

We approached a hedgerow (a fence of mounded dirt and trees frequently used in Normandy) and went through the opening. Lo and behold we were face to face with a German patrol of five or six men and in shock. I believe that both of us had an impulse to run for cover, but I also believe that we decided that it was futile to do so because of the number of the enemy, the click of rifle bolts, hands raised with hand grenades at the ready, and the restriction of the heavy load of ammunition on our running and fighting abilities. We just stood there, stunned beyond belief, until they instructed us to remove our helmets, and took our rifles, ammunition, personal valuables, and any letters or written items.

My friend with whom I was captured was a Corporal from Calistoga, California, and was with me from Fort Hood. He was a good soldier and very conscientious and probably experienced more guilt feelings than most who I know. We were soon separated since he was a Corporal (non-Commissioned Officer (NCO)) and I was a Private First Class (Pfc). I did not see or hear from him again.

Here I am a Kriegsgefangener (POW in German) under the control of a foreign government controlled by a leader who was feared by many and who was at war with my country. It was hard

Missing Soldier Prisoner of Nazis

Pfc. Donald D. Heslop, 22, missing in action in France since Aug. 16, is known to be a prisoner of the Germans, according to word received from the U. S. government by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Heslop, 2538 Oakwood avenue.

Pfc. Heslop, who entered service Jan. 4, 1943, has been overseas since April. He was connected with a tank destroyer outfit.

He was graduated from Zanesville high school in 1940 and attended Ohio State university for two years before entering the army.

A brother, Seaman 2/c Mac D. Heslop, 20, is stationed at Gulfport, Miss.



Heslop

Missing Soldier

to believe. I had thought of serious wounds or death but never of being a Prisoner of War. At this time, we did not know what was ahead. There are many things that go through one's mind in uncertain times such as these, but above all, I was most concerned about my family and Ann, knowing their concerns when they would be informed that

I was listed as missing in action. I learned later that they would not learn that I was a POW until around Thanksgiving, despite my capture being on August 16, 1944. As it happened, this was also the day our troops coming from Italy landed in southern France at Marseilles.

On the other side of the lines, I was spending what was to become a long time as an involuntary

guest of the German Army. We were taken a short distance to their field headquarters. It was an old farmhouse where they took me and the others separately to a room where I faced a very dignified looking German officer who asked me to be seated and offered me a cigar, giving the appearance of me being entertained in his home. This was just the beginning; things cooled down considerably as time went on.

The interrogation began with general conversation with no questions directed to me. He then referred to a recent copy of the Readers Digest on his desk, which contained an article on the Naval Air Base at Pensacola where, unknown to the German officer, my brother was stationed at one time. He asked if I had ever been there. I had never been there at that time but I did not answer except to say only my name, rank, and serial number. This is the only answer required to a question asked by an interrogator according to the Geneva Conventions and the only answer permitted under Army Regulations.

With this he sat back in his chair and confidently explained that their soldiers are instructed to reply in the same manner on capture. The questioning continued apparently without success for about one hour; his voice becoming louder and more threatening, with no physical abuse but indicating such as a possibility. On completion he had me led out to a small building which turned out to be a wine cellar where I joined the

others in a dinner of wine and boiled potatoes. That was the extent of our dinner but our fears were somewhat alleviated, probably to a certain extent by the wine.

We then moved out, traveling by foot, bypassing Paris which was in the process of liberation at that time, and generally at a good pace to avoid the Allied forces who were right on our heels. We continued to move in an easterly direction moving through Rouen, Reims, Metz, and Saarbrucken. We generally moved at night, but when it became necessary to travel during the day we were faced with attack by Allied fighter planes. On one such occasion we sighted a Canadian Spitfire circling above. By training, our normal reaction would be to run for cover but the German guard ordered us to stay on the road, erroneously believing that the pilot would recognize us as Allied soldiers and would be on his way without attacking. The plane, as we expected, did attack and there we were on our stomachs in the middle of an unpaved road with bullets kicking up dust around us. The guard, upon realizing the attack was imminent, immediately ran for cover, and, coincidentally, was the only one of the group that did not survive.

Our pace was very tiring and demanding; many times we felt we could go no further. We slept every time we had a chance in an attempt to develop more energy. We normally slept in a

deserted building or on the ground, but always under the watchful eye of the guard. We did stay in an old prison in Metz.

