



## WITH THE “WATSON’S WHIZZERS” AND “OPERATION PAPERCLIP”

by Isolde Baur

**F**ORTY YEARS AGO—after Germany’s complete defeat in WWII—the nations of the Western Alliance divided among themselves what was left of Germany’s industrial plants. Every piece of machinery was dismantled and shipped to Russia, France and Great Britain to make sure that Germany never would have a chance again to rise to leadership in the industrial world.

The United States of America was mainly interested in German technologies and scientific achievements accumulated during WWII. One of the items on the list of priority was the Me 262, the only jet engine-powered fighter plane in combat, designed and built by the Messerschmitt Company.

Flight Captain Karl Baur, chief test pilot for all experimental aircraft of the Messerschmitt Company during that time, was closely involved—through his responsibility for flight testing—in developing this aircraft to series production.

Taken into “custody” by the Americans in May 1945, Baur recorded the final chapter of this aircraft in his diary and notes. He was taken to the United States as one of the first German scientists under contract of Operation Paperclip, the code name of the War Department.

With the Watson’s Whizzers and Operation Paperclip is a document of German-American history and a testimony from the “other side of the fence.”

Twenty-two years after Karl Baur’s death—he died October 12, 1963, in Arlington, Texas—I feel it must be of interest to some people in the United States and Germany to know “how and why” it happened. Today, restored Me 262s can be seen in museums in the United States and Germany.

**29 April 1945**—“*The Americans had arrived during the night. I had taken my family to the bomb shelter—in the cellar of a brewery, two floors down—the night before and we were*

**"Watson's Whizzers." Standing row, first right (with sunglasses): Karl Baur, second from left, Hoffmann, next to him, Col. Watson.**

*asleep when the shelter filled up with people. Around 5:00 a.m. no noise could be heard from flying aircraft, bombing or shelling."*

Karl took a chance and stepped out of the shelter to investigate. On the corner to our apartment house he met the first American soldier, a young fellow who was scared to death. When Karl approached him speaking English he was relieved and asked Karl about soldiers in this area to defend the city. His assurance that there were no German soldiers in this area made him feel somewhat easier.

It was noon, however, before we were allowed to leave the shelter. Curfew was from 9:00 P.M. to 5:00 A.M..

**30 April 1945**—*"Looting and stealing all over the city! The 'Guests of the Fuhrer' stole whatever they could. Wine cellars of the city's retailers were located behind our apartment house. Some looters opened them and carried the wine away in anything from buckets, bottles and tin cans. One person 'parked' a bucket on our back door."*

Karl rushed to pick up the bucket and we treated all tenants to a glass of the most delicious red wine which we had not tasted in years.

Our car, which we had parked on a friend's property behind the apartment house, had been stolen and we found it the next day on the street around the corner—sitting there without any gasoline. We had no intention of letting it get away! Let's paralyze it!

Removing one wheel should do it. Wrong! The guy who wanted it so badly had a new wheel mounted the following day. This time we removed some engine parts plus another wheel to play it safe. This guy must have hated the whole world when he arrived the next time. We were able to roll back the car to the parking spot at our friend's place and removed all four wheels and the battery. A few months later it was used as barter to secure food for the family.

On 2 May 1945, Gerd Caroli, Karl's former colleague from the Messerschmitt Company, came running up the stairs in the morning.

"Karl, come quick. There is an American colonel downstairs who wants to fly the Me 262," he yelled in excitement.

"You are kidding."

A look out of the window proved that he was telling the truth.

"Well, he knows that we have ships sitting in Lechfeld. He wants us to get the mechanics together and put the planes back into flying condition. If I understand him correctly, he is not allowed to come up to the apartment for security reasons. Also, he showed me a paper from the 'High Command.' I have the strange feeling he wants to take us as prisoners of war."

Together Karl and Gerd went downstairs.

According to Karl this meeting was open and sincere:

"Hello, Colonel. I am Karl Baur. What can I do for you?"

Colonel Watson handed the paper to him from the "High Command" while returning the greeting and introducing himself.

"Well, Colonel, I am not a military man. I am a civilian. You cannot force me to work for you," Karl stated while returning the paper to him with a faint smile.

"Well, if you refuse to cooperate then we have other means

available to make you 'volunteer.'"

Under these circumstances Karl and his colleague decided it would be wiser to cooperate.

Word had reached us already through the grapevine that a number of scientists and friends had been picked up and put into camps. After all, there were still some Germans fighting in mountain villages of the Alps.

"We tried to locate as many of our former top master mechanics as possible informing them to be ready to go to work the following day.

"Life was chaos. Transportation and communication systems had collapsed. American Army trucks picked up the people in the mornings for the 20 km ride to the airbase Lechfeld and returned them to their homes in the evenings.

"The airplanes—which we had only paralyzed—were fixed up and in flying condition again in a couple of days. Several conflicting orders from Hitler and Speer had almost prevented this. Hitler had ordered the 'scorched earth' concept which had meant destroying everything including complete industrial plants.

"Our testing center at the airbase Lechfeld had been cut off from the Home Office of the Messerschmitt Company in Oberammergau during the final three weeks of the war. Therefore, management of our testing center—including myself—were responsible for making a decision. We all knew that the development of the Me 262 was way ahead of any other aircraft development in the world at that time. After deep soul searching by every individual we met again and agreed that it was important to save this advanced technology at any price. The people of Germany had the right to know someday that during the darkest days of their existence something worthwhile was accomplished by their brilliant scientists and engineers.

"Therefore, we ignored Hitler's order and followed an order given by Speer, Minister of Armament and Ammunition, which stated that everything shall be paralyzed only. The Me 262s had been paralyzed by removing the engine governors which we had buried carefully—wrapped in oil paper. All we had to do was to recover those engine controls and re-install them. The price we had to pay for our action was presented to us quickly when certain groups of our countrymen called us traitors. We had to live with that weight on our shoulders for quite some time.

"A Lt. Muller of the German Air Force handed over his fully operational Me 262 on May 8th, after the complete surrender of Germany. He had left from an airfield near Prague, just before the Russians had moved in. No one could prevent his being taken prisoner of war by the Americans.

"I saved his flight gear which he had to leave behind in the cockpit. Seven years later—in summer 1952—I was able to return it to him when we had a wine-happy reunion with all former German jet pilots, the 'Fuzz-Flieger.'

"I picked up Me 262 number 9 in Munchen [Munich] where a famous squadron had been operating jet fighters during the closing days of the war."

Colonel Watson had arrived with six outstanding pilots of the American Air Force who were to be instructed in the Me 262s, namely, Captains Hillis and Dahlstrom and Lieutenants Anspach, Brown, Holt and Strobel.

One of Karl's pilots from the Messerschmitt Company, Ludwig Hofmann, was still in town and helped with briefing and checking out the pilots in the two-seater.

"Those Americans are excellent pilots. But, what impresses me most is the fact that they all have degrees in engineering. One checkout ride in the two-seater was enough to turn them loose. It is a pleasant experience to work with this group. Even the Colonel himself is not afraid of his status and gives a helping hand when needed. Can you imagine an Oberst of the German Air Force giving his crew a hand? Unthinkable!

"Such were Karl's remarks during conversations with visiting friends."

(Thirty-six years later, when the author finally met Colonel Watson they realized that he and Karl Baur had been born only five days apart in November 1911. Probably, this coincidence explained their similar attitude and the respect for each other's work.)

The group was called *Watson's Whizzers* and they gave their "old man" the affectionate title "The Grey Wolf." One evening Karl came home chattering, "Those Americans are like kids. You know, they gave each ship a girl's name and they actually refer to it by that name."

Working for the Americans had a few advantages. All German personnel received meals which was a very important factor, since food distribution to German civilians had broken down completely. Canned military rations were distributed. We learned to enjoy ham and eggs from dried eggs and canned ham. It was a "heavenly" gourmet meal. Most men saved as much as they could to take home to their families, such as cookies and chocolate. What luxuries they were for us starving Germans!

Also, "Off Limits" signs were distributed to the workers for their apartments. It meant that our apartments were taboo for occupation by American military personnel, and we were spared having the former "Guests of the Fuhrer" take over the possessions we had managed to salvage. Our apartment was inspected by military personnel the day they had occupied the City. It was declared unsuitable since we had no refrigerator, no central heating and no bathroom entrance from the hall.

We were among the fortunate people that had received glass to replace some of the broken windows. We had them installed so that we had some daylight in every room. One of Karl's former secretaries had moved in with us already. She started a tailoring business immediately in the one room she occupied. A few days later one of our friends "lost" their apartment with all furnishings to American military personnel and the whole family—three adults and three children—moved into our seven-room apartment too.

The job of restoring the Me 262s and training of the American pilots was completed before the end of May. Colonel Watson had informed Karl Baur that the aircraft had to be flown to Cherbourg, France, for shipment to the United States. Probably he, Karl, had to go to the United States too.

