

The Agiot

11th Edition

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Village News

By Dr. Lionel Mann
Contributing Editor

Joanna and Mel Sperling with their children have arrived to take possession of the new villa that we have built for them. So too have Richard and Karen Quilter to move into their ancient villa that we have renovated and extensively enlarged. There we have installed a novel arrangement whereby the water circulates via a waterfall cascading into the pool - quite spectacular! Derek and Carole Pullen have visited to inspect the progress of their new villa at 'Panorama' upon which we have started work. All these villas are upon hilltop sites with glorious views across the island.

Paul and Sally Grove have been back again, this time with some relatives. Ron and Lesley Woolen have also arrived to take a couple of weeks' holiday in their Villa Persephone. Villa Theodora has welcomed Sue and Andrew Rumble with their considerable teen-age entourage. Other visitors include Steve and Jo Papi, Alex and Petra, Angela from Milano, Pat and Gina Brett from soggy Norfolk, Martin and Chris Hastings from undated Wales, Micky Clark wading from Cheltenham, and of course Richie Henderson from saturated Scotland to perform in Music Week. Most of our guests from the U.K. this year have steamed gently for the first few days as they dried out.

EasyJet seems to have

been very well patronized; many of our visitors are using it and appear well satisfied.

OVERSEAS SERVICE

Part One

By Dr. Lionel Mann
Contributing Editor

After nearly twenty-four hours cooped up in a troopdeck even the sight of the shattered docks of Cuxhaven was a welcome sight. I was travelling "independently", not with any unit, but teamed up with two other corporals to gain permission to leave the docks to look round the town as our train to Headquarters, British Army of the Rhine, would not leave for another six hours. Ten months after the end of the war there was still plenty of evidence of the havoc wreaked by Allied bombing, yet already some reconstruction had been completed.

As we strolled along the raised sidewalk we were passed by three Irish Guardsmen who then linked arms and roughly pushed all pedestrians into the street. They had no respect for age and an old woman fell to her knees. "Fraternisation", intercourse with Germans, was forbidden, and at that time I did not speak the language anyway, but such barbarous behaviour infuriated the three of us. I hurried forward to raise the lady, but she shook off my hand with an exclamation that was patently hostile and came to her feet unaided. So much for "building bridges", but her reaction was understandable.

When we returned to the docks the Military Police seized "independent" me to complete the escort of a deserter to military prison. It had its compensations; we travelled in a comfortable "Officers Only" compartment, plied regularly with good food and drink. The prisoner was a wizened little specimen, smaller even than I,

and permanently handcuffed to the sergeant. The track had not yet been completely repaired from its wartime battering and the train crawled excruciatingly slowly. Some temporary bridges sagged under its weight and I hoped that the engineers had done their calculations correctly! Since I am writing this, they had!

All night, while the prisoner and the private, the third member of the escort, dozed, I chatted with the sergeant, who had to remain awake. A regular, he had served in North Africa with the Eighth Army and then from D-Day across France, the Low Countries and into Germany, having many thrilling adventures to relate. Intrigued I noticed that every town or every village through which we passed was a blaze of light.

"Don't you know?" My companion then enlightened me. Every German housewife after completing her housework would go out on to a bombed site, chip the old plaster off bricks and then stack them. She would be helped by the children as soon as they came from school. Then all through the night the men, having finished their daily work, would work six-hour shifts, rebuilding by the bright lights under skilled supervision. This was self-help two years before Marshall Aid commenced.

Headquarters B.A.O.R. was the spa town Bad Oeynhausen. The entire German population had been removed and the whole town secured by fencing and barbed wire. I had a big room in an elegant villa that provided accommodation for ten of us and a House Orderly who saw to the "housekeeping". The currency in

Germany in those days was cigarettes, coffee and soap. We received a free issue of 150 cigarettes weekly and I did not smoke in those days. For ten cigarettes weekly my laundry was taken out by one of the locals who was allowed in daily for maintenance work. It would be returned three days later expertly washed and pressed.

