







# TRAGEDY OF JUGOSLAVIA

The following article appeared in the Minneapolis Star-Journal, following an interview with Captain John A. Blatnik of Chisholm, Minn., who spent seven months with the Partisans in Yugoslavia.

"After 18 months of foreign service, during which he spent seven months behind the enemy lines with Tito's Partisans in northern Yugoslavia, paratrooper Capt. John A. Blatnik, state senator from Chisholm, is back in Minnesota.

"Capt. Blatnik's first assignment was to work with the Yugoslav Partisans in setting up an escape system by which American airmen who had bailed out over Yugoslavia were picked up by Partisans and friendly peasants and brought safely to secret landing fields where they were evacuated by planes and flown to their bases in Italy.

"Later the captain was head of a military intelligence unit following movements and activities of the enemy and reporting them to Allied headquarters in Italy.

"Capt. Blatnik and his men were briefed at their headquarters so that in case of capture they would be treated as regular prisoners of war.

"After the Americans got into Yugoslavia they learned that on direct orders from Berlin the Germans would treat all such Allied personnel captured behind enemy lines as espionage agents, which meant the death sentence if captured.

"Usually outnumbered and poorly equipped, the Partisans continually and relentlessly waged their amazing guerrilla war against the enemy.

"It was obvious," said Capt. Blatnik, "that the Partisans knew not only what they were fighting against, but clearly understood what they were fighting for."

"Although considerable arms and supplies were flown in by the Allies during the last year of the war, for the first three years of warfare in Yugoslavia, the Partisans had to rely entirely on captured enemy arms and clothing.

"In addition to the Nazi and Fascist systematic program of mass extermination of the Yugoslavs, the Nazi technique of 'divide and conquer' brought about an intestine warfare that was ghastly and tragic," the captain said.

"The people were divided into about a dozen different parties or movements. Many of the groups fought against each other occasionally, but all of them fought against the Partisans at all times. The Partisans were the only ones who consistently fought the German invader.

"The tragedy ended with 10 per cent of the nation's population killed during the four years of war. If we in America lost in dead by that same ratio, we would have had 13,000,000 dead."

"The captain worked with Russian and British officers who were also with the Partisans. He had an interesting six weeks working with Maj. Randolph Churchill, son of the British wartime prime minister.

"March and April of this year found us in a rather tough spot," said the captain, "as the British would say, we thought we had 'had it,' or in plain American 'our goose was cooked.'" We were in Slovenia, the northern part of Yugoslavia, completely surrounded.

"Coming toward us from the south were the enemy and Jugos-

slav quisling troops being pushed northward by the regular Yugoslav Partisan army. Crowding us from the northeast were the Germans retreating from Hungary and under heavy Russian pressure. Just west of us the Germans were pouring in from their retreat from northern Italy.

"The route through northern Yugoslavia was the enemy's main escape route into Austria and Germany, and even that was being narrowed down by the Russian drive into Vienna. We were really right in the middle of one big traffic jam, and for a while it looked as though this were 'it.'"

"Toward the end of April we finally broke through the enemy lines south of us and joined up with the regular Partisan army. We marched on up with them and got into Trieste in Italy as the war ended."

"Captain said he got his biggest thrill in picking up American airmen who had been shot down over Yugoslavia or who had bailed out from crippled bombers.

"Capt. Blatnik visited Slovenia in northern Yugoslavia with his mother 23 years ago.

"In January of this year, I was in the village where my father was born and where I had visited 23 years ago," he said. "I visited my two aunts, but as an enemy garrison was only six miles away, I didn't dare reveal my identity to my relatives for fear they would become victims of enemy reprisals. Two days later the enemy were in the same village and it took five days for the Partisans to drive them back."

"Capt. Blatnik joined his wife, former Beth Arnold of 2840 Humboldt Ave., S., and their baby boy at her home in Minneapolis. They will spend December and the holidays with the captain's parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Blatnik, Sr., in Chisholm.

"Blatnik earned his paratrooper rating at a British Royal Air Force parachute school in Italy. In addition to three battle stars, he has the air medal and the bronze star medal with oak leaf cluster.