"Don't leave town. You'll hear from us soon."

Captain Hillis arrived at our apartment on the morning of June 9th.

"You are ordered to ferry one of the Me 262s to Cherbourg, France."

"Do I have time to finish breakfast and pack an overnight bag?"

Captain Hillis nodded, "Of course," and accepted Karl's invitation to sit down.

"Schatzi, I don't know what will happen. If they want me to go to America, I will insist on taking my two master mechanics.

Colonel Watson in Lechfeld, May 1945.

Emblem of the *Watson's Whizzers*. The picture was taken from Karl's old suitcase.

Oh, and stay in touch with Caroli and the group. Colonel Watson promised us that we would be paid for our work," he mumbled while finishing his cup of peppermint tea.

"On June the 9th, 1945, the seven 'Whizzers,' my old friend and former test pilot Ludwig Hofmann, and I ferried the nine Me 262s to Melun near Paris, France, after a refueling stop in St. Dizier. This was an accomplishment which spoke for the caliber of those pilots and the soundness and feasibility of the new-fangled jet propulsion.

"From Melun I made two trips with Colonel Watson to Norway and Denmark where we collected other German aircraft. From Stavanger we ferried two of the twin-engined Arado 234 jet bombers. I had never had a chance to fly that particular aircraft before and I enjoyed the challenge.

"Stay on my wing" was the order from Colonel Watson for the flight to Melun, via a refueling stop in Le Culot.

"Of course, Watson did not know that I knew this area like my hip pocket from numerous prior flights during the war. After making a perfect 'spot landing' in Le Culot I did not spare my compliments for a job well done. At one time—we had no radios then—when he was checking on me I had the feeling he was surprised that I was still with him, and enjoying myself.

"All aircraft were kept in tiptop condition by German and American Air Force mechanics. The American pilots prepared for a VIP demonstration for General Spaatz, etc. A day later, all planes were ferried to a small airstrip near the harbor of Cherbourg, for shipment to the United States. One of the American pilots 'lost' his way and landed on the island of Guernsey. He secured some fuel from a farmer and made it back to Cherbourg."

Ludwig Hofmann was not so lucky. He had to bail out due to engine trouble. French countrymen found him with a badly broken leg. In his poor French he asked them to contact the nearest American military station. He received hostility as an answer. What? A German pilot in American uniform flying a German jet over France—at that time? They were ready to lynch him. After hours of frustration, pleading with them, trying to explain the situation to them, an officer of the U.S. Army arrived. With the note that was given to him (and to Karl) by Colonel Watson he persuaded the officer to contact Watson in Cherbourg. The next day he was moved from the farm shack to the American Military Hospital in Paris.

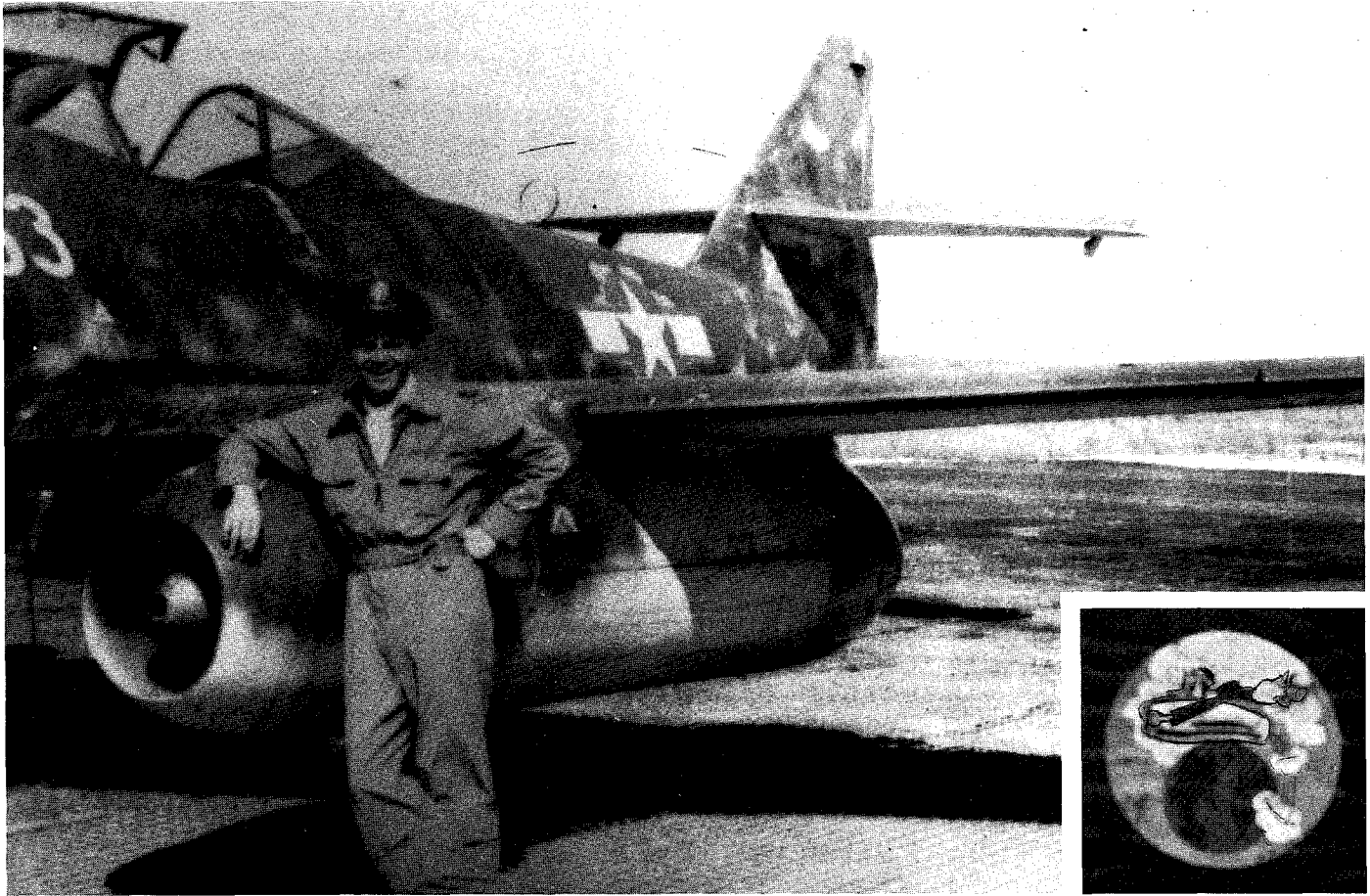
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To Whom it may concern:

The pilot of this airplane, Karl Baur, has been hired by the U.S. Government to fly this airplane to St. Dizier and thence to Melun. Contact nearest U.S. Government office.

/s/ H.E. WATSON

*Note given to Karl Baur and Ludwig Hofmann for flying an Me 262 over France.*



After his release from the hospital his plea to the Americans to help him evacuate his family from the Russian-occupied zone of Germany was in vain. Disappointed about the situation, he decided to join his wife and children in the Russian-occupied zone. He was captured by the Russians immediately and was taken with his family to Russia.

Karl Baur and his mechanics were released and returned to Augsburg on July 5th.

**21 July 1945**—An American sergeant stood at the front door. “Hurry, hurry, you have to go to the United States.”

We threw Karl’s only suit, some faded underwear, shirts and mended old socks in a suitcase, while the sergeant was waiting impatiently. Karl wore his Bavarian leather shorts, his everyday summer outfit—the only thing left to wear after being bombed out several times.

No time for big farewells.

I picked up my infant son and together we watched from the window. Karl jumped into the Jeep—and off they went. For a moment my memory flashed back—when I was watching from another window as my father was taken away by the Gestapo.

“Today, my two master mechanics Hindelang and Sebald and I were picked up at home and taken to the former airfield of the Messerschmitt Company in Augsburg—Haunstetten. Lunch was served by French soldiers in a military tent used as the lunchroom.

“The regularly scheduled C-47 for transporting military personnel arrived shortly after 12:00 P.M. from Munich. It was crowded with people: GIs, nurses, officers and the aisle was full

of luggage. The overloaded bird took off to the east and barely made it. A short stop in Mannheim-Sandhofen after an hour, where several passengers were exchanged. Takeoff for the short distance to Wiesbaden! Here we changed airplanes.

