

Central Oregon Airman Tells Of 'Dead' Cities in Germany

(The following description of devastated Germany, as seen from the air, is from a letter written by Lt. F. K. Shepard, to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Shepard, of the Tumalo district.)

By Lt. F. K. Shepard
On May 9 I flew an observation flight over Germany. Our route went in over Brussels where we did a 360 degrees turn. Brussels is a very beautiful city and is practically undamaged. Allied bombings in France and Belgium were pin point jobs and towns were not bombed as they didn't want to hurt any more Frenchmen and Belgians than was absolutely necessary.

Flags were flying from most all of the buildings in Belgium and from the buildings in what little part of France we crossed. One Brussels street had big letters in white, saying "We thank you." The country here is not mused up much. Occasionally one will see trenches and tank tracks circling around where a battle took place, but not often.

The story is not the same once you cross the German border, for here is where strong resistance was really met. We crossed the border two miles west of Aachen where everything was really torn up. Zigzag trenches and bomb craters have ruined every bit of ground around here. The concrete teeth of the Sigfried line were easily discernible. This line was a great construction feat but didn't do much good.

Coming up on Aachen one sees what appears to be a regular town, however when over the city only debris can be seen. The roofs are gone and only shells of some buildings are standing. Artillery

did most of this damage, I believe. I saw Eschweiler, eleven miles north of Aachen, where I dropped bombs November 16, 1944 in close support of the ground forces. The 8th air force dropped 100 pounders in this area so the doughboys could move a head through the Jerries strong defenses. These bomb craters were well distributed and easily visible.

The next town we flew over was Duren, probably the flattest town in Germany. Most of it looks like piles of sand from the air for there is hardly a wall standing today. Bombing was responsible for most of this destruction. Bombs being larger than artillery shells carry more explosives which knock walls to powder whereas artillery shells cause more of their destruction to such buildings by fire. Had these towns been built of wood, there would be no signs of these towns today.

Next we crossed the Cologne plain which is very flat and beautiful farm land but signs of battle are very much in evidence as the Germans were attempting to keep our troops from Cologne all along this route from Aachen on. The spots where villages stood are almost bare. We passed some big mines and factories and then the spires of the Cologne cathedral came into view.

Cologne is certainly a sight. Once a city of 800,000 people, it is now dead with most of the center of the city leveled flat. More walls are standing here, though, than at Duren. The cathedral still stands, which is a miracle that no direct bomb hits caught it as we often bombed Cologne through the clouds. However, the cathedral has been gutted by fire. All

the bridges on the Rhine are in the drink. The Germans only had to destroy one bridge in Cologne, the Hohenzollern, a great, large railway bridge so big that it still stood after direct hits by 1,000 pounders from my group.

One sees very few people in these cities and towns, but those you do see don't look up, whereas the Belgians wave eagerly. The Germans certainly look like a defeated people, and apparently don't think much of our flying over their ruined country gloating over our victory.

Plane Heads North

From Cologne we headed north and flew over the heart of the Ruhr valley, passing over Dusseldorf and Hamm, south of which lies what used to be the greatest inland port in Europe. Here we turned east, flying over that great industrial area which is mostly covered with factories and towns. At Dortmund we turned north and flew over Munster and then down to Hamm. Hamm, although quite a small city has one of the biggest marshalling yards in Germany as it handled the traffic from the Ruhr which went into central and northern Germany. This rail yard, like all others in Germany, was completely ruined, the result of many allied bombings. It didn't have one good track a hundred yards long that a train could run on. All the rails in Germany are covered with rust, indicating that they have not been used for quite some time.

We continued south and were soon over a beautiful, scenic, mountainside area devoid of large towns all the way to Frankfurt on Main. Here we saw villages in the valleys where streams flowed, there being castles and forts on the hill tops, none of which extended higher than 4,000 feet.

