16 June 1945
Bavaria

Dear Folks:

You have read all about UNRRA, (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration), now I'll tell you about our UNRRA, and some of my experiences with D.P.'s. The typical UNRRA team is a melange of nationalities, and is by no means the smooth working thing that one would gather from typical news reports.

Our rather large D.P. set-up (abt. 5000 persons) is under the supervision of an UNRRA team. At the head of the team is a nice Englishman, Mr. Watson. Mr. Watson is a retired colonel of the British army, for all countries, whose principal qualification seems to be fluency of a sort in English. This is not an invariable qualification, however. His chief of supply is a young Frenchwoman, who speaks only French (I discovered to my despair after trying to converse with her in German and English. The creature knows about as much English as I know French.), but who overcomes her language deficiencies by a continual bustling about that does get things accomplished. Maybe I have referred to my first mission with her.

Capt. Nomine called me into his
office one morning, and gave me a "mission you'll like." A Ukrainian child, seriously ill, was refused hospitalization in the local German "krem" hospital. I was to go out and turn the woman doctor who had, according to this French dame, turned the child away. So, all set, I go out with the Frenchwoman and the child to the hospital. The doctor, who, according to excited Gallic at my side, was responsible, seemed to me to be a typical Aryan; blond, good-looking, and with that penetrating, proud, unyielding stare. Unfortunately, this one was young, which made my task more difficult. But heroically enough, I gave the girl (only 26) a sound reprimand, told her she was to report to the governor. My duty turned out to an all around unhappy one. The Frenchwoman's report was completely incorrect; the girl was not responsible, and she was Latvian, not German. Everything got straightened out, but not due to the unhelpful omniscience of the Frenchwoman. Now I am thinking of dating the young Latvian, but am wondering at the complications of apologies, introductions, and going through the maze of thermometers in the hospital to locate her.

The "other nationalities" include: an Italian who speaks English, and has a basic understanding of U.S. military government procedure. He is always bringing in such names as I incorrectly filled out forms, and switching his 1,000 Italians on alternate days from D.P. to prisoner of war columns on the reports. (This makes a great difference.
in our ration procedures. To this day, after about 10 days frantic telephone conversations, he has never succeeded in establishing a satisfactory stable number of P.W.O. Although his function is, humbly enough, is that of an interpreter, he is eternal, and the camp leaders are the ones who change. About every three days he brings in a smiling, emotional, "new Italian camp leader." Our friendship has proceeded to the point of my giving him cigarettes.

My friendship with another figure began less fortunately. Col. Watson's principal office worker is an officious, middle-aged Lithuanian lady. She was a bit too troublesome in my office in the early days, coming in at odd hours with troublesome requests. Once I threw her out with practically physical force. This incipient feud has been replaced by an amicable working truce, but one has the uncomfortable feeling that this bull-dog-like creature hasn't forgotten. As I know I wouldn't forget.

Another, probably the oddest, employee at the Cosmopolitan UNRRA office, is a Polish girl. Besides possessing a queer name for a Pole, Hanna, she has that slavish accent and grammar peculiar to the Slavs. I jolly her up as much as I can, because the poor girl is a baffled, hunted look of an inferior, and I like to see her light up. She's not up to any light conversation, however, and I have thru experience limited the conversations to chatty inquiries about her health and remarks about the weather. Her function, as far as I have discovered, is concrete of printing
signs, and slipping as surreptitiously as possible between our two offices with reports.

The really bright spot in the UNRRA picture is a beautiful German-blooded, slender Czech girl. She is German thru and thru, but is utterly beautiful, and speaks good English. Also I was lucky enough to be the Captain's agent in reclaiming her apt. for her. (She was ousted by a German. It was the second case in a week where the Capt. called me in for a "case you'll like," meaning a German had to be jailed.) Everything got straightened out, and the girl got two new rooms for her apt. She is eternally grateful, and stammers her thanks in that nervous English of hers, literally sending me into a swoon every time I have "business" at the UNRRA, which I have found occasion for every day since then.

There was a bewhiskered, Frenchman of white Russian extraction, who dined at our table for awhile. We called him, irreverently, "General Electric Whisker." What a character! Had your villain, a scene young Russian Major, who was apparently a political commissar, been a Russian liaison mission from the Army General Staff, turned instantly respectful before him. He has created trouble for about two weeks past trying to impress Poles and Latvians and Lituanians and Ukrainians into the Russian camps. At hot coal of intrigue, he was loaded on a truck and evacuated to Russian territory a few days ago.

These are just a few of the principal figures in a vast, largely peasant, group of DPs. They are a constant thorn in our side, but are entitled to all respect and attention because of what they suffer so mutely under the Nazis.

Love, Bob