

YANK

THE ARMY



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LONDON Two Canadian soldiers walked into a restaurant talking quietly about the Japanese surrender offer. A GI sitting in one of the American-style booths caught their words and let out a whoop. "We're going to tear this place apart!" he announced.

Then he lapsed into silence. Other Americans in the restaurant reacted pretty much the same way. As one soldier remarked, "We're still in Europe, bud."

There was a little more excitement as the evening wore on and there were crowds in Piccadilly Circus and Leicester and Trafalgar Squares. Quite a few people got rid of their waste paper by throwing it out of windows, a sign that the need for saving such things for the war effort was just about over.

Five hundred GIs who arrived that evening on furlough from the continent weren't exactly on fire about the news, either. Duffel bags and toilet kits on their shoulders, they queued up to register for rooms at the Red Cross Club as quietly as they have been queuing up for everything else during their army careers. A lot of the furloughing troops said they didn't believe the war was over and even if it was they'd still have to sweat out transportation home for a long time yet.

Quite a few GIs were more interested in talking about the atomic bomb than about Japan. They were afraid of the new weapon and its potential force for evil. Cpl. Paul Martin of Vauxhall, N. J., an anti-tank gunner with the 9th Division in France, Belgium and Germany and now with the army of occupation in Germany, was a little dazed.

"The news that Japan gave up seems impossible to me," he said. "Especially since the Russians have only been in the thing for one day. This atom bomb is sure a lotta hell; it had a lot to do with the surrender. I have to go back to Germany, but I'm glad for the guys who're sweating it out in the Pacific now. I'll get home eventually and it might be a little quicker than I thought this time last year. How long will we have to stay in Germany? Depends on how long we take to get those *buergermeisters* working right."

"Yeah, I know the atom bomb helped a lot, but it wasn't the only factor in the surrender. Right now I want to go home; I've got 134 points, and I've got a son two years old I never saw and a girl that I only saw once. Who doesn't want to go home, brother?"

Sgt. Bernard Katz of Pittsburgh, Pa., now with the 36th Bombardment Squadron, Eighth Air Force, has been in the Army for five years and had special reactions.

"I'm one guy who ought to be glad, because I saw my first action on Dec. 7, 1941. I was at Wheeler Field on Oahu, the first island the Japs attacked.

"We thought it was an earthquake until we found out that it was war, and war was worse. I jumped under a theater for shelter and found myself lying beside a two-star general. He didn't say anything about saluting, and neither did I.

"Now it's all over. For good, I hope. I think a combination of the Russians and the atom bomb did the trick in about equal proportions. I think the atom bomb is the best weapon to prevent future wars, and I also think it should be given to the whole world so it can be developed to its fullest extent. Even the Japs and Germans should be given it when they're domesticated enough."

—Sgt. FRANCIS BURKE