Frankfurt, like Cologne, and all the cities I saw in Germany, was beat to ruins, being different from other cities in only one respect, that being that one bridge was left intact and being used. Ten or fifteen other bridges across the river were gone.

Rhine Crossed

Flying down the Main river we hit the Rhine at Wiesbaden and followed it up to Bonn, passing over Bingen and Coblenz, old targets of ours. We also flew over about five prisoner of war camps, fields with fortifications around them in which the prisoners were just driven in like a herd of cattle and a big herd at that. They had no shelter and were very overcrowded. The men had dug holes in the ground and other than that it was like living in a barren wheat field. The men looked like red ants from a distance as there were hundreds and maybe thousands per pen. We also saw trainloads of open box cars which were really packed with what we took to be prisoners of war.

Our route passed out over Aachen, Duren and Brussels again, then on to Lille, France over the flying bomb sights at Calais.

Flying the whole trip from 20 to 1,000 feet altitude, we saw practically everything, even the old flak positions. Most of the guns were removed, however. The weather was great, perhaps a bit warm, but fine for sight seeing tour. All agree that such a trip was well worth waiting a long time for. I know I enjoyed flying my B-17 over it, anyhow.

Inventor Who Designed Tanks For War Use Is Forgotten Man

New York, May 24 (AP)—Robert F. MacFae, pioneer designer of military tanks, worked in his 50-cents-a-day hotel room today on inventions he hoped would earn him three square meals a day.

Unemployed, forgotten by those who hailed his caterpillar track war machine and used it effectively against the Germans in the first world war, MacFae refused

financial help from relatives and discouraged publicity of his situation.

The tall, lean engineer was one of five officers of the British royal navy who developed tanks under the sponsorship of Winston Churchill when the prime minister was First Lord of the Admiralty. None of the five ever received a nickel in royalties.

MacFae has been overlooked by

writers on tank history. Yet, the British magazine "Aeroplane," oldest in its field, published an article years ago crediting MacFae with the basic design for tanks.

Charles G. Grey, editor of "Aeroplane" for 30 years, wrote of MacFae as "a forgotten pioneer." Grey said that MacFae "brought to this office in September or October, 1914, the general arrangement of a machine exactly like the tanks which went into action in France in July, 1916, and at intervals for weeks he discussed with us his various efforts to get support for the idea."

MacFae, in 1915, was allotted 700 pounds to contrive a "landship." He turned out an angled-front, endless track steel machine that terrified German infantry and broke the stalemate of trench warfare on French soil.

The British Royal commission finally awarded MacFae 500 pounds for his work. Rear Admiral Sir Murray Sueter, commander in the last war of the Admiralty's air department, called this sum "a housemaid's legacy." He said "Lieutenant MacFae was badly treated."

Today in a Mills hotel in Greenwich village, MacFae stayed close

to his room working on plans for inventions he would not disclose. Over 60, he was far lighter than the 234-pound man who left this country in 1914 to join the Royal navy air service.

He was born in San Francisco of British-American parents. In his youth he traveled extensively in England and studied at the British naval engineering college. In his hotel for the down-but-not-out, he talked only about tanks, his personal affairs, he said, were not for publication.

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Calo Dog Food5 cans 25¢

Libby's Mixed Sweet Pickles.....12 oz. jar 29¢

Libby's Apple Butter303 jar 19¢

Hood River Apple Juicequart 23¢

Derby Steak Saucebottle 14¢

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Arizona

ALLEY OOP

3v V. T. HAMLIN

OSCAR!! WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME IS THAT UNEARTHLY RACKET?

GOSH, AMOS, I DON'T KNOW! LET'S ROUT BIG OOP OUT OF BED!

HEY!! OOP'S BED IS UNDISTURBED. HE HASN'T EVEN BEEN TO BED!

LOOK HERE... UP AT THE LABORATORY!

GREAT GADFRY, THAT BIG DUMB DOPE!

WHAT THE? ... GADFRY ...

Boy WAR BONDS