

Bizarre, Fascinating, and Wacky World War I & II Secrets. — One Cigar Is Enough —

"My name is Hilde Hoffman, and I am sixteen years old. I am a German citizen. My home is in Aschaffenburg, Germany, but my mother and I had to move south of Munich, when American bombers destroyed our house. We are living with my uncle, a kind older German gentleman from southern Bavaria. Now that World War II has been over for several months, my mother and I are preparing to move back to our hometown. One of my uncle's best friends, Mr. Franz, heard that we were moving back and became very excited."

He said, "You know that Germany has no mail service started yet. So I need you to do me a very big favor. Your hometown is very close to Wiesbaden, where the American Army headquarters is located. The general stationed there is a great guy. I know him well. I have a bottle of rare German liqueur called "Ansbach Uralt" (a special kind of brandy) just for him."

"Naturally my mother agreed to see that it would be delivered. But she could not speak any English, it became my job, I had no choice. So here I am, getting off the train at Wiesbaden, Germany."

"The afternoon showers have stopped, but everything is still very wet. Quickly my feet became wet, as my only pair of shoes has holes in their bot-



General George Smith Patton Jr.
"Old Blood and Guts"

toms. But I am lucky; due to the war many Germans have no shoes at all. I have the special bottle of brandy, beautifully wrapped by my mother, and a note from Mr. Franz to the general."

It seems that they were drinking buddies, a weird pair indeed, an American general and a German citizen. But this general was very eccentric, and very unpredictable. He was called "the cowboy general" because he always wore one or more pearl handle forty five caliber six-shooters. He also had another nickname, "old blood and guts" because of his aggressiveness in combat. This is the famous General George S. Patton Jr., one of America's greatest heroes of all time.

"One of my girlfriends,

who works in an army canteen told me, beware of that American general. He is a very big bad "curser." He has been known to curse the blue down out of the sky."

"I did not expect to see the general at all. I was going to leave Franz's note and bottle of brandy at the first available guardhouse. But when I arrived, the guard telephoned ahead, and insisted that I go right in."

"The general has his office in that large stone house," another guard pointed out. "He is waiting to see you, in that big office at the end of the second flight of stairs."

"I hesitated as I had not come for a visit, but now I had no other choice. So I walked into the general's office and stood in front of

his large desk. The person behind it was a very neatly dressed army officer who leaned back in his chair."

"Please have a seat," he said, as he gave me the once-over.

"He was such a soft spoken and kindly looking American gentleman. How could he possibly be the big curser? I had to lean over his big desk, to give him Franz's note and the bottle of brandy. I could not help but see the fancy forty five caliber six-shooter, with a pearl handle."

"How do you do," I said, in my best school girl English. "I am fine," he

said kindly, "and how are you?" "Surely my girlfriend was mistaken. He even reminded me of my sweet old uncle."

"I certainly do thank you for bringing me a present from Franz. We had some grand ole' times together, down in bad Tolz," the general said. I replied, "The only reason that I am here, is because I am the only person in the family that speaks English."

"Yes, and you are doing very well, I am looking forward to having some of that good brandy with my dinner tonight. But I have nothing to give you in return... for this is a big surprise."

"Suddenly he leaned forward, and pointed to a round ornamental cigar container."

"Here, have a cigar, take two or three, in fact you can



by Cecil Owen

have the whole box. I am not supposed to smoke them anyway."

I was flabbergasted. "Thanks, but I do not smoke."

He smiled, "I knew that, but surely someone in your family must smoke."

"I have always been taught to be modest about everything. Therefore, to please the general, I took just one cigar, although no one in my family smoked cigars. As I told the general good-bye, he stood up and thanked me again. I wondered what my mother would think of me when I showed her my cigar. Then as I left the big stone office building and headed for the headquarters' complex exit... it occurred to me, Maxi, the shoe-maker loves cigars, and they are very rare in Germany now. He will be very glad to half sole my shoes for this prize."

This is just one of the unusual episodes in the fabulous life of General George Smith Patton Jr. more will follow later.

Source: Adapted from a story in World War II Magazine.



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