IV

The ARMY OF OCCUPATION

When I left the Division we had just finished the battle for Heilbronn and were moving south toward "Hitler's Redoubt" in the Alps where the German last stand was anticipated. While I was gone the Company had fought its way south to just east of Stuttgart where the Division had planned an assault on the city, but had been ordered to stand down while the French entered the city. Shortly thereafter Germany surrendered.

By now I had been through the whole Repo-Depo process for the third time. Again it had worked well, getting me back home to G Co., 399th Inf., 100th Div. But the European part of the war was now over and I was in an "Army of Occupation."

The Company was billeted in Laichingen, Germany. During that early summer we rotated through the towns of Esslingen, Goppingen and Kirchheim, settling into our new mission as policing rather than combat troops. The entire Division itself had a much wider area to cover – some 1600 square miles from south of Heilbronn east to Ulm. Within this area, we ran motor patrols, "showing the flag."

For the most part we had little contact with the residents. In the first place, we were under a "do not fraternize" order which limited any legal contact to official business; secondly, there was little currency that could be used for any sort of commercial interchange. We were provided with "occupation currency" meant to replace the currency of the defeated government, but the average German citizen had much more faith in his old bills than in the "Monopoly Money" we had to offer. Moreover, there was little in the way of material things that they had to offer us. On the other hand, we had lots of things they could use – food, clothing, candy.

Depending on our location, there were things that could be gotten and not through any illegal manner. In one town the Germans had established a "factory" where embroidered emblems were made. The factory workers were women brought in from many of the countries overrun by the Wehrmach – slave labor, if you will. With the defeat of Germany and the dissolution of the government that had held them, they were free to wander about, even using the now abandoned factory. In a short time they had set up an exchange in which they embroidered Combat Infantry Badges for extra blankets, wool shirts, food. We all left that town with cloth badges in place of the issued metal ones. They also had friends who were in the jewelry business (the town was a German jewelry center) and pretty soon miniature badges were showing up and before long an official contact was made in which we all received new metal regimental emblems to replace the long lost originals we once had.

