

**LIVONIA, MI:** I am, and will be for the next few issues, the Guest Editor of the Item. I start out with the handicap of not being as familiar with all members of our group as is Herb Garris, as I was not aware of the continued existence of our group until 1992. Nonetheless, I consider it a privilege and honor to try to live up to the standards of John Slack, George Juskalian and Herb Garris in keeping our group well informed of each other and our special events. I should say here that letters not containing Postage Fund checks can be mailed directly to me (address at bottom of page 2). This will eliminate double handling. Letters also containing P.F. checks should be mailed directly to Herb Garris or Bob Levin (see page 2).

For those who do not know me, I offer the following. After serving in Oflag 64 as a Lager Bookbinder (known as "Der Gnome"), I returned to civilian life and completed my B.A. in Sociology. My university attendance was in the daylight, while I earned my living at the Ford Motor Company on the afternoon shift. My graduate work was interrupted by recall to duty for the Korean War. From that two-year period, I returned to the Ford Motor Company and completed a very interesting and pleasant 40-year career in the Personnel Office. My wife, Lucy, whom many of you have met, still is employed in the office of the Vice President-General Counsel of Ford Motor Company.

**DON LUSSENDEN**

**PINEHURST, NC:** Herb, I must tell you that every letter from our members that I have seen since December 1994, has included the most sincere and positive praise of your editorship! It is most awesome to an editor who is a tenderfoot. I promise to do my best—I know you are not going to fade away, but will pop up in another role. **HERB GARRIS**

**ATLANTA, GA:** We Want You to Come and Celebrate the Dream! Bill, Boomer, and Don met with the hotel managers February 10th to firm up arrangements for our Reunion. Our planners are expecting a large turnout. The hotel is surrounded by a choice group of restaurants and two super shopping Malls. The Superintendent of the soon-to-be constructed Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville plans to make a presentation at our Reunion. The Park Rangers who will accompany him will wish to interview on video some of the early Szubin arrivals.

Many fun and informative events are planned for our pleasure. **BILL WARTHEN,  
BOOMER HOLDER, DON GRAUL**

**WAIALUA, HI:** Your Christmas card was so welcome and full of good news. Your many friends will be pleased to hear about the hip replacement. It is usually a very successful

procedure, and as active as you are, it's imperative. Your modest report is so like you, of a ceremony in the White House Rose Garden hosted by President Clinton and Russia's President Yeltsin. Bill was among a small group of Russian and American WWII vets who were honored and presented an award for their service. A reception then followed at the Russian Embassy. (You may not know it, but Bill, upon his escape from Baron Rosen farm at Exin, joined a Soviet front line unit and fought a few days with them until we joined and were sent to Odessa.) Bill, we are happy to say we saw the whole ceremony on television! Our congratulations, Bill!

Bill's loyalty to the 501st Prcht. Inf. Regt., 101st AB Div., took him to Seattle for their reunion, so he missed Normandy. Glad you and Peg enjoyed it. Bill, we are pleased with the success of your "new hip," and Peggy, keep up your great work with community and church activities. Best wishes for an active and successful full life. **BILL AND PEGGY PATY**

**LADY LAKE, FL:** Harold, thank you very much for the check for the Postage Fund and as well for your concern for our "method" of providing for the P.F. We will just have to wait a while to determine if we must take more definitive action. Your suggestions are well received. Herb reports that Ethelene's new prescription seems to help. We sincerely hope that Helen's heart condition has improved to a point that it does not add overall to her physical burden.  
**HAROLD AND HELEN TALLMAN**

**GIG HARBOR, WA:** Jimmie, it appears you could write a book about your visit to Ft. Bragg followed by your driving experience in your reunion trip to France! Thank you for sharing it with us.  
**JIMMIE KANAYA**

**LAWTON, OK:** Martin, thank you for your generous check to the Postage Fund. It was most timely, and we know that Herb appreciates your appropriate recognition of his contributions to our group. **MARTIN KEISER**

**CENTREVILLE, VA:** George, thank you for your check to the Postage Fund, and while we have your attention, please be generous with advice and helpful suggestions to the newly designated Guest Editors!  
**GEORGE JUSKALIAN**

**HENDERSONVILLE, NC:** John and Elaine, your generous Postage Fund check is most helpful. Your two page "Holiday Letter to All" is both exciting and inspirational. That two people can be as deeply and successfully involved in so many events and organizations bringing pleasure, knowledge and benefits to others is mind-boggling! I wonder if all this could have started in the Greenhouse at Oflag 64?!

