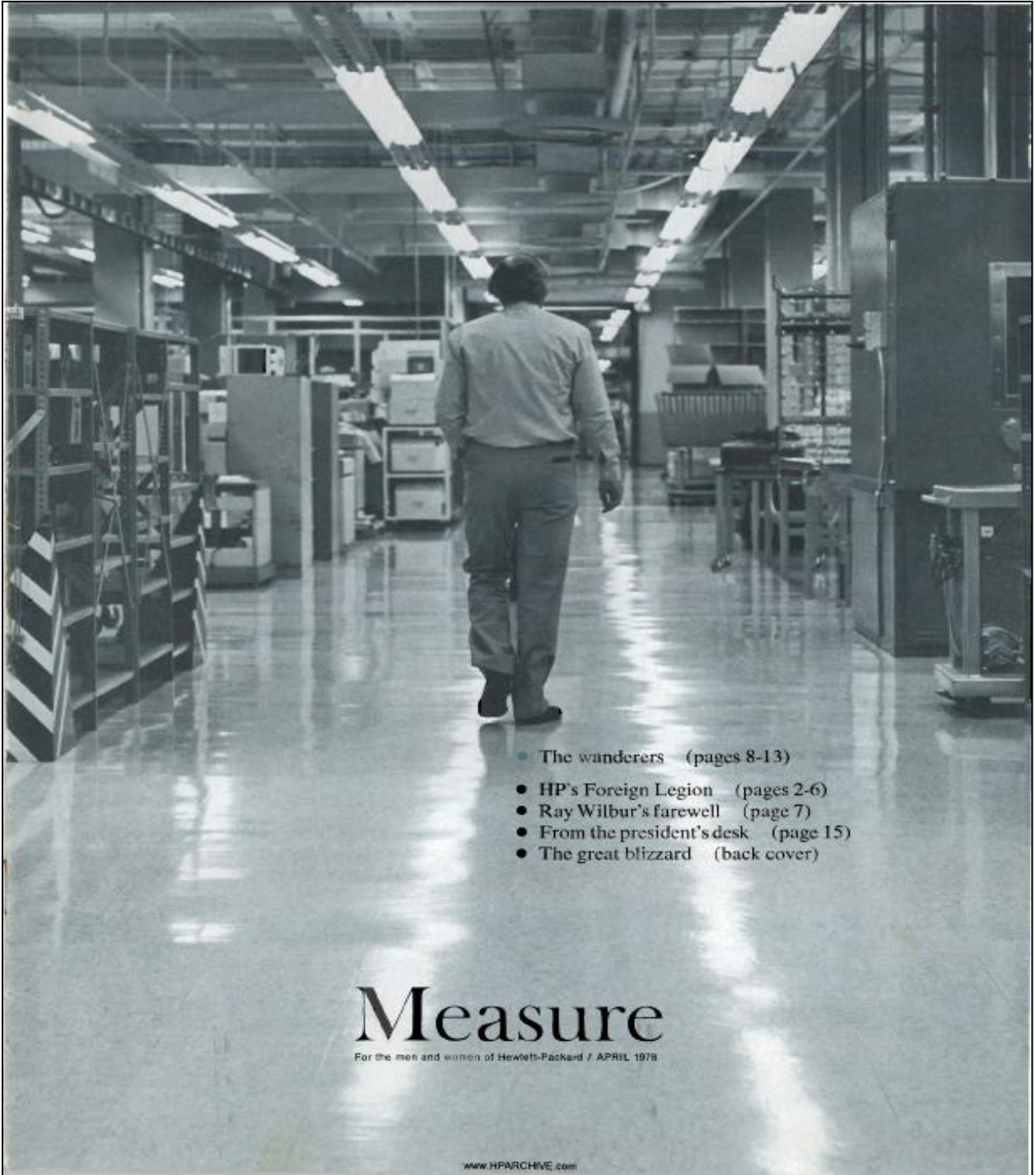


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# Measure

For the men and women of Hewlett-Packard / APRIL 1978

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## HP's growing "foreign legion"

What's a Frenchman doing in Idaho? And why is an American employee in Singapore, a German in Brazil, a Malaysian in California? Now known as foreign service employees (it seems the former term "expatriates" had a slightly negative ring), they're part of a legion of a hundred or so HP people serving outside their own countries. In some cases they're acquiring specific experience and training they need back home. But mostly they're just contributing their skills, as we all do, where they're most needed.



The Magri family: Scott, Diane, Lauren and Jack



George Panos and daughter Lea

□ George Panos grew up in western Greece, but lived in Chicago as an adult and is an American citizen. For the past several years he's been back in Greece, as an HP foreign service employee in the Mediterranean and Middle East sales headquarters near Athens, and his next assignment is in the United Kingdom. His wife Sandy has roots in Southern Indiana and admits to feeling homesick now and then. But she's grown accustomed to Greek life — even tolerant of the goats that sometimes eat the shrubbery around their rented suburban house. A diesel automobile has helped beat the high cost of fuel in Greece (over two dollars a gallon for gasoline). And George and Sandy are proud that their first-grade son reads at better than third-grade level after attending an international school.