Conditions were very cold in winter and the central heating system of the villa was "kaput". Each resident had an electric heater to warm his room, a bucket with a very dangerous wiring arrangement to heat water for washing and shaving, and a radio. Normal fuse-wire had been replaced by paper-clips. At first I rented such equipment for a few cigarettes weekly until I had sufficient to buy my own three-bar heater, beautiful Phillips radio, a good camera and a pair of binoculars, all for rather over two thousand cigarettes.

One bitter morning when everyone was getting up, ten heaters working overtime, ten water-heaters operating, ten radios blaring, there was a tremendous explosion in the street outside. Cautiously we peered out. Paving stones from the footpath had been hurled into our garden and across the street. The electricity cable had erupted under the strain. When we left for the office each of us carried an electric heater and a radio. "Heating system" had been removed from water buckets and conventional fuse-wire had replaced paper-clips. When R.E.M.E. came to investigate and repair they could find nothing amiss and diagnosed an "ageing cable" as the reason for such a spectacular phenomenon! For a few days we operated legally and shivered - before the paper-clips went back and we once more lived in luxury!

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Another freezing morning on my way to the mess for breakfast I had difficulty in keeping my footing on the icy footpaths. Everybody else wearing Army boots with studs was managing, but I was "excused boots" and wearing "civvy shoes". I left the footpath and trudged through the snow, so cold that it did not penetrate clothing but merely fell off. Over my thick uniform I was wearing a leather jerkin and greatcoat, Balaclava helmet, scarf and gloves. Taking a short-cut round the back of the building I heard a curious twittering and when I rounded a corner I came upon eight or nine German children chattering in muted voices, rummaging through the dustbins for food. Scantly clad, skinny bare arms and legs blue with cold, they froze, both literally and metaphorically I should think, at the appearance of "authority".

Horrified I simply said, "Good morning" and walked past them. What else could I do? Fraternisation was illegal and this was Headquarters not a distant city street. Moreover I was only the junior member of the mess, "wet behind the ears". Later in the morning, however, I mentioned the incident in the office. "Serves the little Nazi bastards right," was the only comment. Certainly the observation was probably coloured by our work, bringing to trial war criminals, chiefly concentration camp guards, handling the evidence with its horrifying details of brutality, bestiality, subhuman depravity, but those children were utterly guiltless, suffering and starving through the faults of their elders. Besides has any nation such an unblemished record that it can afford

to judge another?

Of course the children should never have been there, but children often manage to gain access to forbidden areas; it is one of their main diversions. A few years later as organist of the Wembley church with the Stadium in its parish, I was surprised how many of my thirty choirboys managed to attend every great sporting occasion inside the famous ground. Our elderly vicar was given complimentary tickets for everything and he passed all of them on to me - all except those for F.A. Cup Finals, the scoundrel! I became quite accustomed to receiving in the hallowed precincts, "Hello, sir," from a broadly grinning youngster or a group who had gained illicit admission.

Some weeks after seeing those shivering children, as clerk to the prosecuting officer at the Ravensbruck trial I observed deeply shocked the sea of desolation that was Hamburg after it had been mercilessly pounded by the Allied air forces and reduced to a fireball. The destruction suffered by London, or more recently Ground Zero, was a mere pinprick by comparison. We lived in one of the few buildings newly built amongst the acres of ruins, a massive six-storey structure, the area headquarters: ground floor guardrooms, garages, workshops; first floor offices, conference centre; second floor shops, recreation facilities including a cinema; third floor kitchens, messes; fourth and fifth floors accommodation. As well a numerous stairwells there were many lifts made up of connected "boxes", on one side going slowly up and on the other equally slowly down. You merely stepped in when a box reached your level and stepped out at the required floor. Well over a thousand personnel lived there.

All was very comfortably heated with no need to go outdoors for anything except on business. Our team, the officer, his batman-driver and myself, drove to the courthouse in the mornings and returned when proceedings ended for the day. Persons who wished to brave the bitter cold were not allowed out in groups of less than six and compulsorily wore sidearms. Lone Allied servicemen had been found floating in the docks!

