

The Swastikas and last minute German slogans go unheeded now in the towns. In fact now a new emblem hangs over Germany. On every house there hangs the new flag of Germany, the one of "solid white". On some towns where the streets are especially narrow and the houses very huddled it looks as though the weekly wash is hung across the streets, so many are the flags of surrender. Many towns have no flags however, but neither do these towns have any people. Towns like Mannheim, Kaiserslautern, Heilbronn, and Würzburg, towns that have no population, towns in which every building is a shapeless pile of rubble and has a gutted ground shell. This is Germany.

"Gickelstadt the Haffel Mist"! I believe Haffel mist means manure pile and if so it is a very fitting title. At any point in Gey Gickelstadt one is surrounded, engulfed and almost overcome by the unheavenly odor of innumerable "compost heaps". The streets are littered with cow manure, and every yard has a heap of horse or sometimes various kinds of its own. Every cart whether drawn by oxen, cow or horses seems to contain the odorous agent, as the pulling agent, lacking all propriety, seems to always be undergoing a violent case of the G.I.'s. On picture previous outdoor dining room seemed carpeted with dung. Gickelstadt, they name, they fame is HIT, is a shame!

MAY 2

We were scheduled to fly again tonight but the weather proved to be a bit bad, in fact the ranges are extremely poor "over the target area. A large portion of the German Luftwaffe was supposed to surrender yesterday. All of 24 jet jobs were supposed to be escorted in by the P-47's of the 50th Group. Bad weather permitted the making of the sort however. This storm of weather has all the men in the other flights sweating. The war is folding fast and all of the other flights have yet to fly. The bomb time is shrinking fast, last night all German troops in Italy surrendered, the war can't last many more hours our area is practically blank too much to warrant flying and the fever of war is upon us.

MAY 3

We got paid today, a whole hand full of new "Allied Marks". The mark is set at 10¢ by the military government and I don't know whether this is higher or lower than the German mark. It really makes little difference however as unlike France we buy absolutely nothing here other than our PX rations and stamps or envelopes. We may want for things but we have all that is sufficient. It's surprising how cheaply one can live. I probably spend at the most \$5.00 a month now. There is absolutely no entertainment to be found in Giebelstadt other than what one can dream up on one's self. But Giebelstadt has a strong tendency to leave one cold. What a wretched little hole this Giebelstadt is! Miss Eun.

This morning I sent my usual PTA money order for \$100.00, and today with a dripping soggy Giebelstead we were forced to undergo another of those days when all you do is get in endless dull sessions, write letters, talk, write, and if you're lucky sleep. Days like today are a realy most of the time but when you are forced into them day after day it gets a bit tiresome. Most of the fellows are going out looking and scrounging for cars. There are about six cars in the squadron and there'll be more. Bob wants me to go with him to scrounge a car but I can't see myself taking some bodies car whether they are German or not. I just want to get out of Giebelstead and back to my jeep.

The weather is still lousy in Giebelstead. It rained, snowed, and was generally miserable. The flight was not started by weather. N.F.T.s in the morning. The boys however decided to send to stand alert. Snow and it fell. Boy and Jones, good time how. Bridge session rather amiable. All night long. "Was a black one?" even if Jerry flew we wouldn't have flown. It was too black and miserable. The war is nigh fini! Back to Erin!

E. W. WISE, Major, F.D.

To be executed in triplicate.
Ribbon copy to be retained by Finance Off.
One copy to be furnished Personnel Off.
One copy to be furnished Officer — E. M.

WAR DEPARTMENT
FINANCE DEPARTMENT
FORM NO. 38
APPROVED NOV. 24, 1930
(MODIFIED)

P. T. A.

WAR DEPARTMENT
Finance Department

P. T. A.

RECEIPT FOR FUNDS TRANSMITTED TO UNITED STATES

417 Night Ftr Sq. APO 374, New York, NY, 5 May 1945

(ORGANIZATION AND APO NO. OF REMITTER)

F/O DAVID F. DIEHL T-180287

(PRINT IN CAPS: RANK, FULL NAME AND ASN OF REMITTER)

\$ 100.00

* RECEIVED IN CASH OF

* ~~FOUR HUNDRED~~

One Hundred Dollars----- DOLLARS AND ----- CENTS.

