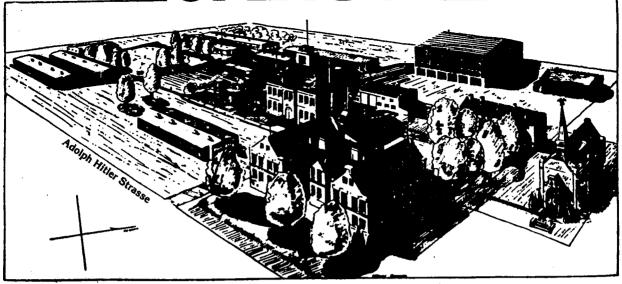
# OFLAG 64



Prisoner's drawing of Oflag 64, reproduced from The Item of January 1, 1945

Drawing does not show the three, high, barbed wire fences surrounding the 900 feet by 1200 feet area of the P.O.W. BY JAMES BICKERS Camp; nor are the eleven guard towers shown.

POST OFLAG 64 ITEM

JUNE 1984

Vol XX1 #3

Gladwyne Someone didn't receive a newsletter the 1st part of May. I am not able 6220 Augusta Dr. #307 to tell who it is as the label was ripped off Ft. Myers, FL 33907 entirely so the letter came back to me. Anyone not receiving the April newsletter (mailed the 29th of April) just drop me a

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WAUSAU ,WI Thanks much John Fehl for your contribution to our postage fund. We also have corrected your Zip Code number. so your mail should come thru promptly. Hope \_\_man, journalist "great guy" and a you can make it to Las Vegas.

**++++++\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** 

FT. MYERS, FL What a nice surprise of Colonel William P. Haynes III. A brief commentary on the book "Raid" by Richard Barons+Abrams. Then attached to the comments on the book was a day to day account of his "March" out of Oflag 64 on 21 January 1945. I am not including in it my mailing as it is quite long and would be costly to send to each of you. I'm sure Col. "Bill" would have no ebjection if I would make copies and send it to anyone who desires some. Send me a , Stamped, self addressed envelope with a 20¢ stamp and I'll be glad to foward a copy to you. Bill also asks for a picture of Oflag 64 anyone who has an extra one available pls, send it to:

| LTC. William P. Haynes III (USA Ret) I will look and see if any of my slides that I took might prove of value to you Bill, If so you could wind up with post card and I'll get it right out to you several pictures. For the meantime the heading drawing of each Oflagaris a very accurate picture of the entire comp.

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Boy leave it to a news-CLEMSON, S.C. "D-Day firster" to make use of the medi he knows best. I received so many . clippings on Wright Bryan 🗪 that I don't know where to start to tell you all about it. I'll make it as brief as possible as I can't devote the whole newsletter to Wright even though it would be interesting copy. For his work at Clemson University, Wright received the Clemson Medaalion, Clemson most prestigious public award. He was V.P. for developement and helped the University to expand from 2700 students to 12,500. Quite an accomplishment. I'd say.

Then come D.Day 40th Anniversary. He was supposed to be in Normandy, but illness kept him at home, Never the less, the Clemson, Messenger carried the story of his first reportin of "D-Day" by an American Journalist, not only by wire but by radio.

(OVER)

Bryan was in a plane that dropped some of the 101st Airborne over Utah Beach.

It was a real pleasure to travel with he and Ellen in '71 back to visit the OFLAG 64 Campsite. Looking forward to seeing you both in Las Vegas.

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CINNCINATI, OH Well, Ed I don't think my memory is much better than your's However, Ed Spicher wrote and sent me two snaps of two different groups taken at the Oflag in 1943-44 and asked that I identify those in the pictures. I can add a few names but suggest you to get to Las Vegas and get help from all of us there, Ed, We would be more than pleased to see you. May I keep these in case you don't get to Las Vegas. I'll send you under separate cover the names I can add. Sure hope to see you in Las Vegas.

\*\*\*\*\*

DES MOINE, IA Just a brief note from Verris Hubbell, bringing me up to date on the latest news from Iowa. Most importantly he also included a small check for the Postage Fund, which is always helpful. I hope the P.O. keeps making money so we can forestall an increase in postage. Thanks Hubb. See you in Vegas. Hope you and Jean are feeling much better. I also received from Verris a map of Germany which shows all the P.O.W. Camps, set up by the German Army, Anyone interested in a copy, just let me know and I'll be glad to make a copy and foward it to you. JJust send a S.S.A.E. #10 size will be fine. I think Verris could also supply them.