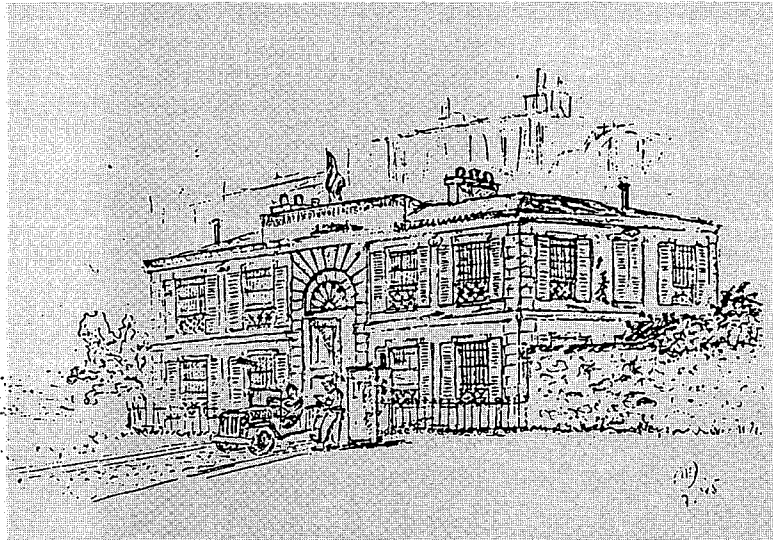
“Some cute French girls served hot coffee and donuts to us during the two-hour waiting period. This airplane was as crowded as the first one. We hardly got our suitcases on. We flew across Kirn an der Nahe where my oldest sister lived with her family. I could see her house still standing and was relieved to know that they had survived the final days of the war.

“A short stop in Reims. My mechanics were fighting uneasy feelings in their stomachs, not being used to flying in airplanes and especially not with continuous takeoffs and landings. But finally we landed in Villacoublay, France. This was a busy airport with airplanes coming and going from all over Europe.

“We were asked to jump into a military truck that took us to St. Germain—Les Loges, Ecole d’ Education de la legion d’honneur. What a fancy sounding name! Only it turned out to be an MP station and jail for GIs!

“We joined a number of German scientists who had been here already [since] a couple of days. Above our quarters were the jailed GIs who had committed all sorts of crimes from drunkenness to murder. Apparently the Americans believed that German scientists belonged behind locked doors, too. When I complained, I was informed that no better place was found for us yet.

“My roommates were some old friends from the Junkers Company: Professor Hertel, Messo. Zindel, Grobler and



Chateau du Grand Chemay—pencil drawing by unknown German POW.

Goetherd. My friends Dr. Lippich and Dr. Ringlepp resided on the second floor. Dr. Richter, the German Japan specialist and helicopter test pilot Gerstenhauer with his mechanics were here, too. They commuted daily to Villacoublay to fix up their helicopters.

"We spent our time with endless discussions and the German card game *skat*. Everyone was worried about the families we left behind. How much of Germany will be taken by the Russians, etc.???"

"Captain Walter S. Diehl of the U.S. Navy arrived. A very pleasant gentleman, so far the finest American I had met. He apologized for the inconvenient situation and assured us that we would go to the United States. The following day he took me to the U.S. Navy Headquarters for an interview, in downtown Paris near the Arc de Triomphe. I changed into my only suit for that occasion."

A lifelong fruitful, generous friendship developed between the two men, who always respected and admired each other's points of view.

"Captain Braun, test pilot of the Junkers Company, stayed here with his mechanics for one night. They had repaired a Ju 290 for Colonel Watson in Orly and were released now.

"Dr. von Doepp and Dr. Frenzel had quarters in the building across from ours. All former employees of the Junkers Company were transferred to Bad Kissingen in Bavaria or to England early in August, except for Dr. Doepp.

"New quarters had been found for us after two weeks in Versailles, in the Chateau du Grand Chemay, officially known as P.W. D.H. Det. 2026 'Backporch.' We had more freedom and were allowed to walk in the park without an MP on our tail.

"Adjutant Colonel Grube was waiting here already. He was an assistant with the Communication Group and had attended the ceasefire talks. During endless hours of discussions he was able to give us an interesting inside look into the German problems which had led to the complete collapse of Germany. It was the belief in the highest places that the Western Alliance would have disagreements in the near future. Unfortunately, it had not come early enough for Germany to take advantage of such a 'problem situation.' Since the tragedy of Stalingrad one error after another was made by the High Command, due to Hitler's

interference all the way down to movements of individual groups. General von Manstein, for instance, was only a delivery boy for Hitler's orders. One of Grube's duties was to bug telephone conversations between Roosevelt and Churchill. Decipher codes were cracked with spectral analyses. Shortwave radios were used in the new Reichskanzlei. 'Eclipse' was captured in Bayenx.

"The company of interesting people softened the stress of being cut off from the outside world. I never spent any time of my life in better company.

"Herr Zimmermann from Charkow, Ukraine, was located in Fallersleben during the final days of the war. He described the gigantic psychological errors that were made by German troops toward the people of the Ukraine.

"Those people had waited for the Germans to liberate them from the Russians. Hitler's SS behaved in the worst possible way imaginable. As a result—when their hopes had been shattered—the Ukrainians joined the guerrillas. Hitler's Goveneur Koch and his party gang built themselves castles in the countryside. When German troops had to retreat, they refused to make those buildings available as military hospitals.

"Dr. Runge and Dr. Franz from Telefunken were stationed here for a few days. They provided the reports about what had happened in Berlin. Looting and raping by the Russians and Americans were daily occurrences when they moved in. Food was very scarce. Entering the British-occupied sector from the Russian-occupied sector was possible for Germans with special permits from the military governments. Telefunken had repair crews working already for the American military government, as well as for the German postal/telegraph offices, railroad and radio stations. The Russians captured similar companies and such places as the company's research center in Oberschonweide. They tried to persuade people with large amounts of food stamps and high salaries to work for them. A one-track railroad opened partially for transportation. Industrial plants in middle Germany (Harz Mountains) were still occupied by the British—such as Patin in Wernigerode. Both Dr. Runge and Dr. Franz returned home on September 1st.

"Dr. Sturm, manager of radio station Stassfurt, stayed for a couple of days. He also wanted to go to the United States.

"Antiaircraft Captain Hofmann, expert of radio/location and radio/navigation/positioning, arrived from a POW camp in Luxembourg via an American detention camp in Paris, where Professors Pankraz and Borsdorf resided with him in the same barracks.

"Dr. Werres, Dr. Stange and Dr. Streiter arrived from Rheinmetall. We played endless hours of *skat* together.

"Professor Dr. Hack, professor at the Universities of Technology in Karlsruhe, Berlin and Danzig, arrived for a visit from the American detention camp in Gandersheim. He reported that numerous VIPs from Patin Corporation were there waiting for their release.

"So, we did hear mostly from where our friends have been and how they survived, but no one could provide information about our families. We all worried about our families, because no one could guess what the Russians might do or what the Americans were willing to give to them.

"A group of the former German Navy arrived late in August from Flensburg. British personnel of the Armed Forces looted and raped in the northern part of Germany no less than the Russians in Berlin. The Duke of Schleswig had protested to



King George VI and finally had his family jewels returned back to him.

"Major Bux, assistant of General Jodl, arrived from the detention camp in Mondorf. The following VIP inmates were transferred to stand trial in Nuremberg: Goring, Rippentrop, Rosenberg, Streicher, Ley, Seldte, Meissner and Donitz. He stated that food and treatment was very bad there compared to that at the Chateau du Grand Chamay.

"The German POWs of Tonray had formed an orchestra and arranged a chamber music concert on the evening of August 31st. POW Weise, formerly assistant professor at the University of Bordeaux, read some of his own poetry. Other talented artists among the POWs produced pencil drawings of the Chateau and its residents.

"Mr. Schelp and Zimmermann arrived from Munich early in September and stayed with us for 10 days. Schelp had spent several weeks in London, together with one of my former test pilots from Messerschmitt, my old friend Protzen and Professor Madelung. Their freedom was not restricted at the beginning of their stay. When they returned to Munich we gave them letters and a small package—stuff that we had saved from our rations—for delivery to my wife."

**13 September 1945**—"Something is in the air! Some people arrived from the MAN Corporation in Augsburg: Mr. Voith and Mr. D.B. Wendlingen, submarine specialists. They swore that they had seen a written contract for being admitted to the United States."

**14 September 1945**—"It is for real! Waiting seems to be over! Captain Freese presented the contract to us. We signed.

"Werner von Braun arrived with six of his top engineers.

"We had to go through extensive, detailed examinations to prove that we were healthy specimens. For several days we had hard times sleeping because of all the needles which had been used on our lower backs.

"Unfortunately, my master mechanic Mr. Hindelang was not accepted for the trip, due to a leg injury which he had received early in the war. My disappointment was indescribable. It would be difficult to operate with only one mechanic—who did not speak English. On the other hand, we had a chance to send a copy of the contract to our wives through him.

"Werner von Braun planned to have at least 115 of his V-2 engineers joining him in the United States."

Mr. Hindelang came to our apartment on 19 September 1945 to bring me a copy of the contract my husband had signed in Paris, France. He was disappointed that Mr. Schelp had not forwarded the package to me. He had the office address near Munich. So we decided to pick it up ourselves.

