

# The

# Post Oflag 64 Item

All the News That's  
Been Geprüft

Nearly Everybody  
Reads THE ITEM

“Get Wise – ITEM-ize”

2nd Quarter 2023

Good Ole USA

Of Undetermined Worth

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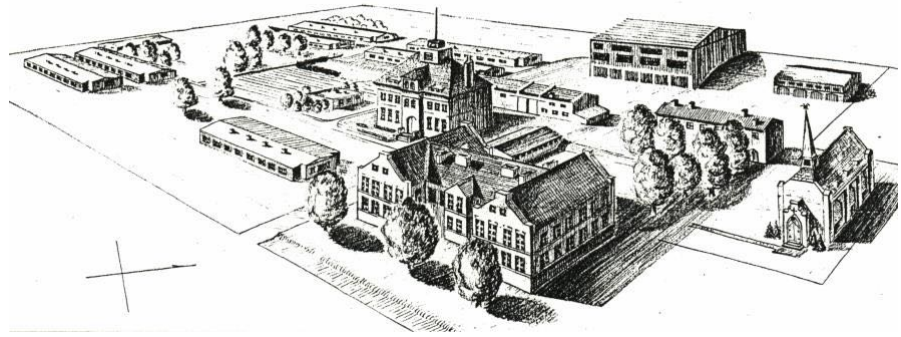
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We apologize to any others  
we may have overlooked and  
thank all who have contacted  
us.

*NOTE: The Oflag 64  
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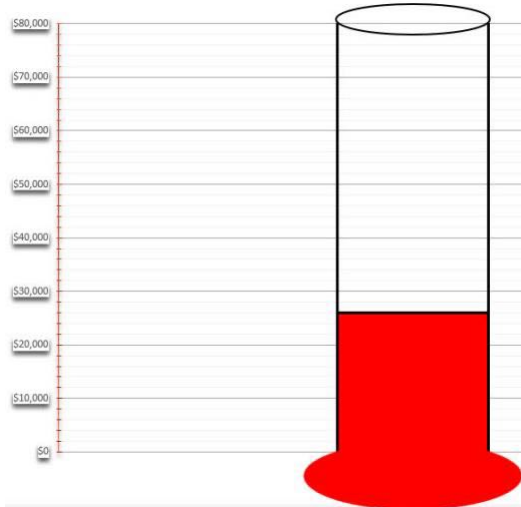


Drawing by Jim Bickers, shown without barbed wire fences or guard towers

## TIN STORE APPEAL

As of June 28, the appeal for financial support to ready the TIN STORE for a Grand Opening has resulted in \$25,995 in donations. That represents 34.5% of the \$80,000 goal established by the Friends of Oflag 64.

Please consider joining those who have already contributed to “Friends” and help them reach their goal by September 1, 2023. Our Kriegies, those still living and also those who have passed on, would be honored to know that you are helping keep their memories alive through your support. (See “Museum Contributions” on the next page for how to contribute online or by check.)



Best to you,  
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**Oflag 64**



# A Little Company Business

## Many Thanks

We wish to express our continued gratitude to Minuteman Press for their ongoing excellent service in printing our ITEM each quarter. The quality of their printing and the timeliness in which the ITEM is printed is very much appreciated. Thank you Mike Vorse, Nate Howe, and Samantha Lemire!!!



And MANY THANKS to Ric Kolseth, our POW Database manager, for uploading the updates we send. Please check the website POW Database page to make sure your Kriegy's information is correct and email us any changes at: [elodie@oflag64.us](mailto:elodie@oflag64.us)

## Postage Fund Contributions

There is now more than one way to contribute to Oflag 64 related funds.



For contributions to the Postage Fund only (which not only covers the cost of printing and mailing the ITEM to our remaining Kriegies or their widows, but also pays for running the Oflag 64 website), please make your checks payable to Oflag 64 Postage Fund, and send them to:

### Bret Job

2801 SW 46<sup>th</sup> St  
Cape Coral FL 33914-6026

OR

### Elodie Caldwell

2731 Terry Ave  
Longview WA 98632-4437

## Postage Fund Contributions

None this quarter

## Museum Contributions

Please write your check payable to and send to:  
Friends of Oflag 64, Inc.  
12768 Turberville Lane  
Oak Hill VA 20171-2214

OR

donate **ONLINE** at:  
[www.friendsofotlag64.org](http://www.friendsofotlag64.org)

You can also access the donation page on the Polish-American Foundation website at:  
<https://bit.ly/3Gx2JfZ>

These funds are separate from the Postage Fund and will be used to help support the future Museum in various ways.