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BATON ROUGE, LA Hi, Howard, your letter has been forward to George Juskalian and I'm sure you'll hear from him in the near future. I hope you also receive the envelope containing the May Oflag Reunion material. Nice to hear from you Howard Charlton Sr. and I hope this means we'll see you in Las Vegas.

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DES MOINES, IA Ed Moschel writes that he won't be able to be with us in Las Vegas. He reminded me that it's been 13 years since we (53 of us) with wives) returned to visit Oflag 64 Camp site. What a trip! Ed sends his regards to all Kriegies.

\*\*\*\*\*

SANFORD, N.C. Bill Makepeace, Jr. is planning to be with us in Las Vegas. Great! Will look forward to seeing but don't count on seeing what you envisio

I,m not 6'4 (6'2) Nor 250lbs.(200) and lived in the White House. I don't know who you have in mind. Hope you can persuade Tom Rush. I know of several coming from Texas. Incidently you will be surprised at how many you will recognize. See you in 3 months. Im starting to pack now!

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BEAUFORT, S.C. Two missiles from the Carolinas this month. How Nice! Earl Smoak, Jr. wrote that he and his wife Ruth will be joining us in Las Vegas. Great! Thanks also for the contribution, the Fund can always use it so we can keep the Newsletters coming to you. Earl was of Co. B 142nd Inf. and after he left "64" he wound up in Luckenwald Let's talk about it in Vegas!

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GLASTONBURY, CT Welcome to our group John Wood. We are indeed glad to have you as a new addition and surely hope you are making plans to join us in Last Vegas. If you need futher information, feel free to contact me or any other member of our group you may know.

\*\*\*\*\*

ONDON ENGLAND Ken Finlaysen writes a pice long letter bringing things up to ate on things in England. Hope to have review of the P.O.W's trip to Poland for all ab you in the near future. Wen, I hope I am able to tempt you to ome to Vegas but you know your situation best. We would all welcome you. Wen visited Dunkirk on D-Day with about 0000 other boys from England. I know you will enjoy the enclosed rticle on Father Brach sent by John ones of Houston. Your meeting with the gals of the olidarity movement from Poland must ave been very interesting, It's a

Oolidarity movement from Poland must ave been very interesting, It's a wonder they let them out of Poland. Thanks for your newsletter and we look orward to a great reunion in Las Vegas.

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LAS VEGAS, NV Alan Dunbar taking a two week vacation with plans well shaped up see enclosed program) for October 12, 13, 14, 1984. We'll be able to get more efinative details to each of you in ate August or early September. When you send checks to Alan Dunbar, We suggest to make payable to

CHAIRMAN, OFLAG 64 REUNION This will make it easier for Alan to andle the funds.

OTE: Keep in mind that the Retired Officer's Association meet the week ollowing in Las Vegas.

ake a real vacation.

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TOUSTON, TX I don't hear from Johnnie Jones very often but when I do its usually ith some great information. The enclosed newspaper articles were sent in by John and I felt they were such choice stories hat the best way was to just copy the rticles. Hope you fellows like them. I did, Thanks John Jones, the are great rticles.

ure glad your coming to Las Vegas. It will be great to see You. ncidentally as you can gather from the rticles. David Westheimer was in CHIETE taly with Father Brach, David was Air orp.

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Royal Oak, MI Here's a source for another book. Angus Mc Keller is writing one about Marwis O. Machus and his involvement in the Kasser ine PASS battle. I have a tape available of the consolidated recordings made by Henry Soderberg during his visit to Oflag 64. I am completely sold out of them and will make special arrangment to loan one to you. We all will be looking foeward to this book. We would be glad to have you visit with our group in Las Vegas where you could probably pick up the answers to many unanswere.

#### \*\*\*\*\*\*

BATON ROUGE, LA Nice to hear from Howard Charlton. Sure hope your planning to get to Vegas. We'll treat you well and you'll have a great time. Sorry to have delayed your reply as George sent your letter back to me. Thanks for the contribution to the Postage Fund. We appreciate your thoughtfulness. Now to answer your questions, For starters. I am unable to help you on LT Fenton's first name as I do not have his name on our mailing list I believe his name has been available in the past but his name has been dropped from our mailing list.

