

# GI Jeans



A French flying officer checks the work of his students at radio school as a GI radio noncom looks on. Their insignia, three chicks backed by the American eagle, proclaims in French: "They will grow larger."

**They like America, but these French Air Force trainees are waiting for the day when they will see their homes again.**

By Sgt. ADAM YARMOLINSKY  
YANK Field Correspondent

**S**COTT FIELD, ILL.—They wear their stripes in bright orange and gold on their shoulder straps and garrison caps; they throw a jaunty palm-out highball to every rank from the lowest two-striper up; their shoulder patch is a red-white-and-blue shield, and they pleasantly astonish bartenders by asking for wine instead of whisky.

These French Air Force GIs are getting the air and ground training that only the unbombed U. S. can offer. The *Centre de Formation Personnel Navigant en Amérique*—the French Air Force in America—has its headquarters in Washington, D. C., but its training detachments are scattered throughout the States. You can hear French marching songs in Nebraska, watch the unfamiliar movements of French close-order drill in Louisiana and observe weird struggles with the English language in a Florida PX.

In spite of language difficulties, the courses are never cut down or spread out for the Frenchmen, and they come through with top-notch grades. Only a select few win out in the stiff competition at the North African end of the line, where the waiting list is as long as an OCS board's. There's a lot of rank in the French detachment, and although the men don't wear hashmarks on their blouses, five years' service is about average.

The typical GI Jean was called up under the regular peacetime draft in 1938 or 1939, and he's been in service ever since. Before the fall of France, he was shipped to North Africa for duty, or perhaps he was sent there afterward by the Vichy government. Jean's family remained in France, sweating out D Day and working for the underground in the meantime. In his wallet, Jean probably carries clippings from a French underground paper telling of sabotage activities.

In his five years, Jean has taken a lot of hard

knocks, first as a *bleu* (recruit) and then advancing slowly by competitive exams, from *deuxieme classe* (private) through *premiere classe* (pfc) and *caporal* to *caporal chef* (buck sergeant) or *sergent* (staff sergeant).

If he got as far as *sergent* on the other side, Jean entered what was strictly a first-three-graders' paradise: BOQ, a separate mess and an officer's uniform. He commanded troops and even had the right to administer punishments. He was, in fact, an under officer rather than an enlisted man. Now he finds himself back in the GI rut—living in the bay, eating in the mess hall, doing physical training and fatigue, and standing inspections like any newly rated corporal.

It's a good thing that Jean has this to gripe about, because there seems to be nothing else in his life in the States that he doesn't like. Even when he's studying hard for eight or nine hours a day, he'll tell you America is a six-month furlough. American GIs talk about good soldiers' towns, but Jean calls this a good soldiers' country. "Everything is free here for soldiers," he says. "It wasn't that way in Africa." American barracks are, like palaces after the cantonments he's had, and although it takes a little while to get used to our food, he has no complaints on that score. He's never seen PXs nearly as well stocked as those in the States.

Jean's pay—boosted by 20 percent overseas pay, flying pay even if he hasn't gotten in his time for the month and a couple of 5 percents in fogley pay—is more money than he's ever drawn before. But he's always cleaned out a few days before pay day.

Jean's social life is pretty well cared for by the French communities near the fields where he is stationed. In St. Louis, a French society gives parties for the Scott Field detachment; in New York there is a French canteen, and in most towns there are enough French families to make him feel at home. The *commandant d'armes* (CO) of the detachment usually locates these families and arranges entertainment for his men. Where there are no French people around, and sometimes even where there are, the boys make up in fast work what they lack in time. One young lady who could speak no French finally insisted that her *sergent* buy her a pocket dictionary.

On the post, Jean sticks pretty much with his

*copains*—his own buddies. The English he has picked up in a month or less of concentrated study may be enough to get him by in school with the help of interpreters, but he doesn't really feel at home in the language. He picks up all our standard cuss words but his own are really more expressive, and he usually sounds off in his mother tongue. French slang is a whole language by itself, and Jean likes to tease the American GI interpreters by throwing in words they never learned at school.

