

YANK

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THE Allied flood rolled on. It was a great period for capturing Nazi field marshals like Wilhelm Ritter von Leeb and Wilhelm List, both of whom had been kingpins in the Nazi drives that overthrew Poland and France and both of whom had had less luck in the invasion of Russia. Adm. Nicholas Horthy, Nazi-controlled dictator of Hungary was captured. All three were picked up by the Seventh Army. Lt. Gen. Kurt Dittmar, leading German military commentator, surrendered to the Ninth. And then came the biggest story of all. The German radio announced that Hitler had died in action in Berlin. The Russians, who had by this time freed Berlin of all but street fighting, agreed that Hitler was dead, not as a fighting soldier but as a suicide. They said that Josef Paul Goebbels, his warped little propaganda minister, had also died by his own hand. Tired of too many German tricks, most Allied authorities reserved comment; they would believe Hitler dead when they saw his body. But a dead Hitler made for cheerful talk.

In Paris, Sgt. DeWitt Gilpin, YANK field correspondent, took a sample of public opinion on the subject of Hitler's death:

LT. WILLIAM J. CULLERTON of Chicago, a fighter pilot who was left for dead a few weeks ago after a German SS man fired a .35-slug through his stomach, sat in a Paris hotel and talked about the late Adolf Hitler.

"I hope the sonuvabitch was as scared of dying as I was when that SS officer let me have it through the stomach," he said. "I thought I'd had it.

"Now they say Hitler is dead. Maybe he is. If he is, I don't believe he died heroically. Mussolini died at least something like a dictator, but somehow I can't figure Hitler dying in action. And I don't think Hitler's death changes anything about Germany. It just might be part of a deal to soften us up so they can stick another knife in the soft spot."

Two Eighth Air Force aerial gunners, who like Cullerton were sweating out a ride back to the States from the same hotel, said that they hadn't believed the news of Hitler's death when they first heard it shortly after the 104th Division liberated them from the Alten Grabow PW Camp.

S/Sgt. Henry J. Smith of Scranton, Pa., said: "I came down near Stutlitz about nine months ago and I just had time to get out of my chute before German civilians started beating me up. One old man of about 60 broke a .22-rifle over

me. But when we left Germany all the people were forcing smiles for us. And that old guy would smile too, now. Mussolini is dead, Hitler is dead—but what's the difference? There are lots more."

S/Sgt. William Cupp of Tipton, Iowa, who came down in Belgium and beat his way within 200 yards of the American lines—then near Paris—before the Germans got him, said: "They want to make Hitler a martyr for the German kids. Most of them are pretty much for him as it is."

At the 48th General Hospital, Sgt. Allan Pettit of Verndale, Minn., and the 78th Division, was well enough to be going out on pass. He had been hit twice before on the Roer River, but this time it was only concussion, and now he had a chance to see Paris.

"Why waste words on Hitler," he said. "And how do you know for sure? Anyway he picked a damned good Nazi to take his place. That crazy Doenitz fought us in the last war."

Over in another ward filled with combat men just in from the front, it was the entertainment hour and as a special favor to Cpl. Peter Stuphin—a Red Army man suffering from prison camp malnutrition—a singer rendered "Kalinka." The GIs thought that was fine, and those who felt strong enough called for tunes like "Stardust" and "I'll Be Seeing You."

A red-headed southerner from the 4th Division was feeling good because the doctor had finished dressing the shrapnel wound in his chest, and he had something to say about Hitler and his Germany between songs.

"I wish I was the guy who killed him," he said. "I'd killed him a little slower. Awful slow."

In the Tout Parcc Bar some men from the 101st Airborne and the 29th Divisions worked at having a good time with pilots from the Troop Carrier Command. There were Wacs in the party too, but the attention they were getting came mostly from pilots. Some infantrymen were arguing about what their outfits did and where.

A pianist was pounding out what he considered American swing, and it wasn't the place for a name-and-address interview. An infantry captain who'd had a few drinks didn't waste much time on Hitler.

"Yeah, I guess he's dead," he said, "but so are a lot of good guys. And you just remember that."

Then the infantrymen went back to arguing about what had happened at Bastogne.