Such are the rewards and drawbacks of being assigned to a foreign country. For HP people and their families, the expatriate experience can be — in varying degrees — challenging, interesting, thrilling and exasperating. And the change in lifestyle can range from almost negligible to something approaching "culture shock."

For Jack Magri and his family, who just returned to California from France, living in a French village near Grenoble for two years was "a fantastic experience."

They tell of the slower pace of life there, of being accepted warmly by the French people, and of spending weekends and holidays motoring through the French countryside or over into Italy. For them, coming back to the U.S. was a letdown.

Neal Mack, on the other hand, was glad to be home after six months. Assigned to help establish a network of HP 3000 computers for the government of Iraq, Neal and two other HP engineers (both named George Moore) shared a three-bedroom house, with sauna, in Baghdad. Although their living accommodations were luxurious by local standards, the climate and culture of the Middle East are not easy for Americans to adapt to. Still, Neal is glad he had the experience. "It makes you look at your own country in a different way," he explained. "I appreciate American conveniences, but I realize how unselfish those people are in comparison. We have a more comfortable life with a lot of material things, but the Arabs have much more love for one another."

One of the first people a U.S. employee going overseas must get to know is Kathy Kechn of Corporate Personnel, who will administer the transfer and serve as the employee's personnel representative for the duration. In handling the Ameri-

can contingent of HP's "foreign legion," she not only processes paychecks and insurance claims but often takes care of their personal affairs as well. "I just helped coordinate the sale of a house for one employee," she said. "I represent their interests here by dealing with banks, lawyers and realtors when the need arises."

In addition to paying the costs associated with moving, according to Kathy, HP also compensates foreign service employees for the effects of double taxation and higher living costs where appropriate. To insure that the expatriate doesn't suffer what amounts to a cut in salary, the company is guided by the State Department's cost-of-living data in addition to the currency exchange rates.

HP doesn't automatically rotate managers and professionals every few years as some companies do, but it seems there are more and more international transfers these days. The simplest explanation for the trend is that international business is growing in importance. But the maturing of the product-group structure and "verticalization" have had something to do with it too — if only by strengthening divisional ties and increasing the interaction between product divisions and sales organizations. Technology and expertise

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## foreign legion

are often shared by exchanging people, and product divisions have found it increasingly advantageous to have factory-experienced people in the sales organizations.

As an analytical product support engineer at HP's European headquarters in Geneva, Frenchman Jean-Luc Truche was already familiar with Scientific Instruments Division and had visited the small Palo Alto plant before being assigned to work there nine months ago. "I knew the people here and the type of business I would be in," said Jean-Luc, although his job in R&D is far different from his role at HPSA. Professionally, he's finding his assignment in the U.S. an enjoyable as well as broadening experience. "My job in product support involved training, emergency repairs in the field and that sort



Neal Mack



Personnel's Kathy Keehn, expatriate Dieter Hofherr

of thing," Jean-Luc said, "and there was a lot of traveling. I was tired of traveling. I have a much quieter job now."

Jean-Luc and his wife are finding their stay personally enjoyable as well. They rent a house only a few minutes from the SID plant, and the relatively short commute is one of the nicer aspects of their new lifestyle. The Bay Area, they say, is comparable to a European capital, having many of the cultural advantages of a large city without some of the disadvantages.

The cost of living is about the same as in Geneva, according to Jean-Luc, but he and his wife are living on one salary now because she doesn't have the required resident alien work permit. In Geneva she was an HP secretary.

Although HP ordinarily makes no commitment to re-hire an expatriate's spouse who has also worked for the company at home, it sometimes turns out that way. Dick and Joella Hornor both worked for HP in the U.S. and Canada before he was transferred to Greece. There Joella was a secretary for another firm ("We were in dog food and chicken feed," she said with a laugh), but she's back with HP

as a member of the "temps pool" now that Dick is with Computer Service Division in Cupertino.

Chris and Beatrix Beck were married in Europe in 1974, one week before Chris was to leave for the U.S. to join the Corporate Controller's staff. Beatrix had been an HP executive secretary and was able to continue in that capacity at Intercon headquarters in Palo Alto. They stayed three years and are now back in Switzerland.

Taking Chris's place at Corporate is Dieter Hofherr from HP Germany, whose wife Birgit was also an executive secretary in her home country. Birgit accompanied Dieter to California on a three-month assignment in 1975 and learned computer programming. Now she's landed a half-day job at HP and is taking data processing courses at a local college.

Of course, not everyone who's working outside his or her own country is considered a foreign service employee. In many locations in the United States, Intercon and Europe — particularly Geneva, which is probably the most cosmopolitan city in the world — there are a number of HP people who were hired locally but are citizens of other countries.

