

POST OFLAG 64 ITEM

WINTER 2004



Christmas 1944--- HAS IT REALLY BEEN 60 YEARS?

PUBLICATIONS

The Waters Story \$19.50
 My Tour of Russia \$ 5.00
 The Men of Oflag 64 \$ 20.00
 The Oflag 64 Directory \$ 3.00
 Oflag 64 Audio Tape \$ 5.00
 Original Roster-Oflag 64 \$10.00
 Tribute to TF Baum \$15.00
 Hammelburg Roster \$ 7.50
 Make check out to Oflag 64 PF and
 mail to the Editor.

In the Presence of Mine Enemies \$10.00
 Make check payable to and send to:
 Mrs. Rose Daniels
 5100 Sharon Road, Apt 603
 Charlotte, NC 28210-4720

Vic Kanners Diary---FREE
 Contact- Dave Kanners
 1141 Pine Ridge Court
 Rochester, MN 48306

Americans Behind the Barbed Wire-By Frank Diggs
 New Price... \$22.00 (includes shipping)
 Contact: Vandemere Press
 P.O. Box 5243
 Clearwater, FL 22205

Press Releases -----\$10.95
 Ted Roggen
 101 Westcott
 Houston, TX 77007

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Marvin Chevalier	Lucy Lampru

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We lost our good friend Irv Yarock
 RIP Good Friend

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2004 Reunion Chairman- Jerry Alexis
 1021 Highland Ave
 Beaver Falls, PA 15010
 Pho: 724/891-2338

MAIL CALL

Marvin Chevalier, Coralville, IA.. Marvin writes that he had a nice time at the reunion in Pittsburgh He also sends on a donation to the postage fund. Thanks. Marvin.

Nathan Sachnowitz, Bellevue, WA ordered a roster of the Hammelburg POWs and also sends in a donation to the Postage Fund. Thanks , Nathan for the donation to the Postage Fund..

Bob Rivers, Orcutt, CA sends in a donation to the Postage Fund,. Thanks, Bob

Bob O'Neill Prescott, AZ says he couldn't make it to Pittsburgh because of health problems. Hopefully the problem will be solved by this time next year and he can make it to Ft. Lauderdale.

Jonel Hill, Pasadena, CA. Joel writes that he and Lois are making another trip back to the place of his capture. Lots of memories in trips like that! He sends in a donation to the postage fund, Thanks Jonel!

Joe Seringer, Wooster, OH got a speeding ticket going home from Pittsburgh. He says he will be in Ft Lauderdale, if everything is still going right for him. Be Careful, Joe!!

Harry Thompson, Wolfe City, Texas, writes that he really enjoyed his time in Pittsburgh and expresses his appreciation for the warm reception he received while there. This was Harry's first reunion. Harry was a Warrant Officer at Limburg when the Xmas Eve raid took place and was at Hammelburg and Nurenburg when the disasters happened at those places. Harry, we were delighted that you could attend and look forward to seeing you again next year in Florida.

Marcia Kanner, Beverly Hills MI, writes that her son Dave has been thru a major operation and is now doing well. Dave has been to several of our reunions and is acquainted with a lot of our men and women. Marcia, please give Dave our best wishes for a speedy total recovery and keep us posted as to his condition as time goes by. Best Wishes from all of us!

Rocco Pravidicva, Rockford, IL sends in a donation to the Postage Fund, Thanks Rocco.

Phillip McIntyre, Hardwick, MA sends in a check for the Postage Fund. Thanks Phil.

Martin Jones, Lawrence, KS sends in a donation to the Postage Fund and expresses regrets that he could not attend the reunion in Pitt. Thanks Martin for the danation.

Charles Turnbo, Salado, Texas sends in a donation to the postage fund. Thanks. Charley

Abe Baum, San Diego, CA Eileen writes that Abe has been down for awhile with a knee operation and expresses regrets that he could not be at Pitt, but will be at Ft Lauderdale with his dancing shoes on! They also send in a donation to the Postage Fund, Thanks.

Don McAlpine, Sun City, AZ. Don is the Commander of the Arizona EX POWs and spends his winters in AZ and his summers in Minnesota where he lives. He has never been to one of our reunions, but hopes that maybe he can in the near future. Don sent a donation to the Postage Fund, which we appreciate.

Lucy (Pete) Lampru, Birmingham AL, writes that she has corresponded with George Muehibuer, West Bend Wisconsin about his experiences in POW Camp. George has put his experiences on a tape and has sent it to Lucy. Lucy ordered one of the books about the personal accounts of the men who escaped the march and came home through Russia that we displayed in the hospitality room at Pittsburgh. She says she really enjoyed reading the accounts of the men who came home via this route. Lucy says she will try to be at the reunion next year in Ft. Lauderdale. She sends a donation to the postage fund for which we are grateful.

2005 OFFLAG 64 REUNION 2005

TO: ALL MEMBERS, KIN, AND FRIENDS
FROM: IRV SOLOTOFF and ROSA T. LEE
RE: ADVANCE INFORMATION ON OUR NEXT REUNION IN 2005

By now I guess that you are all rested up from our 2004 great reunion in Pittsburgh. Jerry did a great job and we are hoping to at least do as good. We know that the 2005 reunion is still a long way off, but we thought that a little bit of advance information will help all of you that are coming a chance to make your travel plans.

