



THE TAOS NEWS

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MY TURN

'Nuts' to the U.S. Air Force command

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In December of 1944, four German military emissaries waving a white flag approached the American lines south of Bastogne, Belgium. It was bitter cold and snowing.

A squad of U.S. soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division disarmed and blindfolded them and escorted them to the Division Headquarters located in a farmhouse. There, an American captain asked them, in German, what the nature of their mission was about.

A German major snapped to attention and saluted smartly.

He handed a letter to the U.S. captain.

The letter was delivered to Anthony McAuliffe, the division commander. He read part of the letter and then laid it aside and said, "Aw, nuts!"

"What does the letter say, Tony?" Col. Kinnard asked.

"The Germans are demanding that we surrender Bastogne," the general replied.

The captain who spoke German said, "I believe the Krauts are entitled to a reply to the surrender request."

McAuliffe told his staff that he wasn't sure how to respond officially to the German demand.

"What shall I tell them?" he asked.

"Sir," Kinnard replied, "I believe what you said a while ago would be hard to beat."

"What did I say?" the general asked.

"You said 'Nuts,' sir."

The typed letter that was given to the Germans read: "To the German commander 'Nuts!' — The American commander." In Taos we are facing a crisis that could have a negative impact on the people of Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado. The Air Force is determined to conduct "war games" over the peaceful valleys and majestic mountains on two of the most beautiful states in the union.

We must stand together and say no! Our people have a right to express their concerns when our way of life is on the line. I propose we notify these would be intruders with the following message:

To the U.S. Air Force Command: "Nuts!"

— Concerned citizens of New Mexico and Colorado.

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