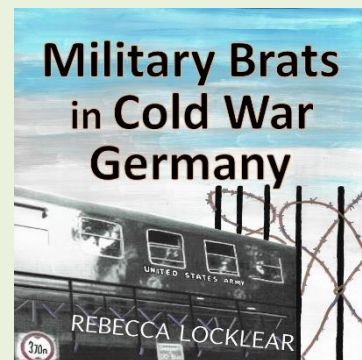


Grade 8-12 study or for adults

Military Brats in Cold War Germany

by REBECCA LOCKLEAR



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Daily Life in Germany

What was it like in the late 1960s and early 1970s to live in Frankfurt, Germany as a high school military brat?

There was no military base in Frankfurt *per se*. The U.S. military presence covered 96.5 square-miles in and around Frankfurt. This included two rifle ranges, four bowling alleys, five libraries, six gyms, two elementary schools, one grade 7-9 school, one grade 10-12 school with boarding facilities, the 97th General Hospital, a dispensary, PX (Post Exchange), commissary, chapel, movie theatre, and seven housing areas. At one time, there were 8,828 U.S. military families in Frankfurt, totaling about 60,000 Americans. (Varga 1) All in all, it was a magical time to be a student overseas, with lots of freedom to come and go, to volunteer for charities, to sing with fabulous choral groups, and to absorb the culture.

The categories below give a brief overview of life at that time.

CLOTHES for GIRLS

Continuing into the 1970s, mothers often made clothes for the family. Girls wore mini-skirts

**CONTINUED for 3 pages
with a variety of categories**

Play Notes: Chapel Youth Camping

Rebecca Locklear

Summary: Two high school sisters – military dependents living in Frankfurt, Germany, attend a church youth camp in the nearby mountains. Not all goes quite as planned. From target practice and a surprise rainstorm to dripping sarcasm, how does everyone get along?

Cast of Characters	# of Lines
Kate, 17	34
Vicky, 15	83
Jean, 17	14 ad lib.
Sue, 16	17 ad lib.
Steve, 16 student president	57
Miles, 15	9
John, 16	20 ad lib.
Leader 1/Tim, male chaperone	22
Leader 2, male chaperone	31
Boy/Girl Campers	7 ad lib.

Setting: July 30-August 2, 1971. Rifle range at Bad Vibel (8 km from Frankfurt); campsite in the Taunus Mountains outside Frankfurt am Mein, Germany.

Performance Time: 30 minutes

Background Information

The Protestant Youth of the Chapel (PYOC) was a high school (grade 10-12) group from Frankfurt Central Chapel who met every Sunday night to learn about Christianity by debating topics and having guest speakers. What made the group special was that even though students came from different denominational backgrounds, they were able to listen to various sides of issues or interpretations of scripture, respect each other's opinions, and remain friends.

Once a year, PYOC would have a camping retreat in the nearby mountains. In addition to games and swimming, there was also time for scripture study, prayers, a worship service, hiking, and football. Late at night, there were songs and ghost stories.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION CONTINUED

Chapel Youth Camping

Rebecca Locklear

Scene 1 Rifle range outside of Frankfurt, Germany (Bad Vibel), 1971

JOHN: *(just getting out of Army truck with VICKY)* Fun to be riding in the back of an Army truck, huh?

VICKY: *(moves slowly, stretches)* I feel like I'll never move again. Everything hurts.

JOHN: Hey, buck up!

STEVE: *(comes up from behind)* Off to the rifle range. First up, target practice.

VICKY: Ahh. *(squeezes shoulder)* My shoulder.

JOHN: *(turns)* What?

VICKY: The recoil kills my shoulder. I'm just remembering from the last time I was here.

STEVE: That's nothing. *(shakes head)* You are so the baby of this group. *(walks on, to JOHN)* You two are the last ones to arrive. They've already started up there. After target practice we'll go and set up our tents.

JOHN: You've really organized this campout. Thanks, Mr. President.

LEADER 1: *(off stage)* Hold steady *(JOHN, VICKY, STEVE hold ears)*...fire! *(loud boom of rifles)*

VICKY: *(walking behind, calling after JOHN and STEVE)* Yeah, I'm always the youngest but I won't be the youngest forever. *(talking to imaginary person or audience)* Does it strike you odd that the church youth camp includes firing M-16s? No? Is anyone concerned about "Thou shalt not kill?" We're military brats, you say? *(realization, sarcastically)* Oh...we just do as we're told. *(salutes)* Yes, sir.

LEADER 1: *(off stage)* Ready...fire! *(loud boom of rifles)*

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CONTINUED! Fun play!

