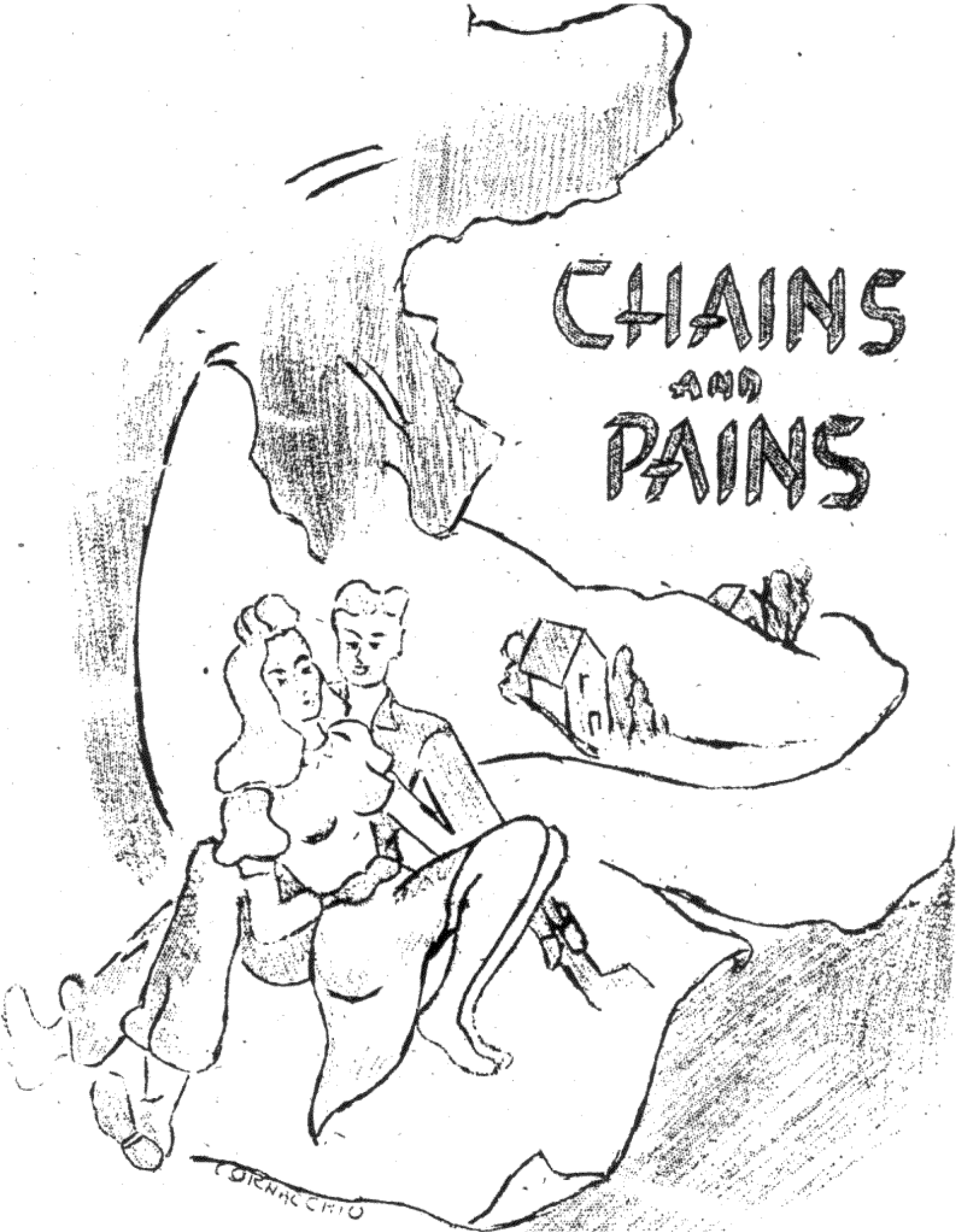


# CHAINS AND PAINS



GIORGIO

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"Come on out and show us your feet!" the men teased, and what a choice situation for teasing.