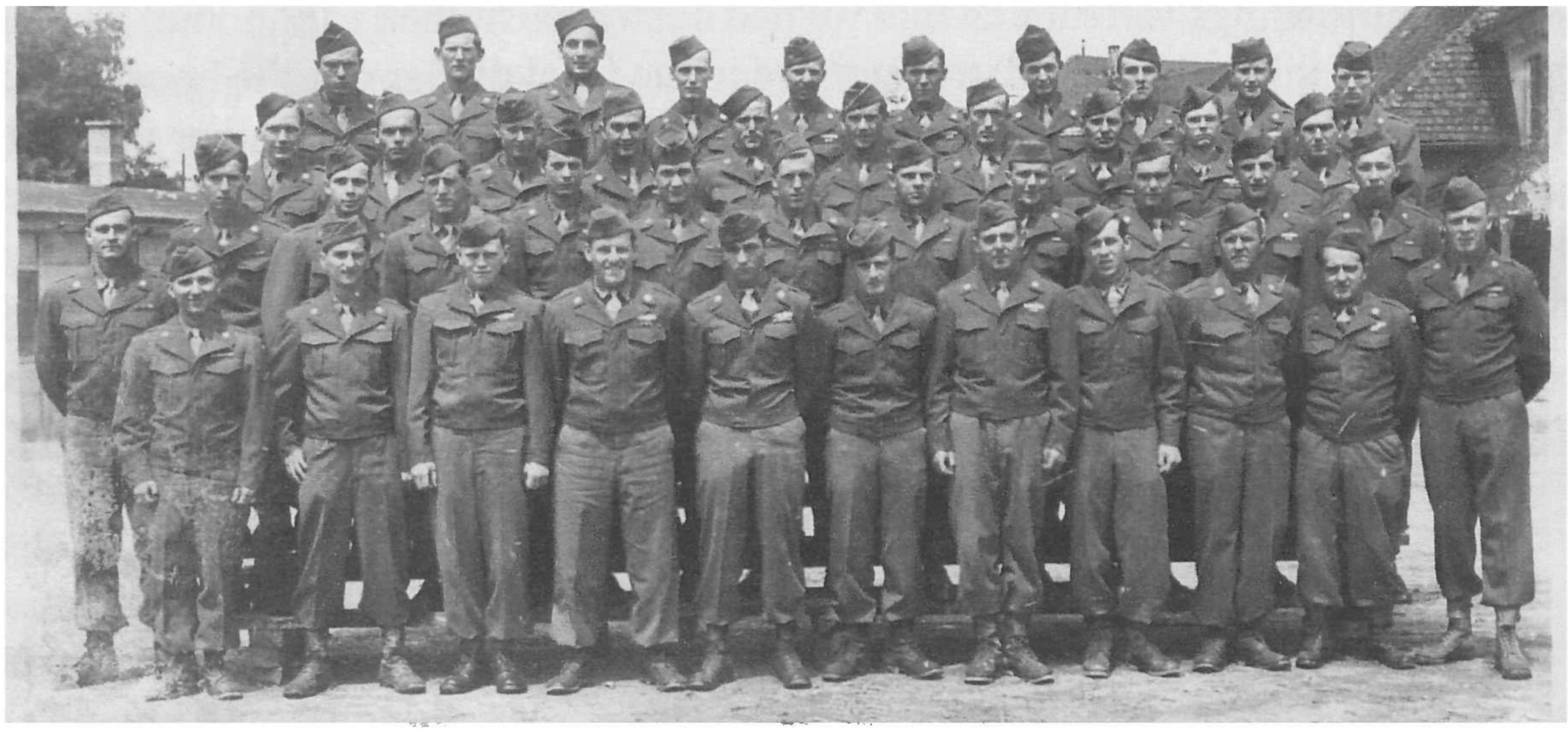
Though some of us had had a little French or German in school, we really were not good enough speakers to really communicate with ease. But two of our more recent replacements came from the far northern part of Maine, had worked with the French-Canadian lumber jacks in those the northern woods and were fluent in French. There were also girls in town who spoke French. Boy did those guys make out! And when it came to negotiating directly with Germans, our ace-in-the-hole was a New Yorker who conversed with them (ironically) in Yiddish. So in the early days of occupation and non-fraternization we still managed to get along with the people around us.

We were billeted in houses in each of the towns, a squad or two in a house, so the environment was about as "homey" as we could have and still be in the service. At times we would be able to sit down together at a real dining room table. The rooms and furnishings were much like we had been accustomed to at home. The one thing markedly different was the manure bed in the front of many of the houses in the smaller towns – and even those on the edges of the larger towns. Rather than farm houses surrounded by fields, the Europeans had whole villages surrounded by fields. In those villages, those manure plots were the fertilizer source for the fields the home owners farmed. But the plots stank. (It was better in Alsace where many homes kept the live stock on the ground floor with the family on the "first floor.")

The electric bus - Esslingen

Still, in many cases their towns were as modern as ours. In some cases there were facilities beyond anything I could imagine. I remember my first shock at seeing a street car moving down a street with no tracks! Then a couple guys explained to me that I was seeing an electric bus. Well! I had to take a picture of it right then and there. And you can see the nice houses with the trees and walks and power lines – not too much different from home. Except for that strange vehicle.

Possibly the worse part of that early summer was the necessary training that we underwent. I am sure it was needed to keep us taunt and ready, but it was a bore to repeat squad and platoon exercises we had become proficient in state-side and practiced in reality while in action. We went out in the field and practiced just as we had at Fort Bragg. We became so close to being garrison soldiers again that by the time we reached Kirchheim we were able to line up in Class A (dress) uniforms and have a group photograph taken of the First Platoon.