Skit Notes: Communist Territory

Rebecca Locklear

Summary: In 1971, during the Cold War, two sisters travel on a train through East Germany to West Berlin. What is it like to travel through communist territory?

Cast of Characters:	# of Lines
Kate, age 17	39
Vicky, age 15	49
Steward	5
Passenger 1	1
Passengers	0
East German Border Guard	1
U.S. Military Police (MP)	1

Setting: 1971, on the overnight duty train that left Frankfurt, West Germany at 8:30 p.m., traveled through communist East Germany and arrived in West Berlin at 6:30 a.m. In hallway of the train; in the sleeping compartment (4 bunks with little head room, narrow aisle).

Performance Time: 10-15 minutes

Background Information

Sisters: As teenagers, between 1970-1972, Kate and Vicky sang 2-3 times a month for military-related organizations or for the German community. They felt good about representing the USA in a positive way. Technically, because of the status of their military father, they were not allowed to travel through East Germany to West Berlin; however, they ended up going seven times. The stories in this skit are true.

Brat Definition: Children of military parents are often referred to as “brats” based on the 1921 acronym for *British Regiment Attached Traveler*. Although “brat” is normally a derogatory term, in military circles, it’s complimentary and symbolizes adaptability since children often change schools, leave friends, adjust to different cultures, and rarely grow up with a *home base*.

Duty Train: At the end of World War II, Berlin was divided into sections occupied by French, British, American, and Soviet governments. U.S. soldiers, dependents, and U.S. Army civilians were transported in and out of the Allied sectors of Berlin by riding the Berlin Duty Train through Communist East Germany. It was called the Duty Train because soldiers were considered “on duty” while traveling on it (King 1).



Berlin Duty Train

Internet

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION
CONTINUES FOR 3 MORE PAGES**

Communist Territory

Rebecca Locklear

- Scene 1** **Train sleeping compartment** (*stage lights low, four bunks, little space*)
- VICKY:** (*opens small red suitcase on train berth, starts to sing as gets out paper bag with snack/orange*) “Cotton candy clouds, so fluffy and white, Who put you there in a sky of deep blue? Or do you just happen to float along...”
- KATE:** (*bossy*) Not so loud. (*on the opposite bunk, arranges heavy sweater, coat, toiletries from small blue suitcase*)
- VICKY:** (*softer*) “...pretty and white in a sky so blue? So blue...so blue.” (*stops singing*)
- KATE:** Hey...what was Dad saying to you before we got on the train?
- VICKY:** (*sitting on bunk, begins to peel orange, gets out crackers*) He said if we were ever captured by the Communists, he would never betray the U.S. to save us. (*raises eyebrows*)
- KATE:** (*musings*) This is our sixth trip on the overnight train from Frankfurt to West Berlin. Technically, we’re not allowed to go to Berlin because of Dad’s work. But I just don’t think anything will happen to us. I like to sing for various events. We represent the USA in a positive way. Nothing will happen.
- VICKI:** (*constant sound of ca-CLUCK ca-CLUNK of train as it begins to move*) It still bugs me to watch U.S. soldiers call the Germans *krauts* and laugh at them. Spit at them. Yesterday I saw a soldier order a bratwurst (*Ger. Tr. sausage*) at the stand and then walk away without paying for it.
- KATE:** It’s only been 26 years since the end of World War II. A lot of Americans here feel superior. Not that I’m making excuses for them.
- VICKY:** Do you remember how long before the checkpoint? I’d like to get some sleep but the ca-CLUCK, ca-CLUNK is so annoying...not to mention loud. Why are there only sleeping compartments when we can never actually sleep?
- KATE:** (*gets cards out of suitcase, starts to shuffle cards*) Game of “Spit?”
- VICKY:** (*puts down food, gets settled on bunk*) Okay. Remember when you lost your retainer out the window the last time we were on this train?

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Play Notes: Everyday Terrorism for Brats

Rebecca Locklear

Summary: Set at Frankfurt American High School, Germany in 1972, students grapple with teenage life overseas when bomb threats become real. Find out what else comprises daily life, from archery in p.e., falling off a streetcar, encountering rats, to dealing with moving “again.” Gain a glimpse into the world of military brats.

Cast of Characters	# of Lines		# of Lines
Vicky, 16	102	Mike, 17	51
Gina, 16	33	Carl, 18	9
Cheryl, 15	13	Teacher	20
Gary, 16	32	2 Soldiers	ad. lib
Ben, 15	7	MP (military police)	5

Setting: Thursday, May 11, 1972, Friday, May 12, 1972, one week later; Frankfurt, Germany. In a classroom, in a hall, at p.e., in a car, on the street sidewalk.

