

ZEUGENSCHRIFTUM

ZS-3143-9

Name:	ZS Nr.	Bd.	Vermerk:
Smith, Mark A.	3143	I	
katalogisiert Seite: 1-6			
Sachkatalog: Bes.Zonen B-3- Gesundheitswesen Bes.Zonen B-3- Besatzungstruppen Entnazifizierung -3- Maßnahmen	Personen: Smith, Mark A.		
katalogisiert Seite:			
Sachkatalog:	Personen:		
katalogisiert:Seite:			
Sachkatalog:	Personen:		
katalogisiert Seite:			
Sachkatalog:	Personen:		

"The Hospital"

25-3143 -2

I had twenty-one men in my Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. With this small force, I had about fifteen square miles to patrol, and within this area there were about ten or twelve villages. (No cities of any size). Confronted with this fact, it was difficult for a patrol to do much more than to ride through every other day, just to let the people know we were still there. Our transportation consisted of three $\frac{1}{2}$ ton personnel carriers, better known as "jeeps". Our heaviest armament was the fifty caliber air cooled machine gun mounted on a tripod (or elevator mount), between the driver and front seat passenger.

From the beginning, I tried to know something about each village in our area, to include the location of the Mayor's office, the police headquarters and the institutions. Once I had done this I could assign my patrol areas and schedule men for each patrol, otherwise, as we were seldom if ever together, it would have been impossible to keep track of the men. I did have an radio in my jeep, but the maximum range under ideal circumstance and by "key" transmission was about fifteen miles.

A few days after the war had ended, I noticed a large building set within a spacious garden, a sign identified it as a hospital for the wermacht wounded. It appeared to be a good idea to make a personal visit, so I parked my jeep and entered the grounds. On the ground floor of the building was an office and I went there first. I talked to a german orderly, fortunately, he spoke enough english to grasp what I was telling him, for he excused himself and left. Shortly thereafter, he re-appeared, having in tow a woman dressed in a hospital smock. After the usual confusion I finally grasped that the woman was the doctor in charge of the hospital. She conveyed the idea that she would like to show me thru the hospital and I accepted. One of the first places that she took me to was the operating amphitheater. An operation was in progress, it was an amputation case. Even as a lay man it was obvious to me, that the patient on the table was not sedated to the degree that he should have been. While I was taking this all in, the lady doctor said to me and again it was in german with a bit of english.

Institut für Zeitgeschichte ARCHIV	Akt. 6341a	Best. 25 3143	Kat. 628
Rep.			

^

(The Hospital-Continued)

28-3743-3

"Herr Lieutenant, we have little morphine or other drugs left is there not some way that such drugs can be obtained for us, the wounded continue to pour in?" I then told her I would see what could be done.

I immediately returned to Regimental Headquarters and reported the situation to the Regimental Commander, Colonel Jeeters. The next day he returned with me to the hospital. After visiting the operating room, he was as sickened as I had been over the lack of drugs and the suffering. He notified Military Government, and the following day the first shipment of morphine and other drugs started arriving at the hospital.

There was an incident at the hospital that would serve to illustrate the bitter fruits of war. One day, I was walking thru the gardens to the office, when a young, wermacht officer approached me. He was, as were most of the patients, an amputee, having lost one of his arms. He reported to me that there was a group of polish displaced persons, living in the village, who were bedeviling the patients. He explained that the poles were riding thru the garden in the evening, on bicycles and that any german soldier who was unfortunate enough to get in their way was being knocked down. It is to be remembered that most of the patients at the hospital had lost one or more limbs and the poles would ride so close as to knock them off their crutches.

I ask the officer if he had reported this state of affairs to the person in charge of the hospital, he affirmed that he had done so, and further the police in the village had been notified, but his feeling was that the police were actually intimidated by the poles. I explained that with my limited resources there was not much I could provide to put an end to the practice. He then said, "Do you mind if we take care of it?" I explained that I had not received any official reports on the matter but I felt that if no one was seriously injured I would place no obstacles in his way.

Several evenings later, the poles came riding on their bicycles, at top speed up the village street and thru the stone gate ways, leading to the broad avenue of the gardens. The german officer had stationed himself so that he had a good view of the approaches to the hospital

The Hospital-Continued.