The reunion dates are September 14th thru September 18th 2005 and will be held at the BEAUTIFUL EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL IN FORT LAUDERDALE FLORIDA. This hotel is an all suites hotel so everybody will have a two room suite, and in the sitting room there is a convertible couch that turns into a queen size bed. So, if you have children or anybody else that you would like to bring along, feel free to do so, as the accommodations are available. We have negotiated a rate of \$97.00 per night for the suite, and that includes a full cooked to order breakfast every morning, and a two hour cocktail party with your choice of drinks at NO CHARGE every night. There will be two sit down banquet dinners with your choice of entree, and a magnificent buffet dinner all will be included in your registration fee. The hotel is only ten minutes from the airport and their shuttle busses run constantly so there will be very little wait for transportation from the airport to the hotel.

The above is only meant to be a thumbnail sketch of what we are planning, there is much more to come in the form of events, entertainment and of course our OFFLAG 64 business matters. We plan on keeping you informed as time goes by, and we are planning to produce a souvenir journal of this affair so we will be asking each and everyone to help us get ads for this journal. There will also be door prizes and a raffle for US Savings Bonds.

When I speak of we that is myself and Rosa T. Lee my co-chair who is assisting me in everything.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to call or write

Yours in Camaraderie

IRV SOLOTOFF



13355 SW 9th court # 213
Pembroke Pines, FL 33027
isolotoff@bellsouth.net

A Little Company Business

From **Jerry Alexis concerning The Reunion at Pittsburgh.....**

There were some Khaki baseball caps in the Hospitality room that caused some comment about how and where to obtain them. Jerry supplies the following: Jerry can get them at a local company for a price of \$10.00 plus \$1.00 postage for a total of \$11.00. If he gets enough orders he can get them for \$9.00 and he will refund you \$1.00 when he sends you the cap. Send your money to ...Jerry Alexis, 719 4th St, Beaver Falls, PA 15010-3001

From **Jerry Alexis concerning the reunion Pittsburgh.....**

Jerry and his brother made a gob of photos while at the reunion and put them all on a CD. The CDs have been mailed out to all the attendees. If your CD was damaged in the mail or you did not attend and would like to have a copy please notify Jerry at the same address and make a donation to the postage fund.

From **Jerry Alexis concerning the reunion at Pittsburgh....**

The Nationality Room Recipe Book..order from: Information Center, 152 CL Pittsburgh, PA 15260

From **Bob Thompson concerning books at the reunion that were in the Hospitality Room at Pittsburgh....**

We gathered up all the old diaries, letters, personal memoirs, etc that we have that concerned the long, cold march., the trip to Russia and the Hammelburg Affair and had them copied and bound to save them and get them to as many people as were interested to prevent them from being lost forever. The collections are not in any particular order and are not indexed. They were placed in a pile just as I had them and copied that way and bound. I found a company here in Tulsa that would copy them for 4 cents per page and bind them for about \$1.50. The average price per each was about \$8.00 to \$12.00 and adding postage makes each one about \$15.00, so I settled on \$15.00 per book regardless of the size and weight.

The books available are:

The, Long, Cold March..This concerns the march from Schubin to Hammelburg and includes the men that went to Luckenwald, It also includes some German Manifests of the men that were sent to Luckenwald. Jack Rathbone had these documents and sent them to me several months ago.

Escape to Russia..This is a collection of the accounts of the trip from their escape point on the march to the seaport at Odessa, Russia.

The Hammelburgh Affair...This is a collection of memoirs of the men that were POWs at Hammelburgh and also some of the men in Task Force Baum.

Looking For Lost Men....We attempted to account for all the men at Oflag 64 by using the original Roster at Oflag 64 and the roster prepared by Herb Garris and Clarence Meltesen, in addition to several others. We then entered a database by the US Govt and accounted for all the men except 41. That is where it stands as right now. We cannot account for 41 men that were at Oflag 64, but we are still looking.

If you are interested in any of these books make your check out to the Oflag 64 Postage Fund and send it to:

Bob Thompson, 7448 E 68th Place, Tulsa, Ok 74133. Please identify the book you are ordering by placing an x in the box before the name of the book.

Subj: Hello
 Date: 11/4/04 4:43:28 PM Central Standard Time
 From: donlucy@wwnet.com
 To: THO7448@aol.com
Sent from the Internet (Details)

Hello Bob and Gladys,

It was so nice to see everyone at the Reunion in September. Debbie and I had a wonderful time. It was really helpful for me to see all of Don's friends and mine from Oflag 64. Everyone was so kind and gave me big hugs and words of encouragement. I came away feeling much better than when I arrived.

I did enjoy the tour of Pittsburgh and the Dinner Cruise. Both were very pleasant experiences. Visiting the 9/11 crash site at Shanksville was a most moving experience. I'll never understand how people can be so angry as to do something like what the terrorists did on that day in America.

After we returned from the Reunion, my granddaughter, and Debbie and Regis' daughter, Jessica, competed in the National and World Championship Horse Competition in Oklahoma City with her big, beautiful Morgan horse, Max. Jessie is 14 years old. Max stands about 15.8 hands high, and is a "big showoff" who LOVES to compete. This was her first time there and she and Max did pretty well! She rode English Pleasure ages 14-15 and received a 4th place ribbon. Later in the same week, she competed with riders 14-17 and came in 9th. Her trainer told her that coming in anywhere in the top 10 spots was very good for the first time competing in the World's. So she was quite pleased. She was very nervous in her first competition, but felt better for the second one. Next year she's looking forward to improving her results. Naturally, we are all proud of her and Max!