The next morning we met to bicycle the approximately 50 kilometers to Unterhechingen, since no train was going there. When we arrived only Mr. Zimmermann was available. No package, but he informed me about the camp of the families of the V-2 engineers in Landshut. Perhaps I would find help there to have the promises of the contract fulfilled.

We had received our husbands' paychecks for the three weeks' work at the airbase Lechfeld, as Colonel Watson had promised. Therefore, we had enough money to live on presently, besides our savings in the bank. The devaluation of the German mark was not expected immediately. What Mrs. Sebald and I needed desperately were the extra calories in food stamps for ourselves and our children (since our food rations were only 800 calories per day per person) and the extra rations of coal or

wood for heating our apartments during the coming winter. These were the things we needed to survive with our children!

Though I had never had lessons in the English language, I sat down and copied the contract word for word. We had no copy machines in those days and I wanted to be sure not to lose the copy my husband had sent to me.

Mrs. Sebald left her children with a sister who lived nearby. I instructed my maid not to let anyone into the apartment while I was gone. We took the only train that was running between Augsburg and Munich at 7:00 A.M. in the morning. On arrival in Munich there was no train to Landshut for the rest of the day! We took the streetcar to the outskirts of Munich in the direction of Landshut and started hitchhiking. After a while, an antique, worn-out truck picked us up. It was rattling dangerously while we were sitting in the back of it and wondering whether it would ever make it all the way to Landshut.

But, it did!

At the police station we asked for directions to the camp.

Worn-out and dirty, we arrived in the camp late in the afternoon. The German manager and interpreter, Dr. Bussmann, kindly invited us to his home. His charming wife asked us to stay overnight, since the American commander in charge had closed his office already.

After discussing our situation with the American officer in charge, he provided us with the necessary letters to the commander of the city of Augsburg. On our return to Augsburg

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**RESTRICTED**

**SPECIAL CONTRACT FOR EMPLOYMENT OF GERMAN NATIONALS WITH THE WAR DEPARTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES**

**SECTION I**

1. Name: Baur (last), Karl (first)

2. Sex (strike out one): Male

3. Place of original engagement (home address): 57 Kaiserstrasse, Augsburg, Germany

4. Position (job title): Test pilot (engineer)

5. Gross pay: Per diem 27.00 Marks (twenty seven 0/00)

6. Minimum period of duty: three (written) 3 (number) Months

7. Name and address of person to be notified in case of emergency: Mrs. Isolda Baur, 57 Kaiserstrasse, Augsburg, Germany

8. Dependents (list name, age, and relationship): Mrs. Isolda Baur, 22, wife; Ulrich Baur, 15, son.

**SECTION II**

In consideration of the service to be rendered by the individual named in Section I, above, hereinafter referred to as the employee, in the position indicated in Section I, above, for gross pay in the amount shown in Section I, above, the following contract of employment is entered into by such individual and the War Department, hereinafter referred to as the employer. The employer hereby offers and the employee hereby accepts employment subject to the conditions herein set forth.

-1- (Initials of employee) *EN*

Contract of United States War Department for German scientists entering the USA after WWII: "Operation Paperclip."

and after meeting with the American commander, we received letters of instruction for the German offices to provide for us the extra calories and heating fuels.

What scared us was the fact that no one was sure how much more of Germany and when would be turned over to the Russians by the United States. At least now we had established contact with the American military government in case we had to move on.

**18 September 1945**—"We were taken by bus to the airport Orly: Von Braun, Zobel, Edse, Noeggerath, Sebald, myself and a few others. The few German marks we had left were exchanged into U.S. dollars so we could have a decent meal in the officers' club.

"Boarding a military transport plane—C-54—during pouring rain at 10:00 P.M.

"Quickly, the plane moved through the clouds and a beautiful, clear sky with bright moonlight greeted us. For the first time—I cannot recall the number of years—I enjoyed a flight as a passenger. The final lights of Europe diminished at the horizon after about two hours. Everyone picked up some blankets and we all lay down on the floor to catch some sleep."

**19 September 1945**—"At dawn—7:30 A.M.—we touched down at the Azorian island, St. Maria. We bought the first good cigarettes and had breakfast. The C-54 was filled and ready for takeoff at 9:00 A.M.

"We witnessed our first traffic congestion at an airport!

"The weather report was not very pleasant. A hurricane was running up the east coast of the United States, therefore, we took a more northerly course to Newfoundland. A full day nothing to see besides the white caps of the Atlantic! A fantastic sight! Had a long conversation with von Braun about details of the V-2."

**20 September 1945**—"The uninviting coastline of Newfoundland approached at the horizon after 11 hours of fighting against strong headwinds. Fog and rain lowered visibility to almost zero. After crossing the swamps of that rough land we finally landed in pouring rain in Canada—2:00 A.M. New York time—for refueling. It was 8:00 P.M. New York time when we took off with a new crew.

"We had a gorgeous flight at 3,000 meters above a closed cloud cover which was shining in the moonlight like a snow field. After five hours we saw the floodlights of New York through the cloud holes.

"What a sight! After living five years in darkened cities we were overwhelmed by that illumination. It took our breath away!

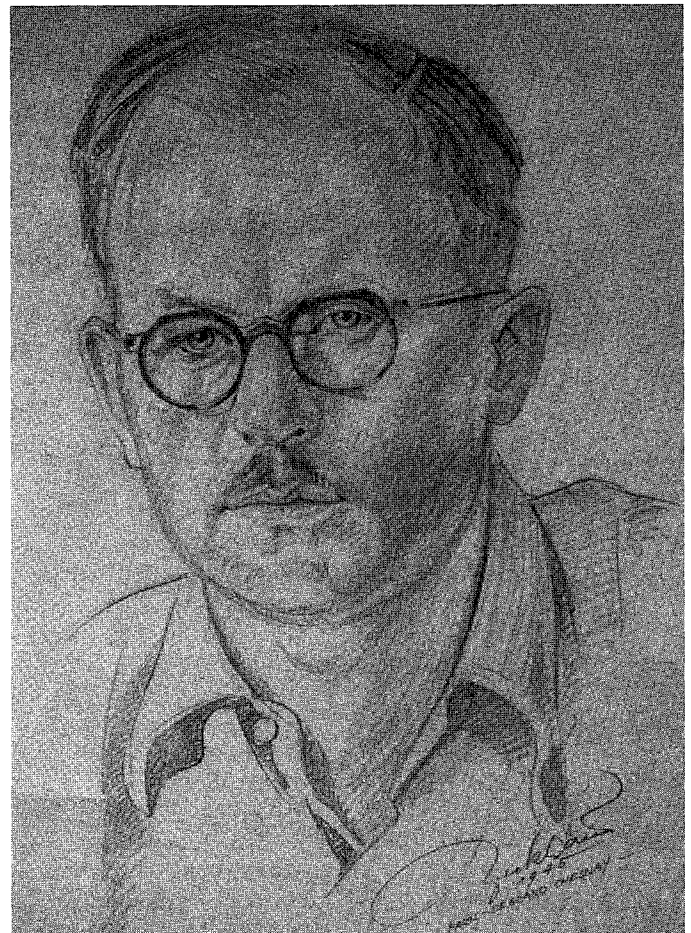
"What an experience!

"We landed at night at the New Castle Airport in Wilmington, Delaware. Tired of sitting on hard benches, we had hoped that this would be our final destination.

"Wrong!

"After duty inspection we boarded again—about 3:00 A.M.—this time a C-47 with comfortable seats, to reach our temporary destination—Boston.

"A cutter took us directly from the airport to where. . . ? Dr. Rees already expected a Devil's Island. However, Fort Strong on Long Island turned out to be not too bad for a few days of rest and relaxation. The barracks in which we stayed were clean and the meals were excellent. We used the time 'on our hands' playing volleyball and walking around the island. The passing boats with the silhouette of the city's skyscrapers in the background



were most picturesque and we did not get tired of looking at them.

"Paperwork had to be done again. Questionnaires completed. And once more we had to prove to the doctors that we were healthy specimens. The police registered our fingerprints, just in case we might try something 'funny.'

"German POWs kept our quarters in tip-top shape and did our laundry too. None of them had any complaints, except that they would rather be back home in Germany.

"Some people around here don't like the idea of my walking around in my leather shorts. I explained to the officer that this

Me 262 with 50mm cannon, 1944. Karl Baur, second from right with Messerschmitt personal.

Karl Baur, 1945, in France. Pencil drawing by unknown German POW.

was the only thing I had to wear besides one suit, which I had to save for official occasions such as going out for dinner. He finally agreed to see what he could do to get some clothing for me. I had no coat and my only pair of shoes showed the wear and tear openly. Somehow, it was difficult to make the people understand here that most of us had lost everything during the air raids in the war and that we had not been able to go out and buy replacements."

**24 September 1945**—"Captain Boesch—manager in charge of us Germans—arrived with a C-47 and took all of us to Wright-Patterson Field, Ohio. Here we lived in pleasant barracks on a hill between Wright Field and Patterson Field. Incidentally, Lt. Kubler stayed with us as watchdog. His parents had immigrated to the United States from Stuttgart, Germany, so we had something in common.