PAY TO Mrs. Frances L. Diehl, 422 West Craig Place, San Antonio, Texas.

APP. ----- P.A. -----

WHICH SUM I HAVE PASSED TO THE CREDIT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND HOLD MYSELF ACCOUNTABLE THEREFOR

* STRIKE OUT WORDS NOT APPLICABLE

NOTE: It is essential that the remitter verify name and address of payee prior to submission of this data to the Finance Dept.

John W. Grange
JOHN W. GRANGE, 1st Lt, AC.

MAY 5

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The weather is still lousy in Giebel. Start as it rained, snowed, and hailed all day and was generally "sour oranges." "B" flight was not the flight to be daunted by weather however, so we flew N.F.T.s in the rain with a 1000 ft ceiling. The weather did get so bad however that night that they decided to send only two over and to stand alert. We drew for this honor and it fell to Bob & Al and Cooley and Jones. We had a ~~weather~~ good time however, getting up a bridge session and all being in rather amiable spirits. It rained all night and was a black one; even if Jerry flew we wouldn't have flown, it was too black and miserable. The war is nigh fin! Back to Erin!

We got up off the benches in the "Intelligence Room" at seven AM to come back to town eat breakfast and then promptly go back to bed. We were dead tired and the weather was still miserable outside so no more logical place could be found than our "Beloved sacks." We proceeded to sleep a good part of the day away. In the afternoon as I moodily sat gazing out of Lambert's window describing the wagons of passing horse manure, I saw a woman coming with an M.P. O'D was the Bakery Woman and she had an order from the Colonel saying she could have ^{her bakery truck} back. The woman was put off and the Colonel took it out of it in some strange manner. Irish clowns in Leipzig

The weather finally broke today and it was a beautiful day. To make it even more pleasant other things happened. "D-nuts" & Denitz the new Nazi Fuehrer ordered all German units to cease fighting. Even better was the arrival of mail. All this time it has been congested at Chalons sur Marne in France and yesterday we sent our B-25 after it, today it returned loaded down with the precious stuff. I received the intoxicating amount of twenty five letters, the "Fattler" and two packages from Erin. Fourteen of these missles were from my wife. It's was a gloriously happy day. I'll never be glad to get back to that wife of mine. That will be the Happy Day!

V-E DAY "Today the war is over, today the mighty Wehrmacht finally admitted defeat. There was not the celebrations you'd expect however. This fact left all of us astounded, because while it is the end of the war in Europe, it isn't the end of the war for us. A lot of flares and a lot of guns were shot tonight and it was rather drunk out, but this celebrating was not a natural one from the heart, it was more because everyone figured it was expected of them. Kimmel got very drunk as usual. He started out OK and we thought he had finished but he hadn't even started. About 1100 we were talking over a little champagne when he left to look for Ray with an enlisted man. He never

found Ray but instead tried to reduce what he thought was a giant but was a man at the Barracks for displaced Poles. The enlisted man had enough sense to come and get us and at two o'clock in the morning we went after him. Sure enough Kimmel was there in this foul smelling room that bedded about 10 men and women, all Poles. We found Kimmel stark naked and disgustingly drunk to the pleasure of the Poles. We got him dressed and drug him home and thought we had him ready for bed when he got "mean" drunk and fought almost everyone in the house before being forcibly pacified. We decided to sit up till breakfast which we did and slept away all day today. Kimmel was a bit disgusting to all today.

MAY 10

This being in many is a cause of strange situations. Today being like all other days, new civilian cars, motorcycles and radios appeared on the scene. All that is necessary to acquire same is a certain quantity of boldness and a gun. The procedure for procuring a car or other vehicles is to search any and all convenient barns or garages until a vehicle is unearthed. To quiet any civilians with a complaint you merely brandish your gun and mutter out of the corner of your mouth "American Government," personally I believe that the wildly gestulating guy is the more sedative of the two. Personally, I lack the boldness or the heart to enact this routine.