**JOHN AND ELAINE CREECH**

**NORTH TONOWANDA, NY:** Dick, your Postage Fund check is much appreciated. The obituary of Wilbor (Bill) Hooker that you enclosed is printed in this issue of the Item. The portion of your letter describing how you met Bill Hooker at Oflag 64 and again fifty years too late in Buffalo, NY, also is included to share with all our friends.  
**RICHARD R. MANTON**

For your information and use: P.F. checks should be sent to one of the Secretary-Treasurers and letters with news or general information to the Guest Editors.

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P.O. Box 1693  
Pinehurst, NC 28374

Bob Levin (910) 673-1590  
558 Seven Lakes North  
West End, NC 27376

**BRADENTON, FL:** Richard, thank you for the Postage Fund check. Believe us when we say that we not only want to keep you posted, but we truly would like to spend time with you in Atlanta October 5th through 8th, 1995. It is not that far from Bradenton!  
**RICHARD BECKER**

**HARDWICK, MA:** Philip, thank you for the Postage Fund check and for remembering us with your holiday greeting.  
**PHILIP D. MC INTRE**

**SUN CITY WEST, AZ:** Al, Thank you for your check to the Postage Fund. We have read with great interest your letter to Herb Garris in which you describe how your MOS caused your several short military assignments. We are reproducing your letter in this edition of the Item for our members to read. It is likely others can identify with you.  
**ALFRED R. FRATZKE**

**LEXINGTON, KY:** Wilbur, thank you for your Postage Fund check, and the next time you write to us, please bring us up to date regarding your life's happenings.  
**WILBUR W. BISHOP**

**WILMETTE, IL:** Jim, Herb Garris responds to the Christmas 1944 card that you recently sent him.

\*Jim, you are correct in your statement about my attendance being very irregular before Norfolk in 1991. We should thank John Slack for his relentless insistence on my doing letters and I am grateful. I had not seen the original of the pretty Christmas Card and the 'less than happy' Santa Claus. (For our readers, it was on the cover for our Christmas 1944 menu. Its message is related to Christmas of 1984 and the success story Jim made in fifty scant years with R.R. Donnelly. Plus much of the credit to Emmy Lou, his engaging wife.) Your kind and thoughtful note to us was so appreciated. The remark on the Item reflects

on the many fine members who make the task more enjoyable! Ethelene and I join in our best with the operation awhile ago. Sincerely, Herb Garris\*

Jim, Lucy and I want to thank you for your good wishes and the post card with a painting of one of our favorite spots, The Cove, Fishtown in Leland, Michigan. We've spent many summers with our children in the beautiful Leelanau Peninsula.  
**JIM BICKERS**

**AUSTIN, TX:** Lloyd, the reason for this reply is to help any others like you who somehow were lost from the computerized mailing list. You are on now and should have a copy of the Item real soon. We regret losing track of you and if you make any more moves, please send us a card. Since it's been so long, some recent copies of the Item are being mailed to you under separate cover. Sorry you didn't know about or attend our Ft. Worth Roundup. It was a great one. Welcome back to the fold, and our best wishes for your improved health.  
**LLOYD C. WARREN**

**SALEM, OR:** Herb Garris responds to a letter he received from Lloyd Shoemaker.

\*Lloyd, thank you so much for your nice note and the interesting enclosures. For those of you uninformed of Lloyd's work, intense and vast efforts in the area of escape and evasion, he has published a few pages of many unclassified interviews, documents, news clippings, manuscripts and books in his long years of dedication to the subject. If you would like more information or a copy of his fascinating book, The Escape Factory, please feel free to write him. Meanwhile, congratulations on a fine job!

Lloyd has donated all his research materials to the Air Force Academy Library at Colorado Springs, where it will be available for use by future Cadets and Military Historians.

P.O. Box 12694, Salem, OR 97309  
**LLOYD R. SHOEMAKER**

**GRAND JUNCTION, CO:** Tom, we have enclosed the trace that you requested in Fort Worth of four members who may never have been shown on our roster or mailing list:

Richard M. Pierce, Dale Barton and William Kefoot - Captured in France, Fall 1944.

Robert Oker - Captured in Normandy in early June 1944.

Anyone with any contact or with any information on the above, please write to Tom, whose address is: 440 West Scenic, Grand Junction, CO 81503. So good seeing you in Fort Worth.

**TOM AND SUE LAWTON**

**KNOXVILLE, TN:** Kathy, thank you again for your thoughtful letter of 12/28/94. It is so meaningful, that we have enclosed it for all of our members to read. For those of you who recall W.R. and want to send her a note of condolence, her address is: 11316 Harkin Valley Road, Knoxville, TN 37932 Bill was a Captain in the 168th Inf. of the 34th Inf. Div., captured at Sidi Bou Sid on 2-17-43.

**KATHY (MRS. WILLIAM K.) JONES**

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA:** Clarence, Herb's reply to your card follows - "Clarence, am in 'hold' on your book pending two developments: your satisfaction with the initial plans of the printer in Vancouver, B.C., and a consensus with Rangers in the near future. Our best wishes on the project."