THANKS to all who donate to our different Oflag 64 funds.

\* \* \*



## We're Looking for these....

Do you have a West Point Yearbook for the years 1920 through 1944? We currently have one each for 1940 and 1941. Please consider donating if you have one available.

We're also looking for additional Oflag 64 artifacts for our museum. Please consider donating artifacts as well. Contact Dave Stewart, at [dslvtx@gmail.com](mailto:dslvtx@gmail.com) for more information.

## National POW/MIA Recognition Day



This day has been celebrated since former Pres. Jimmy Carter proclaimed in 1979 that it would be observed the third Friday of every September. This year will mark the 4th year that DC-area Friends of Oflag 64 supporters will be able to place small American flags and an explanatory tag on the gravesites of the 43 known Oflag 64 Kriegies buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

If your Kriegy is buried elsewhere, we can send you a flag and the weatherproof tag with a daisy sticker attached which you can place on your POW's gravesite on or before September 15, 2023 in honor of this year's observation. Donations to support the Tin Store will be appreciated but are not required.

Please email your order request no later than August 31, 2023 with your name, email and mailing address to:

[Annekreutzer@hotmail.com](mailto:Annekreutzer@hotmail.com)

Any contributions can be made with a check written to Friends of Oflag 64 and mailed to 12768 Turberville Ln, Oak Hill, VA 20171-2214, or you can click on the "Donate" button on our website at:

[www.friendsofotlag64.org](http://www.friendsofotlag64.org)





# MAIL CALL



*It's always a great pleasure hearing from our Oflag 64 families. Thanks for keeping us in "your" loop and for sending information. We love reading about how and what you are doing. Please stay in touch!*

GREG CLINGAN, son of the late Kriegy James L. Clingan – sent a copy of a form from Oflag 64 that his father brought home with him from the camp. (See the Kriegy News and Information section.)

SUSANNA BOLTEN CONNAUGHTON, daughter of the late Kriegy Seymour R. Bolten and Vice-President of the Board for the Polish-American Foundation for the Commemoration of POW Camps in Szubin – sent a copy of the preliminary diagram for the Tin Store Museum. (See the Kriegy News and Information section.) She also sent a two-part interview/article by Roca Wrap entitled "Remembering Oflag 64" containing information that included her dad and his experiences while at Oflag 64.

E. NEAL CORY, son of the late Kriegy William R. Cory – recently donated several artifacts to the museum. Among them are tunnel posters, a letter, photos of the 2006 New Orleans Reunion, and photos of Robert Eckman's Oflag 64 camp model while in process of being built. (See the Kriegy News and Information section for photos of the Tunnel posters.)

TOM DETMERS, son of the late Kriegy Arthur V. Detmers – sent members of the Kriegy Family wishes for a safe and happy Memorial Day. He commented: "More than ever it's important to remember and honor the people who gave us our freedom. Fly the flag."

PETER DOMES, friend of Oflag 64 and expert on Task Force Baum – wrote to let us know that the Task Force Baum website has been taken down. He still has the content and may revise the site in the future, but in the meantime, if anyone needs information, it is still available. He mentioned that he recently participated in a Task Force Baum tour with 10 historical jeeps.

STEVEN FISHER, son of the late Kriegy Leo W. Fisher – wrote to thank us for sharing the letter we found online from his dad following his repatriation in December 1944. Steve said he had seen the first page of the letter but not the entire 3 pages. Leo's letter was sent to families of Kriegies still being held at Oflag 64 at the time. (See the Kriegy News and Information Section for the letter.)

WARREN JONES, son of the late Kriegy Charles L. Jones – wrote after learning of Peggy Kleysteuber's and Ann Kreutzer's coincidental meeting, that his father and Peggy's father knew each other and had corresponded over the years. In the process, Warren learned that the POW ID number showing on a photo of his dad, while at the camp, had a different ID number than the one listed on our website database. We have made the correction and updated the database.

SLAWOMIR KOWALCZYK, friend of Oflag 64 – wrote several years ago about two Kriegies who had hidden out with his grandfather after their escape from Oflag 64. Since that email, he has learned a little more about the two Kriegies. Maurice Topping and William C. Comstock were the two. Maurice Topping died in 1966 and William Comstock died in 2012. He traced descendants of Lt. Comstock and is waiting to hear from them but has not found any descendants of Lt. Topping to date. Included in the most recent email was a story about his grandfather with photos of him and the barns where the Kriegies stayed during the long, cold march. (See the Kriegy News and Information section.)

