

JUNE 1, 1945

On Sunday, May 6, at Reims, France, Col. Gen. Gustav Jodl signed a formal surrender for all German armed forces. YANK's Sgt. Gilpin was at Reims when GIs there got the news:

THE 201st MP Company, whose members handled the guard details when the Germans came to Reims to surrender, is a celebrity-wise outfit. Gen. Eisenhower knows many of the men by their first names and some of them have dined at Churchill's home. They have been the gun-carrying soldiers on hand during a succession of visits to high headquarters by Nazi bigwigs like Franz von Papen, who was described by one of them as looking like "an old goat in golf knickers."

The MPs said Col. Gen. Jodl looked and acted more like the popular idea of a German militarist than any of the other German officers with him at the surrender meeting. He walked and talked with the arrogance that the *Junkers* have developed through a long series of wars. He didn't seem to drink as much as some of the others and before and after each conference the MP outside his bedroom window could see him examining his face in his mirror. After the last conference session Jodl came back to his room, threw open the windows and looked down at Pfc. Jack H. Arnold of Lancaster, Pa. After peering at Arnold, he inhaled deeply and then twisted and pulled at his face before the mirror.

Adm. Hans von Friedeburg, of all the Germans, seems to have impressed the MPs most as what they called a "character." In the words of Pfc. Joseph Fink, who used to build Burroughs adding machines in Detroit, "The Admiral had enough medals hanging on his chest to decorate a Christmas tree."

Fink rode in the car that took the admiral to the German billets. During the ride a British major riding with them brought Friedeburg up to date on current events. He told him the lights were on again in London and Friedeburg, remembering air raids in Germany, replied in English that he hadn't had a good night's sleep in a month. He went on to explain that he had been bombed out of his headquarters three times.

While he stayed in the billets, Friedeburg consumed great quantities of cigars and liquor, but none of this seemed to make any improvement in his testy disposition. When he saw photographs of German atrocities in a copy of the *Stars and Stripes* during a between-conferences discussion of U. S. Army publications he banged his fist on the table in a temper.

The house in which the Germans stayed during the conference looked like a shack on the outside and a palace on the inside. There were paintings on the walls and a grandfather clock, inlaid tile in the bathrooms and comfortable double beds in the bedrooms. There was a bit of a fuss over the first meal because someone had forgotten to get the red wine. Pfc. Frederick A. Stones of Pittsburgh, Pa., commented privately, "If I was running this show I'd throw them a can of C rations."

Stones says that his proposed diet had a practical as well as a vindictive side in that it might have helped shorten the negotiations.

Once Pfc. Joyce Bennet, Wac manageress of the German billets, asked two of the GI orderlies to straighten up the beds of the German officers. The GIs complied but bitched. "We're usually assigned to British Air Marshal Tedder," one of them said, "and he straightens up his own bed and so could these guys."

Speaking of the Germans, a little black-haired Wac from Tarentum, Pa., said, "I felt terribly uneasy serving them coffee. Some officer made a crack about my waiting on Germans while my husband was still shooting them. He didn't stop to think that I'd have preferred to have been spilling the hot coffee down their necks."

On the last day before the Germans signed the piece of paper that officially ended what was to have been Adolf Hitler's New World Order, Col. Gen. Jodl and Adm. Friedeburg were watched by the MPs as they walked in the little garden beside their billet. Friedeburg had relaxed a little, but Jodl was just as stiff-necked as ever.

Later, when it was all over except the publicity, the MPs went back to their barracks and had a bull session about the war, the Germans and "Ike." They talked most about "Ike."

Sgt. Henry Wheeler of Youngstown, N. Y., said, "The windup was pretty much what we expected. 'Ike' didn't have anything to do with those phonies until they were ready to quit. Then he went in and told them to sign up."

"And what does he do as he comes out of the meeting? He shakes hands with the first GI he comes to."

And that is the way the war in Europe ended for the 201st MPs.