

Santa Maria Caesarea

At Santa Maria Caesarea we were warned that the Germans were planning to raid across the narrowest part of the Adriatic Sea for the purpose of capturing the military headquarters of the Allied military government. The straits at this point narrowed down to about 20 miles and it would have been a relatively simple matter to cross in small boats and return in a day. I spent a restless night with a loaded 45 under my pillow but if the Germans had any plans for our capture, they were abandoned without any attempt to cross the Adriatic.

The nearest I came to winning a Purple Heart was when I was returning to Barri from Santa Maria. On a dry road the driver lost control of the command car in which I was riding and I was thrown to the floor. Aside from a slight bruise on my left knee, I was unhurt. At least I thought so at the time. When at a later date I developed some lameness in my left knee, I blamed it on this accident but that time I was not interested in claiming a Purple Heart and was glad to settle for a somewhat painful bruise.

“This is the Army, Mr. Jones”

The only time I saw a U.S.O. show was in Santa Maria Capua Vetere. I had always been an admirer of Irving Berlin’s music and I was more than delighted when I was ordered by our British Lieutenant Colonel to sit next to Mr. Berlin at dinner at our mess.

The show organized by Irving Berlin to entertain the American troops in the Naples area was ‘So this is the army Mr. Jones’. The British Lieutenant Colonel had ‘laid it on’ to have Irving Berlin have lunch at Santa Maria before his show and to my delight I was asked as the ranking American officer present to help entertain our guest. It was one of the few occasions when I had an opportunity to meet an American celebrity.

Mr. Berlin was a quiet, modest and entertaining guest. All that sticks in my memory is one story that he told on himself with a fair amount of modesty. It went somewhat as follows: After the show

proper Mr. Berlin asked if there was any particular number that his audience wished to have him do for them. There were a number of requests and finally a G. I. stood up and said, 'You haven't sung the greatest war song of them all. You haven't sung 'Over There', the greatest of all your World War I songs'. Irving Berlin fielded this chance very smoothly. He said, 'I will be glad to sing for you what is probably one of the greatest war songs ever written. So to wind up our evening together I shall sing 'Over There', the song written during World War I by George M. Cohan'.

I had to admire the great modesty with which Mr. Berlin turned the attention of the audience from himself and wound up his show with a tribute to George M. Cohan.

Opera in Naples

The traveling show which caused the greatest hilarity was 'Madama Butterfly', staged by the U.S.O. at the Palm Theatre in Naples.

The performance was warmly received by the G. I. audience, many of whom had never heard an opera before. At one point in the performance a chorus line representing Japanese beauties turned their backs to the audience, knelt and bowed to a statue of Buddha placed at the rear of the stage. The sight of the chorus line of what purported to be Japanese beauties turning their broad beams to the G. I. audience as they knelt and bowed oriental fashion caused more than a snicker of amusement from the audience. However, the snicker was as nothing compared to the mingled applause, jeers and cat-calls which greeted the singers who came out to accept the plaudits of the G.Is. for what passed in wartime as a creditable performance.

One of the stage managers prompted 'Pinkerton's' small boy, who came up with a stiff fascist salute. Fortunately, all the G. Is thought it was tremendously funny and what might have been a serious International incident was passed off with a roar of mingled applause and laughter, which shook the building so vigorously that I was worried that the theatre, already weakened by several days of bombardment in the capture of Naples, might collapse.



George—*Cello*, Dorothy—*Piano*, Howard—*Violin*

Aversa

Colonel Simpson asked me to represent him when he was invited to be present at a special occasion and I agreed to do so without knowing too much about the occasion itself.

Captain Anderson of the Quartermaster Corps was made an honorary citizen of the town of Aversa. I was never quite sure why it was that he was given this honor. The grapevine had it that Captain Anderson had allowed some of his trucks to be used in the black market operations by the Sindaco. Another version was that Captain Anderson had saved the town of Aversa from starvation. Whichever of these stories is correct, it was quite a show. Captain Anderson stood holding one corner of the plaque of Aversa while the podesta held the other corner. In between and forming a connecting bridge stood the Cardinal, who I assume blessed the whole proceeding. The Womens Club in Aversa arranged to have refreshments served. I could not understand any of the Italian but it was the one occasion for the lovely ladies of Aversa who ordinarily did not allow themselves to be seen in public, to act as floaters and pass cakes and cookies.

