

Emil Kintzl

On Saturday, May 5th, we did not wait to see the liberators. We lapped up the information about capitulation of the German garrison in Svatobor hotel, arrest of traitors, guarding of important places by hastily formed and half-armed patrols of our citizens and also noticed the issue of the former protectorate postage stamps with Hitler. They had the overprinting "Free Susice"! We did not sleep much at night. Our parents were still listening to the Czechoslovak Radio broadcasting and we were impatient that it will come tomorrow! The parents did not hesitate to keep an eye on us on Sunday, May 6th. Just to be sure, Father locked us, me and brother Karel, in a cellar after the quick Sunday lunch. We could hear a roaring and rumbling of the approaching American tanks there. My brother and I were emaciated because of a protectorate poor food. It came in handy to us, because we could come out through the narrow cellar window. To climb over the fence in the yard was a piece of cake. We did not inform the parents, of course, and ran to the square. We were running along the Klostermann-street as quickly as possible, because the rumbling was heard from Volsovska-street. We reached just in time to welcome the arrival of the first American tank. This historic moment of Susice was immortalized thanks to Mr. Emanuel Nejd, quick-witted photographer. My brother Karel and I recognized us in the picture and that is why this photo is precious for me. Only today I fully understand the tears in the eyes of women and girls. Americans were showered with flowers and convoy with soldiers decelerated or stopped to take pies, cakes and drink. Short hugs, kisses and words of thanks... Americans reciprocated by giving lots of chocolates, cigarettes, chewing gums, candies, crackers and cans of food.

We were elated that the Americans put up in the monastery of "Notre Dame". But they were different guests from damned "national guests" and boys from the Hitler Youth! It was cleaned up perfectly and the order was established. Some Americans used the offers from the Susice citizens. We accommodated several soldiers to make our mum happy. Because of one longshanks we had to extend the bed to be comfortable. He was driving a truck for the twenty-litre canisters of petrol and diesel to Nuremberg almost every day. Due to the long journey and hard work during the loading and unloading he was very tired and was always sleeping.

We had believed that general G. Patton came up to Prague's expectations and his army liberated Prague. But we were disappointed and American troops too, because they also wanted to Prague. I realized at that time that politics can be pretty crap. Political interests were more important than people's lives. Bitter lesson, first in this respect in my life. Moreover, experienced in the joyous days

of our new freedom. Although I was a little kid, I realized that we celebrated freedom and peace, but people were still dying elsewhere. A cruel experience...

Kamil Richter

Remembering the Americans stay in Susice would be a repetition of what has already been said. Great atmosphere, enchantment with freedom, sincere friendship with the soldiers, delight, joy. The chewing gums (the only kind was available before the war. Some white pillows at a Mr. Langhammer's bakery), chocolate, abundance of fruits, lots of food, strong scented cigarettes. I got a beautiful nose warmer from general Hoge's personal chauffeur, when he saw that I like to smoke a pipe. I met another one of the great symbols of American democracy respected out of duty and obligation in the army with him. For the first time I experienced such relationship in the military dining hall which was set up in the courtyard of the Svatobor hotel. Each incoming soldier stood in a queue – an ordinary soldier, major, colonel. Join the queue, we are equal here. No wardroom, batches were not in preference to men. When dispensing finished, the rest of the cooked food was given away to our people. It sometimes happened that some American soldier was late, but ours did not jump the queue and did not enforce the service. The chefs had the iron rations of various meals in cans in case of need. A soldier could choose what he wanted to eat. We also admired the system of bowls and flatware. The bowls were made so that the soldier could put all the mess composed of several parts of the menu into them. Back to the abovementioned democratic character. I visited the general's chauffeur at the grammar school one day. General was leaving the building, where headquarters of smaller unit was located. I greeted respectfully. The chauffeur, an ordinary soldier, nothing. I was alarmed when the soldier did not notice his commander-in-chief. He would not get out of joint for a such offense in our army. "No trouble," soldier explained me calmly, "I greeted him in the morning."

Soldiers took care of their appearance. Mr. Barta, tailor in Susice, ironed fifty laundered US military shirts every day. Plus other clothing. Americans and Susice citizens had good relations, but I must say that some people were stealing things to soldiers. Then Americans built the guards. They did not have them before, and especially in a peace time they did not need them. Excuse me, that will not give an examples. It's over and today's descendants can't help that....

