

HERMANN GOERING



Charles obtained this photo of Goering eating chow in his cell.



Hermann Goering was the Nazi's Commander-in-Chief of the Luftwaffe, President of the Reichstag, Prime Minister of Prussia and second-in-command of the Third Reich.

Goering committed suicide in his cell at Nürnberg about two hours before he was to be hanged.

Charles's letter home after Goering's suicide, discussing the commotion that occurred on the cell block as he and his unit scrambled to deal with what had happened:

Nurnberg, Germany

19 October 1946

Dear Folks,

Saturday night. The col is having a big party down at the Grand Hotel to include the Opera Merry Widow, which is being given tonight.

Croner and I didn't even sign up, because we knew that we would be on duty.

The Barber of Seville is next Thursday night, so we may be able to go if we can get off early enough.

I imagine that you are "sweating me out" over Goering. He caused a bit of trouble, all right, but nothing too serious. Croner and I were on duty on Monday in the daytime, but we came down about 1930 to go on guard at Post # 1. This is the main entrance to the prison, and it was necessary to keep an officer there to meet VIP's and to search everyone for cameras. Croner pulled the first relief, and I went down there about 2200. Up until this time, I had been making the evening rounds with the German Doctor. We just got as far as Seyss-Inquart, so did not visit Goering, but Lt MacLinden went with the Doctor the rest of the way. I went on guard. Pretty soon Lt Rahn the doctor came rushing in, and then Col Andrus, so when Lt Pace came down to escort in the Allied Quadripartite Commission, I asked him what was the matter. He really ~~whispers~~ looked excited. He says, "Goering committed suicide." We had it, I thought. I imagine that you read about it or heard about it over the radio. The mutual commentator Arthur Gaeth who was representing all American Radio, gave the most accurate account. As far as we can figure, this is what happened. He must have put the vial into his mouth, ~~as~~ when the guard changed, because, although there is not supposed to be one, there probably was a second or so when no one was looking in. The guard changed at 1030. (pm) Then he just lay there, and about 2245 crushed the vial. The guard saw him stiffen a little, then make a choking sound. He yelled for the cpl of the guard, who called the prison officer. Lt Croner and Mac Linden rushed down

with the Chaplain (Gerecke) who was also in the Prison Office at the time. The prison office is about 15 yards from Goring's cell. Croner went for the German Doctor, but Goring died a few seconds later. The chaplain grabbed his wrist and said, 'My God, this man's dead.' And he was. His face was twisted in agony as only a violent poison death can do.

How did he get the poison. Well, this is something that a Commission from the Allied Control Council is trying to determine, but they never will. There are far too many factors. Personally, I think that he had it when he came to this prison. I think that it was concealed on his body, maybe in his navel. I do not know of a time when I was there that his bodily recesses were searched. Supposedly it was done when he first came into American Control, but there is also the possibility that he could have gotten it from his lawyer during court, when many times things were passed that the Guard could not check ~~well~~ thoroughly (though the Col objected to this procedure.)

There is much speculation naturally, about the ways that he could have gotten it, such as from one of the prison workers, etc, but it is hard for us who have been working so long just to prevent suicide to find a way, because any previous ways that we might have thought of, we blocked immediately.

Of course now that the horse has been stolen, we have thought of many ways of locking the gate. As for me, I think that one mistake was in kidding ourselves that the defendants didn't know that that was going to be the night of their death. There had been so much publicity about the 15th day after the verdict, and any moron could have sensed the greater activity around the jail. You see, the col's idea was that they would not know until midnight when they would be awakened and told to get dressed. I could tell in the early evening when I made the rounds with the doc that this was silly, because everyone of them knew it was the last night. Streicher said to the doc, 'Maybe I shouldn't take a sleeping pill tonight; they might have a hard time waking me up.'

I think that if we wouldn't have thought this, but at six o'clock at night, we handcuffed the defendants as soon as supper, and placed the guard inside, and consisted of outside the cell, looking in, that Goring might have been prevented from taking the poison. However, the mistake was in his having the poison in the first place. One who has potassium cyanide, can always get a second to pop it into his mouth, and after that, it is too late to save him. He dies within 2-5 minutes.

There is an investigation going on, so prison personnel can leave the guards enslave, although there is no suspicion of anyone American.

This is what prevented my entering the pipeline, as they say, for redeployment.

Last Thursday morning, after I got home from work, I received a call from the sgt major, who said that I was to leave for Bremerhaven at 15 after 6 at night. Well, I rushed around like mad, packed everything, sent my barracks bag, banded my footlocker, and began to clear the outfit. I was almost ready to sign out, when somebody grabbed me and told me not to get in any way, as the col would not let any prison officers go as long as there was an investigation under way. I can see his point, because it wouldn't look good anyway.

I had called Park in the morning at Heidelberg, and he said that he was due to go, soon. He was sweating me out, also. When I found out I couldn't leave, I called him again, and by that time he had got his orders, so was leaving the next day. I hope I can catch up to him.

So you see that it probably won't be long now until I am home. I'll keep you informed on the situation. I hadn't expected to be going this soon, but I told you about the speed-up in redeployment of civilian-soldiers.

I am enclosing an invitation to a party which we had last night at the club. It was a very nice party. I went home about midnight when people started to get drunk and when the party started getting not so nice.

I think that if we would have known...
...obtain the...
...was allowed in the chamber...
...part of the time...
...watching the...
...25 hours of... duty...

I am sending a money order also.

within 2-3 minutes.

Hope I see you soon; I always said, you know, that the Allied Control Council would eventually decide to let the...
...this is what prevented my entering the...
...officers...

redeployment.

Love
Chas
from the...
...I received a call...
...I was to leave for Bremen...