**CLARENCE MELTESEN**

**BETHESDA, MD:** Vincent, thanks for your check and nice letter and the good news of the progress you and Mary are making. Please don't overdue it and let's try for Atlanta. Your kind words about the Item are super. Your loss of Mays Anderson was felt by many others.

**VINCENT J. DI FRANCESCO**

**RUTLAND, VT:** Leonard, thanks for your check for the P.F. Best wishes.  
**LEONARD F. WING, JR.**

**FALLS CHURCH, VA:** Al, thanks for the nice check you sent to the P.F. Our best to Louanna and you. Herb will call in March while he is in D.C. Best wishes. **H. A. CASNER**

**LINCOLN, NE:** Jack, thanks for the check to the P.F. Good hearing from you and your comments on the Item. Hope you try for Atlanta. What unit were you with in November 1944 outside of Nancy, France? Warm regards.  
**JACK W. STEWART**

**ARLINGTON, TX:** Vic, many thanks for the nice check to the P.F. I'll forgive your free loading for awhile, and welcome awaits you in Atlanta. Looked for you at Ft. Worth. How did you miss that one - so close by? Best wishes.  
**VIC C. WHITE**

**ALEXANDRIA, VA:** Jerry, thanks for your nice check to the P.F. Right at fifty one years soon from Nettuna, Italy. Best regards.  
**JERRY W. MOHER**

**TULSA, OK:** Bob, many thanks for your generous check to the P.F. Clarence was pleased to know you are interested in having a copy of his about-to-be published book. Copies should be available before long. All the best.  
**BOB THOMPSON**

**WEST END, NC:** Bob, it is a pleasure to announce that you will soon begin to assist Herb and take some of the responsibilities from the Editor and Treasurer positions. Many of our members will recall meeting you and your lovely wife, Carlene, at Louisville, and how you so kindly escorted Stan Peters and his wife. You and Stan were in the same unit of the 34th Inf. Div., near Cassino in Italy. Stanley passed away about a

year ago, and you notified Herb of that. You will assist in the receipt of letters with news and checks for the P.F. Since you and Herb live fairly close to each other, he will add your name as a signatory to the P.F. account with Nations Bank in the Sandhills. You will as usual receive a short note of thanks soon afterward. We welcome you aboard, Bob, and wish you the best. Our support will surely be with you. Checks for the Postage Fund may now be sent to Bob at his address:

Bob Levin  
558 Seven Lakes North, West End, NC 27376  
Telephone (910) 673-1590. **BOB LEVIN**

**BATON ROUGE, LA:** Gordon, good hearing from you and Marty. Hope you both are in fine fettle again. Appreciate the check to the P.F. Airborne!  
**GORDON K. SMITH**

**PITTSBURGH, PA:** Slick, good to hear from you again and thanks for the check for the P.F. Sorry you missed a good one in Texas. Let's try Atlanta. Thanks for your remarks on the Item. Best wishes.  
**JOHN L. \*SLICK\* CRAMER**

**IOWA CITY, IA:** Marvin, thanks for your check to the P.F. Best wishes in '95 and hope you will try for Atlanta.  
**MARVIN F. CHEVALIER**

**ROSELLE PARK, NJ:** Charlie, thank you for the very generous check to the P.F.! We admire your ability to completely rewire an entire house, considering many of us find it difficult to get out of a chair to change a light bulb.  
**CHARLES EBERLE**

**ENTERPRISE, AL:** Clayton, your check for the P.F. is much appreciated, as was your Christmas Card and 'Happy Holidays' newsletter. We agree that

'plagiarism' is a wonderful institution! Keep up the great work.

**CLAYTON AND HELEN METCALF**

**SPRING HILL, FL:** Thomas, thank you for the P.F. check. We are happy that you appreciate the Item, and please, next time share with us some of your personal news!

**THOMAS A. RONEY**

**SAN RAFAEL, CA:** Matt, you will be pleased to learn that your P.F. check was joined by many others making "the fund" solvent again. If page 1 and 2 of the Item has not yet reached you, please notify the new "Guest Editors," and we are certain they will respond. John Slack and Herb Garris thank you for your expression of appreciation for their contributions.

**MATT AND BELL SMITH**

**BELLROSE VILLAGE, NY:** Lorraine, thank you for your P.F. check. We expect by now you have received your copy of Oflag 64 50th Anniversary Book, as John Slack arranged for it to be sent. We hope your copy of Welcome Swede has been returned to you! We look forward to seeing you in Atlanta.