Karel Benes

I associate the memory of American soldiers and May 1945 with the bread aroma from our baker's in Nadrazni street. We had to bake from poor flour during the war. Fats and other needed bakery ingredients were the same case. Including the poppy or pot cheese for "better" bakery goods. We could only dream of some common prewar products from our assortment. At the end of war, the situation with supplying of baker's was complicated. Americans, for whom we baked after the liberation, changed everything. They brought a wonderful flour, fats and other great ingredients and laughed at our surprise. Maybe you would expect that we had some control or military supervision in our bakery when we baked for soldiers. No way! Absolute confidence. We received a request and that was all. Americans developed a taste especially for the rolls. Because they felt very indebted to us, they brought a various canned food. I remember delicious meat can divided into a meaty part and potatoes. Both parts of can were heated together and were divided after opening. The soldier, of whom I wrote above, brought the entire carton of twenty cans one day. We translated into Czech: delicate foal goulash. It was delicious!

I also remember the snack cans with pressed cocoa slices, biscuits and small bowl with jam inside. Some cans contained cigarettes, pressed, but soft bread and meat spread. There were more kinds. I also saw an exceptional thing for us in American camp. From time to time a refrigerated truck brought the packages of frozen chickens which were transported by air directly from the United States. Soldiers roasted and grilled them on the small gas rings to improve their food.

American cigarettes are another interesting story. They were sweet-smelling and strong, man could feel dizzy. We were accustomed to war shoddy fags and now we got these! Cigarettes appeared in UNRRA deliveries here after the war. They were marked with a typical American white star.

Stanislav Rohacek

The Americans set up a military shop with a basic range of goods in the Bouchalka pub. But Bouchalka was mainly a restaurant where the they were tippling and dancing. The soldiers also baked delicious donuts of a special sweet taste, which we did not know. They melted in your mouth. Everyone got as many candies, chewing gums, all kinds of fruit and chocolates as he wanted. Canned food and delicious spread. The spread was called "peanut" by the base material, ground peanuts in oil. Biscuits, snack cans from thin sheet metal with few round biscuits, pressed cocoa and jam, or with meat filling. Nestlé dry milk, big meat cans. I can not give details of everything. Let's drop this subject. When the soldiers went away, they forgot a warm waterproof coat at our place. I used this coat until

recently. When I put on it and went to school, I sometimes attracted attention at the stations and in the streets. And I sometimes caught attention of people who had certain badges or identification card of State Security. In such cases I had to explain that it is not a provocation. The American combat boots made less troubles to me. These boots were resistant to everything – water-resistant, had a firm seams and soles were still like new. I used them for many years. When we were gathering a scrap iron, we found the old full American can in the junk near the Kotrchov's mill in 1963. It was possible to decipher that scrambled eggs with bacon were inside.

We opened the can in the firehouse. Wonderful scents, the contents was undamaged. We ate it and without any health consequences, of course. It was the same with a great can of buffalo meat. I do not remember the year, but the goulash, which we cooked, smelled good from firehouse to Volsovy not. It was very strong smell! The old cans were immediately usable twenty years after the war!

Alena Koncalová

We lived in Otava hotel at that time. On May 6th, we got new guests! Lots of gifts, smiles and joy. The Americans immediately took charge of kitchen. They had their own cooks and cooked also for hotel staff. And we did not have to help. They sometime asked us for some minor service.

The senior officers were accommodated in our hotel and the chars were cleaning their rooms. But the ordinary soldiers were cleaning their rooms themselves. And they were very tidy! We were experiencing the beautiful days with fantastic boys. I would only repeat what everyone remember: chocolate, cocoa, chewing gums, candies, canned food, bananas, oranges, peanut butter. Hard to enumerate everything. Americans had only one request - fresh eggs. They were fed up with dried eggs. My mother was breeding the hens and the egg were available. Soldiers were grateful for every egg to be able to cook their own meals. I also like to recall another weeks of May 1945, when our hotel was used for accommodations of Czechoslovak soldiers from general Liska's armored brigade. Today I realize that the stay in England and the war were obvious from their behavior. Americans behaved very gentlemanly, disciplined, perfect in everything. And their responsible approach to everything was the result of the war. Soldiers knew the value of freedom, human life, final victory. We admired the respect with which they approached to the orders and duties. Some of soldiers "fell in love" in Susice and stayed here permanently. E.g. Messrs Gvozdek, Sykora, Nikendey and other. If I should recall the greatest and strongest experience I would mention our run across the blooming and nice smelling

meadow when it was the first I realized that everything terrible and bad is finally over.

