

Apple Season Approacheth

By Forrest Brandt

A friend of mine has an apple tree in her backyard and it has turned out an early bumper crop this year. She's spent the past week making pies, apple crisp, apple butter, apple sauce and on and on. My perverse mind recalled an incident with apples:

So, October of 82 I'm involved in this huge NATO exercise, ensconced in the tiny tourist trap Bavarian town of Waldenberg and stuck with the 20:00 to 08:00 hours shift in the G-2 (intelligence) shack. While walking into work, I spot this little store - get some dark rye bread, some cheese, some salami to help me get through the night. Knowing all of this will make me thirsty I add a liter bottle of Apfel Saft - unfiltered apple juice. As luck would have it, I finish up the Apfel Saft about 03:00 hours and the HQ gets the nerve agent alert and we're ordered to don our MOPP gear (see photo); put on the heavy, non-breathing, onsie, put on the booties and tape them shut to the onesie, put on the mask and pull the hood over my head and make sure I've got a tight seal, finish with the gloves. I sit and sweat for the first half hour and then my GI tract tells me the Apple Saft wants to set me free. For the next two hours I can think of nothing but how am I going to get out of the alert and relieve the pressure growing in my intestines. I walk, afraid to sit still. I look at the clock constantly. My innards rumble like a tank attack. I check the incoming messages, hoping for an early end to the alert. I tighten my butt cheeks till my thighs start to wobble. Finally at 06:45, we get the notice that the alert is over and we can unmask. I bolt for the john and pray I can get the MOPP gear off before all hell breaks loose. It's a haunting memory, but I still love apples.



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