

## LEAVE TRAINS - by Wells....

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ton, whose home is at 290 West End Ave., New York City, sat in the company of four other GI's. He was returning to Marseille after spending 13 days in Antwerp with his grandmother and an uncle whom he hadn't seen since childhood. Born in Europe, Dimston was reared in the States and returned to this part of the world in January, 1944 with the 3rd Division. A veteran of the Anzio beach-head action, he was a radio operator in a line company serving in Italy and across the south of France into Germany. His furlough over, he was returning to his job as an interpreter and investigator with the General Courts Martial Section in Delta Base Headquarters, an assignment he drew when he was relieved from duty with the 3rd Division.

They Begin Reminiscing

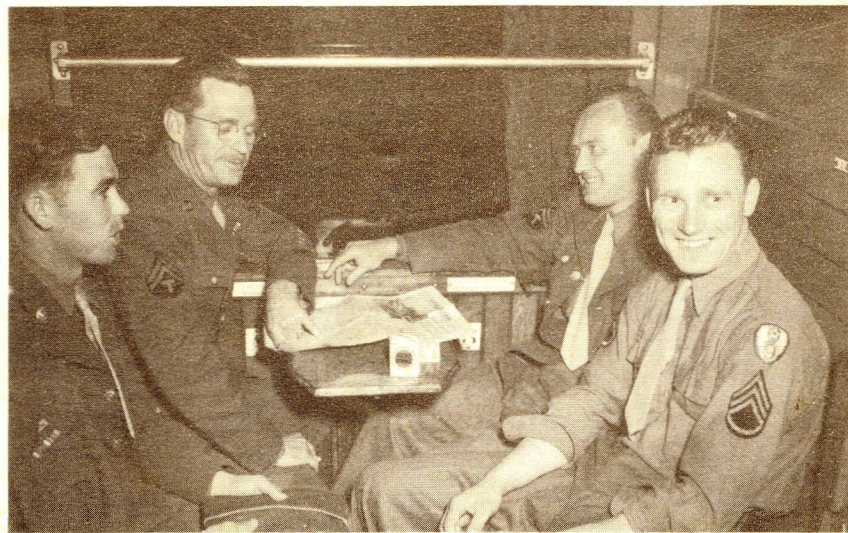
During the first half hour after leaving Brussels, the conversation among furlough-bound passengers drifts through such subjects as the merits of the point system, the progress of the Japanese War, the pros and cons of non-fraternization in Germany and the relative merits of a dozen European cities. It is all quite casual until the inevitable kinship felt among soldiers finally takes hold. Then reminiscences are recounted in a more lively current of conversation, seasoned with some of the best Army slang and picturesque speech. By this time the fields of the Belgian countryside are slipping by unnoticed as the train strains ahead into the enveloping darkness of the late mid-summer night.

Pfc Johnnie Eades whose home is in Bellevue, Ky., was returning to his outfit after seven days leave in Antwerp where he visited his brother, Lafayette Eades, a medic attached to the 30th U.S. General Hospital. Johnnie's favorite topic of conversation was his wife, Laverne, whom he described as the "sweetest gal in the world". An infantryman, Johnnie wore the combat infantry badge which he referred to as the insignia of the "Queen of Battle". Overseas since last fall when he landed at Le Havre with the 99th Division, Johnnie was an ammunition bearer in a light machine gun squad and saw action at the Siegfried Line and in the reduction of the Rundstedt Bulge.

Paris Enters Discussion

A break in the conversation provided someone with an opportunity to flick the light switch, and an overhead lamp came feebly to life, casting little more than a faint glow over the coach compartment. The occupants began to strain at ties, loosen collars, shift uneasily on the wooden seats, and someone remarked through a yawn that "riding these coaches is one time when extra padding on the hindquarter pays dividends."

