

September 17, 1944

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS

After seeing and writing about the struggles which preceded the freeing of La Haye du Puits, St. Lo, St. Malo and several other mileposts in the American breakthrough out of Normandy, YANK Correspondent Sgt. Saul Levitt went along with some of the troops to enter Paris. Despite the joy and gaiety of the French capital, the memory of the ordeals American troops had gone through to bring this great occasion about stayed with him, and is reflected in the following portion of a dispatch he sent back to his office:

In war, as in peace, there have been many roads to this city. We came in on the route of the 4th Infantry Division. On both sides of the road were the people of France saying many things to us to express joy and gratitude, and the soldiers who had gone through the mud and death of the battle of Normandy seemed to understand. They accepted the kisses, the affection, the warmth of this long-imprisoned city with a touch of awe and deference to the name of Paris.

We came as part of the triumph of Paris and not as part of the pain of its liberation. But perhaps this entrance, this freeing of Paris belongs as much to the men who fought and fell around St. Lo as to any others, for it was from St. Lo that the big American armored movements began. So much death, so much mud, so many K-ration meals lie behind this entrance that it is impossible to say it is merely something joyous.

Despite all the bottles of champagne, all the tears, and all the kisses it is impossible for those of us who are here to forget that we are here for the men of the American divisions who died or were wounded on the way to Paris, or have swept around Paris and are past it - for all of those who started out toward Paris but are not here to see it. We are here for the men of the 48 states who dream of home, and for whom the freeing of Paris is the way home.