

How the flight started

John Hanes and I were invited by the Secretary of War to make a trip of inspection to Europe.

The Secretary wished us to see what the Army had done and was doing in Europe, and the part the American G.I. had played in winning the war.

The War Department officials said they were very eager to have publishing executives observe the scenes of the War and the conduct of the occupation so that they would possess background material for their publishing activities.

In short, the Army is proud, and rightfully so, of its splendid job and is eager to have the press observe freely and report accurately the accomplishments.

To: Mrs. Richard E. Berlin, Port Chester, New York, U.S.A.

From: Claridge's Hotel, London W. 1.

24th July, 1945

Dearest Honey:

Here we are in London and, strange as it may seem, enjoying gorgeous Californian weather. The air is balmy and springlike, just as we enjoyed it in Beverly Hills last March.

I miss you and the children more than I can tell you and while the trip is intensely interesting, our Rye place will appeal to me as more delightful than ever. When we complete this junket, I will be perfectly happy to stay put until we take a flight together.

With all my love,

DICK

Thinking that you would like a diary of our eventful European trip, I will start it by your dropping me at the Sherry-Netherland Hotel Friday morning, July 20th, where John Hanes and I were met and driven to the Newark airport. There we had a considerable wait—found it hard to pass the airport's armed guards. After much arguing we finally got through the gates, but then were held for weather clearance over Washington. It was 11:30 when we took to the air in a private airplane—"Commando" (C. W. 20). A twin-motor job, it cruises at about 225 miles per hour and is indeed superb. It is fitted as an executive-type ship, with luxurious seating accommodations for 12 persons. It had a beautiful table for dining, working, etc. and also four very comfortable three-quarter beds.