



While the author was nursing his abscess, the war continued: attack on the Wels freight terminal. (HF)

Wednesday, 31.V.44: „*This morning went with the medic to the sickbay to have the carbuncle lanced. There was an alarm at 03:00 already, at 05:00 I was on aircraft observation. Abscess was lanced under anesthetic. What a relief not to have that knot in my neck any longer ... acting sanitary officer is a great guy. In blazing heat the medic and I returned to our quarters. This afternoon I overslept and missed classes.*”

Sicknesses and other ailments

Then I was assigned to barracks which meant that for the next few days I was accompanied by the medic to get fresh dressings on the wound. All the while, tension was building up between the AAA and the NCOs. Friday, 2.VI.44: *„Went to the sickbay again this morning. This time Hetl came along as he claims to have had a heart attack. My wound was dressed again. In Valentin, Hetl and I did a bit of shopping.*

In our position in the meantime, there was a gas chamber exercise going on, followed up by a 'masked ball'. After supper, Beitz drilled all the AA Assistants with the exception of me, Lakitsch, who is going on leave, and Schmutz. Beitz is leaving in a week and he is really piling it on for the last time ...” Saturday, 3.VI.44: *„Back to the sickbay this morning while the others are sweating on duty. Serious warfare between us and the tracker crew NCOs, in particular Sgt.Beitz. No leave and curfew. See if we care...”*

And this time, because of a carbuncle on my neck, I missed this phase in the coexistence between the various members of the battery. From the barrack window I shot photos of my comrades as they fell in dressed in their fatigues and with full packs on their backs for another session of square-bashing.



A rather fuzzy shot from the barrack window: "masked ball" – falling in dressed in fatigues...

Monday, 5.VI.44: *„...Unfortunately have to take part in regular activities again. Boot inspection, masked ball in the evening because I got my name taken. First in sports gear, then 2nd dress and finally 1st dress with gas mask. Beitz is an idiot. Enough to drive anyone crazy!”*

Already mentioned several times, the "masked ball" was a mean system used by the NCOs and sergeants to keep us in line. We were repeatedly ordered to change our uniforms and to fall in all for inspection: *„at the double – fall in, 2nd dress! ... in fatigues with gas masks! ... in 1st dress!”*. After falling in we were hounded across the fields with orders of *„Down! ... Up – at the double!”* And so on, until we were finally dismissed back to our barrack. Disgraceful. This happened all too often when there was tension between us AAA and the NCOs.