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I arrived in Germany in January 1971 at Rhein Main AB as an SP4 following basic and training. From Rhein Main, I was shuttled to the replacement depot for VII Corps in Stuttgart, to somewhere, and somewhere, then Nuremberg, and then as the final passenger to Bamberg, Warner Barracks where I was dropped off. My orders were looked at, then I was loaded into a deuce and a half and driven through the forest (I later found out the long way around) to Muna Kaserne where I arrived at 02:00. I was given a bunk in the Administrative (?) barracks where I was frequently awoken as hash smoke was blown into my face. I figured I must be in some remote post which **Company C, 71st Maintenance Battalion** seemed to be.

That morning I meet the CO, Cpt Larry Holmgren. He looked at my 201 file and seeing that I was last in an Enlisted Airborne unit, and had typing skills, promptly told me I was his next company clerk as his current one was due to DEROS. I assumed the duties of company clerk, learned the ins and outs of the daily routine of a company clerk, typed up the Captain's papers for the degree he was working on, and figured out the power that the company clerk possessed.

One of the duties was to prepare Article 15 papers and for this I was sent to Stuttgart for a week to a class on Article 15s; paperwork and process. I don't remember how I did, but I do know that upon my return to Muna, the Battalion CO asked me down to Nuremberg and offered me a position as the Article 15 clerk for the Battalion. Why I was offered and not ordered I don't know but at this point I had heard enough talk about the fate of others in this position that I was not, not, inclined to accept. Upon my return to Muna, I told Cpt Holmgren that I wasn't particularly interested, and he suggested I write a letter to the Battalion CO turning down his offer; which I did. In quick time, the Battalion CO notified Cpt Holmgren that I would NOT be his company clerk and I was reassigned to the NCR Vans and to the Tech Support barracks where I was assigned a single occupant room.

The NCR vans were almost exclusively staffed with draftees, and most of these draftees seemed to have attended the University of Wisconsin. Here, while I was training the new Company Clerk, I was being trained on the operations of the NCR Vans; card punch machines (IBM 029 and 129), the magnetic ledgers, and the operation of the NCR500 computer. With the departure of the draftees shortly after my arrival, I became the expert on these items. I was offered Acting Jack E-5 stripes, which I accepted, to be NCOIC of this section.

I managed to hold onto the stripes for 6 months when the other hard stripe NCOs began to complain to Cpt Holmgren that I was associating too much with the enlisted. As I was 18 and all of the NCOs were older than mid-late 20s, I could see no association with them and told Cpt Holmgren that if he wanted the stripes back they were his. He agreed on the condition that I would remain 'acting NCOIC' of the section until a replacement could be found; this did not occur and I DEROS'd in August 1974. There was one hard stripe SSGT that was assigned to be NCOIC in title only, but never was technically competent, drank a lot, and spent from late 1973 on worrying about the family he left in Saigon rather than supervising any staff. As I was no longer hard stripe, I was assigned a roommate.

During this time, I was given an opportunity to travel to West and East Berlin as part of a U.S. Army tour of the conditions there.

I was sent to Oberammergau for training on the care and feeding of the NCR500 computer, and related issues with card punch machines and magnetic ledgers. At Oberammergau I learned of the Sears Christmas catalog equivalent of the U.S. Army's catalog of all items the army needed; from dog food to

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staff with MOSs. I also learned of the U.S. Army hotels that were in Garmisch-Partenkirchen where active duty troops could stay for a few dollars a day. All of this I put to good use in daily operations at Muna and in trips to Southern Germany.