I have finally completed all of the legal papers and documents that were necessary after Don's death. My goal now is to finish his family histories that we worked on together for 40 years. We have collected about all or most of the statistics that can be found at this point, and now the story needs to be told. Don tried to do some writing earlier this year. He told me, though, that he just didn't have the energy to write any more. I will be honored to finish his work. My writing won't be the same as Don's. He had a very special way of telling a story that was so effortless and warm. He held the reader's interest and made them laugh. I will do my best and hope that my writing won't be boring or "dry." Don's family stories will be of the Lussendens, who arrived in about 1850 from Kent County, England, the Boohers who arrived in America in the mid-1700s from Germany & Switzerland, the Kershner family, arriving from Germany in the early 1700s, and the Gantz family. (You may remember that I published a book on letters written during the Civil War by Don's great-grandfather, Lorenzo Gantz, and two of his brothers who were Indiana Volunteers. I still have some copies available for sale, if anyone is interested.) Many of Don's ancestors arrived in the colonies as early as the late 1600s and early 1700s, such as the French, Mueller, Pitzenbarger, McCammish, Grey, etc. families. To make things more difficult, they moved on into the "wilderness" of western Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Indiana. Good early records are not available from those areas concerning births, marriages, and death.

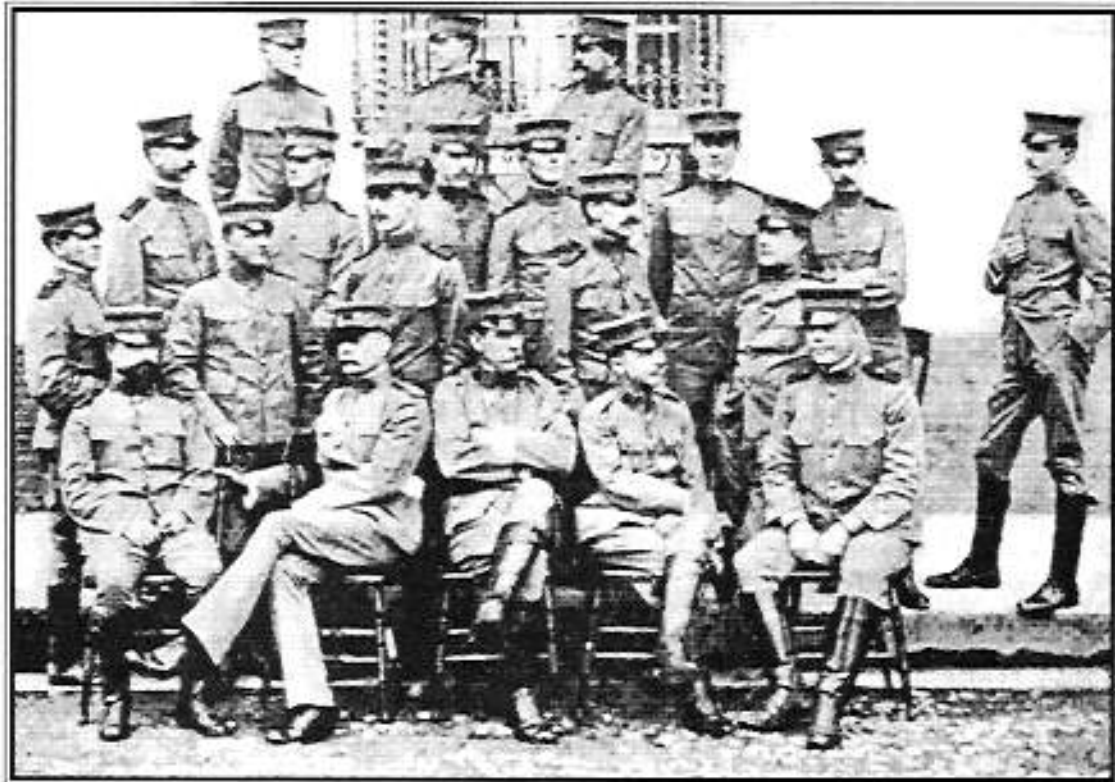
We did get the books that you sent. I still have not checked with Deb to see what was on our list. As soon as I do, I'll let you know if these are all the right books. Thanks so much for sending them.

We are looking forward to seeing our wonderful friends again in Florida next year. I hope we have a big turnout there. Meanwhile, I love staying in touch with everyone via e-mail and phone.