Dr. Barkus is also a familar name but again not on our list. His name must have been in a previous ITEM or in the Ex P.O.W. Bulletin but I still don't have it . George Oughton may be reached at.

George W. Oughton 112 Johns Rd Cheltenham, PA 19012

Sad to report that Amon Carter passed away July 24, 1982. I don't remember a landry as the band leader, but Robert Rankin I do recall May I suggest even if you only travel 50 miles a day, get to the reunion it will be a high-light of your life! I guarantee you'lhave a great time.

I hope you were able to follow up on the May EX P.O.W. Bulletin. If you locate Doc. Barkus Pls. send me his name & address. Thanks,

#### \*\*\*\*\*

MELROSE, MA Thanks, George Maibach for the change of addresss for Father Glennon. How bout getting your parish to send you to our Reunion in Las Vegas, Father?

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ENTERPRISE, AL One doesn't know whether it will be Metcalf or Sage when the letter is postmarked with this town. Clayton writes that he has great fun.

As soon as your book is available, please send me a copy and I'll send a check by return mail, It should be interesting. Those who would be interested, drop a line to

Clayton G. Metcalf 408 N. Rawls St Enterprise, AL 36330 Also we should be hearing about Jerry Sage's book soon, that could turn out to be an amazing story. When's it due, Jerry?

\*\*\*\*\*

TULSA, OK Great to have Bob Thompson back on the list again. Still don't know why the fowl-up but glad your back Bob. Be great to see you again. Hope you can make it to Vegas. Thanks much to Billy Bingham and him to send me his address.

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OMAHA, NE MANCHESTER, MA CAMPHILL, PA JEFFERSON, GA

LOVELAND, CO

This has all the earmarks of an Alfred Hitchcock mystery. I. think Bob Christidisen started it with a letter and clipping which I have enclosed in this mailing on Kermit Hansen, Then Herb Johnson sent me a copy of the same thing from his home in Camp Hill, PA.

Then Bob Christiansen of that he sent to Carl Christiansen of Manchester, MA.

Well anyway all of this inter change makes for good but confusing copy and I'm pleased to report much

Its nice to know that the Items are read and that you fellows out there

are communicating with each other. To top this off I was also the recipient of book written by

Judge James Horace Wood of Jackson County GA. He was in "64" and traveled all the wa with us at least thru Hammelburg. Sure hope you can get to Las Vegas. I will try to read the book by then. Nice to have you joined a local POW group and is having on our list. Thanks much for the book Judg Bring "Boomer" Holder with you to Las Veg as well as others from GA. Also .hope you have been able to supply Bob Christiagen with information on George Williams.

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CAMP HILL, PA Herb Johnson also wrote that he went to Europe and the Azores where he was involved in instruction of certain classes. I'm sure you were up to your classes and gave a good account of ' Americana. See you in Vegas, I hope.

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LAS VEGAS, Ny Well, I'm sure we'll all see Dan Rockwell when we get into Vegas. We're sure looking forward to it any way. Thanks much for the book which I had not read in its entirely, " 48 Hours to Hammelburg' your recollection of what happened to you at Hammelburgais I'm sure John Goode for calling Bob and promptingeasonably accurate and Whiting was not a exact as you will find in details in "Rai We did leave Oflag 64 on January 21, 1945 according my recallection. Glad you have offered to help Alan, I'm sure he'll be able use of everyone he can See you when I arrive.

Welcome back! Jack Stewart LINCOLN, NE once on our list several years ago wrote to me as "Hi". Well, John Slack will due and thanks much for the contribution to the postage fund.

Have crossed off your old address long ago and hope I don't lose you anymore.

We sure will look forward to seeing you in Loveland, CO. sent me copies of letters Vegas. Leroy Ihrie is still in Lincoln at 4100 Van Dorn Street. Both of you ought to get to gether and storm down to Vegas. Kermin Hansen as you can read in Omaha a

Jack Rathbone is now in Denver and I'm of this started with questions originally is a freak storm. See you in Vegas lister the April Item.

Celebrate!

Annette Secor writes that she Hudson, FL will join us at the reunion and it will be nice to have her join us as well as her Fiancée. Thanks much for the contribution to the Postage Fund. Very thoughtful, Annette.