Karel Forejt

We used to play various games with the Americans on a makeshift playing field at a military camp on the site of today's ZKD garages. We preferred rugby football with the oval ball. Once, in the heat of the game, I ran across the pitch and fell down on the ground. Unfortunately, I did not fall down on the tidy ground, but to the trash dump full of empty cans. I cut my leg from the foot almost to the knee. The Americans immediately treated the slash with some powder. Later I found out that it was the penicillin first aid. Jeep arrived quickly and the soldiers drove me to the hospital. It was on the waterfront in the building of Inland Revenue. On the way the car was stopped by a patrol of Military Police. When the policeman saw my foot, he stepped aside and let us go. The doctor who treated me was probably of Polish origin. He injected me and then wanted to make sure that my leg is anaesthetized. Doctor was pricking to my leg and asking "Cujes? Cujes? (Does it hurt? Does it hurt?)" When I did not feel a pain, he started to operate me. Deep lacerated wound extending to the bone, has been cleaned, disinfected and sutured. I had eleven stitches. I was so sad that I was "excluded" from the puerile pranks with the Americans for a long time of four weeks. American medical orderly regularly looked after my health state and redressed my wound. Then he was going by jeep for me. Because I was bored at the dressing-station, he offered me various uncharged guns. Play, boy! He gave me a real American bayonet for a keepsake. If I was as a well-known water sprite from Finian's Rainbow, I would say: "I have it hidden."

Vladimír Marsat

We lived in the so-called IRS in 1945. And this building was the headquarters of the US Command headed by General Hoge and General Bradley. Bradley was commander of the whole army. He used to come to deal with necessary issues around the stay of his units in Susice. Our mom was glad when she could wash, iron and cook Americans. They used to come to us to eat sweet foods. They took a fancy mainly to the fruit dumplings. They liked also omelets, pancakes and scrambled eggs. They had all basic ingredients. Americans replenished stocks of potatoes and fresh eggs here. Soldiers ate a big white bread for breakfast, snake and dinner. Later, our family has received a precious book from general Hoge and we guard it like the apple of one's eye. For all I know, we were the only ones who were honored with suchlike gift in Susice. Perhaps the town representatives could get some. But I am not sure. General Hoge appreciated what our family did

for "our" Americans. But almost all of families had "their" Americans who stayed with them or affiliated with them.

Kamil Svelch

Americans ordered our orchestra regularly. It played them everywhere and really often. While we were playing Glenn Miller's songs, soldiers were paying attention to Susice beauties. Soldiers imported beer to every dance party from Bavaria. But it was lacking one evening. They run out of it. That's why a juice was served in cups. Soldiers and juice! During the dance! No wonder that it aroused sizeable outrage. One American was very furious and threw a big box of cigars among the dancing pairs. ... We stopped playing, of course. Nobody was dancing. Dancing stopped immediately. Pairs were trying to catch a very scarce and demanded goods. While the "cigar show" was going on in the hall, Radko Peterka, our musician, said quietly: "Drink, suckers, there is an alcohol is the juice!" It was an American invention in that evening. How has it turned out? Strong juice had a detrimental effect soon, and so the Americans themselves had to end the party. What about they! They were OK! Soldiers left the hall and went to their quarters. But we had to provide the beneficent service to few friends who were "socially tired" from that hard evening.

Antonín Koncal

When the Americans arrived in Podmokly, they set up a camp on Pavlicek's field and Kotal's meadow behind the school towards Chocholice. They also lined up an artillery there. Them was the good old days. One young soldier took a fancy to me. Maybe I reminded him of his brother or nephew, who knows. I had lots of goodies from him and he invited me for military lunch from time to time. I think he did not like the food because when I took his portion, he gave me some candies. We had problems with communication but understood that the soldiers would like fresh potatoes. They had plenty of dried potatoes and eggs, but they hungered for a fresh food. I brought a basket of potatoes from grandma and got a carton of cigarettes! One day me and my friends went to a small unused quarry near school and we were smoking. But the American cigarettes were too strong. I remember that Zdenek Pavlicek was staggering all the way to home. He was staggering, stumbling and lamenting. We did not help him because we were not better off, we had rushes of sickness.