People I remember are: Les Snow, Jim Smith, Jack Varney, RD Giesey, and Ricky Ridenour. There are others however I don't remember full names. Jack Varney and I learned the hardware aspects of the computer and learned machine language programming; also drinking Plum Brandy from a local farmer that Jack rented an apartment from. Les Snow and I have been in contact. Jim Smith met with my wife and myself during his tour of America following his discharge. I have met Jack Varney in Boulder, Colorado for a drink, or rather drinks, following the sale of his business. ██████ paid ██████ to stash hashish in a set of speakers that I was transporting back to America upon my DEROS for RD. █ took possession of the speakers then called and demanded to know what had happened to the dope. I told him I was unaware and had I been aware of this ... well the short reunion we had during the handover of the speakers would not have been so friendly. And, yes, Bamberg, and Muna, as I knew it, was rife with drugs (hash, heroin, mandrex, and some others) and alcohol. It seemed you took a side, the alkys (drinkers) or heads (drugs). I assigned staff by drug of their choice for duties; couldn't have someone doing LSD watch the flashing CPU lights on the computer as nothing else would get done.

I would go out into Bamberg, into Germany and into surrounding countries (Austria, Belgium, Holland/Netherlands, and part of Denmark) during my tour. Sometimes with others and sometimes by myself. Sunday mornings you could find me at the café by the plaza in Bamberg with pastry, coffee, and a copy of the International Herald Tribune, or the Overseas Weekly, or possibly the Stars and Stripes. As I had a few years of High School German, I could converse some, and this paid off for traveling in Germany and Austria. I made it to two Oktoberfest's in Munich, many museums, the red light district in Amsterdam, the tulip warehouses in Holland, the bad part of Rotterdam and a place in Belgium where they were recruiting soldiers of fortune for Africa.

Jim Smith, Les Snow and I hiked up the back side of the Zugspitze in the summer. I did several Volksmarches, and nothing was better than to go down to the Bahnhof on Saturday morning and take the next train out to see the countryside. Well, Jim Smith got a VW and that was as good to go out and see the countryside as well.

In 1974, Bamberg celebrated its 1000th year birthday. I went home to a town that that same year celebrated its 100th birthday. There is a real sense of history in Europe that isn't evident here. When the brewery I was drinking at, the Schlenkerla (the historic Rauchbierbrauerei), was started in the 1600s, well, there is no comparison. Not to mention Mahr's Bräu.

The movie Shaft came out and they opened a theater at Muna for that. Some Friday or Saturday nights the other entertainment would be a couple of ridge runners punching each other out when they were drunk. Then, in late 1973, or was it 1974 before my DEROS, AFRTS came to town and soon every room seemed to have a TV. It seemed not many others (soldiers) seemed to be going out, well going down the street to the local bar, but not going out in country. I shopped and bought hiking boots on the economy, I had brats and beer delivered to the barracks and the NCR vans (had a hibachi there), went to the stores for some clothes (I could be mistaken for a German at times), and a credenza and refrigerator for the room. I traveled.

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My last solo trip to Amsterdam to pickup of rugs from Afghanistan, a coat from Afghanistan, delftware (pottery), was the end of my storied time. Crossing the border from Holland to Germany, German customs found heroin stashed in the passenger car I was riding in. As the lone American, so I feel, I was pulled off the train by the Polizei, interrogated, had all the stuff I was carrying scraped and tested for drugs (including lint in my pockets) and jailed. I was released into the custody of MPs, and then transported to my unit in Muna. The German authorities did not press charges, however, the U.S. Army did; the charge was smuggling 1 million dollars' worth of heroin (on a SP4's salary). I was under General Court Martial from March 1974 until mid-August 1974 when charges were dropped for lack of due process; not to mention lack of evidence.

My orders for DEROS were cut, I was given a couple of days to pack and get papers in order, a jeep ride the Rhein Main AB, then to Dover, then to Fort Dix and finally out with 45 days of TDY pay (late discharge got me TDY and got me out of reserves), 60 days of vacation pay (the power a company clerk has), and 2 ½ months of back pay. Also, a skill set in computers, programming, leadership, and 2 ½ years of living in Europe so a taste for real coffee, real beer, and good food. Oh, and improved German language skills.