Take care,
 Lucy

They have a book of letters (75 of them) written in the Civil War by Don's great-grandfather Lorenzo Gantz and two of his brothers. They were volunteers from Indiana who went to war because they thought it was the right thing to do to save the Union. I typed these letters exactly as they were written so that Don's family could more easily read them. They tell a very interesting story of what it was like to live in the field, etc, and include also some gossip about what was going on back home on the farm. The book is soft cover and sells for \$15 plus postage, etc of \$3. If any one is interested in having a copy, they can contact me either at DONLUCY@wwnet.com or (734)-591-1739. Our address is: 15413 Alpine Drive, Livonia, Michigan, 48154

Photo of American Officers of the Phillipine Constabulary around 1901
The photographer forgot to tell them to "look at the birdie"



Bob: I found this photo while rummaging through an old album. In the front row left to right: Witt, me, unknown. Back row left to right: Penn, Meuhlbauer, Fabian. If anyone wants a copy let me know and I will oblige. Hern

ATTENDEES THE 2004 REUNION IN PITTSBURGH

WHO'S HERE

Jerry and Marj Alexis, Jack and Lynn Alexis Doyle, Maureen Doyle, Maren Alexis, Roger Alexis
Joe Barrett
Bud Bolling
Brad Bradford
Roy "Tex" and Helen Chappell, Ben and JoAnne Chappell, Barbara Chappell
Robert "Cheerful Charlie" Cheatham
Marv Chevalier
"Doc" Vince DiFrancesco, Rosa DiFrancesco Lee Maria DiFrancesco Christmann, Peg
DiFrancesco Bender
Charlie Eberle
Les and Edie Edsall, Karen Edsall Hipsher, Rich and Nancy Edsall Paul
Reid Ellsworth and family
Herb and Louise Garris
Julie Rathbone Gionfriddo, Julie Rathbone Hoyt, Cheri Thieben
Ed and Peg Graf, Tim and Judy Graf Knight
Donald Graul
Dallas and Rosemary Hartford
Walter and Gloria Heisler
Curtis and Norma Jones
Marcia (Mrs. Victor) Kanners
Ray and Nancy Klingenberg
Judy (Mrs. Paul) Lambru and Carolle Lambru Campbell.
Royal and Harriett Lee, Robert Lee, Michael Lee
Herm and Lucy Littman
Lucy (Mrs. Don) Lussendon, Debra Lussenden Rusnock
Clarence Meltesen
Robert and Joan Moorhead
George Myron
Ted and Barbara Rinehart
George and Arlene Rosenthal
Joe Seringer
Gene "Bwana" Sharick
Margie Slack, Roy Lohr
Irving and Helen Solotoff
Harry Thompson
Bob and Gladys Thompson, Marlene Thompson McAllister, Peggy Thompson Marlatt,
Nancy Thompson Wyatt
Dar and Carolyn Walker
Bill and Dot Warthen. Kathy Warthen Ezell, Ellen Warthen
Pat and Martha Waters

2004 Reunion Report by Jerry Alexis

When I attended my first reunion in Louisville, I thought, "Boy, I'd sure like to host a reunion in Pittsburgh." It wasn't until the Columbus reunion two years ago that I got up enough nerve to extend the invitation. Am I glad I did!

It was a wonderful experience for me and the comments of those who attended expressed the same sentiment. The majority had either never been to Pittsburgh or had been years ago when it was "the smoky city" and "hell with the lid off." Many remarked how interesting, beautiful, and friendly the city is. Our hotel also gave us superb service

About half our group arrived Wednesday and immediately began reminiscing and reading the memorabilia in the hospitality room while imbibing cokes and our local Rolling Rock and Iron City beer (very moderately, I assure you!) The rest came in Thursday. It was gratifying that no one had to cancel because of the hurricanes down south. We had 40 kriegies and over 50 NOKs and widows. That evening most of them enjoyed the meal and show at the Canterbury Dinner Theater. This consisted of comical skits telling about Pittsburgh's history and foibles. They also got a lesson in our language, such as *yuns*, *downtown*, *Stillers*, and *Am City Beer*.

We had our business meeting led by Bob Thompson after our breakfast buffet on Friday morning. Joe Seringer reported that we have about \$12,000 in our treasury and that it costs about \$400 for each issue of the *Post Oflag 64 Item*. Irv Solotoff, the host of next year's reunion at Fort Lauderdale, told about some of the arrangements. Rosa DiFrancesco Lee, Doc's daughter, will be co-host. Pat and Martha Waters invited us back to Charleston in 2006. Four first-timers were introduced - Bud Bolling, Bob Moorhead, Harry Thompson, and Dar Walker. Gene "Bwana" Sharick, a retired director of the Baldwin-Wallace College Choir, came to bring us CDs of "IN CAPTIVITY Competition," subtitled "Select Chamber Music written by Prisoners of War in 1943". The International YMCA, which sponsored the competition, found the original scores in its archives a few years ago and sent them to the Baldwin-Wallace College librarian

YMCA's short-story competition. The college's music department then went to work to perform them in the concert on the CD, which also includes an interesting narrative on the compositions. If you want a copy send \$15 to Gene at 22 Bauman St., Rittman OH 44270-1602.

Thursday afternoon we all went on a tour of Pittsburgh. It included guided tours of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall and Museum and the Nationality Classrooms in the Cathedral of Learning at the University of Pittsburgh. Saturday morning about fifty went on the American Heroes/Laurel Highlands tour.

It included visits to the Flight 93 temporary memorial and Flight 93 Memorial Chapel and the Quecreek Mine rescue site. Along the way the tour guides also spoke on the French and Indian War sites nearby. This is the 250th anniversary of the beginning of that war, which was largely fought in southwestern Pennsylvania. Saturday night we enjoyed a three hour dinner cruise on the Gateway Clipper Fleet's *Majestic*. We sailed on our three rivers - the Monongahela (*Indian for high banks falling down*), the Allegheny (*clear waters*), and the Ohio, formed by them.