First Platoon, G Company, 399th Infantry – Kirchheim, German – 1945

Milby Dunn Sinem Bowers Ostermiller Richard Haney Rietz Conley Heron Rache Black Huff Gentile Powers Matula Bagley Childs McFadden Terrison Cornelison Laurens Gambale Villani Pascarelli Smith Stroder Roswell Heneck DeFusko Avancerna Howe Miller Sirokman Hodge Kent Gosselin Gopon Hann Walsh Kasney Peach Moholland
(Absent: Porter Nichols Watmuff Neal Infante Alford Motlen)
[Original members from Ft. Bragg are underlined.]

The best part was going into Stuttgart. They would pack us into our trucks and away we would go into the big town. There, at the Opera House, we could see acrobats and magicians and singers galore. They were not USO tours. They were performers from all over the continent, most of whom had been forced for various reasons into the Third Reich and who were now only too happy to give us a show or two until they could work their way back to their homeland – if it still existed. And what performers! The man throwing straw hats into the air, way up into the balcony, and then catching them when they sailed back to the stage. And the couple doing all those tricks with balloons – though the only balloons they could get were condoms. Their balloons still shot off the stage and into the audience with great approval. And opera singers. And pianists. Outside, the plaza in front of the Opera House seemed to be a gathering spot for soldiers of all the Allied nations. Even saw a rather still and aloof Russian soldier, dressed far more neatly and dapper than we. No idea how he got there or what he was doing; he looked like an enlisted man, just standing there all alone.

By that time it was quite obvious that we were to be in Europe for awhile. The troops with the highest points for service were already being sent home for discharge. While there was no news about what would happen to us, it seemed increasingly apparent that whatever we did it would be as a unit. Then we got a big move. The powers that be had realigned the areas of occupation. Germany had been divided into "areas" of occupation, an area for us, another for Britain, another for Russia and, lastly, one for France. Now they decided that the American Zone would be shifted over and that we would be taking over some of the area originally occupied by the French. This put our Division headquarters directly into Stuttgart and moved American control to the west, including a large town called Pforzheim which the French occupied. And the 2nd Bn. of the 399th got Pforzheim.

It was almost as if we had to take the town. The city included a kaserne, a German camp built to house an army unit of about the size of an American battalion. But the French were already there. They had decorated the dining rooms. They had seized vehicles from all over town. They had loaded up the vehicles with whatever they could get. And we were ordered to take over the kaserne and not let them leave town with any of the stuff they had gathered up. They were not happy. (Can't say I blamed them. In our travels thus far we had "liberated" vehicles and drove them around to our great pleasure, were amused by the funny little lights that popped out at the side to signal a turn, challenged by the different ways of shifting gears.)

So we set up road blocks and guarded the rail yards while we occupied half the buildings in the kaserne. Someone somewhere worked things out so that eventually there was a formal exchange with salutes and lowering and raising of flags. But most of us were ordered to hide in the buildings (acting as if we weren't there) until the French left. By that time they were ready to leave, we were out manning the city exits to make sure they did not get out with the whole town on their backs. For several weeks after that we ran road patrols all along the borders of our area to make sure that the French stayed out.

And the French were our "friends."

There were also indications that the "Werewolves," a German underground force, would be rising up to take back the country. So we also ran patrols and set up guards to protect ourselves from the real enemy. Whether it was our complete shutdown of the country or poor intelligence on our part, no insurrection occurred. We were only involved that one time in a mass counter-insurgency action, so I don't know if the "Werewolves" ever threatened again.

However, we did do one more mass operation that summer – one which had implications many years later[1]. Throughout Germany there were camps where foreign nationals had been collected. There were captured Russian soldiers, Poles, you name it. Not all were necessarily slave labor; some were there of their own volition, but as part of an international agreement all foreign nationals were to be returned to their own country. Many of them slipped out of their camps and disappeared. At last our army was ordered to gather them up and to forcibly return them. So one morning we moved out of our camp to the edge of town where there was a collection of barracks with a nice two story house at the entrance to the area. There were no fences around the place. We were ordered to surround the camp with rifles loaded and ready. Trucks pulled up and we directed the camp occupants into the trucks for their forcible return – all to Russian occupied territory. Some of the Russians were in fear of death; the Poles did not want to enter Russian domination.

