

Re-Deployment Operations

At the Majestic Hotel, headquarters of U.S.A. General Staff, the Colonel in charge spoke for an hour about the invasion on D-Day, and plans for re-deployment. He told us how landing boats built in the States were constructed specially for landing on difficult "Omaha Beach." He explained how pipe lines were built to supply gasoline all the way from "Omaha Beach" to the Rhine; how the Army had lost 40 days coming down through Normandy, due largely to bad weather, and then had beat their schedule 50 days in getting to the Rhine. At times the Army moved so rapidly that gasoline had to be flown by airplane to front line troops.

The Colonel also explained about re-deployment centers particularly located at Reims and Le Havre, where the boys were being assembled in 3 categories: (1) directly for shipment to Japan, (2) for shipment to Japan through the States, and (3) for shipment to the States for discharge.

He told us how the clothes and equipment of the Army were all being renovated, every man being issued renovated uniforms, etc. The coal situation, we were warned, was most acute and Europe is going to face a serious winter, the transportation facilities being very poor.

After one hour's briefing, we returned to the hotel and met some of the newspaper boys. One of our correspondents who had been with the Army since D-Day said that our soldiers seemed to dislike the outfit fighting next to them more than they did the enemy. In other words, the spirit of competition between the various outfits was intense. He cited, for example, that in Normandy he came in one evening and told a group that the company next to them had been captured. The reply was, "Those dumb So-and-Sos ought to be captured—they never did have any brains."

The point our newspaper boy was making was that the American soldier has great initiative, and that the football spirit is always

predominant, whereas German soldiers fight by the book. He quoted General Patton as saying one day, "If von Runstedt wants to get his neck in a meat grinder, I am the guy to turn the handle." This correspondent said that it was extremely important to have Patton remain in Germany, as the Germans had great respect and fear of him.

Dinner at George V. After dinner back to the Scribe Hotel to talk with the correspondents. Since there are no taxis in France, one rides about on a bicycle or in a one-horse open carriage. The driver wanted \$8.00 for a ten-minute ride. We compromised by giving him 3 packages of cigarettes and \$4.00. Cigarettes are international currency.

One of the French newspaper men told us that butter last winter was \$12 a pound, and eggs 40c apiece. The cold was frightful as there was no coal.

Visited with Lowell Bennett at the Scribe. He is our Hearst reporter who parachuted out of a bomber over Berlin and was made a prisoner of war. Having just brought his wife and two babies over from America, Bennett had been out foraging food and had managed to find two cans of peaches which he was taking home to his babies.

Walking to my hotel at 10:30 p.m., watched huge trucks picking up soldiers to take them to their camps, the soldiers having finished their leave-stay.

Secrets of Transport

Sunday, July 29.

Up early and to church in Paris.

Had a long talk with Major General Ross about the African campaign. He is in charge of transportation for the Army and told me how he had worked very closely with the medical office in evacuating the wounded. They had problems in unloading freight at Cherbourg—not too good a base. The Le Havre chan-