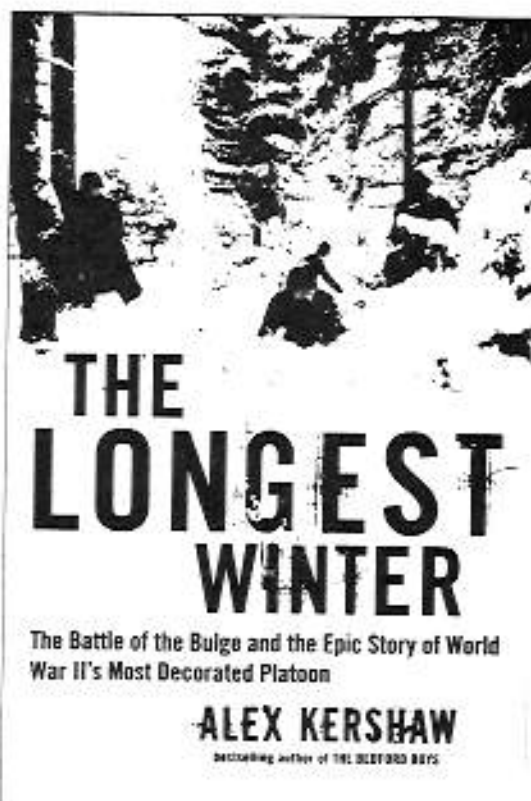
Our time together concluded Sunday morning with a breakfast buffet and memorial service. I led it and Helen Chappell was our pianist. Those deceased in the past year were Joseph P. Ainsworth, LTC George Britto, James V. Cook, BG George B. Donovan, Frank Diggs, Robert Eckman, MAJ J. R. Green, William Harlow, COL Nathaniel Hosket, COL Charles Koons, Paul D. Lampru, Fred Livingston, Donald Lussendon, Jack Rathbone, Victor W. Renz, John P. Sanford, Roy J. Smith, COL Warren Walters, and Irving Yarock. (If you know of any others, please inform Bob Thompson.)

The Eighteen Members Of The I & R Platoon, 394th Regiment, 99th Division

December 16, 1944

*Among them, these eighteen men
received four Distinguish Service Crosses
(the Army's second highest award),
five Silver Stars, and nine Bronze Stars.*

First Lieutenant Lyle Bouck, commanding
Private Robert Adams
Private Robert Baasch
Private John Creger
Sergeant William Dustman
Private Clifford Fansher
Technician Fourth Class James Fort
Private Bill James
Corporal Sam Jenkins
Private Louis Kalil
Private Joseph McConnell
Corporal Aubrey "Schnooz" McGehee
Private First Class Risto Milosevich
Private First Class Robert "Mop" Preston
Sergeant George "Pappy" Redmond
Private First Class Jordan "Pop" Robinson
Private James "Siv" Silvola
Sergeant Bill Slape



On a freezing morning, 16 December 1944, this platoon held up a brutal German attack at a small town called Lanzareth, the point of the main thrust of Hitler's massive offensive. By nightfall that day, the platoon had done the unthinkable: they had killed over 500 Germans from the elite troops, having defended a strategically vital hill without reinforcement or artillery support. Vastly outnumbered, they repulsed three German assaults in a day-long battle comparable to the Alamo. In essence, this battle could be credited with staving off the German offensive that could have changed the entire outcome of the war.

Only when the men had run out of ammunition did they surrender at gun-point.

Nine of the eighteen men who saw action at Lanzareth are still alive, including commanding officer Bouck, who proudly stresses that his unit "was the first to stop the German advance." Bouck's unit typified many other groups of GIs, stranded and outnumbered, whose heroism won the last great battle of World War II but who ended up as captives in German hands.

Bouck was finally liberated from Moosburg prison camp on 25 April 1945 by men of his very own 99th Division who thought his I&R unit had been wiped out. He weighed just 112 pounds (his normal weight was 180.)

THE LONGEST WINTER

Alex Kershaw

Da Capo Press

ISBN: 0-303-81304-1

December 1, 2004

\$25.00

Lt. Lyle Bouck is on our roster of POWs at Hammelburg (Editors note)

OFLAG 64 POSTAGE FUND

Joe Sringer Treasurer

Statement Of Cash Receipts and Disbursements
For the period from September 4 2003 to September 20 2004

Receipts for the period:

Contributions to the Fund	\$2560.00
Books	434.00
Interest earned	72.16
Total cash received	\$3066.16

Disbursements for the Period:

Copies for the Item	\$2678.90
Advances for reunions 2004 and 2005	3000.00
Postage for the Item	1529.28
Supplies	180.69

Total Cash Disbursed	\$7388.87
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Excess of Disbursements over receipts	\$4222.71
Bank Balance September 3 2003	\$17134.39
Balance in Bank September 20 2004	\$12911.68



Jack as a West Point Cadet 1937

JOHN HUFF VAN VLIET, JR.

Senatorial, Kansas

Red Bank

New Jersey

Jack's escapades are as numerous as his witty savings. His flier into the florist business and his ventures into steam tunnels are but two. Perhaps his love of adventure has not helped his class standing, but, oh, what fun. Night watchmen may have thought that the shade of Ichabod Crane had returned to the Catskills, but it would only be Jack, his long legs flying over the moonlit trails. From an irrepressible Plebe who dunked his Corporal in the pool, to an efficient Second Class Sergeant is a long jump, but Jack made the grade with colors flying. His love of the military is an inherent characteristic, and it will carry him far in the Army.



