

XI - ACROSS THE RHINE AND ON TO CHEMNITZ

"A few days after we had crossed the Rhine, Sgt William Murphy (Sv Btry) picked up a small cat that had a black mark under its nose, just like Hitler. Naturally we all called it 'Adolph'. He had it for a few days but then we had a long motor march and the cat disappeared. It must have gotten tired of riding." --- Frank Lankford

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"At one of the positions before we got to Kassel, someone found an old mule. The Sv Btry Supply Sgt, James Phelps, made a bridle from some rope and rode the mule around our area. One from Texas; one from Germany; neither could understand the other." ---Frank Lankford

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"Not long after we had crossed the Rhine, I received a homemade Easter egg from my wife. Daniel Sampley, the Personnel Officer, had a sweet tooth for good candy, so I saved a piece for him. When I offered it to him, it was in a box. Laughing, he emphatically refused saying, 'Oh no, you are not going to get me on that one,' and went on his way.

"During Tennessee manouvers I had received a similar egg. Mr. Sampley was not only curious about the box when it arrived, but when he found out what was inside he couldn't wait for me to cut it and give him a piece. I told him I would cut it later in my tent.

"When the appointed time came, he arrived with a large carving knife. Without observing that the ribbon had been tampered with, I opened the box. There was the biggest black snake I had ever seen. I let out a yell and tried to go through the side of the tent. Mr. Sampley and the others all had a big laugh. They had hidden the egg, which we all ate later, and substituted the snake." --- Francis Neighly

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"Groups of us went to see the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp which the 80th had liberated a few days before. It was a sad and sickening experience.

"The inmates had been kept in long, low buildings that reminded me of 'mushroom houses'. There were tiers of wooden bunks on each side of an aisle, with not much room between tiers. One of our men who could speak German found one of the inmates who told us about the camp. Out on one side of the barracks there were rails over a firepit where the guards would throw the bodies of the dead and turn them over as they burned, like an outside grill. In the middle of one of the courtyards were a number of bodies that lay where they had fallen when they had been gunned down. The guards had not had time to move them before they fled. We also saw another building where there were racks full of naked bodies stacked on top of each other. It reminded me of a downtown meat market where they kept fresh killed chickens on a shelf with their heads dangling over each other." ---F.Lankford

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"Near a German town, the name of which I can't recall, we found a lot of the spare gas tanks that planes carried and which would be jettisoned when the fuel had been used. They were shaped like short fat cigars. Someone had cut the tops off some of them and had been using them for little boats in a nearby stream. It was a pretty stream, about 40 or 50 feet wide, that ran through a very picturesque landscape.

"On a warm Spring day about 15 or 20 of us were trying to ride the 'boats' and skinny dipping in the stream near an old wooden bridge. Then a group of German girls came up the road so we all jumped into the water and just stood there waiting for them to pass. Instead of going on, they stopped on the bridge, leaned over the rail and laughing and waving at us yelled: 'Go swim! Go swim!' They just wouldn't move on. So we all started swimming again. What were we to do?" ---Frank Bujdoso

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