**LORRAINE GLENDINNING**

**ROCK ISLAND, IL:** Jack, thank you for the contribution to the P.F. In response to your request, we are handling this under separate cover. Herb Garris thanks you for your expression of appreciation for his editorship.

**JOHN R. SUTHERLAND**

**OKLAHOMA CITY, OK:** Lucy, your very generous check came and is so appreciated. Though you missed Ft. Worth, please try for Atlanta. Our best wishes.

**MRS. LUCYL SHIRK**

**WEST DES MOINES, IA:** Hub, your P.F. check is most appreciated. Your purchase of an Offlag 64 50th Anniversary Book for your hometown library is a great idea. We probably all should consider doing this, as well. Have a happy and safe trip South this winter. **VERRIS HUBBELL**

**ROSWELL, NM:** Walt, thank you for your P.F. check, and do try to join us in Atlanta in October. If you care to get in touch with old Kriegies, drop a line to your Item editor, and we will publish your request.  
**WALTER GILL**

\* \* \*

#### DICK MANTON REMEMBERS BILL HOOKER

Following is an excerpt of the letter sent to the Item by Dick Manton which describes how he met Bill Hooker, whose obituary is included in this Item.

"I just want to add that another real hero has passed on. I was captured in Italy in January 1944, and after weeks of incarceration in Italian and German POW camps and of a long boxcar ride with almost no food, I finally arrived in Schubin, Poland and Oflag 64. No sooner than I had crawled off the truck and been sent to a barracks did I hear the enquiry, "Is there anyone here from Niagara Falls". I answered that Niagara Falls was my hometown. The inquirer was Bill Hooker, who generously and unselfishly shared with me from his meager supply of food stashed away from Red Cross food parcels. I am sure anyone who experienced life in a POW camp knows how precious our food supply was and what a really generous heart it took to give up some of that food for a stranger. Bill and I had never met before that time. He gave me his home address and told me to encourage my family to contact his mother, who still lived in Niagara Falls and he felt sure that she could help through the experience she had already gained. My parents did contact Mrs. Hooker, and I was told that she too was considerate and helpful to them. I was among the group who returned through Russia and I believe Bill was marched on into Germany. After the war I attempted to find him, but he no longer lived in Niagara Falls and with our busy lives we lost touch with one another. It wasn't until 1993 that I was participating in an exhibit of POW artifacts at the Veterans Hospital in Buffalo, N.Y. when a man came up to my table and asked if I had been in Oflag 64. After I answered yes he asked if I knew Bill Hooker. It turned out that this was Bill's brother Tom, who lives in Youngstown, N.Y. He told me then that Bill was seriously ill with cancer. I wrote to Bill after getting his address from Tom, but I never received a reply. My only regret is that I located him too late to be able to renew our old acquaintance. I will always remember him as a really generous and helpful man, with a heart full of love." **RICHARD R. MANTON**

**STOCKHOLM-VÄLLINGBY:** Henry, we are including in this Item the wonderful holiday letter that you sent to Herb, and hope that we will see you at the Reunion in Atlanta! **HENRY SODERBERG**

\* \* \*

### **Wilbor H. Hooker**

Ex-POW among first  
LaSalle graduates

CHAGRIN FALLS, Ohio — Wilbor Huntington Hooker, 76, of Lake Lucerne, Chagrin Falls, formerly of Niagara Falls, died Monday (Dec. 5, 1994) at his home.

The native of Niagara Falls was born Oct. 22, 1918, the son of Paul and Grace (Wilbor) Hooker. He was a descendant of the Rev. Thomas Hooker, a founder of Connecticut.

Mr. Hooker was a member of the first graduating class at LaSalle Senior High School. In 1940, he graduated from the University of Rochester.

A U.S. Army captain in the First Armored Division, he was captured in Tunis and spent more than two years in prisoner-of-war camps in Italy and Germany. After his release, he obtained his master's degree at Harvard Business School and entered a sales career.

He and his wife of 52 years, Janet, operated antiques outlets in the southeast Cleveland area, including a recent show at the Tanglewood Mall in Ohio. He was adept at restoring antique furniture.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by three sons, Paul "Hunt" Huntington Hooker of Westlake, Ohio, Charles "Chad" Hooker of Half Moon Bay, Calif., and Scott Hooker of St. Johnsbury, Vt.; three daughters, Barbara "Kit" Frank of Trumansburg, N.Y., Jean S. Hooker of Oakland, Calif., and Holly Arghiere of Ashville, N.C.; a brother, Thomas Hooker of Youngstown; and 11 grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held today at the Valley Presbyterian Church in Bainbridge, Ohio.

Memorials may be made to the Cleveland Clinic Foundation to fund cancer research.

Stockholm-Vällingby, December 1, 1994.

