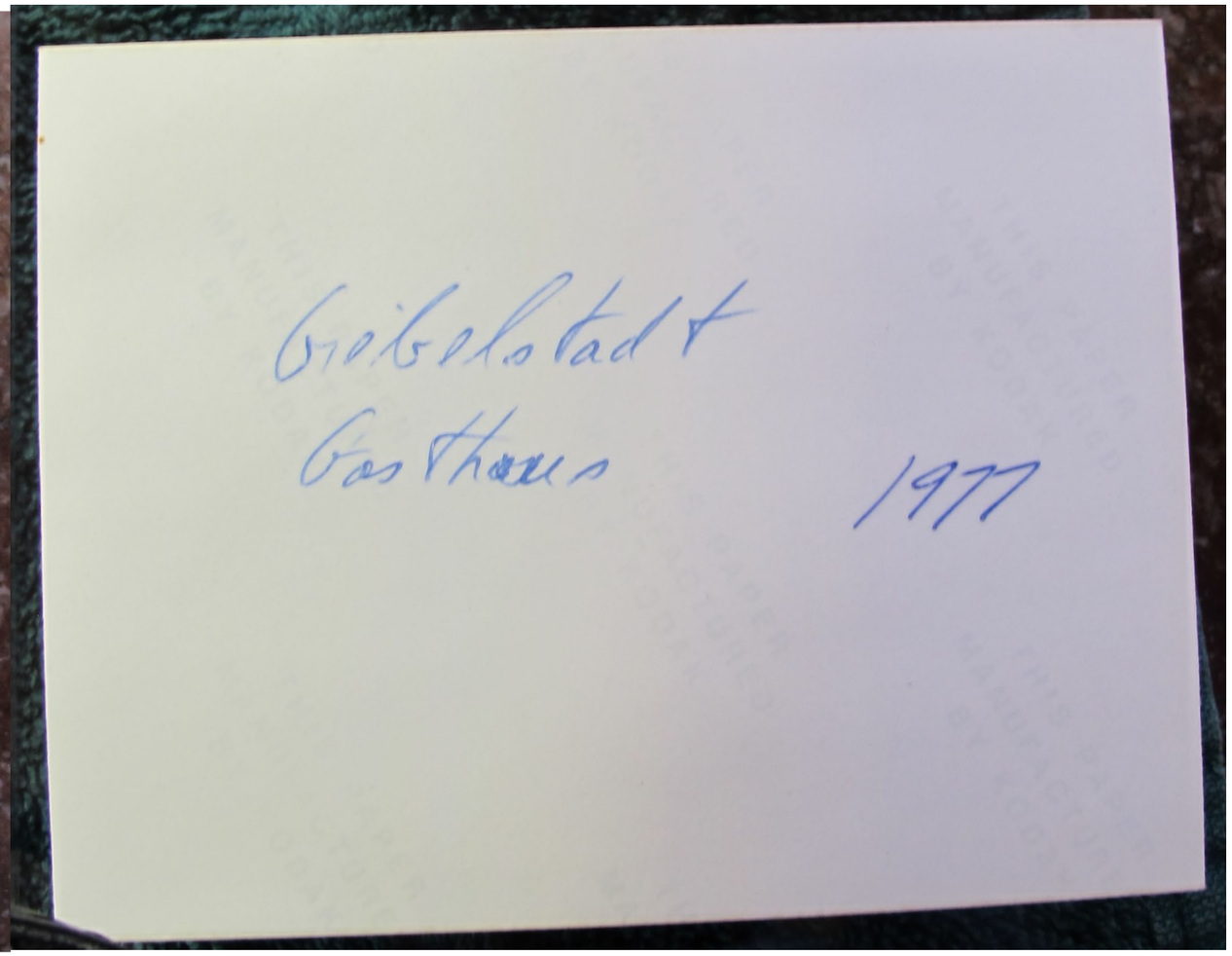
Giebelstadt
Gasthaus
1977

Outside the "town criers" of Geibelstadt is ringing his bell and the townspeople are gathering for his periodical harangue. Geibelstadt is a very typical Bavarian rural town, the old substantial thatched homes, the high gabled roofs and the teams of oxen or horses plodding slowly along the winding cobbled street. The people are outwardly unfriendly towards us, this seem to reflect, our use of their homes. The town seems little aware of the war and generally the people attempt little gestures of friendliness but we are told to ignore this. Cartwell and Anderson were found today and a report from an American PA unit arrived that they had shot down two P-61's last night, Cartwell, + Capt Angus from 415th

Tonight we flew our first operational mission and what a time we had in our first two hours of combat night flying. According to briefing we were to patrol the West side of Munich, between same and our lines. Before we could go up at 0300 (actually the 30th) word came that the line had moved up and actually taken Munich. There we ce thick clouds and to get on top we had to fly at 15,000' where it was -25°c. After an hour and 40 min, I ran out of oxygen, not having come near a thing then on the way home G.C.I. vectored us on to a bogey. We let down to 6000' at 300 mph, picking up a beautiful contact. With a 30 mph speed advantage we worked it down to 2000' feet still slightly above him.

(OVER)

Then he turned on his jets and went into a climb at about 500 MPH. It was useless then and a single engine caused us to decide to go home.

— APRIL 30 - Not sleeping at all last night we went to sleep immediately after breakfast and slept so long that we almost missed lunch. The day was ruined as we slept most of it away. Aubill, Hart and Simmons talked the local bakery woman out of their bakery truck and triumphantly returned today. Bob immediately went haywire and they should return it in no time. Oddly enough seems to be a charged battery. Golly I'm tired, the next time we fly I'm going to sleep. This old stuff is no good. It throws ones schedule a bit off kilter. Not being with Erin is hardly on his schedule.

It seems strange that a land as beautiful as Germany could harbor such a war loving people. The Bavarian countryside with its rolling hills that have felt the plow for centuries, the peaceful well tended, efficiently cared for and utilized farm lands and forests stretching for miles around. The farmers all live in villages nestled in the center of their endless tracts of land. At dawn you can see the procession as they trudge to work. The mountain region of the Black Forest is also extremely beautiful. The town of Heidelberg is like a exquisite gem laid on the curve of the Neckar River, protected by the velvet like pine clad hills the hover over it. Erin would like this too.