ANNE HOSKOT KREUTZER, daughter of the late Kriegy Nathaniel R. Hoskot – wrote about a coincidental meeting she had with the daughter of another Oflag 64 Kriegy while attending the funeral of a 100-year-old friend. The daughter who also attended the funeral is Peggy Kleysteuber and her dad is the late Kriegy William R. Kleysteuber. After some conversation and realization of their connection to Oflag 64, Peggy asked to be added to our email list. What are the chances of such a meeting? So interesting!!

DAVID LITTLE, grandson of the late Kriegy Thomas H. Wingate – sent a link to a page with photos of “US POWs from Africa (March 1943)” also photos of a “US officer with stove”. Go to the middle column, scroll down about halfway and you’ll see the links to the photos. <https://bit.ly/3PEd6DM>

DON PATTON, friend of Oflag 64 and recipient of the recent Ultimate Patriot Award – wrote that he had sent a DVD of the program they produced with Abe Baum several years ago. In it is a segment by Don Frederick, one of our Kriegies, about his experience of being captured in Italy as part of his Ranger assault in the Cassino area and the rescue by Baum.

ALEX SOLSMA, a Catholic seminarian for the Diocese of Arlington currently studying at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia – wrote to let us know that for his masters’ degree program he is writing a biography about Father Stephen W. Kane who was a Chaplain for a time at Oflag 64. He is looking for anything he can find about Father Kane. If you have information to share, please let me know.

DAVE STEWART, son of the late Kriegy Donald B. Stewart – has purchased a number of Oflag 64 artifacts for the museum which were listed online. One was a letter from Kriegy Pdraig O’Dea to his wife, the other was a letter from Kriegy Leo Fisher, who had been released, to parents of Kriegies still in captivity at Oflag 64.

KATHY ZELAZNY THOMAS, daughter of the late Kriegy Joseph J. Zelazny, Jr. – wrote to thank us for putting her dad’s interview, done by the Tacoma Elks in Tacoma WA, on our website video page. <http://www.oflag64.us/videos.html> She sent the video some time back. Apologies were sent for the delay in getting it published.

ROBERT VICEK, son of the late Kriegy John W. Vicek – wrote to let us know that the book he wrote about his father’s and uncle’s POW experiences during WWII has been published. It is now available from Heritage Books and can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3NWTzNA>

LINDA VITALE, daughter of Kriegy Robert E. Levin – sent the following link to photos and descriptions of her dad’s 103<sup>rd</sup> birthday celebration: <https://bit.ly/437iH8r> After receiving permission from Ted Fitzgerald of The Pilot, we included them in the Kriegy News and Information section of this ITEM.

MARIUSZ WINIECKI, President of the Board for the Polish-American Foundation for the Commemoration of POW Camps in Szubin – sent information about a new movie entitled “Hunger for Freedom”, which is the story of a mass escape of Allied prisoners from Oflag XXIB in Szubin via a latrine tunnel. (Oflag XXIB held the British before becoming Oflag 64.) The movie aired in a few local Polish theaters and cultural centers but is not yet available for wide-spread viewing. Watch the trailer at: <https://fb.watch/iEOYfec-CE/>

NANCY THOMPSON WYATT, daughter of the late Kriegy Robert T. Thompson – wrote that as she has been looking through her dad’s WWII papers, she found a letter her dad wrote to Kriegy Martin Keiser around 1980. Martin was also at Oflag 64 and, like Bob, lived in Oklahoma when he returned home.

# Kriegy News and Information

## WWII Veteran and POW Robert Levin's 103 birthday

On May 24, 2023, [thepilot.com](http://thepilot.com) published photos with accompanying descriptions, on their website, of Kriegy Robert E. Levin's 103 birthday celebration held at St. Joseph of the Pines Belle Meade clubhouse. **Many thanks to Ted Fitzgerald from The Pilot** for granting us permission to use his photos and descriptions in this ITEM.



[Robert's] wife of 71 years Carlene (seated at left) accompanied him. Southern Pines Mayor Carol Haney, Moore County Board of Commissioners, Nick Picerno, and Senator Tom McInnis attended the celebration.



Robert seated at first table in the red shirt.



Robert



Robert with Chaplain Jeff Hastings



Southern Pines Mayor Carol Haney presents a citation to Robert.