#### \*\*\*\*\*

FOREST ACRES, S.C. Welcome to our group and thanks for the contribution to the Postage. This wrote often to her husband, a is the way we keep the mail flowing. We have Bill Paty's name on our list and he is in Hawaii. Shimatou is also in Hawaii. I don't have the other two names on my list but assume they were P.O.W.'s. If so and you have their addresses please send them to me. Thanks.

#### \*\*\*\*\*\*

HOUSTON, TX Another great note from John Jones who will be with us in Las Vegas, &s noted earlier in this Item. Thanks for the great contribution, John. It will be good to talk to David Westheimer and I'm sure he'll enjoy the visits with his previous friends from Cheite.

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FT. MYERS, FL Thanks for the reimbursement for the war, we never talked about the pictures. Hope you enjoyed them. It looked much different without the barbed wire.

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GLADWYNE, PA I have recently picked up 10 Copies of "Raid" by Abrams& Baron. Anyone interested in a copy just send me \$10.00 and I will mail one back to you. I also am planning to have 10 cassettes made

of the recordings made in Oflag 64 by Henry Soderberg in July of 1944. Any one desiring a copy, just send \$ 7.50 and I'll get one back to you.

Hope you all are enjoying your Summer.

Your Editor John Slack

# NEW ADDITIONS

John Wood 17 Sulky Lane Glastonbury, CT. 06033

Ernest A. Schulback 1522 Southwood Blvd. Arlington, TX 76013

Judge James Horace Wood State Court Jefferson, GA 30549

# Wartime love letters arrive 40 years later

ATHENS, Ga. (AP) - During World War II, Clementi Holder prisoner of the Germans in Szubin, Poland. But many of the letters of encouragement and love didn't reach him - until recent-

Polish workers discovered a packet of her letters in an old building, where they apparently were hidden by German censors. Last month they finally were delivered to H. Randolph Holder, 40 vears later.

"Until I saw those letters, it never occurred to me that she loved me that much," said Holder, now 67 and the owner of two radio stations in Athens.

"When I'd go two or three weeks without a letter, I assumed the censors must be holding up my mail. But when I finally escaped from the POW camp and got home safely after any missing letters."

Mrs. Holder said she had mixed emotions about seeing the letters because "they brought all that back to me again.

'I remember when the telegram came saying he was missing in action. I ran down to the beauty parlor where my mother was having her hair done. I knelt down on the floor and started pounding on her legs and yelling,

'Those damn Germans! Thos damn Germans!'

"The saddest thing is that h didn't get them when he needethem," she said. "He could'v thought that his bride was goin out on dates back home. I know wives who did."

Holder said the 176 letters counting those written to a fellov Army officer who escaped from the POW camp with him - neve would have reached Athens at al if the Polish People's Republi hadn't taken an interest in th case for what he believes are po litical reasons.

"Szubin was the site of one c 2,161 camps and work commar dos founded by the Third Reic alone on Polish soil for prisoner of war," said a press release tha was sent to Holder. "The prisor ers ... were liberated by the Sov et army in January 1945. Th survivors will never forget th hell of detention."

Holder, imprisoned from 194: 45, said the camp was more lik "Hogan's Heroes" than a "hell c detention."

And he said the Soviets ha nothing to do with his escap€ One day he and another office drifted away from a long marc in sub-zero weather, hid in a pil of hay and then walked 50 mile before finding their way to a Sc viet regiment, he said.

Denver Post 20 July 1984

#### NEW ADDITIONS

Jack Stewart 8109 Hickory Lane Lincoln, NE 68510

William R. Harrell 6326 Oakfield Rd Columbia, S.C. 29206

Lywn M. Hunsaker P.O. Box 554 Darlington, S.C. 29532

Major William A. Schular, Jr 4601 Cedar Spring Rd. Forest Acres, S.C. 29206

(OVER)

#### CHANGES

## NEW ADDITIONS

ROBERT C. PLUMMER 23 Brewster Ave La Grange Park, IL 60525

Maj Bartley E. Kearins(Ret) P.O. Box 3056 Fairfield Bay, AZ 72088

W.J. Leach 6412 King Arthur Ct. Ft. Worth, TX 76118

Wallace M. Wilson 218 Moore St Westville, IL 61883

Carl C. Tschantz 2826 Northland St. Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221

