

By T Sgt. EDGAR L. ACKEN

THE whole length of the one-story narrow stone barracks that served as guard-house dormitory hummed with conversation from the groups sitting on the steel cots, smoking and talking and occasionally horsing with one another. But Jake paid no attention to the others. He had a listener—bought and paid for with Bull Durham. The listener knew it. He was out of smokes and Jake had the makin's.

Jake waited until his victim had rolled a smoke and lighted it. Then he began:

"A frien'a mine come off a furlough an' tol' me. He says, 'Jake, I hear ya ol' man ain't feelin' so good.' So I says, 'What they do, catch him drunk and jug 'im again?'—jokin', see? An' this fella says, 'No, honest, I hear he's sick.' So when I hears that I goes outta the mess hall—I was doin' a week KP; that damn cap'n again, jus' cause I missed reveille. Anyhow I goes to the orderly room an sees the firs' sergeant.

"I tol' him how it was, how the ol' man was sick, had pneumonia or somethin'."

An accidental listener on the bunk behind Jake interrupted him: "Howja know he had pneumonia?"

"Oh, I dunno. Guess this guy tol' me or somethin'. Anyway, I tol' the first sergeant about it,

and he tells me to see the comp'n'y comman'er. So I do.

"Lotsa good 'at done me. The CD looks at me fishy like and asts me where the letter was. An' I says, 'what letter?' An' he says that letter that tells me that my ol' man's so sick. So I tells him how it was—I didn't get no letter, this guy tells me.

"He keeps lookin' at me funny, an' then he says, 'I tell yuh, yuh can't get no furlough unless yuh got proof that ya ol' man's sick. Now if yuh wants yuh can go see the Red Cross an' get them to send a wire an' see if ya ol' man is sick. If they say so yuh can get a furlough.'

"So I went back to the mess hall madder'n hell. Here that cap'n wouldn't let me off jus' 'cause he hated me. My ol' man sick an' all didn' make no difference to him."

The second interrupter spoke up again: "Did you go ta the Red Cross?"

Jake turned. "Nah! Whatsa use? If he was sick the cap'n'd said he wasn't sick 'nough or somethin'." Jake settled in a position where he could face both his listeners. The first one had finished the cigarette and had slumped on the bunk, now and then putting an interested look on his face. The second man seemed the more interested of the pair, and Jake concentrated on him.

"Anyways," he continued, "I got madder an'

madder. There I was, peelin' them spuds an' scrubbin' floors an' washin' pots, an' my father ready to die. I didn' do nuthin' then, though—I couldn'. But that night I borrowed fi' bucks and got in a crap game and won 10, an' I took the 15 an' went to town.

"I had a few beers an' messed aroun' some, but all the time I was mad. Fin'ly I made up my mind. I says to myself, 'Maybe the ol' man's dyin' or somethin'. So I started out. I caught a freight up into Kansas and was goin' on into Colorado where the ol' man's at, an' then I happened to think maybe the MPs or cops might look for me there. So I gets off at Wichita an' gets a flop.

"Then I was broke. So I got me a job in a hamburger joint. I figgered on maybe writin' the ol' man an' if he was all right, I'd come on back. So I work on there an' I had a little dough an' I was ready to come on back, an' I goes into a beer joint an' I has a coupla beers an' somebody clips me f'reverthin'."

"Were you drunk?" his new listener asked.

"Nah! I had a few beers but I don't get drunk on beer. Why I can drink a whole case of beer an' don' hardly feel it. I 'member—"

"What did you do then—after you got clipped?"

"Oh, I went back to the hamburger joint. I couldn't come back with no money, could I?"

"You coulda taken a freight back, couldn't you?"

JAKE looked hard at his interlocutor. "You know how dirty yuh get on a freight," he said. "Yuh wouldn't expect me to come back to the comp'n'y all dirty, would yuh?"

"Yeah," the other said, "I guess ya right. Got the makin's?"

Jake felt the wrong pockets first. "I guess I got a little som'eres." He found the sack and held it out.

The other rolled a smoke and handed the bag back. "Then what happened?"

"Oh, I was workin', and a guy gets flip in the joint. He claims I short-changed him. We has an agyment an' damn if he don't call a cop! The dirty louse!

"The cops take me in. Then they fine out where I'm from, an'—here I am. Jus' on account the cap'n hates me an won't lemme see my sick ol' man, I'm in here."

"How is he?"

"Who?" asked Jake.

"Your father."

Jake got up. "I dunno, I ain't heard from him in a coupla years an' I never did get ta see him."