For the most part we spent our time at the kaserne in Pforzheim, sweating out what turned out to be the hottest of European summers – after the coldest of winters. We kept expecting to be issued summer kahkies. No luck. Our coolest uniforms were our fatigues, green denim-like field uniforms that were at best a little cooler than the winter woolens that were our dress clothes. Pictures from that time show us in our varied modes of coping with the heat. (Note Kent and Dick in wool and me in my fatigues.) And again we repeated the training programs we had been enduring since Bragg. Plus close order drill and those army exercises – jumping in place, squats, arms to the side and then to the front and all the other gyrations that were so popular. Even in our fatigues the physical fitness program was extra warm – and especially when in the sun. Quite frequently we would be permitted to remove the jackets. I think we all remember the day

Kent

Dick and I

the Colonel ordered that the jackets be put back on. The other companies put their jackets back on, but Capt. Hayes refused to give us the order. (Doubt he cared about his record. He returned to his life as a Georgia lawyer after the war. The Colonel was a West Pointer, of course.)

It was in an attic of our Pforzheim barracks that I discovered the abandoned German uniform parts which provided a treasure trove of souvenirs for the company. I managed to pick out the jacket, garrison hat, cap, insignia, belt and epaulets which became a Halloween costume years later (and allowed at least one of my sons to almost convince his peers his father had been a German soldier).

Later that summer I wrote some items for our regimental newspaper, "The Powder Horn." (I had really forgotten about that aspect of the summer until a veteran sent me a copy of one of the items. The story concerned him; he had met me again long after the war, connected its author with my name and reminded me.) The articles were probably the reason I was later chosen to be Regimental Librarian.

Regimental Librarian was a really interesting job. Supplied with a large number of *Armed Forces Library* books, it was the librarians job to set up a library accessible to the Regiment, keep track of the material and promote its use by the troops. These were the same kind of paper-back popular novels, ancient classics and histories, we had seen while in combat. They came shipped in wooden crates that were so constructed as to be easily converted to book shelves. The books did need to be catalogued and stacked in an orderly manner and cards had to be made covering all the books so they could be "checked out." But first, of course, I had to be trained.

I joined with a select group to be sent to a special army training school. We were loaded up and sent south through Bavaria past Munich to Garmisch-Partenkirchen. In peace time this was a treasured Alpine resort area. During the war this provided a secluded spot for German armament development as well as a safe rest area for German officials and their friends. Obviously, it was well suited for an American training area. There were adequate facilities for housing personnel as well as providing lecture halls.

Newly minted regimental librarians were brought there for their orientation. For a solid week we were introduced to the Dewey Decimal System as a way to file and organize our books, methods of maintaining the records of material received and loaned, suggested layouts for our libraries. We were shown how to set up the

"packing-crate" book shelves to best advantage. We got a short course on promoting the use of the library – displays in the library, notices throughout the unit served, use of unit newspapers – about everything we could use to insure use of these neat pocket books with which we were equipped. Mixed in with us were WACS who were serving as military librarians as well stenographers. They had peculiar problems in the storage and retrieval of military records, the operational reports, letters, orders, etc. The army seemed to think that we were all doing the same kind of thing. At any rate, the course was a fascinating view of a side of academia I had never before envisioned.

The nearby village of Oberammergau was famous for the Passion Play that had been performed there every ten or twelve years since the Middle Ages. We were given a tour there, shown the stage where the performance was given, told how the village citizens were the performers and given an insight into how they were selected – and what an honor it was. The village was also a center for wood carving. Almost every family seemed to have one member who was a skilled carver, all very busy keeping up with the Americans' demand for souvenirs. I got a tiny delicate deer to send home. (It got there with only one broken leg!)

Around Garmisch, of course, there were adventures to be had and things to be learned. We got to ride a mountain lift with all the perfect views pointed out to us, as if the ride itself was not thrill enough! (Geography!) And a model of a German rocket airplane was on display, right where it had been developed! (Science! History!) And there were plays to be seen. Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit" was presented and we were informed that Noel Coward himself was taking the male lead. But it definitely was Ethel Merman in "Panama Hattie." A buddy dragged me right down by the drum set and I got the full effect. (Dramatics! Music!)

