

Mrs Robert D Davis, 19107121

CoE, I7E3, 3rd ECAR

APC 658

To Postmaster N. Y.



June 10

AIR MAIL

MRS. R. L. DAVIS

1619 BOSTON

MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA

10 JUNE 1945  
Germany: Bavaria

Dear Folki:

Let me write you a few things about my personal experiences "in office."

To begin with, the circumstances of our administration have changed. Once we handled only small groups intensively, and large groups very extensively. As, for instance, Schauffenberg, my first stop in Germany; we had 700 people there, 1500 in the next towns. Our administration here covered all phases. So severe were the restrictions on these people, that they had to have our permission to blow their noses. So urgent was the necessity in keeping them in line, (they were the last group of German civilians before our tenaciously and thinly held Roer River line before Jülich.) that penalties meted out were <sup>as</sup> severe as possible. My first night in Schauffenberg, I was called out to apprehend a girl who had violated curfew by running across the street at 7:30 p.m. She was 16 yrs. old. Tried, and convicted before our court, she had to pay 1000 marks. [1 mark is worth 40¢ to a German]

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Two men inadvertently stayed overtime at a friend's after curfew (5 o'clock), and consequently had to stay there overnight. They were caught and fined stiffly for "attending an unauthorized public gathering of more than three people." (These two men + the man and his wife made 4.) A man slipped over to the house next door after supper one night. He and the man were fined heavily: the man of the house for "fostering a public gathering," and the other culprit for leaving his house after curfew.

Once the real offensive across the Rver began, on Feb. 28 1945, the aspect of our work changed. We became <sup>vandal-like</sup> creatures of one night-stands. One night, two, three nights was usually as long as we stayed in a place. "Gypsy moves" we called them. Failing time to really initiate an administration in our towns, we contented ourselves with emergency work: obtaining hospital and medical facilities, food and water, some measure of electricity etc. Sometimes we would do no mil. govt. work proper, just billet parts of the division as comfortably as we could, enforce the merciless regime on the hapless civilians for as



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long as we were there at various times we got vast areas. One time the 29<sup>th</sup> Div. was deployed over most of Westphalia as police and security. As we were the only MG detachment in the division, we "ran" most of Westphalia. Actually our work was limited to two things. (1) "Denazifying" the towns. This was the period when we lived at Wulfen, and when we would daily cover 100-200 miles, touring from one town to the next, kicking out the Nazi officials and putting in anyone else who was not a Nazi. From this time I wrote ecstatically of the pretty scenes one saw in the small villages etc. ~~But~~ You see the nature of the work itself. (2) Obtaining food thru' our name for the D. P. camps in the area. (Over 50,000 of them.) This phase didn't last long, but it was our greatest extended operation. We were to have more of them. But the point I make is this; the work brought us <sup>into</sup> only passing contact with the population. We talked to a few officials. The mass of the people didn't know us except as a name.

Now behold. We have a Stadtkreis (City County) the size of Muskogee; a Landkreis (Country county) of the same population. Total population of the

area under our jurisdiction, 75,000. And we have to run everything!

Because we are in the city, it absorbs, perforce, most of our attention. And how! Every morning 200-300 people storm our office with requests and pleas. In vain we limit "speaking hours" for civilians from 9-12; in vain we command the Burgermeister <sup>only</sup> to hear all the requests in advance, and to send, the most urgent to us. Everything is urgent to the person that wants it, and he usually talks the Burgermeister into endorsing his plea. Because Lt. Kobbé and I handle passes, 95% of the people come thru' our office. In vain I take over a court room, try to establish a *modus operandi* of making them stand behind the court railing and advance one at a time. In 30 min. there are 10 people pressing around my desk. And this is how I spend from 9-12 every morning, a harassed man, pinned in to my desk. But it's really fun, being the main contact point with the people. One hears so many odd tales; so many funny ones; it sharpens the German, too. All told, I'm pretty contented now. But so I jump from 9 to 12 every morning, when I have to explain to a few hundred Germans that they are at my disposal, not me at theirs.

Love, Bob