

Five Modern Musketeers "Paint the Town Red"

The three musketeers have come back, but in the meantime they have increased. They are now five. They are staying at the Terminus (hotel) but have in this generation taken on the form of five American aviators. There are really nine on the team, but only five of them have come to Norway. The five happy musketeers can really "paint the town red" as the Americans say, when they go out to have a good time. They are **Lloyd Pittman**, chief pilot, Lt. **Dallas Weddle** (pilot), **F. O. Jerome Zwerdling**, navigator, Staff Sargent **Leverett C. Downing** (over whom there is not the air of importance, as we know about the street in London, of the same name, from where Churchill is directing the winning of the war), and Staff Sargent **Robert Lubovich**.

They said they came to Bergen rather unexpectedly. They were bound for Trondheim when trouble developed in one of the motors, and it appeared that another was about to fail on their B-24 Bomber, so they decided to make an emergency landing at Herdla.

"We were glad," they said, "it didn't happen about three weeks ago," at that time Herdla was still in German hands. "We have never landed in Norway before, but oh boy, don't we know your country".

Maybe you have been on bombing missions over here? "No! We never bombed Norway or Denmark." "We were in 'slip service', that is, we dropped provisions, ammunition, weapons and other supplies to paratroopers, and underground workers." "It was only when we were flying over Germany that we bombed."

"We have bombed a lot of German cities." "Never Berlin itself, but Potsdam." "We could see the fires in Berlin when we were over Potsdam." "We know the German cities pretty well, such as Cologne, Coblenz, Frankfurt on Main, Dusseldorf, Duisburg, Hahn, Munster, Aachen and many others." "Of course, we only got a birdseye view." "However, there is not much to look at there now." Were you on many raids over Germany?

One of the officers has 16 silver leaves and another 24 painted on their jackets. One for each raid. Have you always been lucky? "Yes, we have been bombing Germany for three months, and got only a few holes in the wings, maybe a scratch here and there, but nothing that couldn't be repaired in a few minutes."

"Of course, in three months we only saw a couple of fighters."

Where the fighter planes were we don't know. Perhaps the fellows who bombed the airports would know.

"We have been over Norway seven times with supplies, and we were quite happy when we found out we were assigned the job of flying nine Norwegian paratroopers home." They were supposed to go to Trondheim. "By the way, one of them was from Bergen." "He was 42 years old, and for him it was lucky that we landed here." "That gave him a chance to see some members of his family." "He found out that his daughter had been sent to Germany by the Gestapo." "We didn't see him any more." Maybe he got word from her through Sweden. What was his name? "Search me!" Are you going to fly the Norwegians to Trondheim when you get the plane repaired? "No, we don't know when the plane will be ready." "We will need two new motors for it." "We are going to Stavanger on a boat tomorrow, from there we are going to England by plane." Are you going to be stationed there, or are you going out on new adventures? "Security silence please." "Write instead that we had a lot of fun in Bergen since we came here Monday." "The people here have been very kind to us." "We found a friend here, his name is George Maland, and the things he arranged for us, Oh Boy!" "We saw a lot of Norwegian-Americans; they invited us to their homes." "We know the Norwegian-American homes from the USA, same style and everything." "Yes, we had a good time here in Bergen and would like to come back some day when our war duties are over!" You landed on Herdla airport? "If you can call it an airport." "It wasn't designed for bombers at least." That is too bad! It won't be suited for passenger traffic after the war? Not if converted bombers are to be used! One of the five musketeers is in the fur business in civilian life. Your friend Maland tells us that he sold over a million dollars worth of fur before the war. We hope that his flying hasn't scared the foxes out of their hides so he won't have the fur business after the war.

Translated from Norwegian by Nels J. Kirk