"Our scientists moved into offices in Building No. 12. Sebald and myself helped them to settle in. Otherwise, Andreas Sebald and myself were bored to death. Colonel Watson, as I found out, was on vacation and could not be reached."

**25 September 1945**—"More paperwork, more registrations and passes."

**27 September 1945**—"Captain Boesch took Sebald and me in a C-46 to Freeman Field, Seymour, Indiana. Our quarters here were in a dormitory next to the officers' club. During the first couple of days we were allowed to eat and drink at our pleasure and we were treated like guests. It changed after two days when we had to pay for everything out of our \$6.00 daily allowances."

**29-30 September 1945**—"Open house for the press!"

"I learned for the first time how hard it is to keep American journalists in line. We, Sebald and I, had orders not to talk to the press. However, our superiors apparently had forgotten to inform the press about that fact. They chased us all day long. I was especially concerned about Andreas Sebald—who still did not speak much English—that he may have said something that could cause trouble for us unintentionally.

"The day ended pleasantly, however, with dancing in the club. Warrant Officer Bauer and his wife had invited us to their home the day before for a pleasant evening. It was the first time that we had direct contact with American citizens.

"Colonel Watson showed up. I had already given up of seeing him again.

"Take off that ugly mustache, Karl,' was his first reaction after we had that first drink at the bar.

"You are lucky I did not grow that beard that I promised you at our last meeting in Paris,' I answered jokingly.

"He did not expect that I would go through with it. A beard looked too ugly with my reddish color of hair, however, so I had settled for a mustache.

"American war hero Colonel Kapreski and Lt. Passano joined us for an enjoyable evening. Later we joined in for interesting conversation with Colonel Dorney, Lt. Cols. Belvin and Watt, Major Meiersberger and his wife, and Lts. Walker and Goodrich.

"Watson's Whizzers' Lts. Strobel, Holt and Anspach paid a short visit. The pleasure about the reunion was mutual.

"Colonel Watson demonstrated an Me 262 for public and press on Sunday. Interviews and photo sessions afterwards.

"Available for viewing were: Horton aircraft, Natter, Me 163, Me 262, Arado 234, 219 and 129, Ju 190 and Ju 290.

"Sebald and I were able to help to get some of the birds into the air, though we were not familiar with details of other aircraft other than the Messerschmitt designs."

**1-3 October 1945**—"Colonel Dorney, Major Meiersberger and Lt. Stanley were checked out in an Me 262. All pilots were enthusiastic about the airplane."

**4 October 1945**—"Captain MacIntosh, Lt. Holt and myself took off for Pittsburgh where Lt. Holt left us. When we heard that Lt. Anspach had trouble with his 'Bucker' in which he had left Freeman Field before us, we offered him a ride, but he declined. Afterwards, we found out through the grapevine that he had a cute little blonde in town.

"Why should American pilots be different from German pilots! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Captain MacIntosh and myself took off immediately for Newark. I checked into the Park Lane Hotel for \$3.50 per night. Mac and Dorothea stayed at the Essex House.

"It was raining like dogs and cats. We shall possibly be grounded for a few days according to the weather report."

**5 October 1945**—"Did go to Manhattan via H. & M. tube with Captain Maxfield. Decided to get off on 33rd Street for a little walk around the skyscrapers. After all, that was my first visit to New York! Seeing all that traffic, I tried to imagine all that traffic stopping when Wolf Hirth had made his flight in a glider over that city in ?.

"On 5th Avenue I stopped for a bite to eat in one of the cafeterias and drove back to Newark afterwards."

**6 October 1945**—"Still raining. We take off for Mitchel Field. What an experience for me! Learning the amazing flight-traffic system around New York in foul weather!"

"That evening I tried to reach my old buddy from my home, Hans Haberle in Philadelphia. I had no address or phone number. Sure enough, the telephone operator got him on the phone for me within minutes. No problem at all!"

"One reason why I searched for Hans Haberle was the fact that I ran short of money. I was not given enough travel allowance when we left Freeman Field, since the trip should have been only a couple of days. Now I found myself in the uncomfortable position of not having enough money to pay for my hotel bill."

**7 October 1945**—"So, this morning I took off via bus to North Philadelphia to see Hans, his family and sister Mary with husband. They almost fell off their chairs when they saw me. We had not seen each other since we had been teenagers 15 years earlier when they had emigrated to the United States. They finally relaxed after I had assured them that I was not a POW running away from a POW camp. We spent a wonderful Sunday together, including some of their friends, all natives of Germany. They also provided me with the address of another former classmate from my home village, Ellen Fetzer.

"After I had a chance to call Captain Walter S. Diehl in Washington, D.C., Mary and her husband took me to the train station and I returned to Newark late that night."

**8 October 1945**—"Sitting still in Newark waiting for better weather. Eat my favored food—lobster—in a small eatery close to the waterfront. Here it costs only half as much as in the Essex House and is as tasty and good. I have to stretch the 25 bucks



which I borrowed from Hans Haberle. Returned to my hotel and wrote letters to my friends."

**9 October 1945**—"We had plans to go and see Niagara Falls. However, Jack Woolans showed up in his own P-63. I briefed him and he flew the Arado 234. As before, we had trouble starting up that ship. The right 'Riedel' starter did not do it. After one hour of patient work and a dirty outfit it started. At this point I made it clear to all present that I won't go anyplace again without my master mechanic Andreas Sebald. Besides, he was sitting in Freeman Field doing nothing!"

"Jack had a fair takeoff. However, on landing in Pittsburgh he had to pump down the landing gear by hand, as I learned later. I ate supper with Dorothea, MacIntosh and Major Maxfield at the Essex House.

"That evening we flew back to Freeman Field where we arrived at 11:30 P.M., Indiana time."

**10 October 1945**—"At 10:00 A.M. Colonels Dorney and Belvin and I flew to Pittsburgh. (Without my mechanic Andreas Sebald.) Checking out the Arado 234, we found a hydraulic line broken. The part had to be flown in from Seymour, Indiana. We filled up the Arado to be ready for takeoff the minute the repair work was done. I stayed overnight with Lts. Maine and Johnston. Sgt. Roberts—the American mechanic—was ordered to stay to assist with the repairs. Maintenance Officer Major McNiess, incidentally, is a cousin of Captain Dawson—intelligence officer in Augsburg—whom I met briefly.

"I had plans to call Gus Haller—Wolf Hirth's old friend and one of the pioneers of gliding in the United States. But I felt it was too late that evening to do so. At the Red Cross I was served a delicious barbeque sandwich at no cost—my supper for that night.

"Colonel Kapreski dropped in for a short visit. For the first time I realized a slow but steady developing jealousy among those military men. I did not want to become involved with anything like that. I did not like that atmosphere. After all, I have been a private career pilot all my life."

**11 October 1945**—"Still thick fog until 10:00 A.M. Around noon, Major Meiersberger arrived with the hydraulic line from Seymour. We started working immediately—2:00 P.M.—ready for takeoff. Since the runway was somewhat short for the Arado 234, I barely had cleared the ground at the end of the runway. Unfortunately, not enough to make it over that darn hill which was located following the end of the runway. When I hit it, the bearing plate (visier) was thrown into my face. I was blinded for a few seconds until I could place my eyeglasses. I needed both hands, one on the stick to keep that ship in balance and yet I had to pump in the landing gear manually by hand for 10 minutes. Criminal situation! I cursed and prayed in four-letter words all at the same time. Hoping to bring that ship down to earth without becoming a casualty.

"I made it to 3,000 meters, flying in a clear blue yonder—passing over Steubenville-Dresden-Columbus-Patterson—into Wright Field. Yet, the Arado 234 had no radio in the cockpit. With the airbase in sight, I started pumping out the landing gear by hand again for 10 minutes. Luckily, I had enough fuel to make the two extra circles around the base before I was ready for landing. While taxiing, I saw the fire engine and an ambulance. Mentally and physically exhausted I opened the cockpit and was greeted by the whole group of German scientists, Lt. Kubler and Lt. Passano. What was all the excitement?

"Major Meiersberger, who had taken off after me in a P-51 in Pittsburgh, saw what had happened to me. He had radioed the tower in Wright Field to make sure all preparations were made for an emergency landing of the Arado 234. He had followed me all the way from Pittsburgh. International pilot-comradeship in action!"

"I made it clear to my superiors that I would not fly in the future without someone paying a casualty insurance policy for me. It was impossible to do that by myself from the \$6.00 a day allowance. After staying alive through all the years of hair-raising flying experiences, I had no intention of sacrificing my life now, leaving my wife and son without financial protection.

"An airshow was planned for Sunday. I had a chance to inspect the P-59 and P-80. Would have loved to take them up for a tryout.