Leaving this festive affair I found that while we were inside attending the festivities someone had jacked up the car we had used to drive from Santa Maria to Aversa and had made off with all four wheels. We had to return to Santa Maria in a borrowed car and to the best of my knowledge the wheels were never recovered.

The Colosseum

Santa Maria Capua Vetere was the original capital of Rome and many gala events were staged there. The wild animals to which the early Christians were thrown were kept in underground cages and brought up into the Colosseum after they had been starved to the proper degree of fierceness. Hugo Veloni, my interpreter, offered to arrange a tour of the old Colosseum for me. He assured me that it was in better condition than the one in Rome but I was too busy to do much sight-seeing, much to his disappointment as he assured me that the

intricate machinery for flooding the arena for naval battles was worth seeing.

The Colosseum at Rome is larger but not as well preserved as the one at Santa Maria Capua Vetere and I had hoped that sometime after World War II was over to visit Santa Maria Capua Vetere. However, this proved to be impossible as explained in a later portion of the chronicle.

Espionage Cases

I shall leave the recounting of the espionage trials in Riccione to some historian, not that they were uninteresting or unimportant to my narrative but because the task of deciding whether any military secrets may be involved is more than I can undertake at this time. However, there was one case which anyone interested in my father's penchant for wearing 100% woolen underwear may find interesting.

The first espionage case I tried (and probably lost) will give some slight insight into the nature of the espionage cases I was called on to defend. Uncontraverted evidence was that a patrol operating in what used to be called 'No Man's Land' captured an enemy agent and forcibly brought the prisoner into the territory controlled by the Allied forces. I defended my client on a charge of espionage on these grounds. This was a somewhat pyric victory because, while found to be Not Guilty, he was interned for the duration of the war in an Allied prison camp.

In subsequent interrogations the espionage agent was examined by his captors and divulged a great deal of information. Word that I had gotten my client declared Not Guilty quickly spread throughout the camp and I was then in considerable demand as defense counsel for prisoners accused of espionage, although I was never again quite so fortunate.

My next case was one involving an 18 year old girl whom I first interviewed in the police station in Riccione. She spoke no English and was not at all inclined to be cooperative. I despaired of getting any help from her but I did what little I could.

It was comparatively comfortable for the prisoners in the casermo but the courtroom where the trial was held was bitterly cold. I had

gotten a box from home for Christmas containing a 10 cent comb from my son Edward, along with other trinkets and some virgin wool underwear from my father's estate. It was quite cold in the courtroom and in an effort to warm up my client, I gave her the set of warm underwear, the 10 cent comb and a sample piece of soap such as is given freely at hotels in the United States. I received nothing but a sour 'Danke' and I ended the interview feeling that I had gotten absolutely nowhere with her. The following morning I appeared with my client wondering what, if anything, I could say in her defense. Before the war Bill Crago had been an associate at Cravaths and I knew that the interests of the army would be well served and that my only function would be to assist the accused on trial for her life.

Perhaps I should interrupt my story at this point to explain that in World War I Edith Cavell, serving as an under-cover agent for the British, was caught and shot by the Germans. I talked with a number of British officers who served with Edith Cavell prior to her execution and all agreed that she was a very brave woman but undoubtedly was a spy for the British and knew, perhaps better than anyone else, that if she were apprehended she would be shot by the Germans. However, the case received so much adverse publicity in England that the British never again executed a woman spy.

I doubt whether my client had ever heard of Edith Cavell, and I doubt whether the Allied military court understood her gesture when she rolled back a little of my father's Jaeger underwear to show me what she was wearing to protect herself against the unheated courtroom. She kept an absolutely dead pan expression but the Court looked quizzically at me when I laughed out loud. In my book the real hero of this episode was the brawny Scottish policeman who took one look at the shivering girl whose life was at stake, whipped off his own overcoat and threw it around her.

While we were waiting for the Court to announce its verdict, I tried to give my client such encouragement as I could and through an interpreter she told me she would rather be shot than imprisoned. When the Court did not follow the precedent of the Edith Cavell case, found her to be guilty of espionage and sentenced her to imprisonment, the courtroom echoed with a resounding kiss for the defense counsel.