The week passed too quickly and we were on our way back to our units.

Back at the kaserne I set about setting up the library. A barracks at one end of the camp was made for dining purposes with a kitchen and several large rooms filled with tables and chairs. Not all of the rooms were being used as mess halls. I picked one with enough tables and chairs already supplied, received the packing crates, set them up, recruited some help in cataloging and was all set to go. It was spacious enough so that you could spread out to read in privacy, light enough to be cheerful and just a great comfortable place to hang out.

Every week I sent a book review in to "The Powder Horn" which they gratefully published. Readership picked up. I was happy. After several weeks the Colonel decided he needed an officers' mess and the library was just the right place so we got the boot. The library never recovered.

"Miss 2nd Battalion"

2nd Bn. Men Put Faith in Audrey To Be Winner

The 2nd Bn. put its heads together last week and after a great deal of consideration and deliberation over the numerous photographs submitted, chose Miss Audrey Romann "Miss 2nd Battalion" to represent them in the POWDER HORN's search for the "Regimental Sweetheart". Miss Romann is a product of Granite City, Ill. and the city fathers really have something to be proud of. Her picture was submitted by Pfc. Bernard Miller of Co. G.

But things were not all bad. "The Powder Horn" decided to run a campaign for a "Miss 399th Infantry." Now ever since grade school I had had a crush on Audrey Roman, daughter of a local farmer. Her mother and mine were good friends. And she was a real beauty. She was enrolled at Lindenwood College at the time and just happened to have sent me a college yearbook photo. I submitted the photo along with a little bio explaining her beauty and talent. Couple guys from Headquarters Battalion came down to make sure she was really a "girl friend." Seems they had submitted a candidate. too. But I insisted she really looked like the photo and that it was not touched up in any way and besides she was really a close friend. So Audrey became "Miss Powder Horn" with her picture in the paper and a "gold" engraved cigarette case to commemorate the occasion. It was very uplifting for all of us. Nor was it a fluke – she later became a Miss Missouri.

As that hot summer wound up, we began training for redeployment to the Pacific. You might believe it would be a simple thing to get on a train, but for a large group, a really large group, of men in the army it is a real project. So we trained forming in ranks, dividing up into rail car groups and proceeding to board. Without train cars, of course. We checked equipment. The only question we had was whether we would go through the States and get furloughs or go straight to the Pacific. Then all of a sudden there was talk of some massive bomb that we had and what it was doing to the Japanese. The next thing, the war was over. And here we sat! If they had only waited a week or two we might have been stuck on ship going home – or even better, home on furlough. As it was, the only place we were stuck in was Pforzheim.

With peace, we pondered what our mission would be in Germany. And would there continue to be a 100th Division?[2] And if there were, who would stay with the

100th Division? A point system had been devised to determine who would go, who would stay, who would be discharged. The points were determined by the number of months on active duty, months overseas and medals received (Bronze Stars, Purple Hearts, etc.). It took over 80 points for discharges. Under 45 and you were pretty well stuck in position. Between the two numbers and you would get home, probably with the Division you were with. Most of we ASTPers had 45 or less. I had 45.

So we spent more time "training." And waiting. We were shown a film describing how we had intended to invade Japan. We were told our division would have been with the 10th Army in a direct attack on the main island of Japan. (We were lucky after all.) High point men were constantly leaving and low point soldiers entering the 100th. We formed up and presented a Regimental Review. Formed up several times, in fact. As the honored officer arrived in a Piper Cub and stepped out to receive his salute, that last time forming up, two whole battalions stood there and shouted a cadence count, "48, 49, 50, Some shit!" and sat down. The Second Battalion just stood there with our mouths wide open. I kid you not, our battalion stayed up and quiet. I don't know if we had too many old timers to pull off such a stunt or too many new guys to think of it. But I doubt I will ever forget that day!

Not too long after that memorable day, those of us with 45 and less points were shipped out. Dick Laurens went to a Quartermaster company; I, to the Military Police.

