

Kovacs, Louis F.

Local GI Helps Guard Nazi Bigwigs Facing Trial

DEC 5 1945

Precautions taken in guarding top Nazi war criminals were described in a letter received today from Pfc. Louis F. Kovacs, this city, a member of the Occupation Army detailed to prevent the escape, destruction or harm from the outside to those now on trial for their lives.

Written on November 7, under a Furth, Germany, dateline, Pfc. Kovacs' letter declared his guard company was detailed to guard the Palace of Justice and "all the Nazi big shots, such as Hess, Goering von Papen, von Ribbentrop and all the others."

"It is really a very novel guard detail" the letter continues.... "we pull six hours on and 24 hours off

....
".... Since the time of Robert Ley's suicide, we have one guard for each cell. There are guards 24 hours a day to prevent suicides....

"Formerly the guard was placed so as to guard four men, but that is changed now. There is a guard for each man and we must look at our man every half-minute to see that he has done no harm to himself.

"The doors are unlocked at night time; only the safety latch is on. Also a metal rod screen is used and a light shines in all night long. The screen is used so the bulb cannot be broken.

"The criminals have nothing to do except prepare their defense and pace that little room. Every day for 20 minutes, the criminals get an exercise period, which they make use of very much. Only four or five men take exercise at a time and there is a guard for every man. One extra man is used to walk the 20-foot walk so no one else can do harm to them from the outside.

"The food is prepared by prisoners of war who will be released after this is all over with. They prepare the food very good and the

criminals say it is good also . . . their reading glasses, towels and chairs are taken out at night so they can't use them to commit suicide.

"The guards are armed in the cell blocks with blackjacks; the men at the doors have .45 calibre automatic pistols, while the guards on the outside have sub-machine guns and .45 pistols . . . there is no way of escape, since every hole or crack is well-guarded. It is also very hard to get into the prison, all personnel, including us guards, have special passes to leave and enter the Palace of Justice."

In closing his letter, Pfc. Kovacs said it was possible he might get to see some of the trials at Nurenberg, adding "they should be very interesting."

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