

SWIMS IN RUSSIAN CREEKS RECALLED

Gunner-Photographer Tells of His Experiences

Summer swims in Russian creeks is one of the wartime memories of Technical Sergeant Milton H. Fruchtgarten, gunner-photographer, who was at La-Garde General hospital Friday after six months overseas which included the initial shuttle bombing from Russia with the 15th Air Force. His wife resides at 2929 Dumaine street.

"The Russian people were very friendly," the 25-year-old sergeant recalled. "We

saw mostly the country folk and nothing was too good for us only they didn't have much. They had regular barracks fixed up for us with spring beds and women to make up the beds and clean up."



SERGEANT FRUCHTGARTEN

Russian dancing was another thing, Sergeant Fruchtgarten said with a grin, relating how he fell down when he attempted fancy kicking at the dances they attended in Russia. But at that, he said, the Americans did better at the Russian dances than the Russians did at the jitter-bugging when the Americans introduced it.

Prior to the shuttle bombing, he was in Russia with the crew of a bomber there on special duty and saw something of Russia's bomb-gutted cities. Nothing, he said, was worse except Cassino, "of which there was nothing left at all."

Credited with downing one and a half German planes during 50 missions, Sergeant Fruchtgarten, who wears the Air Medal and three clusters, had two very narrow escapes. Once a bullet came so close that it cut the cord of his heated suit right at the cloth.

"You can't imagine how cold I was for two and a half hours before we dropped to a lower altitude," he said. "I jumped up and down and hit myself trying to keep warm. My hands and feet felt five times bigger than they were."

The other escape was when his plane, Homesick Angel, went out with another crew and never returned. They'd flown the ship overseas and given it that name because right then they were a pretty homesick bunch, he said.

Sergeant Fruchtgarten was in on the invasion of Southern France. "The sky was cloudy with planes," he said. "We left before dawn and saw the light breaking through and the sunrise. Down below were so many ships that if you'd had to bail out you couldn't have helped but fall on a deck."

Sergeant Fruchtgarten entered the army before Pearl Harbor. He attended the Isidore Newman school and graduated from the Delgado Trades school.

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