25-3743-4

grounds and when the poles rode through the gates, shouting and gesticulating, the officer gave a signal and two of the patients standing in the bushes out of sight, stood up and tightened a rope around the trees on each side of the road, placing the rope a few inches higher than the handle bars of the bicycles. The results was total havoc, and the poles one minute pedaling full speed ahead and in the next second laying on the walk amidst the ruins of spokes, wheels and other debris. While the poles were still laying on the ground, the german soldiers gathered around them, shouting and waving their crutches at them. The poles got up and limped away with the remnants of their machines. After that the hospital was no longer plagued by visits from inebriated displaced persons.

(10-11-12 May 45. MAS)

Institut für Zeitgeschichte

Shortly after the war ended, Intelligence Units such as mine were provided with so called automatic arrest list, these list were quite detailed, containing the names of senior and subordinate members of the NSPDA. The list as I recall it also included those individuals who had served in SS units to include the Waffen SS, starting with the rank of corporal. Later it was determined that the Waffen SS units were not always made up of died in the wool Nazis. For example, toward the end of the war, many of the replacements for the Wermacht were diverted to the SS units, and in such cases the soldier had no choice.

There was a period when the military authorities were placing a great deal of stress on locating those individuals who appeared on the automatic arrest list. According to my notes there were two basic facts that had to be met before a suspect could be placed under arrest, these were: The first requirement being that the suspect admitted to his identity; the second being that he not be held for an unreasonable length of time, but be taken to a civilian jail withing the regimental area as soon as possible. (This was in the case of civilians only, military personnel were held in POW compounds).

I received information that a man suspected of being the Kreisenleiter, was still in the area and was living in one of the villages nearby. I no longer have the man's true name, so for the purpose of the story will call him Johann Schmidt. I went to the village and obtained an interpreter. To explain, my procedure was never to use a military interpreter when I could avoid it. We proceeded to make inquiries about Schmidt, and some one finally volunteered that he was looking over his field nearby. (He was a farmer on a large scale, and most of the charges lodged against him was that he had utilized slave labor on his farms and provided them with quarters in his stables). We rode out into the country side and while driving on the road, observed a stocky, heavy set man walking in the field nearby.

I stopped and ask the man for his identification papers. When he produced his identification papers he proved to be Herr Schmidt, and readily admitted that he was. I then informed him that he was under arrest, proceeded to the village where I said farewell to the interpreter, and with Herr Schmidt as company drove to the jail in Wurzburg.

Arriving at the jail, I could locate no Americans, although I knew the control of the jail rested with Military Government. The jailors appeared to be persons who had been working in the jail for years. I did make one of the jailors understand that I wanted to lock Herr Schmidt up and he led me back to a set of cells and indicated that one of them was for my prisoner. He then managed to convey the idea to me that I would have to fill out a set of papers. Once Schmidt was in the cell I started to leave, and he spoke to me informing me in German that he was not the man that I was looking for and that I had the wrong man. I was now confronted with a problem. I faced taking Schmidt back to the village until the matter could be straightened out or I could disregard his statement, feign ignorance and depart without Schmidt. Instead, I entered his cell, removed my blouse, shirt and undershirt, and stood glowering at Schmidt for a few minutes, then I walked toward him and once again he admitted his true identity. I returned to the office and made out the necessary papers.

I am not proud of this incident. But those were catch as catch can days and my threatening attitude was sheer bluff, granted Herr Schmidt was not in a position to accurately judge this and very likely believe I would beat him.

There was an interesting aftermath to this story. No one had notified the family of Herr Schmidt, he had as far as they were concerned vanished off of the face of the earth. Apparently the interpreter had for his own reasons said nothing about his trip to the country with me and that Schmidt had been arrested. Schmidt's family finally managed to trace his whereabouts, and a hue and cry arose about the American's using gestapo tactics.

(Automatic Arrest-Continued)

25-3743 - 7

There was some justification for the complaint. Those days were so hectic that although there was some planning, much of it was on a hit or miss basis.

(May-1945-MAS)

Page Three

Institut für Zeitgeschichte - Archiv