

AMCO NEWS

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MEET OUR BELGIAN SUPERVISOR

In May, 1962, Jean Durllet began working at MAC Panel, Brussels. The plant was bare--no electricity, no heating, no anything. Today, as a result of Jean's labors and planning, the plant is a humming beehive of control panels, wires, boxes and spare parts.



Jean B. Durllet

Monthly shipments of MAC Panel parts from High Point are quickly assembled and stocked for daily shipments all over Europe.

Jean was born in Charleroi, Belgium, and attended school in the same town. In 1935, early rumblings of what was to become World War II found Jean serving mandatory service in Belgium's infantry. After his military service, he married and began working in an IBM installation in Brussels.

The German Army invaded Belgium on May 10, 1940, and Jean, like many others, scrambled for the front lines to serve his country. Before he could be assigned to any regiment, the 17 day invasion was over and he began the long trek, by foot, back to Brussels. Along the way, and still in uniform, he was imprisoned by the enemy for "about an hour." (The desire for freedom is strong and during the early moments of their initial victory, the Germans were unobservant of many such escapees.) With a newly acquired set of civilian clothes and a "liberated" bicycle, Jean pedaled off to Brussels and his family.

During the occupation, Jean, once again like all others, did his best to

earn enough to buy whatever food and clothing was available, as well as keep out of sight to eliminate the chance of being sent away, unwillingly, as a laborer.

Following the end of the war, Jean became a technical assistant for IBM in Brussels, and remained there until he and his wife, Lucienne, moved to the Belgian Congo in 1950.

African living is very different from that in Brussels, and it did not take long for the Durllets to learn not to walk around at night when a stray elephant or wild boar could choose you as an advisory. Even traveling in a car could be dangerous if some frolicsome elephant decided to play ball with your automobile.

Life in the gold mining town of Bambu, high in the mountains, was pleasant. The few hours of torrential rain each day of the rainy season quickly disappeared into the ground, leaving warm afternoons and cool evenings. But even in such beautiful surroundings, picnics were an open invitation for hawks to come swooping down for their easiest meal of the day and they seemed always to prefer chicken.

In 1954, the Durllets returned to Brussels via Kenya (through the Mau Mau country), Uganda, the Suez Canal and Venice, Italy. The month's trip is probably one of their most lasting memories.

Back in Brussels, Jean returned to working in IBM installations and taking yearly camping vacations in the Ardennes mountains. As the vacation time comes closer this year, Jean is already preparing for another pleasant camping trip.