MAY 11

They lifted the barn on flying today and our flight started off by flying. We went up and ran a couple F1's and as was our primary intention headed for the Danube. Bob dropped us down to about 200' and skirted along down inside valleys which we both like so much. The country south of here is very beautiful and we had a good look at it ending up tearing along 100' above the bottom of valleys. Eventually we arrived at Gungburg on the Danube. The Blue Danube isn't blue its green. We stopped around the rest of the day, I painted awhile and a big rumor came out that tomorrow morning all F1's will report for physicals tomorrow preparatory to becoming 2nd Lt's.

MAY 12

This morning after breakfast we took our physicals for becoming 2nd Lt's and it took all morning. All we have to complete is the A-Ray and Blood Test now, both of which will have to be taken at Rheims or Chalons as the available equipment isn't adequate. We learned today that Maj Gardner is to leave with Hager tomorrow and it's surprising to realize the many old timers who have "deserted the rats" with the sinking ship being our move to Germany and now probably the Pacific. From La Vallée it's been Maj. Tarsen, Captains Jackson, Hamilton, Draper, Wilcox, 1st Lt. Devos and Everett and now Maj. Gardner and 1st Lt. Hager, Simpson, Perkins and who else? Eleven hard bitten veterans.

MAY 13

Awakened rudely at 0900, I learned that this morning we are to go to Chalons sur Marne for X-Ray and Blood tests. When we were getting ready on the line the B-25 took off for Florence with Gardner and Hager. They say Gardner was even "Chickenshit" to his last act in the squadron. A sigh of relief was heard. We flew to Chalons, the eight F4's jammed in three C-61's and completed the required. I learned that our applications for 2nd Lt have to be in at Florence by the 15th and they may just make it, all the 16th will start a 6 week period of no operations as they are going to repair the runways. Will we leave or will we be stuck here? What a unhappy anniversary this is! Eleven months and two years!

MAY 14

We flew again today so once again Bob + I decided to see some of Germany. We flew with Aubill's flying formation with us, first to Nurnberg and there picked up the auto train. We saw the huge Nazi stadium made famous by Hitler and as usual the gutted buildings. We followed the autobahn, Hitler's military super highway all along the road, passing Regensburg and finally to Munich. Munich, Hitler's spawning ground was a beautiful city situated on the Isar River which is a branch of the Danube. We flew directly back and incidentally saw "Dachau" the huge famous concentration camp. It is now rumored that no one is to be out from the Squadron.

MAY 15

Eight full Colonels arrived in Regensburg from 12th AF and investigated some wonderfully wild rumors. This information which is probably a pipe dream of a first class rumor starter is supposed to have been gleaned from one of the Colonels. - Fruit - We shall change from the 12th AF to the 9th. All crew who flew operationally will get an Air Medal. All flying personnel will be promoted to 1st Lt. or better. We will leave for the States within a month! The first leaves me cold, the second and third are wonderful and even plausible, but - this is the 41st. The last leaves me delirious! Man to think of seeing Erin within two months - Man!

Pence, Duff Campbell, Howard and a few others of the "group" having been going over to take the past few days working on a couple ME-109's. They intend to fix them up and fly them over here as toys for the pilots. Meanwhile McCullen goes on "prooving" more souvenirs. He has two cars, three motorbikes, bayonets, helmets, gas masks, pictures, wine and various and sundry nicknacks. He's been sending box after box home. Bob and I dined today. Saw a bunch, don't know how you'd describe it, and Bob a boat scene. Then we got into a bridge session with Cook and Gaines as usual we took Ned. Wish we'd hurry and go home, I sure am ready.

We were scheduled to fly again today and they have instigated a new policy. Namely only four crew of the flight fly each three days and then at night for two hour PIs. This means we will fly every six days. We flew a quick NFI this afternoon and then tonight we flew PIs with Cooky & Gaines from 2300 to 0100. It was a nice night, a bit hazy but not cold and rather uneventful. This afternoon a little excitement happened over at Sparkasse when a 35 year old woman came in the house looking for the occupants. As she found only soldiers she threatened to commit suicide and kill her child. No one paid any attention to her and she left a bit P.O.'s.

