

# THE TOWN OF SEVEN SABBATH

by George Melville

Rheeda, Germany, is a pretty small town, and probably not many of the boys that got through there even remember it. If you're looking at a map you'll find it a little above the heart of the country; just east of Hannover.

It's not the kind of a place you'd expect to find in Germany now. A lot of the towns were smashed up pretty bad by the bombings of the ground force's artillery. Rheeda's one they missed. It wasn't important enough to bomb, and the army didn't take it until the last big drive of the war. Then they broke through so fast that they didn't have time to work over the towns like they did in the Rhine valley.

Rheeda's not a hard place to describe. You can find one like it without going very far in this country. It's the kind of a town that would make any G. I. homesick if he ever took a good look at it. I was there in the spring, and I used to like to go up on the roof of the two-story building where I was quartered and sunbathe. None of the buildings in Rheeda are very tall, and from there you could see all over town. If you substitute the Autobon highway that stretches away to the north for the Ohio River, you'd come pretty close to having any little town in southern Indiana. The country round about is flat and green, and the little farms are laid out so they don't waste much space. It looks a lot like home.

The funny thing about Rheeda, when I was there, was that it always seemed so quiet. I guess the people still weren't used to the occupation and kept pretty much inside. You didn't see the automobiles that we have over here, and somehow the lack of traffic and the peace of the town made every day seem like Sunday.

There wasn't much there to remind you of the war. Maybe you'd see a truckload of French D. P.'s once in a while; sometimes a flight of planes would pass over; that's about all unless you include the dozen or so Russians that stayed in the building next to us. They made you remember the slave labor the Germans had used.

The Russians really didn't seem as out of place to me as they might have. I couldn't tell the difference between their language and that of the Germans, and as far as I was concerned they might as well have been the same. They seemed pretty healthy and not at all unhappy. Matter of fact they used to get out in front of the house after supper and dance and sing just like they were at home.

I guess you're wondering why I'm saying so much about the Russians when I'm trying to talk about Rheeda, but to tell the truth, if it

hadn't been for them I wouldn't remember the town nearly so well. Maybe if I tell you about what happened one day you'll understand a little.

I remember I was just getting off guard one morning and talking to the boy that relieved me when I saw one of the Russians coming down the street. He was walking slow and holding his side like he was afraid he'd suddenly bend over or something. I thought he had a funny expression on his face, but I didn't realize he was hurt until I saw the blood soaking through his shirt. He had started to pass us, but he'd gone as far as he could. His arm seemed to sag away from his side, and then you could see that it really had been holding him up. I guess it all happened pretty quick, because neither one of us was prepared to catch him. I felt pretty stupid, just standing there watching him fold up like that, but I couldn't help it.

We turned him over and opened his shirt. I tried to press a handkerchief against the wound to stop the blood, but it didn't help. The cut in his side started under the elbow and ran diagonally across his stomach to his chest. It looked like somebody had tried to cut him in two.

One of the Russians must have seen him fall because, before I knew it, they were all ganged around trying to help. There wasn't much we could do for him. He lay there with the blood flowing out of him coloring the brick sidewalk a deeper red. His face wasn't very pretty. I don't guess I'll ever forget the whiteness of it, or the way his eyes seemed to bulge out when he tried to talk. He finally got a deep breath and managed to gasp something that sounded like "Karl Freidrich—Karl Freidrich" just before he died. I didn't know what he had tried to say, but the Russians had. It was the name of the man who'd tried to cut him.

After we got the body out of the way, the Russians went into the house and came back out with knives. Several of the boys in my outfit had come out by then to see what was going on. We all just stood there, watching them go off down the street. We could have stopped them. I don't why we didn't. I guess we figured it wasn't any of our business.

Anyway they didn't go far. Not long after they got out of sight we heard a woman scream and several men shouting. Then every-

thing seemed to get quiet again. About a half a dozen of us loaded in a jeep to go see what had happened. We passed the Russians as they were coming back. They didn't even act like they saw us. They just kept walking; talking among themselves as if nothing had happened.

We found the German about a block up the street. He was lying in the yard of his home cut to pieces. He wasn't very old. A woman who must have been his wife was kneeling beside him, and something in the way she sobbed and clung to his bloody body reminded me of a child that's seen his dog run over in the street. A couple of the boys led her into the house. I made a quick check to see if he was still alive, but he wasn't.

That's about all that happened. I never found out why the German killed the Russian. Maybe he had a good reason; I don't know. But anyway that's why I remember Rheeda. It wasn't just seeing the two men killed though; plenty of men were killed in the war. But somehow I always thought it was a dirty trick to drag a man out of his house and kill him in front of his wife; especially when he lived in a town like Rheeda, where every day seemed like Sunday.

# Salem Society

Miss Lila Fretwell was half-drowned last Saturday night while attempting to hit high C under a steady stream of water from a Clewell shower. Her many friends will be glad to know that Miss Helen Creamer, her friend and roommate, administered one-armed First Aid and she is now doing nicely.

Mrs. Sue Durham and Miss Mary Newlin have refused to be nymphs in the forthcoming May Day because Dr. Pfol would not consent to be a centaur (Union, you know).

Miss Mary Porter Evans was caught smoking an Old Gold in the George Washington Spring House at 3:15 a. m. Sunday morning. She was reported by the night watchman to Miss Essie, who reported it to Miss Reed who reported it to Ruth Lenkoski who reported it to Peggy Davis at the Campus Merchandizing Bureau who reported it to the president of Liggett and Myers. She will be stripped of the honor of being Representative of the Month, and court martialed immediately. After the harrowing episode, she has been seen foaming at the mouth, smoking ten lighted Chesterfields, and babbling "Always Smoke Chesterfields".

Miss Patsy Moser was last seen at Montaldo's buying a practical Adrian model with the money that she cleverly made off with from collecting senior dues. She laugh-

ingly admits that there was nothing to it.

Miss Marian Reed and Mrs. Howard Jordan caused considerable turmoil in the dining room when they made lengthy announcements and sang naughty songs all during lunch. Dr. Jordan tried to quiet them and was promptly slashed in the wrist with dull dinner knives. This is another reason why Miss Newlin and Mrs. Durham cannot be nymphs in May Day. They are glad to report that he is well on the road to recovery.

Miss Mary Patience McFall, Miss Bitsy Green and Miss Eaton Seville plan to publish a new book on "The Relationship Between Calculus and Flower Gardening". Miss Catherine Moore will also be a collaborator.

Miss Peggy Watkins has, after much work, been able to have "All the Way With Your A. A." printed in ten-foot gold letters across the front of Main Hall. There will be a statue of Miss Helen Stout erected on either side of the entrance. In the statue's hand will be placed a bowl which will contain bird seed.

During the summer Mr. Selfridge's office will be converted into a bird sanctuary for the yellow-throated throistle and the lap wing of Labrador.

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