One of the most interesting stories of a local hire from a faraway place is that of Srinu Nageshwar, who wasn't considered a foreign service employee until recently.

Srini was a young graduate in India when HP was just getting established in Europe, and he wrote to HP in Boeblingen, West Germany, in search of a job. By mail, without an interview or even a telephone conversation, Srini was promised a job if he would travel to Boeblingen on his own. He did, and stayed with HP Germany for more than 15 years before being appointed international marketing manager for Calculator Products Division in Loveland, Colorado. "I've often wondered if I would take the same sort of chance in hiring someone today," Srini mused.

HP believes that, for the most part, its operations in each country should be run by citizens of that country and be an integral part of the culture. But that philosophy doesn't preclude a healthy exchange of people. As a matter of fact, in a new country organization HP managers are often sent in as foreign service employees to start up the operation and work with local nationals, who will eventually assume the responsibility — precisely the situation that now exists in the Mediterranean/Middle East area.

The company may also broaden the local nationals' experience by rotating them through U.S. or European product divisions. Liong Wong, a Malaysian who joined HP in Singapore and went on to manage manufacturing operations in Penang, Malaysia, has been assigned to the corporate staff and several Bay Area divisions for the past three years. The experience should prove invaluable as HP moves toward rounding out its Southeast Asian manufacturing operations with additional functions such as marketing. "It's a definite advantage to work here for awhile," Liong believes. "The degree of sophistication in technical fields and in marketing are much higher, and you can see all the different facets of HP."

Beyond that, Liong feels he's simply added to his general fund of knowledge and his ability to manage. As he put it, "I think I now have a better set of skills for dealing with all kinds of people, because so much is picked up through daily living as well as on the job. Being here has been a big eye-opener for me."

There have been other foreign service personnel from Southeast Asia in what Liong feels are useful, though brief, exchanges. "We have people moving back and forth over short periods of time for specific reasons," he explained. "Occa-

sionally someone is sent over to learn about a certain product and then transfer the manufacturing to Southeast Asia. Or people come here to work and go to school on a part-time basis."

The chance to pursue advanced education in combination with working is an oft-stated objective of the foreign service employee in the United States. Chris Beck told why: "In Europe, we have only full-time schools in the day and it's difficult to take two years off work to invest in an added degree. The possibilities for going to night school in the U.S. are really great." Thanks to HP's flexible working hours, Chris was able to fit in a full day of work before attending afternoon and evening classes at the College of Notre Dame in Belmont, California, where he earned a bachelor's degree. He went on to Golden

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Jean-Luc Truche



Joella and Dick Hornor, secretary Anne Jaquanad in Athens

## foreign legion

Gate University, finishing up the final work for his MBA degree in a dead heat with the Becks' departure for Europe.

If they have any leisure time after cramming the week with such activities, foreign service employees and their families usually fill that too. Liong's wife, Siew Hoon, is interested in arts and crafts, and has spent much of her stay in the U.S. collecting works and learning different techniques.

Many of them travel — often to places they may never have a chance to visit again. How many people will ever see the



Liong Wong



Srin Nageshwar

Hanging Gardens of Babylon as Dick Hornor, Neal Mack, George Moore and others have? How many would seize the opportunity to cross the Sahara, as Diane Magri did with a group of French people? (She also renewed old Peace Corps friendships in Africa.)

Jack Magri thinks HP's transfer policy enables a somewhat carefree existence for the expatriate by removing some of the everyday stresses. "It makes it automatic that most of your needs are taken care of," according to Jack. "When you're in a foreign culture, even though you're participating in it you're really sheltered and taken care of in many ways. It's when you come back home that you're awakened to reality by having to deal with things like mortgages and insurance again."

But whatever the quality or style of life in the foreign country, it's bound to be different from home. Jean-Luc Truche misses the proximity of the mountains, and hasn't traveled much in the U.S. because the distances are so great. Neal Mack found that Baghdad, with its strict religious codes, offered no alcoholic beverages, no entertainment, and no female companionship ("You do a lot of reading and jogging," he said, "and spend time just getting to know people."). In Boeblingen, Englishman Ken Miles and Frenchman Marc Pointeau talked about having to adjust to the laws and customs of a German village, where it's illegal to use an automobile horn or wash your car on Sunday. And the children of expatriates often find the international schools far more challenging. If they do well in them they may suffer from acute classroom boredom back home.

"You have to be flexible," said Jack Magri. "Some Americans go overseas and just can't accept things not being like they are in the U.S., and that's the beginning of a bad experience."

It appears that HP foreign service personnel, by and large, have few bad experiences. Being part of a company with a broad international outlook makes it easier, and knowing that wherever you go in the world you're part of the HP "family." But sometimes it's also helpful to have a spirit of adventure. □