He'd come sneaking in trying not to be seen, but his mistake was in not waiting for dark. His shoes were gone and he admitted under coaxing that he'd walked three miles in his stocking feet. And he never did get his story plausible enough to make anyone of the delighted spectators believe him.

"His girl got mad at him and threw his boots into the river.", the men decided from his evasive answers.

He refused to come out and give anymore details. They had the story entirely wrong, he insisted. But the men were paying no attention to him except to be sure he heard all the new details they were inventing.

"Won't anyone lend me a pair of boots for tonight?" came pleadingly from the window.

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### SELFISH?

He was definitely selfish. He took the vegetables from a garden carefully tended by the German woman. Cucumbers, kohlrabi, onions, and lettuce were his plundering - and he turned out a fine salad that night. The rest of the squad watched him and their mouths watered. "Give me some!", they begged.

"Are you nuts?" I got this!" and he added the vinegar.

His comrades jumped on him. "When you steal for your hungry comrades that's noble and unselfish, but when you steal and eat it all yourself, that's selfish and bad".

"Go ahead, you leeches," and he split it up.

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"Better watch your step, that's not your woman and these kids will tell on you." They know who each man visits."

"I know that." the flirting GI returned to the bench and continued "That girl I go with has plenty of sense. She sends the kids to see if I'm faithful to her. She told me: "You can be with another girl and come here and make me sick so if you want me, you don't fool with anybody else." You can give her credit for wanting to take care of herself, and if I play fair with her, I've got a good thing." The men nodded approval.

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The danger of enemy shrapnel is past for 1945. The only possibility of pierced flesh comes from Capt Talbert's needle. Nobody is scared of it. All GI's like to make believe it's rough - some of the officers fell in with the spirit of the men and acted extra scared to prove they were regular guys who feel just like the plain GI's.

They didn't manage to put it across for when one Lt said - "Maybe we'd better go back to our quarters and take a big drink", the effect of trying to show they were just GI's collapsed.

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She had been doing his washing. Twenty-five years old, the mother of two kids, and her soldier husband's whereabouts was unknown. She wanted a slice of white bread to toast for her sick mother.

"She won't have a thing to do with the soldiers" the GI's remarked when she left. "But I'd rather do something for her than for some whore who'd pay off. She's worth it. You respect women like that."

## LIVING IN GERMAN HOUSES

The GI's were balancing the woman's holy water gadget just to tease her. And it smashed to the ground.

"We'll buy you one if you'll tell us where", the now contrite GI volunteered. She finally made him understand which store sold them.

"That's a lot of trouble going to town and buying one", his companion in mischief remonstrated.

"Who's going? We'll just go in another apartment and get her one".

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## WHAT IS THEIR CRIME?

Whether it is the beginning of a planned effort - or a momentary use of some available pictures, the spotting of atrocity pictures throughout German cities halts the average German and he stays to look.

It meets with the approval of the GI. In spite of associating on friendly, intimate terms with the young women, he sternly demands that the Germans realize why they are hated and condemned. But the pictures that are not of PW atrocities are yet to be shown. They are of the millions whose torture has been of the mind and heart. This has been Germany's greatest crime - a crime against the people of each man's family, who worried and agonized and will live in daily dread until the whole war is over. Your mother's pain, your wife's suffering, is a German atrocity as real as Gardlegen or Buchenwald.

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The GI's were calling suggestions to him as his girl came up and they started away together.

The girl didn't know what they were saying but she sensed it might influence him. She put her fingers in his ears so he could hear no more from those soldiers - and kept his ears plugged until she had him safely out of hearing.

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"I was just waiting for someone to ask me that. I knew it was coming"! Chaplain Coiner turned to his associate and his jeep driver as if to prove there was little he did not foresee. "No, you can't marry a German girl", he answered.