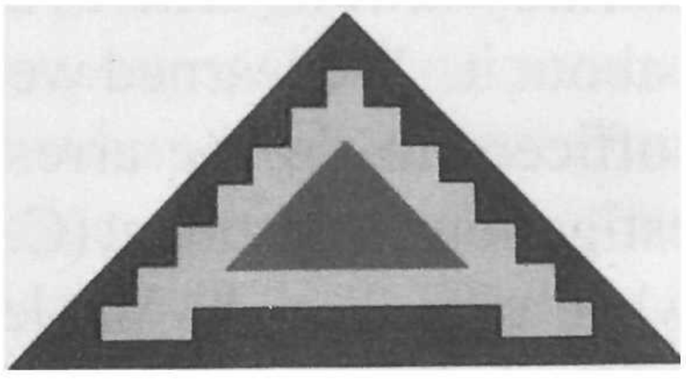
Military Police ?!?!

1. It was the American experience with these forcible removals that shaped the agreement after the Korean hostilities that allowed those persons captured to individually choose the country to which they would be repatriated.

2. There was a strong rumor that the occupation force would be reformed into a "District Constabulary" which would function much like the State Police at home. The emblem was to be a blue circle with a yellow "C"and a red lightening bolt across it. After the war, a fraternity brother of mine (he had been a Major) claimed he had designed the insignia. And fraternity brothers never lie.

V

THE 504TH MP BATTALION



My impression of an MP was always of a large in-charge type of fellow – like a civilian policeman. Imagine my surprise when I reach the 504th Army Military Police Battalion. These guys were not much different from us infantrymen, except that they were a little older – which was to be expected. They were shipping out and we were their replacements. Pouring in with all our Combat Infantry Badges, we must have overwhelmed them, because they all kept telling us about *their* combat experiences, especially road intersections under fire. If we were impressed we were not about to show it; after our first barrage *we* all felt suitably inducted into combat and for most of us that exposure had been a long time ago.

The real novelty for us was the 45 caliber pistol that was the standard arm. It was so different from the rifle we were used to carrying and, besides, few of us had been close to one since Basic Training, if even then. The old-time MP's from our new unit were around long enough to demonstrate pistol use, at least how to strip one and clean it. Now our web belts were plain with no pockets for shells and wearing a holster was something new. Then there were those black armbands with white

"MP" on them and the shiny helmet liners with MP on them – all emblems worn by those we had been conditioned to stay away from.

Heidelberg on the Neckar River

In its infinite wisdom, the Army knew that we would need some form of induction into this different branch of service. It set up a training school at Heidelberg, using the facilities of the University. So we went to the University to become fully trained MP's.

The course was quite complete.

There were lectures on military law, its articles and practice. We learned who we could arrest and how to go about it. We learned we could not arrest officers and how we could use our own officers to do the arresting. Taught fingerprinting. Introduced to the Criminal Investigation Department (C.I.D.) and Counterintelligence Intelligence service and just what a "G-2" did. We learned just what our Special Services were and did and about the German Abwehr and S.D. intelligence services.

Sightseeing with new friends

Out of the class room, we had gym. Learned how to disarm a person armed with knife or gun. Learned to use a "night stick" to drag someone along with you – as well as strangling if need be. Practiced all sorts of judo moves from taking a person down from the front to circling around behind. I learned that with all the tricks, it still wasn't wise for me to confront someone too much larger than I. Outside the walls of the school, we got a course in traffic control. After teaching us the moves and methods, they took us to a busy downtown intersection to gave each of us a turn directing traffic.

Downtown Heidelberg – where we practiced traffic control

We did have free time to roam the town. I was taken to a steam bath by a guy from New York who knew all about such things. Can't say I really enjoyed sitting in all that damp heat. And really did not get the point of jumping into such a cold bath right afterwards. I was, however, assured that the experience was just perfect and that I had been made into a new man. It was much more pleasant just wandering about, viewing the Neckar River, taking in downtown and just relaxing from all the classroom experiences.