Dear Herb,

I was very sorry to hear about the necessity for you to leave the job as editor of the Item. I was even more sorry to hear about your wife's medical problem - I am sure she is followed with warm thoughts from every one of the Oflag 64 group.

You did an excellent job as editor, with skill, enthusiasm and good humor. A genuine vote of thanks to Herb from this side of the Ocean! We shall miss your "communiqués"; still we are happy that John Slack wanted to become the successor - we all know that he is reliable - to say the least!

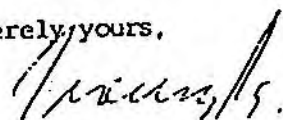
I am happy that you had such a good reunion at Fort Worth, as reflected in the excellent report by Lucy Lussenden. I cannot fully describe my feelings of despair and sorrow when I - three days in a row - tried but failed to get a seat, both with SAS and American Airlines from Stockholm to the USA. Everything was overbooked. In the future I must start travel earlier! I followed you in my thoughts all through the week.

Sad to hear about the lack of success in the sales of the Anniversary book. I feel so sorry for the ones who invested money in this publishing undertaking; there was nothing wrong with the quality of the book - perhaps the price was so high that it became preventive. If I were a millionaire I should buy a dozen but I am afraid that I cannot afford more than the two copies I bought in Louisville.

We are at fairly good health. Will visit with our younger son and his family in southern Sweden over Christmas and then proceed to Copenhagen to celebrate New Year with some Danish friends - an old tradition.

Once more, thank you for your fine job with the Item. And with best regards to Ethelene and other members of your family. Hope you, in spite of all, will have a good Christmas and New Year celebration in North Carolina. Claire sends her kindest regards and best wishes.

Sincerely yours,



(Henry Soderberg)

Leam City West, AZ.  
Jan. 8, 1995

Dear Herb,

Thank you for your letter and your supposition that our father may have paralled. It was my fortune or misfortune to never be with any unit very long.

I was a photo-intelligence officer in charge of a photo team. I joined the 1st Inf. Div in Algeria weeks before the Sicily campaign. Was with them thru Sicily & accompanied them to England, where the 1st Inf. was divested of its overstrength. I was transferred to London, when all photo teams had been made up; so was assigned to work at combined headquarters in an interesting unit whose duties consisted of attempting to verify or confirm intelligence received from the continent. Approximately 3 weeks before D-Day I was sent to 101 AB to replace an officer who had made himself very unpalatable to Div. Hqs. (Newbery).

I made the eve. of D-Day landing in an English plywood glider on a field which I knew was totally unsecured. The gliders were total wrecks & personnel dazed or injured. I was wounded by shrapnel in my right hand, & by a rifle bullet in my right shoulder and was captured immediately.

Was transferred to St. Mere Eglise & from there to a deep wine cellar at St. D's. A German doctor cleaned out the blood poisoning that was causing my temperature & forwarded me to Mortain via ambulance. From there to a POW hospital at Rennes. I petitioned to be transferred to the POW camp outside Rennes. I was on the Luck. boxcar journey ending at Phimms & from there to Trier. Was there abt 6-8 weeks when cannonading could be heard in the distance, we were moved to Limburg then to Szubin, arriving there late Sept or early Oct. Upon the evacuation of our camp at Szubin, I elected to walk the way to Suinowunde where my flat feet betrayed me and I was in a group of somewhat disabled who were sent to Luckenwalde. I was in the last truckload of E. POWs to leave Luckenwalde. I could speak some German and several times was detailed by German Captains to relate their orders. (at various times during my captivity.)

I was for many months fearful that the Germans would discover that I was an air photo interpreter; you will recall I'm sure, that Air Force personnel were or could be rather unpopular with German army or civilian population.



11316 Hardin Valley Road  
Knoxville, TN 37932  
December 28, 1994

The Editor  
Post Oflag 64 Item  
P. O. Box 1693  
Pinehurst, NC 28374

Editor,

With much sadness, I write to inform you of the passing of my husband, William K. (Bill) Jones, on October 15, 1994.

He shared a special familial-affection and camaraderie with the former POW's of Oflag 64. They were a special group.

Writing in the December 19th issue of Newsweek, Joe Klein made an interesting comparison between the veterans of World War II and the generation who came of age in the '60's:

"It could start with the recognition that the generation now passing from the scene-- the stolid, reserved World War II vets whom we rebelled against back when (they never shared their feelings; they never understood!)--will live in history as the greatest Americans of this century. They left a better world for their children; we'll be lucky to hold the fort."

I think we all agree.

On behalf of my husband, I am enclosing a contribution to the postage fund. This is sent in appreciation of John Slack for his effort in starting the POST OFLAG 64 ITEM and in keeping it alive. To my husband, it was like getting a letter from home and has been a marvelous way to keep everyone in touch.

May the New Year bring Health and Happiness.