"What do you mean I can't marry her? You a minister and you deny that when God plants love in two hearts they can't marry?"

"You could be married in the sight of God, but you'd be courts martialled for disobeying an army order", Chaplain Coiner explained, and also detailed the difficulties of a honeymoon" in public places which of course was the only association allowed without penalty. Yes, with a DF it would be all right. Sixty days waiting and permission of your commanding officer could tie you to a Pole, an Italian, Russian, Belgian etc. But for the gorgeous fraulein you dream about - nix matrimony except in the sight of God. And maybe if that was enough for you, you'd like allotments for her and your kids. In theory you'd get them, but the Office of Dependency Allotments isn't set up for German Aid. And when it would come, and how with no postal service, no one has yet figured out.

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The perfect squad leader: He comes over to the truck and tells the men to load up if they're ready to go. The breast of his field jacket bulges with oranges he begged from the kitchen so that each member of his squad will have something to tempt the women who can be found near the job.

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The Sgt Has A Kind Face

Apple cheeked, rotund Winberg sat down on the bench. The girl got up from the other end as if to go. "Please don't. I didn't mean for you to leave." She looked at him and decided there was something fatherly about this plump gentleman, and she desperately needed someone to talk to. She'd been living in a barn for two days having been sent to Plattling by a Regensburg doctor who told her she could get help here. Winberg listened and encouraged by his friendliness she told the rest of her story.

She was pregnant by an American soldier. It happened three months ago. She wanted to go in that hospital to see if they could get it out. For two days she had been trying to get up nerve to go in, afraid to face the reality of possibly being turned away. The girl felt in Winberg's impressive size and kindness, the strength she needed. Certainly it would be grossly unkind to leave the young lady so hesitant and fearful.

His obligation was clear. He led the scared girl to the hospital and was relieved when the kindly sister offered her a motherly arm. What if she hadn't been admitted to the hospital? The girl had already begun to look upon Winberg as her protector and she might have permanently attached herself to him.

Winberg sighed. How had he gotten mixed up in this. He'd look more closely the next time he sat down beside a woman.

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Smith and Reidel were beginning their evening with shovels and fatigues. That was the penalty for breaking curfew - dig a 6x6. They had company while they dug. Kids watched from the edge of the growing pit. GI's came and asked how it was going.

"I'm gettin' something out of this anyway," Smith answered as he held up a can of worms. "I'm going fishing tomorrow."

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Mixed opinions from the watching GI's greeted the homecoming and family reunion of an ex-PW. His wife and two little children were not in their own house. He came into Able Co's yard, still with his huge knapsack, looking for them. His kids were so small they just looked wonderingly. His wife conscious of the GI's eyes, was restless. As they left A Co to pick up their new life, Socas broke the silence: "That's you in 1948," said to no one in particular.

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She lives across from the motor pool. She hangs out on on the bench where she is in full view of the mechanics. When there is any audience, she begins her routine: Opening her legs and toying with her skirt. It's so flagrant the Motor Pool has decided she's cracked. She wasn't getting very far as a temptress. A new idea struck her. She would take a sponge bath while garbed in a wrap-around dress. Then began her bath in public: First uncovering her upper section she washed that thoroughly. Then untying the lower part she finished bathing.

Was she trying to get any single man? Every driver and mechanic was accused of being her goal. But altogether the men decided she was crazy.

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GI's are expert judges of the interest and perfection of the feminine bust. This particular babe, passing by as the men faced the long evening ahead, was sure to draw attention. In a land of loose chubby breasts, this fraulein was an exception. "Look at those pointed breasts!" the men gasped.

"If I had the points that gal's got, I could get a discharge." came from point conscious Bowie.

For the new serum shots, Wojciechowski presented his right arm petting his untouched left arm with a caress reminiscent of a woman's touch. Wojy gave his reason. "This is the arm who leans on".