Cedric Adams wrote in his column in the same newspaper:

"This story comes from Capt. John A. Blatnik, paratrooper who spent months with Tito's Partisans behind the lines in Yugoslavia. He writes: 'The spirit and morale of the Partisans were nothing short of phenomenal. They had none of the things a regular army provides its soldiers. No regular issue of clothes, no food, arms, ammunitions, medical care, USO shows, toilet articles, insurance, mail.'

"I told the Partisans how our soldiers, too, were going through hell on the battlefields all over the world. The Partisans would listen carefully as I told them of the bitter, bloody amphibious landings our men were making on the islands in the Pacific. I told them of the mud in mountainous Italy. After I had finished, a young Partisan spoke up:

"Yes, they are brave men, but I think there's a difference. For you Americans this war is a fight; to us it is a struggle. Then I remembered how not long before this I was with a Partisan patrol making a night crossing of an enemy-held valley with its well-guarded road and railway. I noticed a barefoot, ragged member of our patrol. He had no rifle, no grenade, no weapons of any kind. I asked him why he was traveling with us. He replied, 'I come

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# ENGLISH SECTION

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DECEMBER 28, 1945



After three years of service without a furlough, Stanley J. Jankovich, son of the well known Mr. and Mrs. Anton Jankovich, 14214 Westropp Ave., arrived home, honorably discharged. He served overseas in the European theater of operations for 29 months.

Home on furlough for the holidays are brothers Pfc. Frank and Pvt. Stanley Ceperlo. Frank has been serving in the army for 2 years, 11 months, of which eight months were spent overseas. Stanley entered the service three months ago. They are the sons of Mrs. Pauline Ceperlo of 1400 East 53rd St.

Three sons of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sever, 1391 East 45th St., who were serving in the armed forces, have arrived home, honorably discharged.

Cpl. Frank Zore, 1037 East 70 St. sent a telegram the early part of this week to his parents from Camp Atterbury, Ind. notifying them that he is on his way home. Cpl. Zore was unaware that he was arriving home for the funeral of his father, who passed away while Cpl. Zore was making plans for coming home.

### DON'T FORGET

Tomorrow, Saturday, December 29th, is the day of the dance being held by the Cleveland Maccabee Red Jackets at the Slovenian Auditorium, 6417 St. Clair Ave. Music will be furnished by the popular Johnny Pecon and his orchestra.

SANC No. 48 will hold their monthly meeting tonight at 8 p. m. at the Slovene Workmen's Home, Waterloo Rd. All members are urged to attend, as plans for the coming benefit affair to be held on January 17th, will be discussed.

SANC No. 39 urges all members to attend their meeting, which will be held tonight at the Slovene National Home, St. Clair Ave. The meeting will start promptly at 8 p. m.

### WEDDING BELLS

Last Saturday, Nada Sabec, niece of Mrs. Sore, 14905 Lucknow Ave., became the bride of Joe Yoder. Both are employed by the G. E. Co. The couple left for a trip to Florida. They also visited Mrs. Yoder's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Sabec of Strabane, Pa.

Congratulations!

### VISITORS FROM CANADA

Joe Pogorelec of St. Catherine, Canada spent the holiday visiting his brother, John of 1391 East 45 St. Together with Mr. Louis Zevnik, who, prior to moving to 1058 East 72 St., resided in Canada, they visited our office during the past week-end. Mr. J. Pogorelec has a wife, daughter, and son, in Europe. His son, who is 20 years of age, has been serving with the Partisans for the past 22 months.

along so when one of our comrades falls, I pick up his rifle and ammunition and go on. The rifle must go on."

"I think I begin to understand what the Partisan meant—for us a fight, for them—a struggle. Then I thought of Valley Forge."



### American Legion

POST NO. 273

Although the snow storm on December 13, 1945 was severe, those that braved it to come to our open house meeting did not regret attending. Like a flash the hall was transferred into the Yule-tide spirit. Leave it to the ladies of the Auxiliary—they do not have to rehearse this act. The food could not be better nor the decorations prettier. It has been the custom with the Auxiliary for years to have some kind of a pre-Christmas celebration and this year they chose to share presents with one another secretly. It was very interesting. Mrs. Frank Snyder, we all missed you very much and are hoping that you will get well soon.