In spite of this teasing, Jean gets along very well with the interpreters. They are sometimes his only link with the English-speaking world. They help him with his shopping, go on sick call with him to explain his symptoms and translate the doctor's advice, and write his love letters. In their spare time, the interpreters are kept busy answering questions from other American GIs, who want to know what two orange stripes on the shoulder mean, or how you give the command for column right in French. (It's "*Changement de direction à droite une fois, marche.*" just in case you're interested.)

Jean's six months in America are a good deal, and he deserves the break after five years of service. But it's more than just that; it's a chance to learn a trade that will help him win back his own country. And when you hear Jean talk about France, or see him reading one of the very few Red Cross messages that gets through from his people, you know that winning back his country is what's at the bottom of his heart.

## WINGED WEDDING

**M**IAAMI, FLA.—S/Sgt. Walt R. Johnson of Chicago, Ill., was at the altar getting married here after a long hitch at a bomber base in Greenland where GIs use interphone language all day long.

The chaplain asked him the fateful question: "Do you, Walter, take this woman, Helen, to be your lawful wedded wife?"

Walt nodded nervously.

"Roger," he said.

—YANK Field Correspondent



## THE SAD SACK



## "LOST AND FOUND"



SGT. GEORGE BAKER

## Court Martial for Bigamy

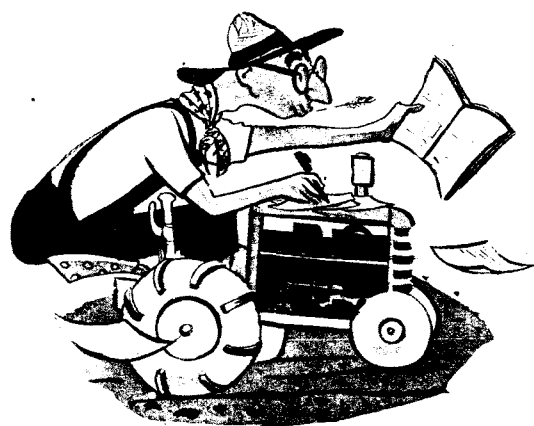
Dear YANK:

Just before we left our last station one of our buddies was suddenly yanked off to the guard-house. We left the island so quickly none of us could find out what he had done. Now we hear that he has been court-martialed for having two wives. Frankly, it doesn't make sense. Can the Army punish a man for a civilian crime like bigamy?

Kwajalein

—Cpl. CHARLES FUNDER

■ It can. "Bigamy has long been recognized as an offense under the 95th and 96th Articles of War, without reference to state laws," according to the Bulletin of the Judge Advocate General of the Army, April 1944 [page 150]. Article 96 would probably apply in this case, since it states that a court martial can administer punishment for "... all crimes ... of which persons subject to military law may be guilty."



## Loans to Veterans

Dear YANK:

I was 23 when I enlisted and intend to take advantage of the educational provisions of the GI Bill of Rights when I get out. I need only one more year of college to get my degree. I know that my tuition will be paid by the Government but I can't see how my wife and son can live on \$75 a month while I go to school. I own a 10-acre farm, which could be fixed up to produce additional income if I could borrow about \$1,000 for more livestock and equipment. Will it be possible for me to get that \$1,000 under the loan provisions of the GI Bill of Rights, in addition to receiving the education benefits?

Italy

—Sgt. JAMES ACKER

■ Yes. There are no restrictions in the GI Bill of Rights against a veteran obtaining more than one of the benefits of the law. To get the loan you will have to show that "there

## What's Your Problem?

is a reasonable likelihood that such operations will be successful." If you can show that, the Veterans' Administration will guarantee 50 percent of the loan at not more than 4 percent interest.