"Lt. Johnston arrived with 'Prairie Hound,' a C-64, and we flew back to Freeman Field, where we arrived at dawn.

"It was one of those nights when a test pilot had to celebrate. After all, I 'celebrated' my final flight as a test pilot. So, according to 'German Rule,' I soaked down the day's experiences with the best whisky the country club had to offer and as much as my \$6.00 allowance allowed me. Lt. Maine and Lt. Adkinson help me celebrating."

**12 October 1945**—"Translated all day for Major Meiersberger and Lt. Titzler from tons of scientific papers captured in Germany. Among hundreds of papers I found a report from one of my former test pilots of the Messerschmitt Company. He was captured by the British in Bavaria and was taken to London. Since the report was full of white lies, I had to write a corrective statement to it."

**13 October 1945**—"Went on a 'shopping spree' with Andreas Sebald into downtown Seymour. Downtown is crowded on Saturdays with farmers from the surrounding area. Some come in shiny new cars, others in 'antiques.' You saw every kind, color and age.

"The corn had not been harvested yet.

"It becomes more and more difficult for Andreas Sebald to stay here by himself most of the time, while I 'explore' the country.

"Early to bed tonight."

**14 October 1945**—"Went to morning service to the nearest church.

"Remaining of day smoking, reading . . . boring.

"Sebald and I want to go home, since there is absolutely nothing for us to do here.

"On top of it all, I am not allowed to write to my friends any longer. I feel my rights have been taken away. Still no contact with our families."

**18 October 1945**—"Quick! Quick! A Mr. Alberti from G2 Washington picked me up to take me to Patuxent River, Maryland. A former Commander of the Embassy in Tokyo was flying with us. I had the feeling his assignment was to find out if I was the same guy who taught gliding to officers of the Japanese Army in 1935. After I assured him that I was one and the same he relaxed and we had a very pleasant conversation for the rest of the flight—partly talking in Japanese. From him I learned that the Gestapo had acted more than disgraceful in Japan during the final days of the war.

"Colonel Carl greeted me and escorted me to Captain Walter S. Diehl at the BOQ where I should have stayed. However, Carl fetched me later and took me to the isolation ward of the

hospital.

"What a surprise they had in store for me!

"Two POWs greeted me—Mr. Bringewald and Mr. Ruff—from the Messerschmitt Company. The two engineers were on the way to Japan via German submarine, when they were captured by the U.S. Navy. They were held there for more than a year already. I stayed with them overnight—a pleasant break in their boring routine—having a guard at the front of my door was not to my liking."

**19 October 1945**—"Early that morning to Flight Test Center in 'Carrier.' Commander Conally got permission for me to walk around freely. Inspected the prototypes from Curtis with propeller and jet engines. P-59 and P-80 were barred at that time because of accidents due to engine burnouts and vibrating of elevators and ailerons.

"No wonder! They were using a spring flettner (Federflettner).

"It seemed to me that more interest was shown in the captured aircraft here than at Freeman Field. More work was done here to rebuild the damaged aircraft. However, the atmosphere with the people was a very cool one. Apparently, most of them still suffered mentally from the war experiences with the Japanese. This was understandable.

"A Dornier Do 335 should be rebuildable even without having drawings of it. I did greatly admire such an undertaking.

"The Air Force had given the two worst-looking Arado 234s to the Navy. At the Armament Test Center I found the two-seater Arado 234, which had made the crash landing in Cherbourg. All electrical lines were loose or broken. 'Even Andreas Sebald would have a rough time to fix that,' I reported to Captain Giese, Chief of Flight Test Center."

**26 October 1945**—"Chief of Flight Test Center, Captain Giese arrived with Melvin Gough and 10 other engineers from NACA, Langley Field. They interviewed me for more than two hours about pilots and flight test procedures, results, etc."

**27 October 1945**—"This was 'Navy Day'!

"It was celebrated with performing rocket takeoffs of PBVs, armament testing and helicopters."

**28 October 1945**—"Went for a long walk through the woods which wore the gorgeous colored leaves of autumn. I passed run-down farmhouses of former farmers who had given up farming. Since the Navy moved in hiring Negroes paying them up to \$8.00 a day for manual work, they refused working for farmers who only paid them 50 cents per day.

"Have a chance to do some shopping in the PX store."

**29 October 1945**—"Return flight to Freeman Field: Passing over Washington, D.C., was a beautiful sight—Pittsburgh, Columbus—where we landed for a quick lunch.

"Letters had arrived for me in Freeman Field from the girl of my home village Ellen Fetzer and my old buddy Kenneth Zerwick. The church paper, the *Lutheran*, had arrived too.

"Andreas Sebald had learned more English while I was gone. He was trying very hard. But the situation becomes more and more difficult for him to cope with."

**31 October 1945**—"I gave lessons in German to everyone who was interested in learning German.

"Also I was writing a report to Melvin Gough at NACA and I felt it was proper to mail a copy of it to Wright Field. That was my biggest mistake I made during my stay in the USA. The report apparently caused Colonel Putt to start a rage. He ordered that I should be allowed to write censored letters only in

the future. That of course caused me a 'rage' and I stopped writing completely.

"After that experience I asked my superiors not to renew my contract. No more writing to my friends, no contact with our families and little money—that was not exactly what I had expected."

**1 November 1945**—"Thursday night Captain Shroven invited us to drive to Indianapolis for an ice hockey game. Terrific game! Buffalo against Indiana. When the Color Guard marched in and everyone jumped off the seats to honor the flag, well, it was no different from Hitler's Third Reich.

"Indiana did win with 2:11.

"Driving back home in pouring rain."

**3-5 November 1945**—"Another boring weekend. We are not allowed to go anywhere anymore without escort, except for going into Seymour."

**9 November 1945**—"From today on we are not allowed to go into Seymour alone anymore! There is nothing to do here for us. I think like the cowboy in the song, *Don't Fence Me In!*

"We drove to Dayton with Major Hoover in his Hudson. Staying in Wright Field until Monday, 12 November.

"The whole group of German scientists had reached a low point too. It seemed we all were put 'on ice' for later use. All scientists had hoped to continue their particular research here. Instead no money was provided for the simplest equipment. Everyone was sitting, gaining weight and became mentally depressed.

"I let myself become involved in a quarrel with Edse who apparently suffered from 'cottage fever,' and made life more difficult for everyone here every day.

"Mr. Lynch was very pleasant company. Together we drowned our homesickness in whisky every night. He was longing for his girlfriend in Salzburg, Austria. We were longing for our families in Augsburg. Mr. Lynch spoke only in Austrian dialect, no high German at all.

"On Saturday we went for another shopping trip into Dayton.

"We heard that the British finally broke the old speed record of the Messerschmitt Me 109. The new world record for aircraft with piston engine now stands at 613 kilometers per hour.

"Again I asked Colonel Belvin and Captain Boesch to let Sebald and myself go home. I read the newspapers and realized the social problems this country had to face. The soldiers returned home with no jobs waiting for them. Tremendous social pressures were building up. It was too risky to let us Germans walk around freely. We would have taken the risk of being kidnapped, etc. Besides, the interest in German aircraft was not important anymore. What the Americans wanted to know they knew by now. We Germans were—in a certain way—a bother. The possibility to enter into industry for further career expansion was slim, more likely impossible. Production of war planes had stopped and strikes took place all over the country.

"Colonel Belvin was one of the finest officers of the U.S. Army I ever had the honor to meet. He himself had not been home for several Christmas holidays and was supposed to leave for overseas again before this Christmas. He could understand our wish. If we would have had contact with our families our decision probably would have been different. The uncertainty about our loved ones was a load too big on our shoulders. He therefore reported to Colonel Putt in Wright Field that our mission was completed.



"At the same time I tried to convince the other scientists to stay on, since no one could be sure what was going to happen in Germany for the next few years, concerning their professional lives."

**12 November 1945**—"We drove back to Seymour today. About 30 miles before reaching Freeman Field, an engine bearing gave up in Hoover's Hudson. Puff-puff-slip-slip . . . we barely made it to the base. Sebald and I started repair work on the car immediately. At least we had something to do."

**15 November 1945**—"Lt. Kasperek took us into Indianapolis in an 'official car.' It was getting colder now. We needed warm winter clothing to wear. The prices were reasonable enough, so I could afford a coat, a suit and one pair of shoes."

"Driving to the countryside I realized the corn still had not been harvested. Kasperek filled me in: The American farmers are independent businessmen. Such was difficult for me to picture since all the years in Germany, German farmers had to produce what the Government asked them to produce. The farmers here can keep as much cattle as they want, the type they want. They can sell when they want or can hold it back, just as they please or the business demands. Enormous amounts of products are spoiled. As example: with the corn picking machine."

"At our return, we were informed that Lt. Johnston had ruined an engine again in one of the Me 262s."

"Again, I had a chance to talk to Colonel Belvin and Captain Boesch about our return to Germany."