Jack at Oflag 64 Reunion Colorado Springs... 1992

11000 JOHN HUFF VAN VLIET, JR (B-Tex 9 Nov 14:A.Kan)
 Military History.—Schofield Bks. TH. w/Co 27 Inf.—24 Apr 40:
 Bn Adj 27 Inf.—(1 Lt Inf 12 Jun 40)—Jun 40: CommO 27 Inf—
 (Capt AUS 9 Sep 40)—Jul 41: Cp Leonard Wood Mo. Inf.—
 (Tdy WD G-3 Mu Obsvr England. Sep—Dec 41)—Dec 41:
 Ft Benning Ga. Stu Adv Crse.. TIS. Jan—(Maj AUS 1 Feb 42)
 —May 42: Instr TIS.—Jun 42: 2 Corps Staff.—Aug 42: Scotland,
 Africa. S-3 163 CT (34 Inf Div). Sep 42—Jan 43: CO 3 En 163 Inf
 .—(Lt Col AUS 2 Jan 43)—(SS)—Feb 43; POW Gerinany,—
 (BSMv) May 45; Ft Leavenworth Kan, Stu C and GSS. Ft Benning Ga,
 SW TIS and Yale U. Stu, Aug 45—(Col AUS 9 Oct 45)—Apr 46:
 (Col AUS terminated 30 Apr 46); Ft Benning Ga. Instr and C Sect TIS.
 May 46—(Capt Inf 12 Jun 47)—(Maj Inf 15 Jul 48)—Jun 49; Ft Lewis,
 Wash. CO 3 Bn 23 Inf 2 Inf Div. Jul 49—
 Son of John Huff Van Vliet, Class. of 1913

The WWII story of Lt Col Jack Van Vliet

LTC Jack Van Vliet was captured by the German Army in North Africa, on Feb 17, 1943. He was transported to Oflag 64 in Schubin, Poland and arrived there on June 23, 1943. He was assigned to a barracks as a barracks commander that housed about 200 officers.

C:\MSOFFICE\My Documents\Van Vliet Story.doc

Lt. Colonel JOHN H. VAN VLIET, JR. *Quartered in the "White House" and Barracks 3B.*

Lt Col. Van Vliet was captured on February 17, 1943, in the Tunisian desert in sight of Djebel Hamra. He then commanded the 3rd Battalion of the 168th Infantry. The Afrika Korps had come through Faid Pass surrounding and bypassing him. As he tells it, *"We had grandstand seats to watch the destruction of two battalions of the 1st Armored Division on the plains below us. On February 16th, we saw our first friendly airplane, a Spitfire which dropped a message: 'Cut your way out to Sbeitla,' a town about 35 miles to our rear. After dark I led the Battalion 22 miles across country. There we could see a glow in the sky where the Germans had already taken our destination, Sbeitla. Daylight found us several miles short of our new destination, Djebel Hamra. Mechanized German units were between us and our goal. They had armor and we had rifles. It was a round-up rather than a battle. By mid-afternoon, we were being herded by German armored cars with machine guns. We were marched another 20-odd miles to reach water at Lessouda." Before reaching Oflag 64, Col. Van Vliet was exposed to three different all-British officers' prison camps, where he learned much about escape techniques. This he passed on to the senior American officer at Oflag 64. There he dealt with many of the escape projects and helped in receiving French language news from BBC on our radio.*

Jack and some other prisoners attempted to escape from Oflag 64, at least twice, and were caught and punished by the German Army.

He was selected along with several other officers from the British Army to go to a place known as the Katyn Forest and observe the scene of an excavation of several hundred Polish officers that had been killed and buried there. He was then returned to Oflag 64 and stayed there until the POW Camp was evacuated, on January 21, 1945, to prevent the American Officers from falling into the hands of the Russian Army.

On the long, cold, march from Oflag 64, the weather was terrible. The day the camp was evacuated the temperature was 20 degrees below zero and stayed that way for several days. The column of marching prisoners was about 1500 men and the march lasted for about 6 weeks. The men were divided into platoons with a commander of each platoon of about 200 men, Jack was assigned to a platoon as commander.

Of the 1500 men, about 450 escaped and made their way across Russia to the Russian seaport of Odessa. There were about 450 men sent to a camp at Luckenwald (50 miles, plus or minus, south of Berlin). The remaining men made their way to a Camp at Hammelburg, Germany, known as Oflag XIII B.

The men that were sent to Luckenwald were sent there because of their physical condition or because of the condition of their clothing and shoes. Jack Van Vliet was assigned as group commander, to a group of men that left for Luckenwald from Stolpe on Feb 14, 1945. Jack spent the remainder of the war at Luckenwald and was liberated by the Russian Army on April 21, 1945.

Lt Col Van Vliet was sent to Korea during the Korean war. Lt Col Van Vliet attended most of the reunions until his health failed and he was lost to the men of Oflag 64. He was on our mailing list, but we never heard from him or about him, until we started trying to find him. Herb Garris found that he had died in the year 2000 in Atlanta, GA.

FREED BY PATTON, DIES IN ACTION AS VOLUNTEER

TAPS



After surviving a death march across Germany and the miseries of a Nazi prison camp for nearly a year, Lt. William L. Harlow of Hyde Park was killed in action one day after he was released by Gen Patton's army. He had volunteered to join Patton's spearhead pressing on the attack.