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"We built the swimming pool in the wrong place, bring your men back and move it", was the Division order after Gross's squad had built them a swimming pool. The first day it was opened, they needed a truckload of medics and band-aids to patch up the bruised swimmers who found rocks too close to the surface. "We engineers knocked out the Infantry - almost a whole regiment", the first squad bragged. "Then after moving it we used a DP to try it out and he skinned his face". Everytime the waterlevel drops the squad figures they'll move it again and are pleased at the prospect of more swimming and deeper suntans. After all, you can't build a swimming pool on shore.

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Bee companies volley ball court was cut in the hillside by the bulldozer. A great mound of dirt suggested a fort to the youngsters and they peppered the infantry kids who were advancing. Some of the dirt flew around the first platoon men still working on the court. "We better answer their barrage", Neighoff ventured.

"Better not! They might lick us and we'd never live that down", Connarton warily concluded.

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"A growling bear, a man eating tiger, that's Scafuri. His pleasantest word is a snarl. Bringing the rations from Plattling, he discovered an orange with a soft spot. He balanced it in his hand threateningly. "I oughta hit somebody in the nose with it", he scowled. Then he tossed it easily to some kids. As they excitedly ran for it, a pleased smile came over Scafuri's dour face. It flickered there for a minute and then he was again/growling bear, a man eating tiger - it's quite an act.

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#### SEARCHING FOR WEAPONS

Fluhr was getting a guide service from the English speaking girl of the house. When he reached the barn end had been shown into every corner of it, he asked his fair guide: "Have you got anything else I can look at?" "Now don't get fresh", she jumped to a conclusion based on past experiences with GI's, he decided.

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"Keep everybody in the houses during the search", was the order. Machine guns set up in the streets were a tacit hint that the Yanks meant business. As the morning drew on, a GI would listen to a Mother's tale and let her go around the corner for the baby's milk. Soon every kid was being sent on errands here and there carrying milk pails. Prilla laughed at how the Germans thought they were getting by. "We ain't dumb, we're just goodhearted", he said as he watched the milk cans appearing.

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It's only one of the dozens of similar tales from the checking of Plattling for weapons.

White barged into a room to search it. A brassiered and pantied fraulein popped out of bed. "That ain't a pistols, White", he was cautioned.

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Few weapons were found in the search of Plattling. But most houses had GI cigarettes or chocolate. For washing and services rendered, Bee company decided. In spite of the "no monkey business" warning, the men were on the lookout for something to drink. One driver who always takes part in the searches for just this loot, came across a hidden bottle but to the amusement of his squad who translated for him - it was HOLY WATER. He doesn't trust Germans and only after he smelled it would he put it back.

## A HORSE ON CHARLIE

"C Company has women in their stockade", fascinates the other companies. The unromantic truth is that not only are the women protected from the GI's but also from the German internees and from their own desires if they have them. There is bedcheck - but it doesn't mean seeing each little babe is tucked in bed. The OD and Sgt of the Guard merely count noses at 10 PM to see the women are all in - and no men in with them. C Companies' women, as romantic material, are firmly under lock and key.

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## INTERMENT CAMP NO. 5

Something happens to a man forced to guard prisoners. Take an average normal GI such as came to Internment Camp No. 5 as a guard. It was going to be kind of a lark. He hadn't experienced the tedium, the morbid atmosphere of two thousand people always hungry, pacing endlessly in an enclosure. He seemed always to be on call to guard these prisoners. Everything he wanted to do was cut out because of these damn prisoners. He got orders and regulations - more every day and pretty soon in his mind, because of all the rules, the fence moved over and took him in. He was a prisoner too. Even when he was off duty he was only a few yards from the prisoners pacing endlessly. A few yards from sordidness when he was trying to forget and enjoy himself.

