

XII - TO NIEDERHOLZHEIM -- END OF MISSION

"When we left the Chemnitz area it was late in the afternoon and we didn't know we were in for a very long ride. My truck was taken to haul infantry so I had to ride in the back of a 4 X 4 with several others. It soon got dark and cold. We huddled up and some of us went to sleep.

"Much later I woke up and found the truck was stopped and I was the only one in it. I got out and went off the side of the road into the woods to relieve myself. On the way back to the truck I heard others talking. I asked why everyone was in the woods and was told that German planes were flying up and down the columns strafing us. I had been asleep and missed the whole thing."
--- Frank Lankford

"When the war was nearly over, we were stopped in a small German village and some of us went out hunting souvenirs. No one had bothered to carry his rifle.

"Entering one of the deserted buildings, we encountered several German soldiers who had been hiding there. Fortunately, they did not put up a fight. Harold Heathcote did have a knife and he captured the prisoners. One of the Germans had a pistol so this gave Harold the prize souvenir of the day." ---Thomas Haynie

"It was near either Simback or Dingolfing that I took a prisoner. I was talking to him in German when he waved his arm and the next thing I knew four more joined us and I had five. Then they all started whistling and waving their arms and Germans came from everywhere. If I had known they were all around me I would have been terrified. I don't know how many I ended up with but it was a lot. I didn't know where to take them so I took them to the CP. Boy, did Major Roark give me a reaming, the gist of which, in polite language, was 'Don't ever, ever, bring prisoners into the CP area.' Then he went to talk to them and when he came back asked: 'What did you say to those men? They all want to join our army.'" --- Francis Neighly

"One rainy day just before the war ended, we pulled into a courtyard that had buildings on all four sides. The main building was being used as the "Sv" Btry CP. Our generator was in the courtyard with wires running to the main switch box to which the regular house wiring was connected. Between two of the buildings there were two bare wires. My driver warned me not to touch them because they were 'hot'.

"Later, one of the men in the section, Sebastian Guigno, accidentally touched one of the 'hot' wires and it knocked him off a truck. The driver saw it and ran to the hallway calling me to come quickly. Running out I saw Sebastian lying flat on his back with a wire across his chest. All I could think of was getting the current turned off. I ran to the generator and, not knowing where the switch was, started pulling wires. Lights began going out everywhere and men were yelling: 'What happened to the generator.'

"We got Sebastian to the medics promptly. He was back in a few days and I don't think he knew exactly just what did happen."

--- Frank Lankford

"About the time we moved into Austria, I had obtained a large piece of limburger cheese and forgot and left it in the CP overnight. The next morning I went back to retrieve my prize. As I neared the CP I could hear Major Schalliol and Major Roark vehemently expressing their disgust with the obnoxious odor and threatening to Courts Martial whoever was responsible for it. Sgt (William) Cooper was frantically fanning the air with a map. Needless to say, I did not acknowledge ownership of the offending cheese. Rather, I joined the chorus in heaping condemnations upon the saboteur, whoever he was. Fortunately, the battalion displaced later that morning and the matter was soon forgotten. I don't believe they ever did find out who was responsible for stinking up the joint." --- John Beard

"While we were in the Niederholzheim area, groups were taken to some of the nearby lakes and recreation areas for an outing. One day I went for a boat ride on a lake. I believe it was at Vocklebruck, but am not sure. It might have been Gmunden or Ebensee. Anyway, I remember there was a large lake that extended out at an angle from the town as far as you could see. Along the bank was a pretty park with a long walkway and numerous benches.

"The boat was about the size of a New York City ferryboat. We rode for quite a while. Along the way the surrounding mountains just seemed to leap up out of the lake without any shoreline.

"We landed at a small village that seemed to be a tourist stop at the foot of one of the mountains. From here a cable car took us up and over a narrow valley or gorge to the top of an adjacent mountain. On the way someone was teasing a Lieutenant, trying to get him to look straight down at the valley far below. No way. When the car passed over the arms of a support tower, the car gave a lurch and swayed back and forth. The Lieutenant cried out, 'Oh my God', and clung to his tormentor.

"When we arrived at the top there were several inches of snow on the ground. I tried to take some pictures of the fellows having a snowball battle in mid-summer, but, wouldn't you know it, the film jammed." --- Frank Lankford
