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REPORTS BY Ps/W ON GERMAN CIVILIAN REACTIONS
TO ALLIED MILITARY GOVERNMENT

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During the Rundstedt offensive German soldiers entered territory where German civilians had been living under Allied Military Government for a period of many weeks. Many of these soldiers later became Allied prisoners of war and related their impressions of the indifferent, almost hostile, reception which the German civilian population had accorded them. In part the civilians were fearful because they had come back into the combat zone and again faced the threat of evacuation. But many of them seem simply to have been expressing their genuine approval of Allied Military Government.

The following is a selection of quotations by Ps/W setting forth their version of what the German civilian population told them. In using them for output, especial care must be taken to ensure that they are in line with current directives. If in doubt or if the point is not covered, you must obtain permission for output from your Directive Section with whom the responsibility will then lie.

P/W's unit attacked and captured the German village of BINNENSDORF. Several civilians there openly asked the troops: "Why did you come back? Previously we were lucky that the war had hardly touched us. Now our homes and our fields are ruined."

When the Germans came through Belgian towns and villages, they were met by what the P/W called the natural hatred of the population.

(Feldwebel, Volksgrenadier Feld Ersatz Bn., Postal employee from BRESLAU, age: 34. Joined SA early after 1933).

The usual reaction was "Warum sind Ihr zurueckgekommen?" (Why have you returned?). He had been told by several people that they had been very well treated and generally content under the Americans. A miller in one village told him in amazement that he had been allowed by us to run his mill as he saw fit, without interference. The great fear now is that the SS will come in to these towns and villages and force the remaining people to evacuate.

(Gefreiter, Panzer-Zerstoeerer CO, RR worker from DANZIG, age: 30).

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P/W spent a couple of days at KROMBACH in the EUPEN-MALMEDY sector. The civilians were not happy about the presence of German soldiers, because instead of giving them food as the Americans did, the Germans were compelled to take food from the population. Individual looting, however, was not permitted. Civilians who left their homes during the fighting returned to their homes and found that TOTENKOPF SS troops, who had passed through the town, had broken open their doors and looted foodstuffs. Another reason for the non-popularity of the German soldiers is that US air attacks are now starting again, whereas people had peace during US occupation.

(Obergefreiter, Sturm Pionier Co., shipping clerk from BERLIN, age: 23).

Most villages re-occupied by the Germans were empty of civilians; the few persons who remained did not complain about American occupation. They did not expect German troops to be able to compete against American motorized transport and advance with their horse-drawn transport.

(Obergefreiter, Volksgrenadier Regt., window-trimmer from BRESLAU, age: 30).

P/W was at LANDSRATH in EUPEN-MALMEDY sector, after it had been taken from the Americans. Civilians had no complaints against Americans, said they behaved well and took nothing from them. P/W spoke to a few girls there who had no complaints against US soldiers either. Later P/W was at NADREN (BELGIUM) also previously occupied by us. There the young girls had evacuated with the Americans, when they had to retreat. He does not know why they did. (1) P/W believes German civilians are fearful of coloured US troops. He himself read a story in a German paper of a US coloured soldier having raped a German woman in occupied Germany.

(Oberschuetze, Ambulance-driver, locksmith from WORMS (RHINE), age: 18½; 12 years of Hitler Youth education.

In passing through EIMERSCHIED, civilians spoke freely about the good impressions American troops made. After having seen American rations, people used to laugh at what the Landsers have to eat. The population had been comparatively happy, as the war seemed to be over for them. Then with German troops there again, the town was bombarded once more and sentiments like the following were freely expressed to the German troops: "Wir wollen lieber die Amerikaner hier als die Landsers". (We should prefer to have the Americans here instead of the Landsers).

(Rottenfuehrer, 9th SS Panzer-Grenadier Div. "Hohenstaufen", baker from AUSTRIA, age: 26).

The German civilians were disappointed when the Americans left. It was especially appreciated that Americans did not enter the private homes as German soldiers do. In a town near ALDRINGEN the mayor had to issue a proclamation which he posted that children have to keep away from American kitchens, as it is not in line with German pride to have them take presents from the Americans.

(Gefreiter, 62 Volksgrenadier Div., baker and candy-maker from East PRUSSIA, age: 21).

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German peasants had told P/W repeatedly that in territory occupied and then lost by the Allies, they had been treated ever so much more decently and humanely by the Allies than by their own countrymen, especially in the case of the SS. This same view was held by the Belgians with whom he had spoken.

(Lt., Company Commander, Volksgrenadier Co., student from LEIPZIG, age: 25).

When men of 3 Battery, 1352 Artillery Regiment passed through WALLENDORF, again held by the Germans after a period of US occupation, they were told by the civilians of WALLENDORF how very correctly the Americans behaved as occupational forces,

German civilians in AUW were glad that German soldiers returned, but had only the best to say about American troops - were not molested - not arrested. - some even gave chocolate to children.

(Grenadier, rifleman, Machine Gun Co., mechanic from HAMBURG, age 22).

Civilians in SCHOENBERG and other villages nearby were glad that German troops were back, according to P/W, although American troops behaved well, in general.

(Unteroffizier, Heavy Machine Gun Platoon Leader, commercial employee in transportation trade from LEIPZIG, age: 21).

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