Relaxing by the river

We got back to our assigned companies (I went to Company B) feeling much more confident of our abilities to be MP's. From then on it did not take too long for us to settle in to doing jeep patrols, guarding the area and assuming all the other details normally done by an MP company. Our company operated out of a really neat German house – all art-deco and as cool as a set from some 1930's movie. There were such buildings in Germany, scattered here and there. We decided they must have belonged to some high government officials, since they were so separated. This was at least the second one I had seen.

Part of our duties in that area was guarding the motor pool. This was a not too unpleasant task since all we had to do was stand guard at the entrances. Rolls of barbed wire kept the place secure otherwise. We had barrels in which we kept fires going, especially during the night, providing heat as well as light. We were not too concerned with providing impressions, so it was rather shocking to us to have girls stop by, now and again, and make caustic comments about our being sloppy soldiers and weren't we ashamed. The thing was, we never were ashamed. We felt we were really just civilians. After all, the war *was* over. The fact that we were in uniform merely showed that we were members of that ragged American militia of civilian patriots who came forth when our country was in danger. Our presence in Germany was certainly more their fault than ours. We could not talk to them anyway.

But the non-fraternization policy was slowly relaxed and we did start direct contact with the locals. (For some reason, knowing we could talk back, they no longer made fun of us.) And we were able to make some friendships. Wolfgang (Werner?), for one, dropped by one day and offered to be an interpreter. Wolfgang was a couple years younger than we were. He came with the usual baggage – claimed he was never a Nazi or Hitler Jungen, was only in local service as an anti-aircraft

gunner, etc., etc. We believed him about being in an anti-aircraft crew – that was very logical and understandable. We forgot the other. His educational attainments were at least on a par with ours, so we had an easy exchange of ideas. We did not use his interpretive skills very often, but we ended up picking each others brains. We compared text books and concepts, learned about each others countries, needled each other about our respective school systems. In short, he was welcomed into our little circle of ASTP people (yes, there were still a bunch of us, by fate, still together) as if he were one of us. When it came time for the Company to leave, we parted as old, dear friends.[1] The night before, in fact, for the first time for any of us, one of the guys got a bottle of whiskey and we all, Wolfgang included, got stinking drunk. Wolfgang, although he did make it, could barely wave goodby the next day as we shakingly got on the trucks to leave.

The trucks took us north to Giessen, a town near the British Zone of Occupation, which became our home for the rest of my time as an MP. The town was in a critical location – it was not only on the border of the American Zone, but it was a major railway center, contained a large quartermaster depot and was the location for a sizeable contingent of Polish troops.[2] Although those other units had their own MP's, we had to police the overall area including the local stretch of the autobahn.

Our room in Giessen

Company B was billeted in a small hotel, the Hotel Kohler. It was really a perfect place for us. There was a kitchen with a dining room big enough to service a company, suitable offices for administration and rooms for all. Each floor had one bath, an additional lavatory, one large room and several smaller ones. (I was in one of the large rooms with eight other guys.) There was a park across from the Kohler and suitable parking for our jeeps. We had a real home!

I do not know if the crew was already installed when the Company took over the hotel, but from the time we arrived the kitchen was manned by a complete staff of civilians. These were not just displaced persons or Germans looking for a handout. They were a bunch of pros. They turned the GI issued mess into a gourmet feast. The vegetables and salads were well prepared. We had steaks done to perfection.[3] Elegant German chocolate cakes came up for desert. Breakfast eggs were done to order with really good pancakes and melt-in-your-mouth French toast.

This hotel service did not extend to housekeeping, however. We had to keep our rooms and halls and facilities properly cleaned. (I learned how to scrub a porcelain tub with cleansing powder and dry newspaper to remove a year's crud, a lesson carried with me back into civilian life – and to good results.) Our military duties did not end with keeping the place clean, however. There were real police jobs for us to perform.