## Faithless Wife

Dear YANK:

I am enclosing the exact wording of a letter sent me by wife and will be ever grateful for any possible solution, for I have tried everything I know, even prayer. Still TS. Question: Can wife get allotment without consent of me when I have this letter of bad faith? Here are her words:

Dear Ahmed—The time has come to clear things between us. You will have realized, before now, that our marriage was a mistake. I beg of you to put an end to this mistake and get a divorce. I left your house this morning, because I didn't want to saddle you with the role of a betrayed husband. As a matter of fact, I have never been yours, but now I belong to someone else, and this finishes things between us.

I have grown distrustful of what is generally known as "love," for the feelings that have alienated me from you are drawn elsewhere, and I've got to obey the secret promptings of my nerves. I want to thank you and wish you well. I am going away. It makes me unhappy to hurt you, but you are so strong. I am still your friend, and perhaps the time will come when you can be my friend, too. I am taking everything except your clothes and the typewriter, and am having my friend type this for me, for you know I write poorly.—ELAINE.

Iran

—Pfc. AHMED S.

■ Yours is simply a classic version of a common problem. All the proof in the world that a soldier's wife is faithless does not change the fact that a family allowance is given to her regularly as long as she remains legally married to the soldier. If you are interested in initiating divorce proceedings you should consult your Legal Assistance officer, who can give you information about the divorce laws in your state.

## Maximum Fines

Dear YANK:

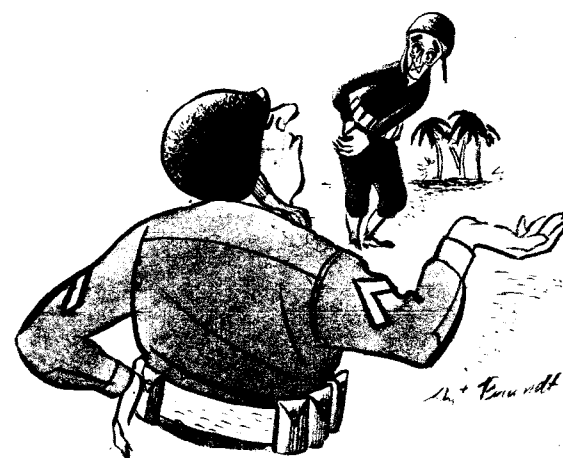
I have been court-martialed three times in special court, twice for AWOL and once for assault. The assault was merely a tussle with another soldier. In June 1943 I was fined \$30 a month for six months. On July 22 I was tried for the

second offense and was fined \$33 for six months. Two days later I was fined \$33 for another six months. The court fined me two-thirds of my pay, but they have been taking all of it. Since June 1943, I have only received \$10. This was when I was at the POE. What I would like to know is this: Is it lawful for the Army to take all of your money, allowing you nothing for cigarettes, etc.?

Guadalcanal

—Pvt. RICHARD MACK

■ The Manual for Courts Martial [par. 104 (b), page 96] protects a man from having more than two-thirds of his pay taken away at any one time. Moreover a Judge Advocate ruling on that question makes it very clear that a GI may have no more than two-thirds of his pay taken away through action of a court martial unless the sentence of the court martial also orders a dishonorable discharge, and you have not been dishonorably discharged. Refer your Finance Officer to AR 35-2460 [par. 5 (b)], and he will see to it that you get the money that is legally yours.



## Privates Winning the War?

Dear YANK:

Buck privates! I'm one. Can't help it. Don't like it. But buck privates win wars, and so I said aloud the other day. I say there are more of us than all the other grades of GI put together, and that is the reason we sad sacks are doing most to win the war. A pfc who calls himself a noncom said I was wrong. There's 25 bucks on the deal, YANK, and it's a problem of prime importance to lots of guys down here. What do you say?

New Guinea

—Pvt. JOHN KALDER

■ Shell out. There are not more privates in the Army than all other grades of enlisted personnel. Buck privates account for only 38 percent of total enlisted strength.