CHARACTER QUALITY New York ACCURACY ENTERPRISE
Journal American
AN AMERICAN PAPER FOR THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Sports

By Bill Corum

Our Tour of Front Reveals German Debacle

The Noose Tightens. Death Gasp Near.

BERLIN BURNS AND HITLER CAN'T FIDDLE

CORPS HEADQUARTERS, First Army, April 28.—Your correspondent just has come from a four-day trip along the front of three American armies—the Seventh, Third and First. Behind the sometimes uncertain fronts of these armies, you will please understand, and not in front of them.

BILL CORUM

In spite of the historic link-up of our 69th Infantry Division (there are those doughboys again, brother) with the Russians at Torgau, we remain a fellow who can wait his turn for the vodka. However, our sports-writing pal, Cy Peterman of the Philadelphia Enquirer, told us all about it. Cy, who has managed to get fat on K rations and thus establish a secure place for himself in the eating league's Hall of Fame, was right out there gabbing in Russian with the boys in the black leather jackets. With a slight Philadelphia accent, however, it must be confessed.

Cy didn't know whether any of his new found pals had ever heard of Philadelphia. But they didn't ask him how he thought Connie Mack was going to make out this year.

Coming back to things we had seen and heard ourselves during the last four crowded days and nights, we could never have believed them possible if we hadn't seen them. And, even so, they still are unreal, as though witnessed through the fragmentary glass of a dream.

We visited the infamous Beuchenwald prison camp near Weimar. But by now so has practically everybody else we know. Among others we saw our friends Jack Hearst and Amon Carter, on the morning they left an airfield for there, along with the Messrs. Chandler, Hibbs, Pulitzer and other American publishers and editors.

The best description we could think of the Beuchenwald we saw was that it was an all too real, though still unbelievable, Dante Inferno. There is a point where even such words as horrible, terrible, madness and sadism cease to have meaning. This is the case of the "Hell on Earth" that was Beuchenwald. So far, for any writer to say them over again is a waste of time. Nobody can describe what words won't describe. The pictures you have seen best describe Beuchenwald, though, you may be deeply grateful, without the stench. That is to say, those of the pictures you have been allowed to see. Some the general public never will see and it may be glad of that.

Over a Bright Land That Has Died:

Beginning at Beuchenwald, I might, without exaggeration, say that almost overnight I have seen Germany go from what almost certainly must have been the most sadistic of modern nations to the saddest. I qualify the sadism with the words "almost certainly" because I know nothing about the Japs. If there is any reader who is inclined to question the sadism of the Nazis, I can report that for four days and nights of constant travel through the Reich on a trip that has extended from Bavaria to where I write in middle-Germany, I have yet to enter a house or barracks and fail to find somewhere on the premises the ever-present whip or cat o'nine tails. Surely, all the Nazis cannot have been jockeys or cowboys.

Now, "Due-Day" has come to Germany at last, and, this time, it has paid through the nose and will certainly continue to pay for years to come. While Berlin burns, Hitler can't even fiddle. With Berlin surrounded, our troops and the Russians hooked up on the Elbe and with Patton crashing into the "National Redoubt," Nazism strangles in its death throes.

But if you were here you wouldn't even have to know those things to know it. Death and disaster are painted on the faces of the cities and towns and the once fair fields of a picturesque land as seen from the air and in the faces of the people when you meet them on the streets.

We spent a night in Crailsheim, once an important rail center, earlier in the week. About the only building left standing in the center of the town is a liderkrantz cheese factory which smelled just about as you would expect a deserted cheese factory to smell. I always have heard that cheese improved with age, but not this cheese. Not for me, at any rate. Walking through what had been the residential section, which was still standing, I suddenly had a feeling that somebody was staring at me. Looking up, I caught the glimpse of a face just before a lace curtain was suddenly dropped. It was coming onto twilight and the street was narrow and it occured to me that this wasn't Madison ave.

A Baby Tries to Fraternize:

Still, I didn't want to turn about too quickly, feeling sure that whoever it was still was watching from behind the curtain. A few houses further on, a tow-headed baby of about three popped its head out of an upstairs window and waved. What a howl it put up when its mother grabbed it and dragged it back into the room. I hope it wasn't fraternization. For I'm supposed to be some sort of assimilated officer and gentleman in this Army, and it costs, as you know, $65 when the non-fraternization rule is broken. And among other difficult angles of the situation, I haven't got the $65. Still, I had to smile at the scene and the fact that all of a sudden I wasn't nervous anymore and no longer felt that maybe somebody might be going to take a potshot at me from behind.

That happens around here. Or has, and probably will again. But the thousands of German men, women and children I have seen, seem to me too licked and to know it. And it is on the record of history that when your German is licked he is all licked—for the time being. Let us never again forget that phrase—"for the time being."