Food was arranged for us by the guard when available, but many times there was not enough. A number of times it would be at a farm house where, in many cases, we were served delicious soup. As a group, the French people were as gracious as possible in consideration of the guard looking on. We were able to have a limited conversation in view of language differences and with the help of some in our group with limited knowledge of French. We felt in many cases that they considered us liberators from German occupation. In other cases, we could not tell.

Several times we ate at a German army field kitchen where we were fed well since they had fresh meat. While we had been issued packaged rations, they would raid the farmer's pasture, assuming without permission, and butcher the cattle and pigs. I do not believe that this menu was a daily occurrence; at least, definitely not for us.

We were surprised along the way from Normandy to see a large number of horses being used to tow German equipment, such as guns and supply wagons even though we were in a period of mechanization (and had been for a number of years). This confirmed the information we had that the Germans were

suffering from severe shortages of equipment and fuel and, consequently, they were forced to return to the horse and wagon days.

Our first stop in Germany after crossing the border at Saarbrücken and continuing northeast through Weisbaden was Limburg, home of a well-known cheese. We arrived there during the first part of October. Limburg, located northwest of Frankfurt, was the point of registration for many prisoners of war entering Germany and was known as Stalag XII-A. It was

here that we received our "dog tags" similar to the IDs issued by the US Army, less the name. It included the name of the registering



Stalag XIIA
Limburg, Germany

Stalag and a registration number, which I remember in German to this day. We were required to identify ourselves by answering with this number in German at roll call, which usually was twice a day, and more when our actions offended the captors. We continued to wear the U.S. tag to identify ourselves as U.S. soldiers, instead of spies, in case of escape.

Our quarters for three days in Limburg were in a circus type tent with straw covering the ground, which served as the bed for 50 to 75 men. Based on the size of the tent, it did not allow much space for each person. Getting up at night was



Crowded Living Conditions
Stalag XIII A at Limburg

quite a chore, especially when returning to try to find your space with no lights. As uncomfortable as it was, it was only the beginning of what it was to be in the following couple of weeks as we traveled into Germany.

We remained in Limburg for about five days; we then boarded a train of box cars similar to the ones used in the U.S., but somewhat smaller. They were most uncomfortable and can be compared to riding in an automobile without springs and no tires. They were built for hauling freight and livestock where comfort was of no concern. It was by no means an observation car

as we know today since there was only one small window (about 12"x18") covered with barbed wire and located about seven feet above the floor. There were no sanitary facilities.



P.O.W. transportation from Limburg to Moosburg on work details—Became home for a period just before liberation

The cars were known as 40 and 8s by World War I soldiers. This was because at that time they were used to transport 40 men or eight horses. We did not have to worry about the horses, but we were still uncomfortably crowded with 50 of us in the car. There was not enough room for all of us to lie down at one time and we were continually looking for someone to stand to provide floor space for sleeping or wall space to sit down and have support for the back.

The guards were in another car. When the train would stop or at times convenient to them, they would bring us bread, boiled potatoes (at times),

and water. This was all we had during the trip that lasted four or five days. The Germans were big on potatoes and bread.

After a night of travel covering about 50 miles, the train arrived in Frankfurt and pulled into the main rail yard in the center of the city, which normally is the primary target for air raids. This fact came to mind vividly when, shortly after we arrived, we were greeted by the sound of air raid sirens. The guards immediately deserted us, presumably headed for an air raid shelter, and took the engine, which was disconnected from the train. It turned out, luckily, that the main rail yards were not targeted and spared, but we heard the sounds of aircraft, exploding bombs, and anti-aircraft guns in the city, indicating damage in that area. However, until the All Clear we remained sitting ducks: deserted and without access to shelter. Finally, this episode ended with the All Clear siren and the return of the engine and guards. We were again on our way to an unknown destination.

We headed south through Wurzburg, Nurenburg, Regensburg, and Landshut. Our journey ended in Moosburg and Stalag VII-A (POW Camp) where I would be held until the first part of April 1945. We arrived in the middle of the night shortly before the middle of October and just after my 22nd birthday. Looking back on it, the calendar was not too important at that time and I failed to realize the date, with all the happenings

and changes taking place, so it was just another day with no celebration.



Stalag VII-A
Translation: War-Imprisoned Crew Base Camp

We arrived in a downpour and were immediately lined up for roll call which would become a ritual at least two times a day. We were held in line for about two hours, soaking in the cold fall rain. We were then led into a dingy looking barracks, but happy to be out of the rain, and bedded down on the floor for the night. It was very uncomfortable; but after three days in a crowded box car, it felt pretty darn good to be able to lie down and stretch out. Comfort is relative.