The living conditions of the surviving residents of the city were horrifying. In that icy weather they were existing in holes in the ground, devoid of heating, always hungry from a desperate shortage of food. Every morning trucks went round to collect for mass burial the bodies of men, women and children who had died overnight from hypothermia, starvation or related diseases. Germany had "sown the wind and reaped a whirlwind". That should deliver a stark warning to any nation that conjures up even the slightest pretext for going to war - but does it?

Although I did not know it at the time, the Ravensbruck trial marked the end of my "cushy" service in the Judge Advocate General's Department. I was sent on leave resulting in moving into an even more "cushy" posting. That will have to wait until Part Two of this saga.

An interesting and instructive sequel to this part, though, is my journey home at the end of my "military" service. Some two years after first arriving in Germany I joined the boat-train at Hannover where a bright new station had replaced the stark ruins that I had passed through on my arrival. All around a complex of elegant buildings had risen from the ashes.

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A complete contrast from my first journey, the train sped without delay over faultless track and through sparkling newly-built towns and villages, all erected through concerted national effort in just over two years.

We turned aside through Holland, equally neat and clean. I was sharing a spotless comfortable compartment with two other sergeants also going home for demobilization. We relaxed sharing conversation and the ample provisions that our units had supplied. When I produced venison and wild-boar sandwiches my companions' astonishment was amusing to behold. "You had it made, mate. Whyever are you getting demobbed?"

In the Sergeants' Mess at Hook of Holland we were treated like royalty with a feast fit for kings. The Dutch still remembered their liberation from Nazi tyranny by British forces. However the army was determined to get its last pennyworth out of me and made me sergeant-in-charge of a troop deck for the crossing. We steamed out into a Force Eight gale. My charge was right in the bows, up - up - Up - UP - DOWN, with teeth-jarring force. I spent only a half-hour on duty, quickly handed over to my deputy, parted with that wonderful meal and spent the rest of the trip miserably trying not to fall out of my bunk.

Arrived in Harwich, along with many others I could not face breakfast and we boarded the waiting train. What a difference! The carriages were filthy; that reserved for sergeants and warrant officers was thick with dust, littered with cigarette ends, crushed packets and dirty newspapers stuffed under the

seats, and of course the toilets did not work. At times throughout the journey we had to queue at the overworked one in the next carriage. When eventually the train started, thirty minutes late, it crawled, stop-and start, all the way to York. We left at 9.30 a.m. and arrived just after 4 p.m.! "We know we're back in the U.K. now, don't we?" one of my companions remarked. Neither food nor drink had been available throughout our dilatory progress.

At the Demobilization Centre our late arrival did not endear us to the staff who rushed us through, giving scant time for careful selection of civilian clothing. By the time they were finished I was ravenously hungry. My last meal in the army comprised two cold sausages, a congealed fried egg and a wad of lukewarm mushy greasy chips washed down with unsweetened tea laced with reconstituted powdered milk; two spoonfuls of sugarless gluey rice pudding was enough - I left the rest. "A land fit for heroes"?

Back at York station I waited for the next train to London, an "express" from Edinburgh running four hours late. Arriving at Kings Cross in the early hours I dozed in a waiting-room chair until the Underground started running and then took the first train to Liverpool Street just in time to catch the six o'clock for my home town. Again in a grotty condition it also proceeded at "dignified" pace, rather over three hours for a hundred miles. Passing through London I was shocked to see that bombed sites had not even been cleared and there was no sign of any attempt at rebuilding. My home town was in like case. Who really "won" the war? Our post-war government was more concerned with "divide and rule", fostering social

jealousy and hatred, sowing envy and greed, than with encouraging reconstruction, stimulating enterprise and economic recovery. Three years after the war rationing was still strict and wartime austerity still reigned. The entire country was just shabby. Land of hope and glory?

I walked into my home completely unannounced and unexpected at ten o'clock in the morning of my twenty-first birthday. Grandmother, the only person at home, after recovering from the shock set about preparing a breakfast. Then she spent a long time on the telephone!

