

YANK

THE ARMY



WEEKLY

September 7, 1945

PARIS The GIs had managed to keep their VJ spirit bottled up through most of the phony rumors, but when the real thing was announced the cork popped with a vengeance. A spontaneous parade, including jeeps and trucks and Wacs and GIs and officers and nurses and enlisted men, snaked from the Red Cross Club at Rainbow Corner down to the *Place de l'Opera* and back.

Jeeps crawled along in the victory celebration so loaded down with cheering GIs that the shape of the vehicles could hardly be discerned. Some GIs showed up with flags to add both color and an official note to the procession. By the time the demonstration hit its full stride trucks and cars were moving five abreast with pedestrian celebrants marching before and behind and between.

The most unusual note of the day was the spontaneous contribution campaign for the Red Cross which started up out of nothing at all except good humor when a GI at the Rainbow Corner pinned a couple of franc notes to a tree, announcing: "This is for the Red Cross."

His idea caught on and soon other GIs were unloading their spare currency. The sport was enlivened considerably by kissing French girls at the tree, whether as a bonus for contributions or just for the hell of it. At any rate, a late afternoon check showed some \$14,000 raised for the ARC by what had begun purely as a half-gag gesture of good will.

The whole show was a soldier—especially an American soldier—performance. French civilians were happy and pleased, and they showed it.