MAY 18

Duff Campbell was killed yesterday. That was the first thing I heard this morning. Yesterday they finished or thought they finished working on one of the ME-109's and Duff took off. He never got above 500' in the air and although everything looked and sounded O.K. something must have been wrong because he stayed right in the pattern at this low altitude. Coming in on his final he was still turning and he never got the wing up. His wing tip hit the ground and he started to cartwheel. "He had it" instantly. They decided to let the ME-109's go and for all they cared and there were some pretty quiet boys around today. I wish this war would end!

MAY 19

Rumors circulated to the effect, today, that Monday the 21st we are to move. Our destination is to be 4-78 near Worms on the Rhine supposedly. This will put us only about 15 miles from Luxembourg and the 415th. It will be good to have Giebel tract and also good to see Bob Bates. Life has reached a point of boredom here that almost causes nervous frustration. Pete Tombert is especially affected by this, as he is one big bundle of nerves. There is nothing to do here other than what one can devise and most of us are trapped in an overwhelming desire to get home at least for leave and quickly, too. Your my need for Erik is almost to the point of desperation.

MAY 20

Yesterdays rumor was confirmed and in detail - the cruel detail being that it is our lot to once more be tent habits. The field is near Blum on a tributary of the Rhine, halfway between Mannheim and Darmstadt. Another cruel detail is that once again Bob and I are to travel by truck, so we have got to fly. We began to leisurely pack. Pete came out victorious in a skirmish of the 41st's battle of Giebelstadt. Three little Giebelstadters were inadvertently playing in our yard when Pete seized them. Grabbing a German toy gun, Pete dashed out of the house brandishing his weapon and shouting "VADROUSE!" The enemy retreated under this brilliant attack and we congratulated Pete on his

MAY 21

super courage in face of an enemy that out numbered him.

MAY 21 - We were supposed to ship today but here I am still in Giebelstadt. Most of the fellows are gone that is those who were flown at any rate. Those of us who were supposed to go by truck haven't left yet for the simple reason that the trucks didn't get here until late this evening. I'm glad we didn't go as it's a miserable rainy night and the thought of the confusion of returning to tents is not overly welcome, especially feeling as I do. Apparently the enemy that was a bit rotten last night and I am now suffering the consequences. Namely a slight fever and a gummy stom-ach. I wish I were with Erin.

We left "grumbling Giebelstadt" this morning, grumbling because we took a table and four chairs. It took us all morning to make the trip in the drizzling rain but it was enjoyable because of the beauty of the country. I think frankly, that beside all of my "bitching" that I prefer to travel by truck one sees so much more of the country side. We arrived to discover that we are not only sleeping in tents but that the tents are scattered in a forest. Bob + Pete + Jeanette and I immediately started to set ourselves up, staking flooring and putting up a tent when the "Gears" announced that they were breaking up all groups. Hate, disunion, and hell is in the offing. This will be interesting.

As the whole squadron burrowed deeper into their holdings, the indignation mounted at yesterday's ridiculous order and no one moved. No one will move either! A silent pact was made to quietly ignore this and neither say anything about or against it nor do anything about it. Passive resistance it might be called. To night a couple of the fellows came back with a deer they had shot in the woods. Immediately they dressed and butchered it and we had a bit of venison around our big open fire. It's really nice here and there's a fine friendly informal air. That is except for the ignored "Gears". Wish I could tell I were with Erin, regardless.

MAY 24

Bob has now developed a new mania, this time, its gliders. One took it that glider out on the field and he was off. When Bob gets an idea he goes crazy until its execution or another idea creeps in. Usually another creeps in and he forgets the first one to concentrate on the second. As a result his past is one weird assortment of skewed manias. As I said he is now in the throes of a "glider mania". He sleeps little, doesn't know if or what he ate, smokes like a reefer fiend and darts every where he goes, even if its across the room. You can see gliders soaring around in his eyes. But a new idea will strike and the gliders will glide out of his mind, like a bat and a car now rust and mottled with dust, none of them more than a bunch of plans & drawings.