The Moscow Pact

THE joint British-Russian-Chinese-American declaration that came out of the Moscow conference put the clincher on a few points closely connected with our collective terms of service in this man's Army and with our action after the war itself is won.

As such, the Moscow Pact is right next to the skin.

First off, the four Allied nations pledged themselves to "continue hostilities against those Axis powers with which they respectively are at war until such powers have laid down their arms on the basis of unconditional surrender."

Such a guarantee can only mean a shorter fight, which won't leave anybody alone toward the end with a war on his hands and no one else there to help him. The conference brought together for the first time the diplomats and experts of Britain and Russia and the United States, who talked over the military ways and means of winning in a hurry.

Grand strategy, as such, is so far removed from most of us that its effect on the individual personally might be lost in the shuffle. But the destiny of every man and woman in uniform is shaped by the big shots who look at a map of the world and say we hit here and not there.

And the big shots of the Big Four talked it over with the idea of coordinating their efforts to bring about the earliest unconditional surrender of Axis enemies and, just as important, making that surrender stick.

In a joint declaration, which included China, it was decided that the Allied unification now being welded in war will be carried on to see that surrender terms are met, that an international security set-up is established and maintained, and that the world in general gets a chance to live in peace—even if peace has to be crammed down a few throats.

The nations declared that "after the termination of hostilities they will not employ their military forces within the territories of other states except for the purposes envisaged in this declaration and after joint consultation."

That "except," of course, is a large little word. On the basis of the Moscow Pact, if any of us find ourselves held for foreign service it will be duty in which the whole Allied force is involved and in which the idea is a lasting peace.

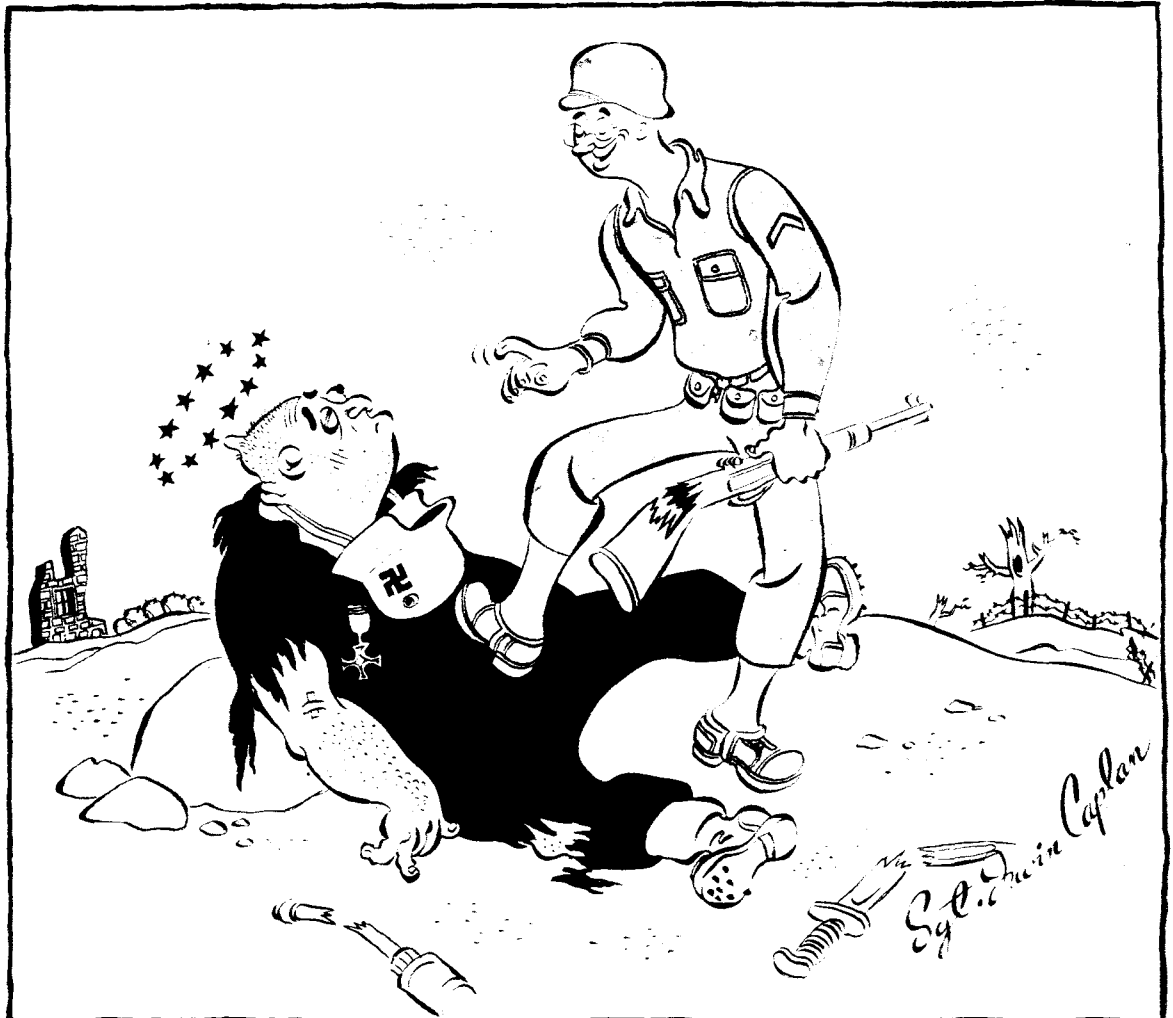
Post-war police duty, bugaboo to a lot of us, is another task that will be shortened by the cooperation of the United Nations working for a common cause.