**21 November 1945**—"We, Sebald and I, completed the

repair of Hoover's Hudson. It was dirty work but it worked out fine."

**22 November 1945**—"Thanksgiving Day! We made a test ride in the Hudson into the next village of Bedford."

"The traditional turkey dinner was served for us in the Officers' Club with the officers and their families. In the evening we drove into town for dinner with Captain Horn."

**23 November 1945**—"Our departure came surprisingly quick. At 10:00 A.M. we were informed that our travel orders were ready. We were to be leaving today: Destination Augsburg, Germany—via Wright Field. At 2:00 P.M. we were ready to leave with our hands full of written recommendations and warm farewell wishes from all officers, especially Dorney, Belvin, Meiersberger and Schroven. Most of them felt sad about our departure and we promised each other to stay in touch by mail as soon as the circumstances would allow us to do so. We left with a feeling that we had been well liked. Major Hoover drove us in his Hudson to Wright Field. We still had to make him drive slow—not more than 40 kilometers per hour—because of the engine repair. Our constant reminder during the first 200 miles must have been a nuisance to him. We stopped in Hamilton, Ohio, for a sumptuous dinner and reached Wright Field in the dark of the evening."

"Most of the scientists envied us for going home. Dr. Zobel also had in mind to cancel his contract—which was due for renewal on 18 December—in case he would not be allowed to do any productive work. However, I recommended to him it might be better for him to sit it out a while longer."

German Me 262 pilots of WWII, 1952. First row standing far right: Karl Baur, Galland in center.

Karl Baur, 1943, in Me 262 before takeoff.

"The final evening I spent with Mr. Lynch at the 'Heurigen,' a nightclub. Nothing comparable to a 'Heurigen' in Germany, though. The drinks were vermouth or whisky with Coca-Cola, instead of wine. Our conversation centered around Salzburg, Austria, Bavaria and the Gemutlichkeit which the United States does not offer. He would have loved to join us on our trip home.

"The teasing would not stop. Dr. Edse forecasted that we probably would 'freeze to death' on the 'Devil's Island.' Somehow, Captain Boesch still carried a grudge against me. Apparently about my independent traveling around New York without escort. He refused to let me join the others for a shopping trip into Dayton. So I made a big list for my friends to do the shopping for me."

**26 November 1945**—"Operation Paperclip was in full swing now. A large group of German scientists had arrived in Boston and were due for transfer to Wright Field. We flew with Captain deTolly in a C-47 to Boston. At low altitude over New York—our farewell—and Andreas Sebald at least had an impression about New York before leaving the USA. We remembered the landing spot in Boston from our arrival less than three months ago. The cutter took us back to the 'Devil's Island.'

"More than 60 German engineers and scientists were here at the moment, waiting for transfer to different destinations. Professor Kamm, Dr. Steinhoff, Dr. Franz, Dr. Schmid—all old friends of mine since the early days of aviation in Germany.

"It was a long night of talking and remembering!

"And who was still 'sitting' on the island? The gentlemen from MAN Corporation, Mr. Voith and Mr. Mercedes! Although they had left Paris before we did.

"All were flown to Wright Field on 27 November. More than 20 engineers for Werner von Braun's V2 group had arrived by boat and were ready to join him in Texas. Only the submarine experts Dr. Richter, Dr. Storm, Dr. Muller, Mr. von Hormann and Mr. Muller, from MAN Corporation, remained. Unfortunately, Mr. Muller seemed to be in poor health."

After Karl's return to Augsburg we heard from Mrs. Muller that her husband had passed away only a few days after Karl had left Boston.

"Dr. Richter, submarine expert, who was flown in a hurry to Washington, D.C., from Paris, was in an unpleasant situation. He never had been offered a contract to sign. Therefore, he did not receive the \$6.00 per day and was unable to replace his worn-out clothing. It was said that he should return with us to Germany. For one reason or another he did not."

**28-29 November 1945**—"It did not look good for our return trip! As at our arrival three months earlier, again a hurricane was running up the East Coast from Florida. Dams and homes were destroyed in Massachusetts. Our island was flooded too. The hot water central heating system was out of order in the barracks due to the boiler standing in high water. It was unpleasant, yes—in the near-freezing temperature.

"We stayed inside all day playing Monopoly. Nobody was in a good mood. The teasing would not end. 'You optimists! You'll never be home by Christmas!' However, Andreas and I



were steadfast in our belief, as long as sufficient time was left. We never gave up hope.

"I want to make an important statement here: All offices, places and people involved had honored our contract. We had no reason to believe that someone would purposely ruin our return. A written contract was a written contract, even if it had been with former enemies.

"If the paying of our allowances was not always on time, it was merely a result of red tape and a profound working of government offices. During Hitler's regime we all had learned what 'breach of contract' meant and somehow we were still affected by it."

**2 December 1945**—"All left today, except for Dr. Weihe from Zeiss-Ikon Corporation. We received bundles of letters for their loved ones to be mailed in Germany. It was about time for us to leave too!"

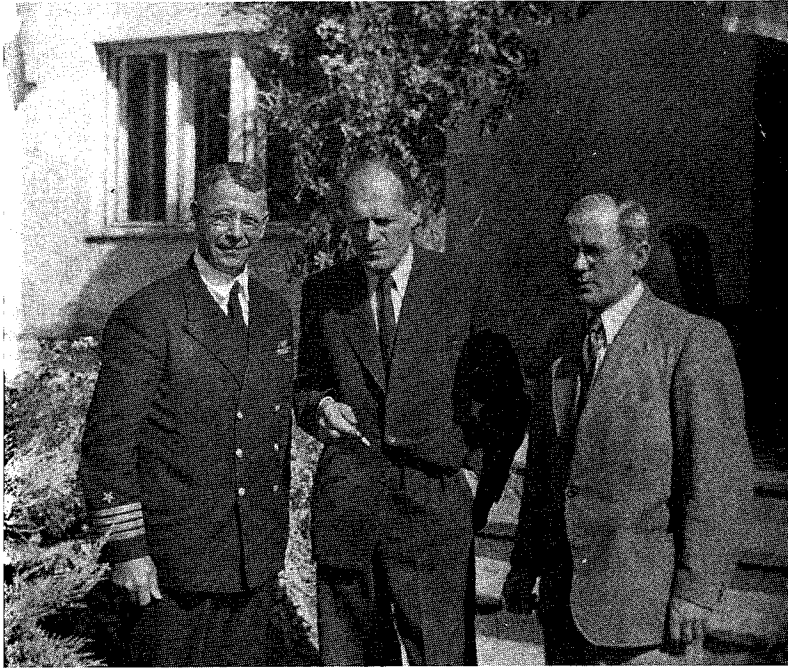
**5 December 1945**—"Mr. Carlson arrived with the news today: You shall leave tomorrow by boat. He took us once more to the PX for shopping. Sebald and I needed extra suitcases. We had filled them with luxuries no one had seen in Germany since years: chocolate, coffee, tea, canned foods, fancy underwear and stockings for the ladies. The 'newcomers' from Germany had instructed us about what to take home for our families. Actually they said: EVERYTHING!

"Mr. Carlson offered to us that he would be glad to send some food packages as soon as the postal service would be working between Germany and the USA. We left some money with him for that purpose.

"The Morgenthau plan was in serious discussion and to an extent already in force—to starve the Germans to death—the easiest way to get rid of them.

"Incidentally, a shipment of vermouth and whisky arrived on the island today. We had a farewell party—Western style—with the sad people who stayed behind. The windows were left undamaged, but a few glasses and chairs were cracked up after midnight. Mr. Carlson had informed us that the military transporter was 'dry.'"

**6 December 1945**—"The cutter took us to the harbor of Boston during rain and high wind early in the morning. We passed a boat that had run aground during the storm two days ago. Our boat almost capsized and we had to fight seasickness. A waiting car took us to the *Kokomo Victory*, the military



From left to right: American Naval Aviation pioneer Walter Stuart Diehl, Prof Messerschmitt, Karl Baur, 1948.

transporter that should take us back to Europe.

"But difficulties with hiring a crew, and the boiler plant, created another day of delay. It was difficult to sign up a crew since the boat would not return to the United States before the Christmas holidays."

**7 December 1945**—"We were having lunch downtown, and bought a few small items for our children. Departure was set for 6:00 P.M. that night. We stood below a gun carriage and saw the lights of Boston slowly diminish. Dim lights from the barracks of Fort Strong could be seen, before the pilot boat departed and the *Kokomo Victory* sailed into the open sea. Still, the remainder of the hurricane affected us for two days in a rough sea. After we had passed the storm zone during the third day it was smooth sailing across the ocean.

"We occupied a pleasant two-bed cabin with bath. As the only passengers we had numerous advantages such as selecting our own movies to see every second day and the meals were served for us with the officers. Cooperation of officers and crew members was excellent, probably as a result of complimentary stories about Germany from returning soldiers. It made it more clear what Mr. Morgenthau had in mind with his slogan: 'Germany Our Problem.' Troops should return as quickly as possible since they did not receive that bad impression about Germany as they should.