When morning and the light of day arrived, we were faced with a view that was very depressing, both inside and out. It was difficult to believe that this was to be our "home" for quite a while. The barracks were long frame buildings badly in need of paint. They were divided into two

sections, each housing 100 persons and separated by a small utility room with one sink and one cold water faucet. For light, one low wattage bulb was hanging from the ceiling. This was the only place available for bathing and washing (mostly rinsing) clothes, with no soap. The best we could do was to attempt to keep our underwear clean.

Our outer clothing did not fare so well and became so stiff that they could stand alone. Brushing teeth was a problem with no toothbrush. I believe that, at times, we did receive toothpaste in Red Cross parcels. Showers were not convenient and only available at the convenience of the Germans. Consequently, I only remember having two showers. These included "delousing" to rid us of lice, which were plentiful in the seams of our wool underwear. Our evening pastime was to gather under the light in the wash room, pick the lice from our



Daily Chore
Picking lice from the seams of clothing

underwear, and kill them by pinching them between our fingernails (only way to kill them other than by chemicals). The end sections of the barracks contained wooden bunks constructed three high with slats on the rails of the bunk, which held up mattresses of a burlap sack filled with straw, also serving as a refuge for bugs. The barracks were arranged in rows in compounds housing prisoners of various nationalities – English, French, Indian, American, and Russian. The compounds were surrounded by barbed wire fence of two rows with rolls of barbed wire in between. Spaced along the fence were guard towers equipped with machine guns and spotlights. All of this made it clear to us that these guys were serious and would not tolerate us approaching the fence too close so we kept a good distance to avoid misunderstanding. We also realized that it would be almost impossible to escape through the fence.

Each barracks had representatives of the various nationalities. These were usually appointed from the ranks of non-commissioned officers. There was usually one or two per barracks and they acted as liaisons between the prisoners and the Stalag command. The Stalag as a whole was represented by officers of each nationality. I am not too sure whether or not they were able to accomplish anything. They were, in addition to other things, responsible for communicating complaints to the Stalag command and the Red Cross representing the Geneva Convention, and

determination of eligibility to go to Infirmary for sick call. The Red Cross visited periodically and in many cases were responsible for safety measures and limiting work details to residential and humanitarian purposes. Their recommendations were followed for a short time after they left, but the problems would arise again and the process would have to be repeated on the next inspection.

The scarcity of food and the diet were probably our biggest problem. Normally we had three meals a day. Breakfast was bread (brot) and a powdered ersatz coffee or tea. Lunch included a boiled potato or cabbage soup, occasionally with meat of doubtful origin, and other items not usually seen in soups such as a small piece of wood with a screw. Dinner included more bread, potatoes, and a small portion of sausage or cheese. When we had bread it was split between 10 of us and we took turns for the right to the crumbs. It was black in color, with a hard crust and very gaseous. I am sure that it contained no flour but some substitute. Regardless it tasted like straw and had the appearance of a brick and handled as such and transported on a flat bed truck. I learned later that the Nazi Food Ministry was claimed to have published a recipe for the "bread" as follows: Bruised grain (50%), sliced sugar beets (20%), tree flower (sawdust) (20%), and minced leaves (10%). Some times we found some foreign items that led us to believe that someone was cheating on the ingredients. The

diet was severely lacking vitamin content and, consequently, after a few months the deficiency was evidenced by malnutrition sores which remained with us for a while after reaching home.

In many cases, we had much better food and extra helpings when we were on work details in Landshut (north of Moosburg) and Munich. Most of the time in German army kitchens, but at rare times the food was homemade by friendly residents. The Germans did not approve of residents feeding prisoners, but we were fortunate that some guards chose to overlook this regulation.

On one occasion, in downtown Munich, I remember a guard allowing us to have an above average lunch at the historic Hofbrau Haus, where the Nazi Party was founded in 1920. It was a beer hall and very rustic with Bavarian décor and tables and benches similar to our picnic tables.



Hofbrau Haus - Munich

During our work details we acquired many different types of food, mainly bread, all acquired by gift (seldom), trading cigarettes, and "other" means. Since we were captured in the summer, we had no overcoats. The Red Cross supplied us with French overcoats which were extraordinarily long and full. Some in our group had sewn large pockets on the inside of their coats to hide their acquisitions (loot). Some of us had to rely on the outside pockets which were large enough for a loaf of bread.