Washington O.P.

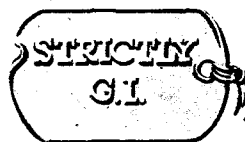
CAPT. CLARK GABLE, returning to Washington after a photographic mission in England and bombing raids over the Continent, had War Department secretaries agog in the Pentagon corridors. He told us one of his big difficulties was photographing German fighter planes going by in the opposite direction at terrific speeds. "Jerry doesn't just come in to get his picture taken; he has other business." Gable also had a little trouble taking sound films around the bases because of the GIs' language.

We went down to Union Station here to watch brass hats eat a GI meal cooked on one of the Army's new type of railroad kitchen cars. Among the innovations are showers for the KPs. . . . Present T/Os call for 6.6 doctors per thousand men in combat areas and 4.6 in nonbattle areas. Shows how medicine has advanced in the Army; the original ratio, set after the Spanish-American War, called for 8.5 per thousand. . . . Out of 60,000 American wounded and thousands of British flown to hospitals by the Medical Air Evacuation Transport Squadrons, only two died in transit. . . . We hear that our armed forces now burn up 80 times as much gasoline as in the last war. An Infantry division needs 12,500 gallons to move 100 miles. . . . In a big invasion 10,000 kinds of Signal Corps equipment go ashore.

—YANK's Washington Bureau

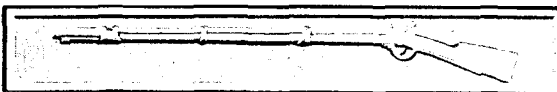


"Nothing personal, you understand."



Infantry Badges

Two new badges for infantrymen have been authorized by a WD order: the Expert Infantryman Badge for men and officers of the Infantry who "attain established proficiency standards or whose action in combat is rated satisfactory," and the Combat Infantryman Badge for those "whose conduct in combat is exemplary or whose combat action occurs in a major operation."



The Expert Infantryman Badge [above] is a miniature silver rifle mounted on an infantry blue field with silver border. It is three inches long and one-half inch wide. The Combat Infantryman Badge [below] is of the same design with wreath added. The badges will be worn above the left breast pocket, in the same position as the wings of an airman.



The order also specifies that Infantry units in which 65 percent of the personnel have won either

one of the two badges will carry white streamers on their unit guidons, colors or standards.

Mediterranean Casualties

The Secretary of War has announced that total Allied casualties in the Mediterranean Theater from Nov. 8, 1942, to Oct. 29, 1943, were slightly less than 100,000. Of this figure American forces lost 5,539 killed, 17,621 wounded and 7,966 missing. Axis casualties during the same period in that theater totaled about 600,000: 40,000 killed, 90,000 wounded, 468,055 prisoners of war.

GI Shop Talk

A new lip mike, worn on the upper lip and held in place by bands around the ears, has been adopted for use by the Army Ground Forces. . . . Army Ordnance has translated its technical manuals and field-service publications into Chinese and French. . . . Garden-fresh vegetables are now available for GIs in the British Isles as a result of a British-American agreement for the purchase of seeds for the overseas Victory gardens. . . . A change in the grade of wool used for GI socks will assure less shrinkage and greater wear, the WD announces. . . . Huge tank transports, 58 feet long and weighing more than 40 tons, are transporting armored vehicles to the front lines and removing disabled ones; use of these vehicles enables a tank to go into battle with full fuel tank and cool motor. . . . Christmas cards to soldiers overseas should be sent in sealed envelopes as first-class mail. . . . The Alaska Defense Command has been separated from the Western Defense Command and redesignated as the Alaskan Department. Lt. Gen. S. B. Buckner Jr. commands.

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