Milton M. Moore 6770 Edgemere No. 164 El Paso, TX 79925

George Rosenthal 2836 Fairgreen Dr Clearwater, FL 33519

Bill Barr 10078 SW 88th Ct. Ocala, FL 32674

W.R. 'Bill' Makepeace, Jr. P.O. Box Drawer 68 Sanford, N.C. 27330

Eugene L. Ranck 946 Carbondale Rd. Ione, CA 95640

Lt. Col Clarence R. Meltesen (RET) 810 Gonzalez Dr 4-D San Francisco, CA 94132

Edward O. Hirt 990 Eagle Rock Rd Colorado Springs, CO 80907 Father Charles Glennon Holy Ghost Church Whitman, MA 02382

Lt. Col. Richard D. Heil 2117 Harwood Dr. El Paso, TX 79925

Francis B. Stevens 3202 Stephenson P1. NW Washington, D.C. 20005

Garvin Fitton Box 249 Harrison, ARK. 72601

Don Hemler Forest Knolls RRI Pequot Lakes, MN 56472

Thomas E. Lawson 2184 South Fenton Denver, CO 80227

NEED NEW ADDRESSES Lt. Edward Baker 549 Hellman St Phila, PA

Lt. Arthur Heindl 3703 N. Oakley Ave Chicago, IL

Capt. Leo V. Thieme

Lt. Harvey A. Todd

Pop" Phill Foster Penn State

Thomas O. Rush

"Red Wiegand

# Regent Kermit Hansen Meets Life's Challenges Head-On

By Joseph Brennan

Lt Col. Kermit Hansen had two purposes in mind when he visited Omaha University in November, 1945.

The first was to urge students and faculty members to purchase bonds to finance hospital care for World War II veterans.

"Visit a hospital," he told an OU convocation, "and when you see a veteran with his discharge button in his lapel, say 'Glad to have you back, brother. I helped bring you here'."

But what the OU student newspaper, "The Gateway," neglected to report was that Hansen also used the visit as an opportunity to lecture in the classroom about his experience as a prisoner of war in Germany.

"The main thing I think you learn about that," Hansen said in a recent interview, "is the marvelous combination of self-reliance as well as being part of a group . . . if you're not part of a group, you're subject to more problems than if you try to fight them with esprit de corps."

Hansen has faced many challenges. He just finished a year's responsibility as chairman of the University Board of Regents, on which he has served since 1970. Hansen, 66, is one of two Omaha regents who represent Douglas County.

Military Honors

In 1939, Hansen was graduated from UNL and landed a job briefly with radio station KOWH before being interrupted by a call to military service. Allied campaigns in Italy and France followed, where he distinguished himself in battle. He was captured in 1944 and spent six months in a German POW camp. Although at first Hansen "felt useless" being a captive, he later realized the benefits of the experience.

"I think it was kind of the Ph.D. of 'What are the basics of life? What are the things that are important to you?"

Hansen said.

"Then when we made this long 500-mile march from Poland back into Germany in 1945, that really tested not only your philosophical guts but also your physical guts."

Hansen was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart before returning to Omaha.

After the war, Hansen returned to work in public relations for the Omaha World-Herald. He later wrote the paper's youth activities column for three years. The Herald didn't keep him long, however, as he was lured back east to work for an advertising agency based in New York and Washington.

## Back To Omaha

Although his job there involved setting up campaigns for the armed forces' recruiting efforts — something he was familiar with — he tired of the commuting involved in the job. The World-Herald came calling again, asking Hansen to return to work on the business side of the newspaper. "I think I would have come back if they had asked me to sweep floors," he said.

While working on the paper, Hansen also served on

several local civic organizations. In the 1960's, he became president and chairman of the board of the U.S. National Bank. Gov. Norbert Tiemann appointed him to the Board of Regents on the condition that he run for office in 1972. Hansen was re-elected in 1978.

When he first joined the board, one of the major university funding programs was expansion of the UNO campus. Omaha University was beset with financial problems throughout the 60's and merged with the state university system in 1968. Hansen said the growth of UNO in the early 1970s enabled the campus to become "a marvelous asset to the entire state and certainly the university system."