Our meager rations were supplemented by Red Cross parcels. Originally we were scheduled to receive one parcel per man per week. However,



Distribution of Red Cross parcels

as it turned out, delivery was intermittent with none at times. As time went on, this changed to one parcel for two men every two weeks and then to fewer parcels over time. The Germans claimed that the shortages were the result of

Allied bombing raids on trains transporting the parcels. In an attempt to correct this delivery problem, the American, Canadian, and British governments furnished trucks painted in white and identified by large Red Cross symbols. This did very little to solve the problem leading to suspicion that the real problem was looting by both the German military and civilians who were also faced with serious food shortages.

The typical parcel included the following items: powdered milk, oleo and cheese spreads, corned beef or Spam, prunes or raisins, jam, biscuits, chocolate bar (known as "D" ration: very good and energizing), lump sugar, powdered coffee, four or five packs of cigarettes, soap, and vitamins. The items were varied from time to time.

I recall that we went on about six or seven work details while at Moosburg. All but one were to Munich, 40 miles to the southeast. The other to Landshut a short distance northeast. We would leave early around 5 a.m. for the trip which would normally would take about two hours barring an air raid the night before causing damage to the rail right of way and then becoming considerably longer. The travel in the crowded box cars was the longest part of the day; many times we did not return until late in the evening. These trips, many times, were made in extremely cold weather. It was said that the winter of 1944 was a record cold, very bitter and uncomfortable. On

arrival at our destination, we were met at the work site by work supervisors. They were very dedicated in the performance of their job and most times we did not have the same interest and did not work as fast as they would like to see. They, as Nazi party workers, had bad tempers and would prod us with their rifle butts and refer to us as "Americanish swine," a typical reaction. We were not in any way willing workers and were not swayed by their actions.

We would often see work details or political prisoners from Dachau concentration camp. At the time we were not aware of the atrocities being committed there and at other camps. We only learned of this after the war ended. Their work was not controlled by the Red Cross and was in more dangerous and undesirable jobs. They were dressed in striped uniforms including sandals with wooden soles. The Jewish prisoners were identified by the Star of David on their uniforms. Their guards were very careful not to allow their group to talk to us or civilians. I think most German civilians were suspicious that something, not known to them, was taking place behind the walls of these camps but did not want to admit or talk about it.

The most memorable and frightening work detail experience took place in Munich. We had just left the train and were on our way to the work site when the air raid sirens sounded. The guards, apparently not familiar with the area, were

not aware of the location of the shelters. As a result, we were stranded in the railroad yards when the U.S. Air Force bombers appeared and began their bomb run above us. We were at a point where two tracks came together with a low spot in between. We dove for this spot and got as low as possible. This was the first large raid I had observed since St. Lo but this time we were in the target area of our own bombers.

We felt the concussion from the bombs and saw debris falling around us but there were no casualties. The bombing had subsided when we cautiously raised our heads from the prone position and could see planes in the distance plummeting to earth with fire and smoke pouring from the engines and fuselages after being hit by anti-aircraft fire. We did see some parachutes billowing out of the planes but at this time we were not psychologically capable of counting the ones drifting down. The only consolation was that many did make it from the plane but there was always the concern as to what took place on their landing.

There was not a German plane seen in the air during the raid to resist the attack but no sooner had the attack ended and the bombers had gone, we heard a whining sound like we had never heard before. Looking up we saw planes swooping low across the city at a speed we had not seen before. These were the first German jet fighters and the first that we had ever seen.

It was obvious that this fly over was for propaganda purposes to increase the morale of the German people who were very distressed with the progress of the war at that time.

The Isar River, running through Moosburg, makes a turn which was used as a turning point for bombers on air raid runs over Munich. Their course took them over our barracks and, consequently, the air raid alarms were sounded and we were restricted to our barracks until the all clear was sounded. We learned later that we were in no danger since the Stalags were well marked on Air Force maps.

The guards, as time went on and with greater losses on their fronts, were replaced with younger (age 16) and older (age 60) ones. The older ones really did not have their hearts in their job. The younger were immature. Many of the guards had lived in the U.S. and returned to Germany to visit relatives, and were conscripted in the Nazi Army. A prisoner from Chicago, who was fluent in the German language, struck up a conversation with a guard who had lived in his neighborhood and whose father had a bakery which he had visited a number of times. They found, along with the rest of us, that this is a small world.

The first of April saw us board a train for Munich where our residence was to be in a box car of the type described earlier. We were to live here on a railroad siding in the center of the city for a

period of about three weeks until a few days before liberation.

When our troops neared the city, the guards disposed of their ammunition but retained their rifles for appearances in case they were challenged by an officer or another official, such as the Gestapo.