"It was also interesting to me to know that the *Kokomo Victory* was not sailing under the command of the Navy, rather under the command of the Army.

"The ship entered the English Channel in thickest fog, with full speed of about 16 knots. Radar made it possible. One can see every buoy in the water at a distance of 17 meters. What a priceless invention for the merchant marines sailing through fog-rich seas!"

**16 December 1945**—"After seven and a half days—arrival in Le Havre!

"German POWs worked in the harbor. Some of them were used as MPs. The harbor was crowded with American GIs—the principal place for returning troops. Besides one 1,000-ton Russian boat, only American boats could be seen. The *Kokomo Victory* shall be filled up quickly with returning soldiers.

"A German POW drove us through the bombed-out downtown area to the camp *Home Run*, where we had to wait for our escort. The camp was located in the undamaged part of the old fortress overlooking the city on one side and the whole Normandie on the other side. Nothing showed that there had been any fighting here during the war.

"German POWs had formed a band here too and played during lunch and dinner. A German girl from Heidelberg—waiting on tables—had been left here by her American boyfriend and was expecting a baby."

**19 December 1945**—"Sgt. Bartha, our escort, took us to Paris in the evening. We passed customs as 'Americans.' Luggage was deposited on the station's luggage depository. Knowing France, I did not trust the situation and checked frequently to make sure the luggage was still there. We slept in billets overnight near the Gare du Nord."

**20 December 1945**—"We had all day to see Paris. It was only about four months since I had seen Paris the last time. It looked worse than I ever did remember. Practically no cars in the streets. We paid with American cigarettes for our aperitifs, and we ate at the American transient mess at the Gare de Est. Polish natives, now wearing American uniforms, already run a flourishing black market.

"5:35 P.M. departure for Frankfurt. It was amazing; leaving from the same old gate as in old times—No. 6—and still the same railroad cars.

"The train did rumble through Saarbrücken when I woke up during the predawn hours. I realized how hopeless it looked for our country. Grotesque house ruins along the railroad tracks in a dull drizzly rain. Depressing!

"The bombed-out railroad station was still filled with debris; only a couple of tracks had been cleared for trains passing through. The few people I could see looked worn out, pale and hungry. This was the zone occupied by the French. But surprisingly, no French military could be seen.

"I dozed off again.

"We were passing in slow motion over the bridge of the Rhein River near Mainz when I woke up again. Repair crews were busy in the brightness of searchlights."

**21 December 1945**—"Arrived early in the morning in Frankfurt—south railroad station. We gave the attendant at the luggage depository a few cigarettes for handling our large trunks. He accepted it with a fake smile.

"As per our travel order, we drove to the American military headquarters to see Lt. Parsons and Lt. Wheeler. While we waited for the bus, I ran across the street to the post office, bought stamps and mailed the numerous letters of friends from Wright Field and POWs. For many of the families it shall be the best Christmas gift they ever received!

"We had a chance to freshen up while we were waiting at headquarters. Probably, this was the only building in Frankfurt with running hot and cold water and a working central heating system. Holiday atmosphere dominated in the offices already. We were informed that we would be staying here for at least one day. Lt. Wheeler would drive us to Augsburg the following evening. Again, I asked for assurance that we would be home



before Christmas day. This assurance was given.

"At noon we arrived in Hochst, Fiat Headquarters, where we had to wait endlessly—it seemed. We eat our K rations for lunch while waiting in the guards' room. Some questionable characters who were working there started talking to us. Most of them considered themselves having been politically pursued. That rerun we had heard too often before. I was more interested to find out what the food rations were and income, etc. After a couple of cigarettes they became more sociable.

"All agreed on one thing: 'No way you are going to be home on Christmas.'

"Many have come through here—for only a couple of days—and still sitting in Kreuzberg ever since.

"Damn it! Should we really get stuck at our final leg?

"I wrote a short note to my wife and asked one of the men to mail it for me. At least she should know at Christmas where I was.

"Unbelievable—but true! We ended up that night in the castle Kreuzberg, the 'dust bin' or detention camp for former Nazi VIPs.

"When the driver mentioned, 'You get good food up there,' I snapped at him, 'To hell with your food, I want to go home.'

"Castle Kreuzberg, beautiful [was] located a short distance from Bad Nauheim, overlooking a picturesque valley in the Taunus Mountains. It was mentioned that Himmler, Commander of Hitler's SS, had his headquarters here at one time. The occupants were considered 'Internees' by the Americans and 'Prisoners' by the British Guards. When a British guard searched my luggage for booze I had a very hard time keeping cool.

"It was not only against my contract, it also was the biggest insult toward me personally. I, who had never been a member of the Nazi Party and had to fight Himmler's bandits all through the years!"

**22 December 1945**—"Besides others, I met the distinguished Professor Esau, Mr. Sauer—Adjutant of Erhard Milch—of whom we had said a year earlier, 'The milk becomes sour.' He was on his way to push out Erhard Milch of the position as head of the Reichs-Luftfahrt-Ministerium. Director Sauer of the Siemens Corporation, Chairman of the Board Schmitz of I.G. Farben Corporation and several of his directors, Director Arevi of VDM, and Vice-President Merker of Magirus, were here too. Some of them had been 'allowed' to bring their secretaries, which made life a lot easier for them.

"At noon two people left without us.

"Speer's Adjutant, Mr. Nobel, arrived from the detention camp in Kornwestheim. Professor Willy Messerschmitt was still there according to his report and it did not look good for him."

One of Karl Baur's first activities after his return was to collect signatures from American VIPs, which helped to have Professor Messerschmitt released from the camp.

"When the 'Internees' invited us to clean windows, unloading potatoes, etc., I declined and made clear to them that Andreas Sebald and I were paying for our stay.

"I never will understand that people who once served in such high positions became such chickens. Most of them were taken prisoners the day the Allied Troops marched into Germany and none of them had made any effort to be released.

"Lieutenant Wheeler had kept his word!

"Quick! Quick! Our car arrived at 3:00 P.M. After a quick checkout we were on our way to Frankfurt again. At the Amer-

ican Headquarters, Lt. Wheeler just had time to exchange our dollars into U.S. military marks. He was not authorized to do so—but did it anyway since the person in charge had left on holiday already.

"To the railroad station again. It was the biggest chaos I ever had seen at any railroad station. Our train was supposed to depart at 6:45 P.M. We were traveling in a reserved car for American military personnel and therefore had no problems finding seats. Everyone was in a hurry to get home for the holidays. Lt. Wheeler provided us with the necessary papers at the last minute, which we would need for the Commander of the American military government in Augsburg. Many civilians were left at the gate. Polish natives had blocked doors and windows of the railroad cars and refused to let Germans enter."

**23 December 1945**—"Our train arrived in Augsburg at 4:00 A.M. We borrowed a cart to take our luggage to my apartment which was within walking distance. The streets were abandoned. Curfew was until 6:00 A.M. So, Andreas Sebald—after he had returned the cart to the railroad station—waited at the apartment for the first streetcar to come out of the depot to take him home to his family.

"It was a good feeling being a 'real' Santa Claus." □

#### GLOSSARY

|                                               |                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Guests of the Fuhrer</b>                   | Natives of Lithuania and Poland who emigrated to Germany early in WWII |
| <b>Lechfeld</b>                               | Airbase Lechfeld, located 20 km south of Augsburg                      |
| <b>Gestapo</b>                                | Secret Police Force during the Third Reich                             |
| <b>SS</b>                                     | Hitler's Special Force                                                 |
| <b>Erhard Milch</b>                           | Secretary of Department of Aviation during the Third Reich             |
| <b>Fallersleben</b>                           | City in the state of Thuringen/Germany                                 |
| <b>Werningerode</b>                           | City in the state of Thuringen/Germany                                 |
| <b>Oberschonweide</b>                         | Village near Berlin/Germany                                            |
| <b>Telefunken</b>                             | Industrial corporation in Germany                                      |
| <b>Patln</b>                                  | Industrial corporation in Germany                                      |
| <b>Rheinmetall</b>                            | Industrial corporation in Germany                                      |
| <b>MAN-Maschinenfabrik Augsburg/Nuremberg</b> | Industrial corporation in Germany                                      |
| <b>VDM</b>                                    | Industrial corporation in Germany                                      |
| <b>IG-Farben</b>                              | Industrial corporation in Germany                                      |
| <b>Magirus</b>                                | Industrial corporation in Germany                                      |
| <b>NACA</b>                                   | National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics                            |

## MOVING?

If you're planning to move please send us your change of address as soon as possible. We cannot get your JOURNAL to you if we don't know where you live. To ensure uninterrupted service please let us know at least six weeks in advance. And to be sure it is *your* address we change, please include your current mailing label.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS  
INCLUDE CURRENT LABEL