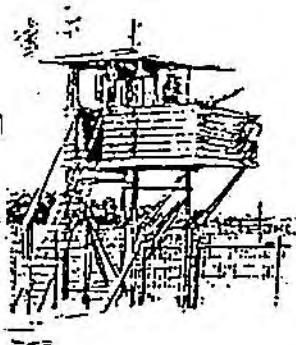
Sincerely,

*Kathy Jones*

Dr. Garris lives in Pinehurst and is a frequent reviewer of military history and government books for THE PILOT. His military duties began at Fort Bragg, and after completion of the Airborne School, he joined an Artillery battery of the 101st Airborne Division. Training followed in England and he jumped into Normandy on D-Day 1944. He was captured ten days later and was moved to a POW camp in Poland, from which he escaped and made his way to Odessa and repatriation and returned to U.S. Forces in Naples. There he was allowed to return to the 101st and joined his same unit on the Rhine at Dusseldorf. He remained through the occupation period in Austria and in the fall of 1945 moved to France and was assimilated into the 82d Airborne.

## POW ODYSSEY

Recollections of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III  
and the Secret German Peace Mission in World War II



MAJOR GENERAL DELMAR T. SPIVEY USA

POW ODYSSEY: Recollections of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III and the Secret German Peace Mission in World War II, Maj. Gen. Delmar T. Spivey, pb., 180 pps, Mrs Delmar T. Spivey, 103 Randolph Farms, 13300 Indian Rocks Road, Largo, FL 34644, \$7.00, 1984. Reviewed by Dr. Herbert L. Garris.

This book was presented to me by Nina and Bob Weinberg just after the Fort Worth Reunion. It is truly a fascinating story produced by a senior USAF officer, who was an observer of the skills of the aerial gunnery crews, and was shot down over the German Böhmer.

The vivid descriptions in prose, photos and sketches delineate life at that camp. The military organization which prevailed there was very similar to what we saw at Oflag 64. It was quite respectable with a high degree of discipline, morale and efficiency. The author's role became readily apparent soon after his arrival and today is still legendary. Considerable credit is due and given to the supporting roles of the International YMCA and Red Cross, which made an existence more comfortable. These resources were food supplements with the food packages, but additionally added greatly to the cultural, educational, religious, athletic, musical and gardening programs.

An interesting portion of the book is devoted to a constant thought of all prisoners—an escape. Many camps were heavily engaged in this difficult, tedious and dangerous pursuit with a very slim success possibility in view. Even so The Great Escape took place here and so infuriated Hitler, for the security embarrassment, that of the 76 who cleared the camp 50 were shot in retaliation. A very serious warning proclamation was soon posted at all the German POW Camps to discourage any such recurrence.

Shortly after early January 1945: the Russian Offensive toward Berlin: began, moving all camps along the eastern border were ordered to evacuate westward into the heart of Germany. The miserable weather conditions, meager quarters and food along the marches are well portrayed. Until many years later were many of us aware of several international negotiating teams, from Sweden particularly, who met with senior German military and civilian leaders to hopefully find a way to end the war. The author along with another fellow prisoner, Brig. Gen. Vanaman, were removed from the march column and reported to high German authorities to assist with a covert movement into Switzerland in this effort. Their efforts came too late for a real advantage, yet, they did expedite the enhanced flow of Red Cross packages to the respective columns enroute to Moosburg.

This small book, although out of date, has many aids as mentioned above, including a map of the entire area of The Odyssey, but moreover shows the unflagging character and leadership of the author.

Thank you Nina and Bob very much!

BAND OF BROTHERS: E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne from Normandy to Hitler's Eagle's Nest, Stephen E. Ambrose, Simon and Schuster, New York, 335 pp., \$25.00, 1992. Reviewed by Herbert L. Garris.

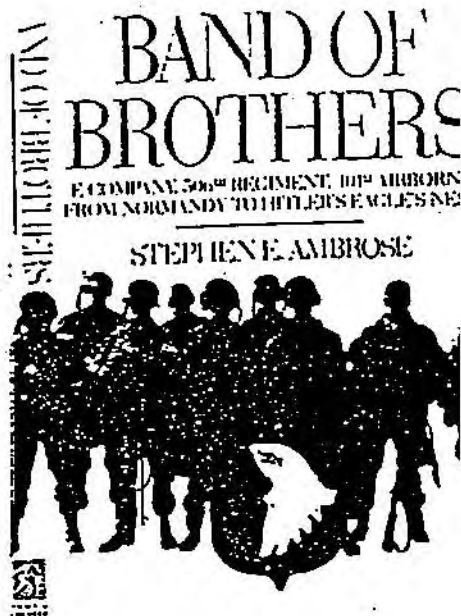
The real success in the production of this fascinating book lies in two important areas. One is an accurate and thorough research into the review of the events as they unfolded throughout. Second was the writer's skill in his easy to read presentation in such a personal and thoughtful way. To any member of the 101st Airborne Division, including even those out of the 506th, and all readers of current military history, a real treasure is store for you. It is a deep credit to see such a fine, though poignant story told of an unparalleled performance of such a professional Infantry company.