The 36 yr old Infantry Officer, husband of Mrs Louise Dodge Harlow or 23 Albion street, landed with invading armies in Normandy and was first wounded and then captured Sept 12, 1944, by the Germans. He was imprisoned in a German camp in Auflag 64 in Poland.

When the Soviet Armies swept into Poland, the Hyde Park Lt was moved with his comrades by a forced march across the whole of Germany to a new camp at Hammelburg. There he was rescued by spearheads of the Third Army April 2. The following day he insisted on joining Patton's men and he was killed in the attack.

Lt Harlow was born in Hyde Park and was graduated from Hyde Park High School in 1928 and from Dartmouth in 1932. He was employed in his fathers lumber business before entering the service in March 1943.

Surviving are his wife, his parents, Mr and Mrs William B Harlow of 38 Milton Avenue, Hyde Park, three daughters, Mary, Constance, and Elizabeth, two brothers, Richard, and John and a sister Mrs. Reed Freeman of Hyde Park. Memorial Services will be held at Christ Church at 2: 30 PM tomorrow, with the Rev F. Taylor Weil officiating.

There has always been a lot of questions about the casualties at Hammelburg during the Raid by TFB . Nobody really knows how many of the prisoners were killed. This man, Bill Harlow, was one of the men that was killed. I, (Bob Thompson) told his nephew David Harlow all I knew and gave him all the information that I had. The article on the left of this page was from his hometown newspaper. The date and the name of the hometown newspaper, I do not know.

On Aug 15, 2004 a man named David Harlow (from Wagoner, Ok) called and asked questions about a man named William Harlow that was at Oflag 64 and also at Hammelburg. William Harlow was David's uncle and had died on April 3, 1945 as the result of wounds received in a tank battle at Hammelburg.

The family of William Harlow knew nothing more that what was in a letter from the War Department stating he had died of wounds during a battle. David Harlow had heard that I was at Oflag 64 and Hammelburg and might know something of the situation when his uncle died. He came to my house and I was able to acquaint him with what had happened on the day Task Force Baum came to the camp. I didn't know the man but I did inform him about the ambush at Hollrich when two tanks of the recon patrol were hit by Panzerfausts and a lot of men were killed and injured. I also informed him of the destruction of Task Force Baum on the side of Hill 427 the next morning where a lot of men were either killed or injured. I told him that probably his uncle was fatally injured in one of the two places and gave him a lot of information concerning the two places mentioned. We do not know how many of our men were lost either in the long trip across Russia or at Luckenwald or at the Hammelburg Camp. It was a very satisfying feeling to be able to acquaint David as to what happened those two days in 1945. It won't help the family in their grief, but maybe it will furnish a bit of closure on the death of their family member.

Local war hero passes away

■ Decorated veteran Roy Johnson Smith saw some of the world's most famous battles and returned home to lead a productive life

By EVAN DUFFY
Call News Editor

With the United States embroiled in what will likely be an extended War on Terror, a whole new generation of Americans is learning about the sacrifice that comes along with war.

Few men were more qualified to discuss such matters than Mt. Vernon native and Turnerville resident Roy Johnson Smith, a noted decorated hero of World War II whose wartime experiences included his escape from a Nazi prison camp, participation in the battle for Normandy and two Dis-

Smith's exploits carried him around the world, as he battled against the Nazi war machine in the sands of northern Africa. While fighting in north Africa, Smith earned the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism and received a promotion to the rank of First Lieutenant.

According to wartime newspaper accounts, Smith braved heavy fire to destroy an enemy position in north Africa. None other than famed World War II general George S. Patton pinned the medal on his chest.

The account stated that Smith led three privates, under the cover of darkness, within 30 feet of the enemy position in the face of heavy fire on Nov. 9 near Port Lyautey. Smith then destroyed the enemy stronghold with his own submachine gun and grenades.

Smith continued his quick climb through the Army rank structure, as by early 1944 he had earned the rank of Captain. While fighting in Normandy, Smith was awarded the Bronze Star for Exemplary conduct against

the enemy and in July of 1944, he earned a second Distinguished Service Cross with the oakleaf cluster for his gallantry in the Cherbourg victory.

However, Smith's fighting came to an abrupt halt after he was taken prisoner by the Germans on Aug. 8, 1944. After falling into enemy hands, Smith was transported through Poland to the heart of Germany by paddleboat and railcar. The trip took 25 grueling days to complete. He was held as a prisoner of war at OFLAG 64 until he was able to escape the camp in January of 1945.

After escaping from the Nazis' grasp, Smith found himself in a foreign land with little or no protection from the brutal elements of the environment. Smith was helped along by a Polish family who gave him a wool overcoat, and he began the long ordeal of walking through Poland's freezing climate on the way to Odessa in Russia, where the British ship *Mariposa* was awaiting his arrival. Smith was finally able to rejoin his unit in April of 1945.

After the combat ceased,

Smith remained overseas, serving in Berlin for three years, where he participated in such momentous events as the Berlin Airlift.

It was while stationed in Berlin after the war that Smith met his wife Karin, and the couple returned to Alabama along with their first two children in September of 1949.