## UNO's Best Days Ahead

The university's best days are ahead of it, according to Hansen. The \$25 million Diamond Jubilee capital improvement plan, if achieved, will allow UNO to solve its "academic physical needs" as well as the parking problem.

Still problems remain. Last summer, a state commission awarded faculty members represented by the American Association of University Professors salary increases greater than the amount previously allocated by the Nebraska Legislature. The Regents ordered budget cuts at UNO to make up the difference by eliminating faculty positions and reducing programs.

"For three years, we did almost nothing but cut things — we cut equipment and travel, we eliminated positions that were unfilled. We really dug into the administrative and overhead elements of the university. When we got this increase in pay, the practical place to look (for budget reductions) was in the unit concerned."

### Personal Battle With Cancer

Hansen's attention to university matters was diverted in the late 1970s when he was told he had cancer. It took a while to sink in.

"It took some time — and I find from other cancer patients pretty much the same reaction — when I heard about it. I did not want to discuss it with my wife or anybody else for three or four days," Hansen said.

"It was all inside. As my wife later told me, "You were like a wounded bear trying to crawl off into a cave.' I think that was my reaction, that I'm all alone on this, nobody can help me, I've got to think it through. But that isn't true; there's lots and lots of help available." Hansen credits his doctors and wife for giving him the strength to undergo treatment and be cured.

If that experience gives one a new sense of the opportunities of life, Hansen has made the most out of such adversity. He enjoys being a regent. In 1981 and 1982, he visited 280 classes on all three campuses to view firsthand the day-to-day experiences of students and teachers.

Visiting classes "raised my appreciation for what hard work teaching really is," said Hansen.

# War camps tested Johnson's mettle

Retired Lt. Col. Frederick A. Johnson's unconquerable will to survive was severely tested as a prisoner of war during much of World War II.

Johnson died Sunday. He was 70. After graduating from the University of Florida in 1937 with a degree in engineering, he worked as a sales engineer for Crane & Co. until the start of the war.

One of the most grueling ordeals in-his life began soon after he started a tour of duty with the Army in Africa. He was assigned to an advanced tank corps and was sent into the front line of battle.

where he was captured.

Johnson was sent to a prisoner of war camp in Italy, where he lived on a meager subsistence of rice and water. He later was transferred to a camp in Eastern Europe.

He attempted to escape three times and suffered extreme malnutrition, weighing only 83 pounds when he was liberated at the end of the war. He served in the military until his retirement in 1962.

Johnson did not speak of the hardships of his imprisonment, and preferred to keep his memories to himself until about 10 years ago, when he joined American Ex-Prisoners of War Inc.

"He began to talk about it a little then, but it was something I couldn't get out of him as a child," said his son, Frederick Johnson of Birmingham, Ala.

During the past three years the elder Johnson had begun contacting some of the men with whom he had

been imprisoned.

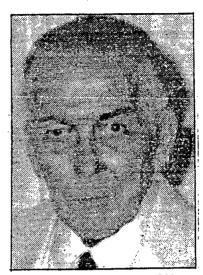
"If was a personal thing with him and he would keep it to himself," his niece, Judy Northup of Irving, said. 'He was a good soldier and a good

Johnson had an outstanding personality and he enjoyed meeting

others, his niece said.

4He was a very personable man and the ladies loved him," she said. 'He was very charismatic."

After his military retirement, Johnson served as chief appraiser



FREDERICK A. JOHNSON . . . captured in Africa

for the Bexar County Tax Assessor's Office from 1962 to 1974.

Johnson remained active most of his life and particularly enjoyed golf. He taught the sport several years while living in Charleston,

His son, Dave Johnson, manager of the New York Mets baseball team, played for two world championship teams with the Baltimore Orioles.

Johnson enjoyed following his son's career and saw him play in the World Series and when his teams played the Texas Rangers,

his niece said.

Other survivors include his wife, Elaine Johnson of San Antonio; two daughters, Kris Kash of Uvalde and Patricia Groff of Stillwater, Okla.; a stepdaughter. Elaine Tucker of Dallas; two sisters, Lorraine J. Moore of Irving and Elaine Hibbert of Annapolis, Md.; and eight grandchildren.

Graveside funeral services will be at 1:45 p.m. Wednesday at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery with the Rev. John F. Daniels offi-