We ran local patrols throughout the town. It was on one of these patrols that the bombed out church was brought to my attention. The Germans made it a point that we had actually bombed a church – *their* church! I am not too sure that it had any historical significance, but it had obviously been an imposing structure. Its destruction had evidently deprived the local Catholics, for at Christmas time the Mass was held in a local theater. I know, because we Catholic soldiers were sent to share the service with them. The service was in Latin, but the sermon was in German and as near as I could make out they were told that it was not their fault and things would get better for them. Of course my German has always been very sketchy.

We had a very interesting relationship with other MP's. The different larger units in town had established service clubs for their members. As an unattached unit we had no service club of our own so if one of our enlisted men wanted to go "clubbing" he had to be welcomed into someone else's. At one point it became an issue with the 3rd Division's Club. They either would not let one of our men in or kicked out someone from our unit. As an Army MP unit we did the obvious – we put

all the streets around the club off limits. And enforced it. Then 3rd Division MP's blocked us from the Quartermaster Depot where we picked up our supplies. Among the few old time MP's with the 504th, this seemed to be a reasonable and usual thing. It took some major brass to straighten things out.

The Autobahn in Winter

Flathers in our jeep

With the winter on us, it was decided that we should patrol the Autobahn. I ran a jeep patrol with Flathers as my driver. Any American units stranded by the weather could be found and helped. And anyone violating the law would be arrested (whatever that law might be). Jeep tires are great for mud and snow but not too effective on ice and the only violation we found was a Mercedes speeding down the road. Under any condition a jeep is hardly the best of pursuit cars. On the ice and chasing a vehicle capable of 150 miles an hour there can have only one result. We slid into a tree. I found that a jeep dash-board is not too good a cushion. Still have the scar on my leg.

Then there was the problem of contraband. Army equipment was disappearing and turning up in the hands of the Germans. Not necessarily big stuff. Many Germans were suddenly wearing overcoats that suspiciously appeared to be made of GI blanket wool. So we made a few mass raids on apartments where, it was thought, we might find evidence of misappropriation. Nothing was found, but many GI's and their girl friends were upset.

Obviously, by this time the Army of Occupation was more occupied with internal affairs than the affairs of country we were occupying. There were some indications that this was as it should be. German police were taking care of local affairs. It was not uncommon to see two-man patrols of German police walking the

streets. Political parties were organizing themselves. A couple of us wandered into a small local tavern one evening and observed first hand a young man passing out handbills for his party. He had no qualms about giving one to us.

Even as some degree of "normalcy" returned, we kept up our posts in the bahnhof (railroad station). People were coming and going there from all over Germany. Many were traveling home; others, to visit relatives. But many more were wandering souls with no place to go but to the station where they might find some warmth, perhaps a way to another station, perhaps someone they knew or maybe some anchor for their lives. It was our job to see that conflict did not occur, but there was no more conflict than their just bumping into each other. These people were too worn and exhausted to create much trouble.

Now and then a British soldier would appear. Usually he had made a wrong connection. Once a pair of them showed up, searching for one of their own. Their uniforms were much like ours, with similar jackets, but the cloth was more coarse and the color a deeper brown. And they were older, much older. We talked about our getting out and they just shook their heads. They had been in the war since its beginning.

Chances were that we did get out before they did, for it was not too long after our chance meeting with those Brits that we started again through that process of the higher "point" men transferring out and lower "points" coming in. This time I was a "high point man." I took one last look at our jeeps parked across from Hotel Kohler with the trees not yet budding into spring. . . .

I took one last drive past the postoffice.

That evening I watched the shadows fall on the buildings across the park from us.

The next day, the many of us who had arrived together in the 504th and had trained together as MP's together, boarded a railroad car together and headed to our port of embarkation.

1. Several years after the war, Wolfgang turned up in New York for a short time on some kind of mission. He contacted most of us. I do not think he realized the distances involved; I doubt any of us made it. I hope he accepted our regrets.

2. On at least one occasion the quartermaster troops and the Polish soldiers had a real violent confrontation – which we were, fortunately, not needed to resolve.

3. I am not sure these steaks were GI issue, but all the food was so good that the "special meal" we were given on coming home, courtesy the U. S. Army, was really quite blah.