It was like old home week when these troops found some wounded Americans awaiting them in a German hospital.

By Sgt. SAUL LEVITT
YANK Staff Correspondent

WITH THE THIRD ARMY IN GERMANY—Ten miles north of Frankurt there was a hospital for wounded soldiers, German and Allied alike. The hospital stood in a clearing in woods and the night before the Americans arrived the Allied wounded huddled on the crumbling foundations or strained themselves up from their pillows to look out. They could hear the artillery fire of the battle for Frankfurt and they wondered when the Americans would come. Many of the German doctors had cleared out but a few doctors, nurses and orderlies remained.

By morning on the 29th there was no longer any artillery fire and it was hard for the wounded to believe that those who could manage it donned their old uniforms, the khaki pants and the typical jacket with the big wings. Some had been prisoners for months, others for years. There were men who had been wounded in the last German attack. Five Russians insisted on making them pale.

Those who were not bedfast ventured out for walks around the hospital. The others smoked their Red Cross cigarettes nervously, and waited.

Inside Frankfurt, the Fifth Division passed a break on March 25, after fighting 31 days and crossing five rivers since its last jump-off. From Frankfurt the enemy was driven. Capt. Donald E. Robinson's recon troops out of Frankfurt reported that they had found out what was out there, but word had come back through their officers that there were Americans in the vicinity, some of them Americans.

Going along the road with the recon troops we could not help but notice how they looked at us. The Germans, swept along by the German wind, were vastly different from the men in front ahead. The displaced persons looked straight at us, ready to cheer or salute if we so much as casually stepped in on the wrong foot. Five Russians insisted on shaking hands with Capt. Robinson once when the column was halted. Ten Frenchmen waved a tricolor flag made of rags.

Once the column passed a farm suddenly and there was tension in the air. German soldiers had been seen on the roads and the word was being passed back. Some men got out of their jeeps and took positions in the ditches. An ultimatum to be sent ahead to the burgomaster of the village where the Germans were seen was routed. He was to be told to remove whatever German soldiers there were and surrender them in the town square or we would shoot the place up. Then we rolled into town and the burgomaster rang a bell in the square summoning all the civilians. He read a document addressing all soldiers to report immediately to the town hall. His air was cool and casual until he finished with shiny with sweat.

The column moved on and everything looked calm in the little villages. We passed two Russian women who told us they had been hidden in the hills and could not venture out as they were wont eating. The men threw them some rations.

A sign worded down the line of more Germans ahead—a busload of them approaching a crossroads. The men behind the guns then let the two men of the recon party go to a stop. It emptied quickly. A German up in front of the vehicle pointed his finger at the air as if it were suddenly red hot. This was funny enough for aripple of grim laughter to run down the column.
YANK

Among the 21 Germans on the bus was a medical officer with a Heldelberg saber shorn along his right side. He had been captured along with some Luftwaffe flak gunners and two nurses wearing red cross arm bands.

The medical officer perspired freely while explaining that the Germans had been flying across country. Meanwhile, our soldiers removed five cases of cognac from the bus as a German offering of friendship; the local mailman. The mailman looked at his letter and then at the cognac but was not interested. He was strictly minding his own business.

In Stanley Swiecikow of Wynandotte, Mich, whose lead platoon had grabbed the bus, looked over it with a little grimly when he saw the Luftwaffe wings on the mailman's hood and heard that he had taken some flak guns. He said something very loudly about how he would like to fix them so they would never be any good hereafter as future fathers. The German officer grinned painfully. The GIs, with the platoon leader of soldiers, started at the German nurses.

The woods around us were resounding with 40-caliber fire as the recon cars probed ahead. A heavy area with bullets for more Germans. Down the road came the sedan and Oberleutnant, his pistol in front of it. It stopped and two riflemen got out. "Tell them to keep that car off the road," said the captain to a soldier who spoke Ger-

The road was an old one we named after us. It was very quiet until suddenly there was a loud scream. Simultaneously, we sighted the prison hospital and the men hollering and crawling down the walks, calling to us as they came.

We got to them and they talked in loud, histrionical voices and what they had to say seemed never to finish. There was a captain with the scars of burns around his eyes, men with mite legs, a small Texan with the Air Forces insignia on his shirt, a Canadian from Toronto, a flyer from LaFayette in the Shetland Islands.

The recon soldiers didn't know what to say. They were windburned, healthy, cocky soldiers of a conquering army and the men they had found looked drawn and pale. But they got together with small talk over cigarettes and cognac while the German medics and Luftwaffe wounded looked silently. No one paid any attention to them; this was an American old some week in the prison hospital. A Yank with a bad leg added the final festive touch to the late afternoon when he pulled his stretcher and its screaming into the still countryside.

Everybody wanted to go back with the recon troops to Frankfurt, but Capt. Robinson explained presently that they would have to wait until doctors and ambulances came the next day. So the hospital chain was down in the hospital that night, others of the recon boys were out doing their job and had flashed more Germans bringing the total prisoner take to more than 100. Some of the wounded hobbled up and down their place out for the changing guard around the hospital. It was a tough job for the interrogators and medics arrived. Those who could walk climbed into ambulances and the others were brought in stretcher by stretcher.

It was still very joyous but it also was very somber. The children in the neighborhood, an officer read off the names of every man going by him to the waiting car. An American soldier and we were on a list of theirs. It was cold and they were back and I was cold.

They were soldiers again; it was roll call.

Capt. Don Robinson of the Fifth Division recon crew returns to his men in his German uniform.

It was late in the afternoon as we turned into more woods and heard a single rifle shot ring out. Darkly the roll call went the message: "Venison dinner tonight."

We rolled for a thousand yards through the woods, but it was miles in the lines of our lines. It was very quiet until suddenly there was a loud scream. Simultaneously, we sighted the prison hospital and the men hollering and crawling down the walks, calling to us as they came.

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