

This airfield had been badly beaten up. The Germans raided the Brussels airport early New Year's Day this year, figuring that the British would be sleeping off the New Year's Eve celebration. The officer who told us said that the Germans were pretty near correct.

Major Nims motored us to the Palace Hotel, a leading hotel, which had been taken over by the British Army. We were given excellent rooms, but no hot water, no towels, no soap.

People told us that you can buy anything you wish in Brussels—if you have the price to pay. Food shops quote butter at \$8 a pound. One does not see much of the famous Belgian lace but small handkerchiefs are \$15 apiece. The Belgian franc is 44 to the dollar.

### *Sights in Antwerp*

After luncheon in the Army mess, we motored to Antwerp which, we have been told, is the finest port in the world. Here we met Col. Noble, in charge of the port, and were told that the Belgians deserved unusual credit, especially the civilians who worked to put the port in shape. 12,000 Belgians worked on the port under fire last winter at \$4 per day. An aggregate of some 5,000 V-E bombs landed in and about Antwerp, but immediately after a bomb would hit, the workmen would return to their jobs and assiduously perform their duties. Col. Noble spoke in the highest terms of the Belgians.

Motoring on the splendid highway from Brussels to Antwerp, approximately 32 miles, one sees nothing but huge American trucks hauling supplies. We passed a convoy of huge trucks hauling trailers—on each trailer was a huge Sherman tank. These trailers perform invaluable service, as they save the roads by taking the tanks up to the front so that their tractors can not chew up the roads.

There is very little, if any, bomb damage in Brussels with the exception of the airport. The Belgian people, after our invasion, said:

“We never believed you were coming but then when we saw what you brought with you in the way of tanks, equipment, motorization, etc., we realized why it took you so long to get here.”

Antwerp, with a population of about 400,000, has handled 3,500,000 tons of American supplies. Col. Noble told us that during one of the worst V-bomb raids they had a munition ship alongside the dock. They moved it into the stream instead of keeping it alongside the pier, as an explosion here would have literally wrecked the entire town. Two hours after they had moved the ship and placed a flour ship alongside the pier, a V-bomb hit and destroyed the flour ship.

We passed a theatre in which a V-bomb exploded one Saturday afternoon and killed 500 people.

Saw a floating chapel in one of the harbor basins. The General Motors plant, their largest assembling plant in Europe, was completely wrecked, while the Ford plant, directly across the street, was untouched. Officers facetiously tell you that Ford employees must have been flying the airplanes that wrecked the General Motors plant.

Many thousands of engines and airplanes were being assembled for the Japanese theatre. We visited six huge basins that accommodate up to 35 ships at one time. Went aboard a German E-Boat, the pens of which we saw a few days before in Le Havre, and examined the engine-room in which the big motors total 60 cylinders. The E-Boats have two torpedo tubes at the bow.

We examined a captured unexploded buzz bomb—it looked like a small airplane with wings on the bomb, and a seat for a suicide pilot.

The port installation at Antwerp is indeed another tribute to our engineers and our transportation men who so effectively reconstructed the damage and made the port responsible for shortening the war by 6 months.

Motoring back to Brussels in the late afternoon we passed a

dump of thousands of tons of ammunition. Noel Vincent met us and invited us to dine with him at the RAF Officer's Club, located in a palace once owned by the Rothschilds. Motoring there, we noticed that everyone walks—no vehicles other than Army equipment.

The delightful dinner in the fine RAF mess cost our host 20c.

## *In Brussels and Bremen*

*Saturday, August 4.*

Up early, toured and inspected Brussels. Breakfast in the mess at the Palace Hotel: sausage, tomatoes and tea.

Visited the Guild Hall, the famous building of Brussels, and also saw the grand palaces of the king. Everywhere on the streets one sees charming flower stands. Visited the fountain place of the famous mannequin. Did not have time to go out to the famous battlefield of Waterloo, 15 miles away. Saw the Palace of Justice which the Germans destroyed by fire. Visited Leopold's palace with its garden of gracefully-interwoven trees, and went to the superb Royal Theatre.

The American mess hall is underground in an uncompleted railroad station that was being built before the war, similar to the underground installation of Grand Central in New York. The officer in charge told us that they were feeding 5,000 American leave troops per day. Huge steam kettles; enormous amounts of food being consumed by our soldiers. Brussels is a popular spot for all G.I.s on leave.

Reporting to the office of General Koenig, with whom we were to have lunch, I noticed a chart which reported 60 cases of infantile paralysis in Brussels in the last week—the plague had increased from 10 cases the week before.

At General Koenig's luncheon, he expressed his views that soldiers should be taught morality; they should not be allowed to smoke or drink, and should be made to go to church.