The title is very becoming and wisely chosen- BOND OF BROTHERS from the bonding of its officers and non-commissioned officers which is shown repeatedly. It made the reading of the trials of Normandy, Holland and the Elbe not any easier or any less costly, but surely more bearable. The close brotherhood stemmed from three unique and exemplary company commanders and their trusted NCO's so devoted and dedicated who led this organization from inception in Toccoa, GA., all the way through to Hitler's famed Berchtesgaden Retreat.

A pattern clearly develops as to the way in which the 2d Battalion, and more specifically E Company were invariably called from Normandy forward to fill in on the tough spots, seemingly more often than usual. With tremendous losses of men and equipment, hardly believable, they executed all the assigned missions rated only as an exceptional performance and well beyond the normal call of duty.

Considerable credit must be given to the two, in this reviewer's opinion, members of E Company who were so helpful and instrumental in their interest and facts provided from the inception to the completion of this exemplary unit history. Two names appear frequently as the story progresses and to whom accolades should be given are: Richard D. Winters and Carwood Lipton, the Company Commander and its First Sergeant, respectively. The former became the 2d Battalion Commander and the latter was awarded a battlefield commission.

Near the end of the story the author with respectful care and skill employed personal taped interviews of many of these key leaders who provided follow on of the rest of the story until now. Their remarks are admirable and give such a meaningful ending to a service to our nation and their turn again from military service to civilian life again. Congratulations!



**DES MOINES, IA:** Bob and Hub. Thank you for the 'How They Coped' article from The Des Moines Register. We shall make a copy of it available to the Park Rangers from Andersonville when they interview us in Atlanta. **ROBERT ECKMAN AND VERRIS HUBBELL**

## HOW THEY COPEd

# Two D.M. veterans recall their capture 52 years ago

**Both were captured in North Africa and spent more than two years as prisoners.**

By **BOB ASBILLE**  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Capt. Robert Eckman and Second Lt. Verris Hubbell, both of Des Moines, were captured during the battle for Faid Pass in North Africa in 1943. This began a long journey to Germany and on to Poland — an adventure that would last more than 27 months.

Even after 52 years, the events remain clear to Eckman, 85, of 2318 40th St. and Hubbell, 80, of 4701 Pleasant St., West Des Moines. Both men recently recalled the adventure.

After their capture, the men were flown to Germany, where

eventually they arrived at a camp at Rotenburg where British officers were held.

"It was temporary, because the Germans kept prisoners from different countries in different camps and officers in one camp, enlisted men in another," said Eckman.

One poignant memory from Rotenburg was a British pilot who had lost both legs when his plane caught fire, Hubbell said.

"He was getting around in a wheelchair. Before we got there, the Germans had allowed the British to air-drop artificial legs after complicated arrangements made by the International Red Cross and International YMCA," recalled Hubbell.

"Shortly after, the Briton escaped. He was recaptured, but escaped again and again was recaptured. This time, the Germans took away his artificial legs."

Eckman, Hubbell and 1,200 other American officers eventually

were packed into boxcars for a five-day ride to Oflag 64 near Scuzbin, Poland.

The camp once had been a school for Polish military cadets. Because of his rank, Eckman got to stay in a large building that once was a dormitory for cadets. This building also housed the ranking American officer, Col. Tom Drake.

### Keeping Up Appearances

Drake, said Eckman, insisted that the prisoners shave daily, get haircuts and wear clean, neat uniforms.

A few American enlisted men were brought to the camp by the Germans to serve as barbers. Hubbell, who had some related experience as a civilian, became a tailor.

Drake also organized activities to keep up prison morale. There was a "big band," a theater group, choruses and a variety of classes in

**POWS Please turn to Page 6**

# Men held captive more than 2 years

## POWS

Continued from Page 1

several subjects including languages. One American had taught German in college. Drake used the professor as an interpreter during visits with the camp commandant.

"During one conference, the German interpreter did not show up, so the American performed the service for both sides," said Eckman. "After that the commandant used the American as the only interpreter."

Eckman said that the International Red Cross and the International YMCA "probably kept us alive."

"The Red Cross saw that food parcels from home were delivered and the YMCA saw that clothing, medical equipment, books and sports equipment and musical instruments were brought in," he said.

### Confusing Their Captors

The prisoners also had a secret radio, components of which were smuggled in Red Cross packages after complicated planning by Allied intelligence. The Americans listened to BBC and knew more about the war than did the Germans.