We now had some freedom which we did not know quite how to handle but the guards took it upon themselves to provide shelter for us in case there was a fight for Munich. They divided us into groups and our guard led our assigned group of about ten prisoners to the basement of an apartment building at 145 Arnulf Strasse where the residing families had gathered for protection.

I do not recall their number (I would guess no more than ten), but they all demonstrated much concern and fear as what would happen to them. This was April 29, 1945, and the war in Europe was close to being over. It was while we were in the basement that we became acquainted with Karl Horn, the 16-year-old son of one of the residents.

We enjoyed talking with him as he was very fluent in the English language as was the case since most young people in Germany were educated by Hitler and the Nazis in preparation to conquer the world. He was, therefore, more conversant than the others in the basement. He

was quite impressed with us both as Americans and soldiers. Karl brought us up to date on others in the apartment.

Most of them held high positions of employment and in the Nazi party. Party affiliation was necessary for employment in a high position. His father was postmaster in Munich. Karl, in an attempt to influence, after we were liberated, brought me a brand new Luger pistol (German made) in the original carton with all the cleaning equipment, which was probably stolen. I carried it to the ship returning home when I traded it for a German ceremonial sabre or sword. I felt it would be a safer trophy. A copy of a letter I received from Karl in 1948 is included in this narrative. I did not answer it, which I regret now. The reason was a line in the letter reading "when do you return to us." I was not quite over my experiences as a prisoner at that time to appreciate this. Once is enough.

We spent the night in the basement and we were listening to the radio broadcast in German and all of a sudden the Star Spangled Banner came on in all its glory and with a meaning to us that we had never experienced before. It is difficult to fully express our feelings at that time but I can say that we were thrilled and stood at attention with tears in our eyes. It was great to know that we were now free and would be going home soon. We quickly ran to the street and we were again thrilled to see our tanks rumbling down the street

along with soldiers of the 42nd Rainbow Division.
We now knew the war was over.

Chapter 4
Liberation

We were certainly a motley looking group: unkempt and greatly in need of a shower, dressed in badly soiled clothing. Basically, I was dressed in clothing that I was wearing on the day of my capture on August 16, 1944, with the exception of a logn and full French overcoat and British hob-nail shoes, both given to me by the Red Cross in October after I arrived in Moosburg.

The Army took over and formed us into a military group. We were moved into an apartment at 222 Arnulf Strasse, just down the street from where we had spent the night before. We were assigned two to an apartment. The German tenants had evidently moved out very quickly since the cupboards were full, clothes were in the closet, and the apartments were completely furnished. The Army posted guards around the apartment in an attempt to control a group that had been in captivity for a long time, some for a year or more. In no way were the guards able to control fellow soldiers, some of whom just wanted to exercise their freedom, such as those who commandeered a streetcar, took it to the brewery, loaded it with kegs of beer and returned it to the apartment. It was here that we had our first shower in many months. What a wonderful feeling.

We left Munich on May 7, 1945, V-E Day, by truck after enjoying a rest in the apartment. We

went west from Munic through Dachau, one of the infamous concentration camps, which abruptly made us aware, for the first time, of the atrocities committed in these Nazi death camps.

The most gruesome sight was the many bodies loaded on flat cars. It was real and difficult to realize how such a thing could have happened in a civilized nation. We should be guided by the lessons of history to avoid such a thing happening down the road.

We continued on from Dachau to the airport where we saw about six U.S. Air Force C-47s (military version of the civilian DC-3) which were used to transport paratroopers. They were not by any means the most luxurious. This was not important to us at the time as our main interest was to just get home. The seating was on benches along each side of the cabin in front of small round windows presenting a very limited view. It was not like the air-liner of today.

We found the American pilots and the ranking British non-com in deep discussion on which troops, American or British, would fly out first. Since both the pilots and aircraft were American there was no question. The pilots answered, "We only move 'Limeys' (British soldiers) when all 'Yanks' have been moved out." The problem was solved and we were in the air and on the way to France, another step closer to home. Since this was an air corps plane, the pilot set his

course in a straight line with no allowance for weather so it was a bumpy ride at times.

Our course took us over Paris and, since it was V-E Day and the end of the war in Europe, we got a glimpse of the fireworks display in celebration of the day through the small window. It was an exciting and memorable sight. We were again reminded that we were free for sure.