Paris intruded into the discussion, as it inevitably does, and T/5 John A. Wynn, 4228 Suitland Road, S.E., Washington, D. C., began to ask about places to go and things to see there. A medical corps man attached to the 160th Station Hospital, Wynn was bound for the comforts of his first leave since 1943. He had passed through Paris once before, and was returning to become better acquainted with a city which impressed him as being "almost" on a par with Washington. With him was T/5 Joseph J. Zubrowski, 4 Hill Street, Jewett City, Conn., whose military background was identical with Wynn's. Both had been trained together back in the States at Camps Lee and Picknett, then moved overseas where they



Letting up after months of continuous duty without a break in routine, furlough-bound GI's like Pfc Johnnie Eades, T/5 John A. Wynn, T/5 Joseph J. Zubrowski and S/Sgt Eddie Sciencinski relax aboard a leave train and swap personal experiences, finding humor in a lot of things they never thought they'd ever laugh about.

-- Photo by 2nd MRS Engr. Dept.

served in England prior to arriving in France. The Paris trip was but another milestone in their parallel military careers.

A few hours out of Brussels someone pulled the emergency cord. Whether this was done by some incurable practical joker with malice aforethought, or by accident, the result was the same. The train ground to a stop and up ahead the engine wheezed impatiently. Pouring forth French with typical volubility and gesticulating wildly, a member of the train crew came swinging down the narrow coach aisle, lantern in hand, peering suspiciously into each compartment, apparently bent on ferreting out the responsible culprit. When his pretense at intimidation failed, the trainman finally warmed somewhat, and before leaving the coach he seemed resigned to the futility of trying to terrify a confession out of his khaki-clad passengers with explosive French. Shrugging his shoulders as he retreated out of the car he muttered something that sounded very much like "C'est la guerre".

Under way again, S/Sgt Eddie J. Sciencinski, 2201 South 15th Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was frank in admitting that he preferred to do his traveling by plane, adding that his preference was probably due to his service in the Air Corps. Assigned to the 493rd Air Service Group which operated P 47's, Eddie's overseas service began in December, 1943. He was stationed in England in an area over which London-bound buzz bombs frequently passed, and came to the continent in time to participate in the Normandy campaign. Moving with his unit, which kept on the heels of the advancing ground forces setting up landing strips as close to forward areas as possible, Eddie participated in the Northern France, Rhineland, and Central European campaigns before the war in this theater ended. Conversation with Eddie revealed that he was a crusader for the P 47, a ship he has seen come home to roost many times, battered beyond description, yet still able to fly. A few attempts were made to talk up the merits of other ships, but Eddie insisted that that P 47 was the best ship of its kind that ever cut the air over Europe.

Spinning ahead toward the Franco-

Belgian border, the noise of the wheels on the rails and the lateness of the hour combined to create heavy eyes. The conversation drifted slowly from a running commentary of personal experiences into sporadic remarks. Someone stood to stretch, and there was a general sorting of legs and shifting of posture as more or less comfortable positions for sleep were sought after. The compartment light was switched off, and discussion was laid to rest with half-stifled yawns.

Whoops - Wrong Door

A match flared out of the darkness and someone lit a last cigarette. Apparently realizing that when the train reached Paris in the morning there would be no time for parting remarks, the smoker wished his traveling companions good luck. The responses were brief and restrained, for no one seemed inclined to anything but sleep.

A figure, silhouetted by the aisle light, slid the compartment door open and prepared hesitantly to enter. Clairvoyantly, someone not yet completely asleep directed the intruder to the middle of the car, whereupon the interloper closed the door quietly, remarking that "they ought to put that thing at the end of a car, the way they do back home."

And so it goes aboard a leave train. The atmosphere is casual, the personalities kaleidoscopic, and on each trip a different pattern of viewpoints and experiences fuses together into a composite of Americans in Europe. Then, when the train slides into the Paris terminal, the pattern dissolves as the furlough-bound passengers drift toward the station exits and filter along the Parisian streets.

And Isn't Paid For

A soldier parked an Army jeep in front of a parking meter, got out and started to walk down the street. A policeman saw him and called after him. "Hey, buddy drop a nickel in that parking meter."

The soldier yelled back, "Put it in yourself, that jeep belongs as much to you as it does to me."

A very small boy came home dejectedly from his first day at school.

"Ain't goin' tomorra," he spluttered.

"And why not?" his mother asked.

"Well, I can't read and I can't write and they won't let me talk, so what's the use."