There were several escape projects, none successful, but it kept the guards and POWs occupied, Eckman said.

Drake had other projects to keep the German guards off guard. Once, he had prisoners shred cigarettes (from their Red Cross parcels) on the ground during muster. The smell drove the guards crazy because they could not get cigarettes.

"In fact," said Eckman, "there was an outbreak of disciplinary problems and low morale among the guards."

The Americans took advantage of this to bribe guards with cigarettes for favors or information.

By early 1945, there was no doubt about how the war was going, Eckman said. For more than two weeks, thousands of German refugees with horse-drawn wagons were passing on the road past the camp 24 hours a day. These German farmers had



DAVID PETERSON/THE REGISTER

Robert Eckman, front, and Verris Hubbell stand next to a scale model of the Oflag, a war camp in Poland that both men spent time in during World

War II. The model of the POW camp is part of an exhibit in the National Guard Museum at Camp Dodge.

been sent east to farm Russian land earlier in the war and were now being driven west by the Red Army.

Finally, Americans were evacuated from the camp. Most of the prisoners walked for five days among the refugees in wagon tracks made through four-foot snow and sub-zero temperatures. Several hundred of the sick or lame were evacuated by train.

Many of the prisoners eventually arrived at a camp near Hammelburg, the last part of the journey on a train. The several-hundred-mile route to Hammelburg was strangely quiet — no air raids by the British or Americans.

"Allied intelligence apparently knew that prisoners were being moved down this route," said Eckman. "Shortly afterward, we heard

that air attacks had utterly destroyed the railroad," he said.

### Freedom

The prisoners at Hammelburg were rescued by a U.S. 4th Armored Division task force that broke in behind the German lines.

"It was a gamble," said Eckman, "and it so surprised the Germans they had no time to counterattack. The rumor was that Gen. George Patton gambled so that he could rescue his son-in-law who was a prisoner there. It was a good story, but probably untrue."

Hubbell didn't follow Eckman. He was liberated by the Russians in Poland and eventually turned over to U.S. forces.

He remembers a stopover in

Rheims, France. "This was April and we hadn't had a bath since January."

"In a long tent were showers. We took all our clothes off and threw them in a pile. Then we got a towel and a bar of soap. I scrubbed myself so much that I used up the whole bar of soap. It was heaven," said Hubbell.

Then he and the others were sprayed with DDT.

"That was to get rid of all the craters that were hitching rides. Finally, came a complete fresh outfit of clothes."

Eckman said that he remembers all the poignant anecdotes, all the humorous stories.

"They crowd out all those thoughts of despair and misery of being a prisoner."

WERE YOU BORN BEFORE 1945? IF SO, WE ARE SURVIVORS!

Consider the changes we have witnessed!

We were born before television, before penicillin, before polio shots, frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, contact lenses, Frisbees and the Pill. We were born before radar, credit cards, split atoms, laser beams and ballpoint pens. Before pantyhose, dishwashers, clothes dryers, electric blankets, air conditioners, drip-dry clothes ... and before man walked on the moon.

We got married first and THEN lived together. How quaint can you be? In our time, closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of." Bunnies were small rabbits and rabbits were four legged animals, not Volkswagens. Designer Jeans were scheming girls named Jean, and having a meaningful relationship meant getting along with our cousin.

We thought fast food was what you ate during Lent, and Outer Space was the back of the Riviera Theatre. We were born before house-husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages. We were born before day-care centers, group therapy and nursing homes. We never heard of FM radio, tape decks, electronic typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, yogurt and guys wearing earrings. For us, time-sharing meant togetherness ... not computers or condominiums. A "chip" meant a piece of wood. Hardware meant hardware and software wasn't even a word.

Back then, "Made in Japan" meant junk, and the term "making out" referred to how you did on your exam. Pizzas, McDonalds and instant coffee were unheard of. We hit the scene when there were 5 and 10 cent stores, where you bought things for five and ten cents. Baskin & Robbins sold ice cream cones for a nickel or a dime. For one nickel you could ride a street car, make a phone call, buy a Pepsi or enough stamps to mail one letter and two postcards. You could buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600 ... but who could afford one? A pity, too, because gas was 11 cents a gallon!

In our day, smoking was fashionable, GRASS was mowed, COKE was a cold drink and POT was something you cooked in. ROCK MUSIC was a Grandma's lullaby and AIDS were helpers in the Principal's office. We were certainly not born before the difference between the sexes was discovered, but we surely were before the sex change. We made do with what we had. And we were the last generation that was so dumb as to think you needed a husband to have a baby.

No wonder we are so confused and there is such a generation gap today.

**BUT WE SURVIVED!**