

The guards afterwards professed to see nothing wrong with this idea, nor with the odd coincidence that Bergdoll's car and German chauffeur happened to be at the North Philadelphia station when they arrived there; and certainly not with the lavish meal which their charge served them in the family mansion. Following this gastronomic orgy Bergdoll made his guests comfortable with cigars and real German beer, as an agreeable prelude to the drive to Hagerstown. To these pleasures of the flesh the host provided intellectual stimulus by reading aloud from the plays of Shakespeare. The two sergeants, though understandably surprised at this cultural demonstration, were not disturbed by it; the cigars were good, the lager was cool against the spring warmth of the day, and they felt indolently at peace with the world. Naturally, they offered no objection when Bergdoll politely excused himself to answer a telephone which was ringing in the next room, and it was only after their prisoner had been gone some 15 minutes did the noncoms suddenly realize that neither of them actually had heard the phone bell which Bergdoll so promptly answered.

White with fear the two soldiers flung open the door through which their charge had gone; the adjoining room was empty both of telephone and Bergdoll. Racing to the street they found that Bergdoll's car had also vanished and with it the chauffeur. A hasty search of the house from cellar to attic proved equally fruitless and the military policemen took their dispirited way back to

Governors Island where their report of the day's events immediately provided incredulous headlines for the press. Courts-martial were ordered for the commanding officer of Fort Jay as well as the guards who had let Bergdoll escape. All were found culpable, but in-as-much as no proof could be offered that anyone concerned had profited financially from Bergdoll money, the trials ended in acquittals.

Meanwhile Bergdoll and his chauffeur had been traced to Canada, but before they could be caught and held for extradition to the United States the fugitives slipped aboard a ship bound for Europe and were not heard from again until they turned up in Germany. Here two operatives of our Criminal Investigation Division (CID) tried to kidnap the deserter. Their abortive attempt was thwarted by an angry mob of local Bergdoll sympathizers from whom they barely escaped with their lives, the whole affair so ruffling the feelings of the provisional German government that the commander of our occupation forces was forced to the humiliating necessity of tendering a formal apology, disclaiming official responsibility for the actions of the CID men. Another kidnap attempt a year later also failed and from then until well into 1939 Bergdoll in Germany and his mother in America provoked a continuing series of pleas, arguments, charges, and counter-charges to establish his innocence and effect his repatriation. Nothing came of these efforts and on May 26 Bergdoll himself suddenly arrived in New York Harbor, just one day ahead of proposed Congressional action specially designed to bar him



Many historic banners are displayed in the rafters of St. Cornelius Chapel.