

G.I.s—it was to me a complete reenactment of Paris as I had seen it in the last war.

Back to the George V for luncheon. We were introduced to General Lee, Commanding General of Command Z and General Eisenhower's aide in handling the Paris district.

The General, very gracious, told us that he was delighted to have us at the hotel. He hoped, however, it would not be a precedent for more civilians to come. He had received letters from General Somervell and Secretary Patterson asking him to extend us full courtesies. Accordingly, the courtesies of the European theatre were ours.

Having asked for accommodations to London that afternoon, we were told the plane would be at the field at 4:30 and that the car would call for us.

At 3:30 Lieutenant Watts took us to Orley Field. While we waited for the plane, another of our C-54's (the same plane in which we flew to Paris) came in, and General de Gaulle, with a French escort, deplaned amidst much fanfare.

### ***G.I. Revelations During Hop to London***

Our plane was a paratroop one with two rows of seats against the port and starboard bulkheads—tin seats, and not very comfortable riding. On this plane were thirty G.I.s who had just come down from Germany and were going to England for a seven-day leave. All had had a big night in Paris and looked a little weary. They told us they had blown in a month's pay in one day in Paris. In the usual G.I. fashion, they were loquacious, grumbling and happy.

One youngster said, "This is a blankety-blank war when you are going to get killed some way and I suppose I will get mine in Japan where I am told I will be ordered immediately upon my return from leave."

Another soldier, when Johnnie and I (the only civilians) came

in the plane, sounded out that we looked like two Congressmen. For the hour and forty minutes from Paris to London, we chatted with the boys.

Their stories were fantastic. They say the Russians are spending money even more wildly than are our G.I.s in Germany. One kid said a Russian soldier paid him \$650 for a \$20 Swiss watch. Another kid said a Russian soldier paid him \$200 for an old suit of civilian clothes from a man traveling in Germany.

This, of course, is all Russian Occupation money and apparently Uncle Joe is liberally distributing Occupation money to his soldiers—who are buying everything in Germany. (They don't steal!) All this merchandise will be carted back to Russia and then, I presume, the Government will confiscate it and the Occupation money will be declared worthless. This is another example of *collectivism* working full force.

One G.I., an intelligent law student of the University of Virginia, said, and all of his pals agreed, that no American G.I. wants anything to do with Communism, and that the whole Russian system is all wrong. These kids may not exactly know what they are talking about but their heads seem to be properly placed on their shoulders.

Another boy commented that fraternization orders or no fraternization orders can't keep the G.I. away from the German girls and said, "Them German girls are tops. In Paris the girls charge you 1000 francs. In Germany it is love. Hitler taught them that they must propagate the German race, and they are continuing that program with us."

Another smart comedian chirped up: "You know, in the next European war all we will have to do is to send over the uniforms because we are going to leave enough American soldier babies in Germany to supply the manpower."

One boy told me he met a fraulein in Germany two days before, aged 22, unmarried, five children. She had been awarded a top Hitler decoration for propagation. He was sure he was going to be responsible for No. 6.

All this is very amusing but I dare say it carries a lot of truth.

The youngsters were all asking—"When are we going home?" This is the inevitable G.I. cry all over the place.

On this flight from Paris to London, we flew over Cherbourg and saw terrific damage, with bomb craters all over the fields. One cannot discern much damage to the buildings but wherever there is a semblance of an airfield it is completely peppered, as with smallpox.

Arrived at Bovington Airdrome at 6 p.m., U.K. time. Ben McPeake met us with his car at the airdrome: cleared immediately through Customs, we were taken to the Claridge, where Ben had engaged a lovely suite for us.

## ***Conditions in London***

*Tuesday, July 24*

Up at 8:30, delightful breakfast, eggs (furnished from the farm of a friend of John Hanes). Eggs are almost impossible to obtain here and the food situation is more acute than during the war.

McPeake for 2½ hours drove us through the blitzed, devastated sections of London. The West End, comparable to our Fifth Avenue district, doesn't seem to have been severely damaged, except for an odd building here and there.

We went to the Moorgate section which is in the City and here the damage was terrific. You see entire sites of blocks completely obliterated. In this section 135 people were killed standing in line to purchase fish rations. Business buildings and homes have been completely wiped out.

Any number of people who went to their shelters during the blitz were drowned by water bursting from sewer mains. McPeake said that one house out of every three in London received some sort of damage. The worst casualties resulted from flying glass—when a bomb or rocket hit it blew the glass out for blocks around and caused untold damage and injury.