MAY 25

As the day went on and days grew clearer the tabbed around our particular hub of tents. I was writing in the tent when Reminski walked up, I went outside and there down the line was good ol' Uncle Bob Bates. Their field 4-12 is only fifteen miles from here and they had driven down to see us. It sure was good to see Bob and within ten minutes we had dispersed with all the local intrigue and got down to the business at hand, namely talking about our wives and reminiscing about those happy days at Fresno. Golly, what a wonderful life that was. I just hope we can get back to it soon, and who knows maybe we will. Meanwhile here we sit in the back forest having a nice easy but rather meaningless life. I miss Erin!

MAY 26

Today might be deemed a day of travel. This afternoon Tom Hart and I went to Grasgeran near Dornstadt the home of the 415th. We didn't find Bob Bates so we returned shortly via the thumb. Then this evening Bob, White, a couple enlisted men and I ~~one more~~ ventured out on the Autobahn in a truck & jeep. The truck had to return so only the jeep could carry on. Off the super highway we went and through Frankfurt, dodging bomb craters and rain squalls. Jostling jerking long after night fall we arrived at the nest of gliders. We couldn't return with any so we just took as it rained and soaked in. Finally we started back and we were cold, tired and wet when at 4:30 we rolled in after 260 miles and 8 hours of steady going.

MAY 27

Naturally that wild jaunt of last night left me a bit tired today. I'm fast it just completely knocked the hell out of the whole day for me. Not Bob, however, he is at his peak on this glider mania. "How can anyone sleep when he has gliders skittering around in his head." He woke up early with a cigarette in his hand and darted out as he "kissed" the smoke out between his teeth. When in one of these deliriums he is a sight to behold. "Swish, swish" as he darts around, "kiss, kiss" as he smokes that endless cigarette. Plans and drawings galore. He drew detailed drawings of gliders to see how many would fit in a truck. A casual glance would say "two." Bob figured for hours and drew on reams of paper. Suddenly he announced, "Two."

MAY 28

Bob and R. Q. White were going to go back to Jersfeld today to get the gliders but since R. Q. had to fly this couldn't be done. Rumors went around today to the effect that our applications for 2nd A have fallen through, that is at least for this month. It seems as though the XII AAF has a monthly quota for such things and our eight applications were a bit too much for the quota. I don't have too much hope any more and I'll just sit back and see what happens, maybe next month. It really doesn't make a lot of difference because we stand to leave 22.5 months if we get a commission and go back to the states and then overseas again. Just so I go back to the states that's all there about. I sure miss that Rebel.

MAY 29

My fair haired pilot could see the no longer with mere plans of gliders so he and "R. Q." and Culill took off for Hulla to get the real thing. This is a mania that is a mania! Of course gliders are "reboten" on this and all fields. We spent the day laying around sinking a little deeper in the depths of this big black forest. We discovered the alarming fact that our tent leaks, in fact I don't think it even slows down the rain. As if to impress us with this fact, it rained hard several times. Such is the life of a Night Fighter. It seems rather definite that we have now left the 12th A.F. and are in the 9th A.F. I just wish they'd send me home, should do so much more good in the States. Me + my wife!

MAY 30

Last night or rather early this morning Bob got back from Gorgefield with three gliders, one for R. S., one for George Cullill and one for himself. They brought with them a huge glider trailer to carry the wings and carried the three glider fuselages in the truck. They are beautiful things and handspanning new except where some souvenir hunters slashed the swastikas off of the rudders. Bob got back at 4 AM but he was up and raring to go at 0800. He darted out of his sack as he kissed some smoke between his teeth and headed for the gliders. I haven't seen him since. Life goes on here at its same boring pace as conversations ask again and again when are we going home - "Back to Erik?"

MAY 31

An amazing project has recently been started by Fabus, Foylynn, London, Cornwall and Company. It is a railroad no less. It seems that the above in the eternal wanderings of all overseas men formed this Nazi narrow gauge rail road complete with donkey engine and cars and extra tracks. One tank the started laying track towards our area. The idea took hold and they are really working on it. Even Maj. M. Gray can be found at the heading end of track. So far they have made a bridge and laid about a half mile of track. They are going to run it to the area and then to the "line". Rather aptly they have named it "The Broadway Showtime".