Despite his gallant service to his country and the hardships of the Nazi prison camps, Smith's fighting days were not yet done. He went on to serve in the Korean War only a year later, where he participated in several campaigns before achieving the rank of Major and returning to the U.S. in 1951.

After returning to the United States, Smith's service to his country continued though his service was mostly in America with a stint in Germany. While in the U.S., Smith served out his time in Georgia, Virginia, Kansas and Missouri. During the years he was stationed in America, Smith and his family often returned home to Turnerville where the Smiths' next two children

were born.

see SMITH, page 10A

In 1955, Smith was again commended by the army for his "Skillful execution of his duties" during Exercise Sagebrush in Louisiana.

During Smith's stay in Missouri, he attended the Missouri State Teachers' College before retiring from the Army as a Lt. Colonel in 1959. Afterwards, he returned to Turnerville with his family where he built his home and several others in the neighborhood.

After returning to his home, Smith served as a forest ranger and later went to work for The University of South Alabama, first in maintenance and later in development. In 1973, he earned his B.S. in Engineering from Mississippi State University.

While at USA, Smith earned a host of awards and honors, including his recep-

tion of the university's Distinguished Service Award in 1976. Smith retired from the university in 1989 after 22 years of dedicated service to the institution.

Smith was a member of the Scottish Rite and the ABBA Shrine as well. After his retirement, he went through three operations in three years and eventually began to walk down the path towards Alzheimer's disease.

Warren Earl Walters

December 31, 1917 - June 3, 2004

COLUMBUS, GA— Graveside services for Colonel Warren Earl Walters will be held at the Fort Benning Cemetery on Monday, June 1 at 11:00 A.M. Visitation will be from 4:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. this evening at Striffler-Hamby Mortuary on Macon Road.

Colonel Walters, 86, who died on Thursday, June 3, was born in Fayetteville, Ark., on December 31, 1917, to Clyde Earl and Anna Duggans Walters. After graduating from the University of Arkansas, he was commissioned through the Thomason Act as a Second lieutenant in the United States Army.

As a Lieutenant, Colonel Walters was assigned to the cadre that activated the Second Armored Division at Harmony Church under the command of General George S. Patton, Jr. As a Captain and Company Commander, Colonel Walters went overseas with the Ninth Infantry Division and participated in the invasion of North Africa on November 8, 1942. In North Africa, he fought with distinction, was wounded and captured in March, 1943. After WWII, Colonel Walters held the position of Instructor at the Infantry School, assistant Army Attache in the American Embassy in Athens, Greece, and Chief, Small Arms Committee, United States Army Infantry Board, Fort Benning. Among his decorations, he proudly wears the Combat Infantry Badge.

Colonel Walters is survived by his wife of 62 years, Elizabeth T. Walters, a daughter, Sara Ann Walters Ingram, and a son Captain (USN, retired) Clyde Thatcher (Buck) Walters. His grandchildren are Benjamin Duggans Ingram, Ann Ingram Carroll, David Thatcher Walters, and Laurie Walters Knox. Great grandchildren are Benjamin Duggans Ingram, Jr., Elizabeth Laynie Ingram, and Emma Grace Ingram, Thatcher Edward Knox and Katherine Louise Knox.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Columbus Hospice, 7020 Moon Road, Columbus, GA 31909 or Valley Rescue Mission, 2903 2nd Avenue, Columbus, GA 31904.

Pulaski County

MARTHA BESS BINGHAM, 86, of North Little Rock died on June 5, 2004, at the Arkansas Heart Hospital. She was born on March 23, 1918, in Lonoke County, and was the only child of J.E. Biscoe Jr. and Sally Boyd Biscoe.



She graduated from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville in 1942, with a degree in accounting. She was working in the payroll department at Camp Robinson in North Little Rock, where she met Bill Bingham, who was stationed there after returning from WWII. They were married in 1946 and their marriage lasted for 50 years until his death in 1997.

After the Korean War, she and her husband returned to work the family farm near Blakemore in Lonoke County. They resided on the farm for 43 years in the home in which Bess was raised.

After her husband's death in 1997, Bess moved to Parkstone, a retirement center in North Little Rock. While at Parkstone, Bess made many friends and especially enjoyed baking cakes and sharing them with other retirees at the center.

She was a member of the Caney Creek Baptist Church in the Pettus community in Lonoke County for 70 years. After she moved to North Little Rock, she joined Park Hill Baptist Church, where she was a member of the Open Door Senior Adult Sunday School Class. She occasionally remarked that the members of her Sunday school class only promoted to Heaven.

Bess is survived by her son, John Biscoe Bingham and his wife, Marcia Bingham, and two grandchildren, David Biscoe Bingham and Daniel Matthew Bingham, who live in Sherwood. She is also survived by another daughter-in-law, Julia F. Bingham, and two grandchildren, Billy Burton Bingham and Sally Frances Ghamin, who live in Fayetteville, Ark. She was preceded in death by her husband, Bill Bingham, and a son, Billy Bingham Jr.

Funeral services will be at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, June 8, 2004, at Park Hill Baptist Church in North Little Rock. Interment will follow at Roselawn Cemetery in Little Rock. Memorials may be made to Park Hill Baptist Church or your favorite charity. Visitation will be held with the family from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday, June 7, 2004, at North Little Rock Funeral Home, 1921 Main St., 758-1170. Online obituary and guest register at www.northlittlerockfuneralhome.com.