Enjoy yourself!! Hell! When you stepped out the door or walked past a window the prisoners were always there. Five hours every second day was all he could leave the prisoner sights - and because there was no town and no recreation he quit even trying to get out. He began to hate the prisoners, to hate himself. Anything bitter gave him pleasure. He delighted when a Nazi hung himself. He kept the rope for a souvenir. He hoped more would hang themselves. That would be fun. He was no longer the amiable guy who went to guard prisoners. He felt nasty and mean.

"Why do I feel this way?" he asked a Captain from War Crimes Commission who had been talking about the Nazi activities while awaiting delivery of some criminals.

"The Germans learned you couldn't quarter guards next to PW enclosures. They always had the guards quarters far enough away so the men wouldn't always have prisoners before them. You can ask some of the interned men here who bossed prison camps."

"Have you plenty of recreation?" he asked the worried GI. "That would help you".

The GI thought of the schedule and spat in disgust. Maybe someone else would hang himself - that would be fun. That last guy had hung himself while his toes could still touch the floor. Hangings were much more fun than he'd thought.

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Ferguson showed his wife's letter. "Look what she says - the customs office wants \$137.98 from her as duty on the box of war trophies I sent home. I had two shotguns, two swords and one Nazi knife in the box and it was censored and passed. The customs office told her duty on that kind of stuff is high and she'll have to pay if she wants them. I wouldn't give ten dollars for the whole box." he exploded.

And in the next letter she wrote that if he could get an affidavit that they had been legally sent the customs office might do something about it. Lts Swinehart and Linde fixed up the necessary papers and now it's a question of time to see what customs office can think up next.

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## HATCH AND ESS

Rico held up his bandaged hand, "I broke the syringe jabbing it in the rear ends of those whores." he explained, "and it wasn't because I got two excited either," he anticipated the thought in everyone's minds. Before he could be questioned further, he was in the aid station.

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The two non-coms set up a couple of babes. Got them a room by flashing some official looking papers. They found out, when they entered the love nest next evening that the babes had skipped - and among other things, taken the Sgt's radio.

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Martha Tilton sung as if she was the sweetheart of every man in the audience. But habit is too strong. The bend of men's minds doesn't change with a sentimental half hour. "I don't think she has on any pants." was remarked.

"Your not used to American pants" was Nunn's solution to the question. They began debating as their truck went back to Plattling.

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### "A DAMN GOOD SHOW, H&S DECIDED

With the finale of the USO show in Landau town square, the men stood up and stretched. Hardly were they on their feet when a storm of bent-over and crawling kids of all ages began darting between them. It was so sudden - as if hundreds of kids had hatched out while the men were sitting on their helmet liners, and on arising had set them free.

A second glance told the story. They were snipe hunting. This was a paradise of cigarette butts. A hundred Papas would be in tobacco for a week.

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### IT WAS ONLY A GEORGRAPY LESSON

Lt Linde has been drumming up men interested in getting high school credits. "I missed Lt Linde's talk", the Chainster was asking about it. "Did he say you can get credit for some of your Army training? What for instance? Close order drill?"

Lt Linde's substitute wasn't sure he'd heard about close order drill. He finally decided ~~that~~ wasn't what the I&E officer had meant. "Look", he explained. "You've travelled a lot in the ETO, you could get credit for Geography".

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Everybody kidded about it. "If only I could take this babe with me" was heard constantly as the Battalion got ready to leave the Neudietendorf sector. Many women swore they'd follow their GI companions and somehow two of them managed to get to Bavaria. The new replacements who had a beautiful set up in CRIMMITSCHAU were also rewarded with the presence in Bavaria of one loyal camp follower.

It's so easy to say "Of course I want you to come", when you're sure the road blocks won't let her thru - but it's anybody's bet whether the men are pleased now that they have a new area to explore.

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In front of Battalion Headquarters, sooner or later everyone in Chain will meet and tell the latest. If one's from A Co - or the medics, the men will discuss the prostitute guard house. "What's the latest?" Shulteis was asked.

"Oh, not much - they still can't understand how it is they're sick and the men they've taken on are not."