This meeting was opening by Commander Joseph J. Gornick later than usual, also most of the routine had been waived in order to get acquainted with the World War II servicemen who were guests for the evening.

The Post went on record with a contribution to the \$15,000 sponsored by the American Legion of Cuyahoga County to our sick and wounded at Crile, Marine and Brecksville hospitals. A contribution was also made to the Christmas Seal Fund sponsored by the Anti-Tuberculosis League.

At this meeting August Primic presented the necessary papers and we were glad to sign them as we deem it an honor to sponsor the Boy Scout movement in this community. We also urged the parents to enroll their boys. Our Troop 250 Boy Scouts and Sea Scouts Ship Saratoga meet at the St. Clair Recreation Center. A. R. Geambro is chairman, Felix A. Danton, scoutmaster, and skipper Joe Legat and James Rescic the Post's committeeman.

In his talk to the World War II veterans, John L. Mihelich said that every one has his own right as to what organization one wants to belong, but he outlined that Lake Shore Post is a local organization and that recently our comrade, the Honorable Governor Frank J. Lausche proclaimed Dec. 15 as American Legion Day in Ohio. He also stated that the American Legion is recognized as having potential power in public life and with the combining of the two would greatly increase this strength of leadership which the World War II veterans will assume. We also discussed the plans for our new club rooms.

Since Xmas is past—in closing best wishes for your happiness are extended. And may God bless you all in the new year.

# Waterloo Gossip

By "The Tattler"

Hellooo-ooo—is it cold! This weather! Adding all those zeroes just reminded me of the cold weather, so I had to remind you all of it—how mean, huh?

Sunday and Tuesday, I, along with a lot of others attended the dances at Waterloo. Sure had a grand time and I know everyone else did. The crowd is wonderful and getting better all the time too! More vets attending. That's the way we like to see it.

Vadnal at the bandstand giving me a very sweet smile. Man, was I shocked! The music was wonderful, fellows, and how in the world the Vadnal boys had the pep to play up Holmes Ave. after the dance at Waterloo Rd. is beyond me. Your shirt was kind of wet, Johnnie. Were you that warm, or did someone spill water on your head?

I attended the dance Sunday rather early, in fact very early. Coming in by myself I expected to have a dull evening, but was I surprised! Had the grandest time of my life!

Eleanor Celin and Dolly arriving just in time to grab the first dance—is that a must for you, gals?

Snoopy and Jo Simoncic coming down from Holmes and really looking all in.

Bumped into Pvt. Frank Celin surprisingly. Really expected him to be back at camp but they gave him an extension of 5 days so he could spend Xmas at home. Sure nice of the army, huh?

Rudy Ivancic home on leave, having a rip-roaring time with all his gal friends and I am happy to see you home, Rudy, even though you didn't seem to think so.

Mistletoe was all over the place Tuesday... I could just picture New Year's Eve. —Huba, Huba!

Quite a bunch of new outfits worn by the gals. Santa sure must have been good. Millie Suzick looking really very nice in her white suit. Against her strawberry blond hair it looked just stunning. Isabelle Sundry looking quite appealing to the gals. —John Wenzel

eyes in her black dress. The dress sure is an eye-opener, is! Millie Kramer wearing an awfully cute blue and white sort of a pinstripe long sleeve dress. I love the way those sleeves are made, and a lot of compliments were given to you on your shrewd jitterbugging! Quite sharp, Millie!

Dot Iczak and Tony Zupancic begging me to tell them what was in the Enako about them a few weeks back! Well, it's the truth you two do make a nice couple when dancing so closely. No remarks!

Johnnie Yagodnik hiding in the corner all night—what's the matter, Johnnie? Afraid of the cat?

Marion Godec wearing a very lovely corsage given to her by none other than that well known Waterloo fan, Oners Erjavec.

Gee, so many more were present that I'd like to mention, but this must get in the mail tonight. I know this is a short article, but I'll make up for it next week. I know I'll have a mess of gossip then. Keep that mistletoe fresh, fellows, as you'll be wanting it New Year's Eve. So until next week, so long, one and all.

Always

"The Tattler"

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