Our destination was LeHavre and Camp Lucky Strike, a debarkation point remembered by thousands of U.S. soldiers passing through on their way home. It was here that we were debriefed (got to talk to others), deloused (got rid of the bugs), and got badly needed new clothing from top to bottom. Believe me, we were clean, decked out in new clothes and felt like our old selves again after a long, long time. I cannot forget that it was here that we received our first complete hot meal. It was delicious even though it was Army food but, considering what we had to compare it with, it was a meal fit for a King.

We were at Lucky Strike for about two weeks getting processed back into the Army and refreshing our memory of how to be a soldier again. I have to admit that we were pretty rusty on Army discipline at this time.

We then boarded a Swedish ship "The Kungsholm" which was acquired by the U.S. at the beginning of the war. It was a hospital ship

to which I was assigned for a priority transport as a former prisoner of war and not for injury or sickness.

Many of the piers in the harbor had been damaged and not usable. It was, consequently, necessary to board the ship by a floating wooden tower with a stairway. We set sail for the USA after the loading process was completed.

It was standard operating procedure, regardless of the site of an Army facility, to immediately set up guard and, since I was an enlisted man and ambulatory, I was selected for guard duty and served my shift while we were at sea. The experience gave me the opportunity to see many areas of the ship which I would not ordinarily see. Not always pleasant since the areas included some very badly wounded and others with mental problems resulting from combat experiences.

The trip was pretty much uneventful until I came down with an infected tooth which I was told had to be pulled. There were not dentists or dental equipment aboard so a Physician "had to make do with what he had." It was very painful and, needless to say, not my most pleasant dental experience. Another such experience, running a close second, occurred during combat in France. It was here, during shelling in the area, I had a bad tooth that needed filled. I was taken to the rear echelon where a dentist and his aide "welcomed me." Their equipment for drilling

was powered by the aide's foot – very primitive but, again, he “had to make do with what he had.” The procedure was interrupted a number of times when shells exploded in the combat area located some distance away and presenting no immediate danger. They would make a dash to their foxholes leaving me sitting in the chair but with no fear since I was in an exceptionally secure area compared to the one I had come from.

We had a lot of spare time on the ship so we spent much of it listening to big band music which I had no opportunity to hear during the past ten months. Many of the pieces were ones with which I was familiar, but there was one that I thought was great – “Sentimental Journey” with vocalist Doris Day. It became a favorite of mine since the lyrics reminded me of my journey home from Stalag VII-A.

We had been at sea for about a week on May 29, 1945, when lo and behold there appeared out of the fog before our eyes, the Statue of Liberty in all her majesty. It was a most emotional experience realizing that many immigrants before us, as they passed this monument for the first time, found and enjoyed freedom from oppression. I am sure that we experienced the same feelings of joy and hope as we returned to the life we knew before and those they found here.

The ship entered the New York harbor without

the customary welcome by the fireboats with their hoses shooting water skyward since we were probably among the first, if not the first, to arrive after V-E Day.

We docked in New York City, debarked and proceeded by train north up the Hudson to Camp Shanks, located near Orangetown, where we were served a delicious steak dinner, spent the night, and boarded a troop train in the morning for Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

The stay in Atterbury was short and then I began the last leg of the journey home for a 60-day leave (furlough). I got off the bus at Zanesville carrying my souvenir Nazi sabre and was met by Mother, Dad, and Ann for a long-awaited joyous reunion. Then to our home where Mother prepared my favorite breakfast of bacon and eggs. I was overcome by the great food and the opportunity to talk to everyone.

My stay in Zanesville was great – getting to see all my friends and continuing life where I left off as I had dreamed so often. The big occasion was Ann's birthday on July 15. It was not an ordinary one, but the celebration of our engagement with a party given by Ann's Mother and Dad. We capped the day off with a trip to Buckeye Lake with friends for dancing and fun. Just like before.

The leave ended all too soon when on August 1, I boarded a train to Miami Beach, Florida, for a

government sponsored R&R (Rest and Relaxation). I was quartered in the New Yorker Hotel, deluxe in its day but before air conditioning, located in the center of the area at that time. It has grown a lot since. Today it is the area now called South Beach. The Army sponsored all kinds of entertainment including a day of deep-sea fishing. I did not catch any fish but had a great time. The only problem with our stay there was the extreme heat with no air conditioning.



Rest & Relaxation
Miami Beach, Florida

We headed back to Camp Atterbury after about ten days. We were on the train when we learned of V-J Day, the Japanese surrender, and the end of World War II.

Under the point system established by the military, I was required to meet service requirements and, lacking a few points, remained on duty at Atterbury until I was discharged on November 19, 1945.