Performance Time: 25 minutes

Background Information



Frankfurt American High School c. 1972

Frankfurt American High School (FAHS) opened in 1946 and closed in 1995. In 1972, with 1,800 students in grades 10-12, it was the largest Department of Defense operated high school for U.S. military dependents in the world.

In the early 1970s, during the Baader-Meinhof era, there were frequent call-ins with bomb threats. “We all huddled in a warehouse without toilets and communication to the outside. We waited until military police cleared the school buildings with dogs,” reflected a student.

On Thursday, May 11, 1972 at 7:05 p.m., Baader-Meinhof terrorists attacked the U.S. military I.G. Farbin building next to the high school. One person died and 13 were wounded. Beginning the next day, due to increased security, students had to show their I.D. and go through

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**CONTINUES WITH 2.5 PAGES
OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Everyday Terrorism for Brats

Rebecca Locklear



Scene 1 Thursday, May 11, 1972 in Grade 10 English class, in the hall

VICKY: *(begins group presentation with staging/props with GARY and GINA)*

Don't be fooled by me.
Don't be fooled by the face I wear.

GINA: For I wear a mask.
I wear a thousand masks,
masks I'm afraid to take off,

GARY: and none of them is me.

Pretending is an art that's second nature to me,
but don't be fooled...
I give you the impression that I'm secure,
that confidence is my name and coolness my game,
and that I need no one.
But don't believe me.

GINA: Beneath my mask lies confusion, and fear, and aloneness.
But I hide this.
I don't want anybody to know it.
I panic at the thought of my weakness exposed.

VICKY: Will you laugh at me?
Will you reject me?

GARY: So begins the glittering but empty parade of masks and my life becomes a front.
I tell you everything that's really nothing, and nothing of what's everything.
Please listen carefully and try to hear what I'm not saying.

CONTINUED

Scene 3 Thursday, 2000 hours, one week after the bombing

CARL: *(driving Belair station wagon with MIKE, GARY, VICKY, GINA, CHERYL, BEN, music playing)* Let's go on down by the Farbin Building and out that way. See how things are there...now that it's been a week since the bombing. *(screeches to a halt)*

SOLDIERS: *(surround car, flashlights brightly shine in car windows)*

GIRLS: *(scream ad lib., duck down on floor--no seat belts at that time)*

MP: *(taps window with a .45, yells)* Open up.

CHERYL: *(to GINA)* They're going take us away! We are so in trouble.

CARL: Damn. We're surrounded. *(rolls down window, fumbles for I.D., ALL becomes quiet in car)*

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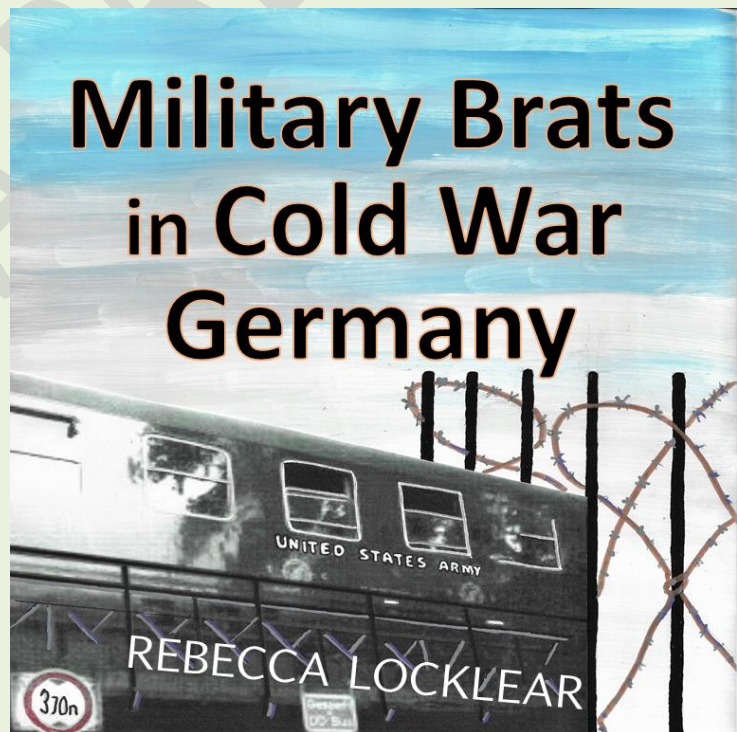
**Gain insight into the early 1970s time period
by relating to overseas military brats!**

INCLUDES

“Europe BRATS: Looking Back” by Rebecca Locklear
2nd Place ~ Adult Poetry Contest, 2019

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