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HQ 92-411 (Bonn) 1
Dec. 1945

STATION HISTORY

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A "White Christmas" seemed imminent as December bulldozed its way into Southern France on the crest of freezing 60 mile-an-hour winds. The shivering 92nd saw its water supply almost entirely cut off by ice-clogged lister bags, water trailers, and pipes. Water for washing and shaving was obtained by melting on barracks stoves ice chopped from lister bags. Water thus procured was not very palatable, having that woody taste peculiar to melted ice. This condition prevailed for three days.

The month was made more bearable by the advent of Christmas and the New Year holidays which were as festive as possible under the existing conditions. The traditional turkey dinner, increased whiskey rations at the EM Club, and a USO show at the station theater did much to liven the Christmas week-end.

Many spent Christmas afternoon listening to the radio: Lionel Barrymore in Dickens' "Christmas Carol", and a special holiday Command Performance, featuring the best in State-side entertainment. On Christmas Eve, carols were sung in the 92nd Chapel, and packages were distributed to all who attended. These gifts were sent by members of a women's patriotic group in the U.S.

Increased quotas were allotted on passes to Nice and Cannes, thus enabling a large percentage of 92nd personnel to spend the holidays on the Riviera. An estimated 160 men took advantage of this factor on each holiday weekend.

New Year's was celebrated with the usual raucous ushering of the old year out and the new year in. Officer and EM celebrants jammed their respective clubs making toasts and conjecturing on what 1946 would bring in

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the way of a ticket home. The outlook seemed bright for those in the 55 to 59 point category. Fifty-pointers too, felt that they wouldn't be far behind.

On the 14th, Major Victor A Cherbak Jr., Group Commander, left the station on an R&R furlough to the "States", being replaced by Captain Robert R. Scott, who was formerly Group Operations Officer. Several other officers and enlisted men left on the same day, also on R&R furloughs.

On the 13th, all Liberty Runs by military aircraft were cancelled, making it necessary for all personnel going on leave, pass, or furlough to travel by rail, water, or motor transport. Since the distances involved make leave areas other than Nice and Cannes unfeasable, the Riviera has become our sole port of call, with the exception of furloughs to Switzerland and occasional trips, mostly by married men, to England.

In an all-out, all-month effort, the elements outdid themselves in giving us a violent cross section of weather. After more than a week of very unseasonable warm sunshine, following the freeze earlier in the month, the wind shifted to the South, bringing with it a three day down-pour. Water covered the entire base, not a rock being visible. The roads assumed proportions of swift flowing mountain streams, and barracks "shipped" water through cracks around doors and windows. No dinghies were available.

Between the fifteenth and twentieth of the month, more than one hundred low-point replacements arrived. These men, the majority of whom possess B-29 MOS numbers, came direct from the U.S. via Le Havre, France and Furstenfeldbruck, Germany. Many of these, regardless of MOS, have been put to work in various departments where the shortage of personnel is most pressing. Some are on flying status. Arrival date of Super Forts is as much a point for conjecture as ever.

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Roughly 12 to 15 percent of the personnel on the station were found to have scabies in a physical examination held by the Medical Department. A total of slightly over one hundred men were afflicted. Preventative measures were instituted immediately. All clothing and bedding of those infected was sterilized by steam. Patients were treated with Benzo-benzoate; flying equipment and leather goods were sterilized with Methyl-bromide gas.

The shortage of kitchen personnel in the mess halls has been alleviated to a great extent by French civilian cooks who were hired recently. This, however, has had no effect on the quality of the food, since we are still drawing the same rations.

As result of the cancellation of Liberty Run aircraft, there has been little air activity. A rough estimate of December hours in the air is as follows: 66 hours training, 180 hours transport, 67 hours miscellaneous. Total: 314 hours.

Two automotive accidents occurred during the month: one, the total loss of a Jeep, in which the driver was slightly injured. The second was an ambulance which was 28% demolished, but with no injury to the driver. In neither accident were the drivers at fault.

The reenlistment campaign was still under way; however not with the widespread fervor of the previous month: 14 more men signed up.

Men of the 92nd who had been referring to themselves as the FBI (Forgotten Boys of Istres) as early as September, were wondering what the complaint had been <u>then</u>. As the winter wore on, the mail situation grew steadily worse; the weather coupled with the added difficulty in getting away for a few days, gave the terrain an even bleaker appearance. All of our thoughts were in one direction -- WEST!

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