PROPERTY PAGES



Hlomos

This is a two-bedroom village terrace cottage situated in the beautiful mountainside village of Hlomos. Newly modernized and renovated it features a working fireplace and a good quality spiral staircase leading to a top floor with amazing views. This is a new property to our website and well worth viewing.

Price € 120,000



Pearcroft Villa - Ag. Ioannis

A four-bedroomed detached house in the Ropa Valley, Agios Ioannis. This house features a very large family kitchen with solid oak units, a large lounge with corner fireplace and a wooden staircase with marble steps leading to a large landing area, suitable for converting to a snug or study. Well maintained lawns and gardens surround this property.

Price € 360,000



Velonades Mountain Property

A small terrace cottage in the village of Velonades. This property also includes a piece of land 30 metres from the cottage, which is buildable. This property could serve as a temporary home whilst building on nearby land, and could then be rented out. An ideal buy for someone in the building business.

Price € 42,000



Rose Villa-Afra

This is a three double-bedroom bungalow, 110 square metres in size and about ten years old. It is situated in Afra with perfect accessibility for Corfu Town. It features a modern kitchen with fitted hob and oven, a fireplace in the lounge, oil-fired central heating, air-conditioning, water purifier and double glazing.

Price € 214,000



Panorama Development

Stunning, innovative, moulded to the terraces villas, enjoying unspoilable views across the valley. Both three-bedroom villas are one hundred square metres basic with extra covered area in the linkage. The villas are centrally heated and feature spiral oak stairwells.

(See website below for details)

Price: € 326,000



Villa Alan-Ag.Pandeleimonas

Situated in the quaint village of Ag. Pandeleimonas, is this charmingly renovated and restored house, 160 square metres in size. It has two bedrooms, a bathroom, kitchen and open-plan lounge-diner. On the ground floor is a garage and workshop. A gallery on the first floor gives out to extensive views. Included in the price is an integrated 40 square metres self-contained studio flat.

Price: € 230,000

PROPERTY PAGES



Vernoukos

The two-storey three-bedroomed centrally heated home stands high above the sea, an infinity pool lies between it and the forested terraces which tumble away to the shore. The often overused accolade 'Location, Location, Location' is richly deserved here.

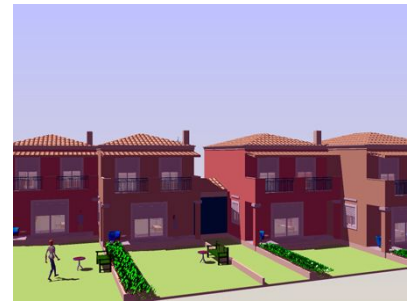
Price: € 1,200,000



Vine Cottage - Hlomatiana

Just 5 minutes from Messonghi, this village house has been totally refurbished. The dwelling size of this property is 65 square metres and features two-bedrooms, a shower room and open plan kitchen, dining area and lounge. Patio doors lead on to a verandah with sea views over the West Coast.

Price € 93,000



Agios Ioannis

Set in the village of Agios Ioannis, 5 miles from town, is this new development of 4 linked-detached houses, set in a quiet corner of the village. Plans are drawn and approved and available. Building is due to commence shortly. Each house is of two storeys, comprising 100 square metres altogether, and each has its own small garden.

Price € 175,000 (each)



Agios Martinos

This is a modernized, old stone, mid-terrace cottage. Only five minutes away from Acharavi and features magnificent views across to Albania. This property has a small central room/hallway with two rooms leading of which could be used as bedrooms or one as a lounge area. A new kitchen (English) has been fitted along with a refurbished bathroom/shower room.

Price € 85,000



Land in Katounas

These are two adjoining plots of land, each of 4,000 square metres. This gently sloping land is easy to build on and features fantastic uninterrupted sea views. Both plots can be bought together (combined cost of €340,000), or separately each priced as below. Nearby is the beautiful village of Kassiope with its traditional harbour.

Price: € 180,000 (per plot)



Land in Danilia

This is a very picturesque piece of land. The buyer would have an option of dividing this piece of land and building two separate properties each of about 130 square metres. Water and electric utilities are nearby, and this land lies a short distance from the main route between Gouvia and Aqualand.

Price: € 110,000