Quilts of Valor presentation made by Karen Marshall (right) and Margaret and Bruno Mettler (holding quilt). Robert in the center, seated.

\* \* \* \* \*

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!**

...and best wishes to our great **KRIEGER PATRIOT AND HERO**

Rupert Starr – **101 years**  
July 16, 1922



## THE OFLAG 64 TUNNEL PROJECT

Thanks to Neal Cory II, son of the late Kriegy William "Bill" Cory who recently sent the photos below the narrative that follows. You may recall that his father, Bill, was one of the Kriegies who had a big part in the Tunnel Project at Oflag 64. The drawings were done on poster board and used as part of a presentation subsequently sent in a letter to me (Elodie), to Katherine Robinson Stevenson, and possibly others. It was dated 12/13/08. His presentation follows.

In Bill's words -- Hervey Robinson [Katherine's father] was on the Tunnel Committee – he was from South Carolina as I remember and a great friend of my close friend Hill T. "Spud" Murphy. Spud, Bill Fabian and I sort of spearheaded the Project. I think Fabian was from around Brownsville TX.

We four sealed ourselves in the Tunnel January 20<sup>th</sup> – '45 when the Germans announced an evacuation back into The West due to the pending overrun by the Russians who had recently crossed the Vistula River at Warsaw. This sounds as though we made that decision. Quite frankly, it actually went this way – I approached Lt. Col. Waters who had overall charge of Intelligence inside the wire – Asking of him to let a few of us absent ourselves from the Appel and hide away in the Tunnel – actually, I asked for him to allow up to 60 men which he promptly turned down as though I was some sort of nut – he narrowed it down to 4!!! This really posed a problem for Spud & me – who to select so to speak – well, Spud took first crack and picked his good friend Hervey Robinson. I then made a momentous decision and picked the guy I thought had done the most for the Project – Bill Fabian.

We still had overnight to think about everything which turned out to be damned short. Howsoever, the German Command turned the Camp out for Appel on what was a very cold, wet and sleety day. (We four were down in the Tunnel). It seems from later accounts that the Germans made the rest of the Camp stand in Appel for hours while they counted, and counted, but couldn't come up with the correct total numbers – "4 missing". I guess they were under some unknown Orders to get moving as they started the "march" Westward leaving some inmates in the local Hospital in Szubin who must have been too wounded to make the march, plus us 4. Quite frankly I've always thought the Germans never had a "real" count anyway.

The whole Project wasn't accomplished overnight – all in all. The Committee spent 10 months on this deal. Everyone I'm sure wishing to take initial credit – actually, that's of little consequence. So here is my story. I don't know if Hervey was at Oflag 9 A/Z in Rothenberg with me enroute to Szubin or not, but it was there in a POW Camp essentially for British POWs that we were sent enroute to establishing 64 that my part of The Tunnel Committee first began.....For some reason I was selected by the British Tunnel Committee (everyone had a mission to escape somehow or other) to participate in their Project.....At this point no one knew that we would soon (I think about 3 months) be settling in at Szubin which would become Oflag 64, or for that matter who would be in charge of Inside The Wire Intelligence. Col. Waters had been at Spangenberg, not Rothenberg, so I personally was rather overjoyed when it turned up that he was to be just under Col. Drake who was our CEO & head of the 168<sup>th</sup> Inf. In Tunisia.

Back a bit to the Tunnel at 64 – It seems everyone in our Camp helped in some way or other to make this Project a success. As said before, a code of all Soldiers was to attempt Escape if found to be captured, so there were many and various types of Escapes, none to my knowledge successful. But, as said, everyone seemed to help in some way or other. We had to have a very sophisticated communication system so that we kept our secrets from the Germans. By soliciting almost everyone in the Camp, we were able to let the "diggers" in the Tunnel know when things weren't normal, such as a German Guard making a suspicious move – leaving his post, or tower, or coming in the front gate. Special movements by one or more of our personnel triggered extremely fast word throughout, and particularly even down in the Tunnel to cease



operations. Some days, we stopped “digging” for days, until we were convinced the coast was again clear. This was most essential to our operation and was largely responsible for probably taking a full 10 months – even then we weren’t finished – but far enough along to convince Col. Waters to allow us the chance to complete an Escape Plan.

The Tunnel itself was begun in a Laundry Pot in the middle of one of the 1-story Barracks – the fire box under the Pot was falsified by creating an illusion of having been used by spreading ashes around. Actually, this was our entrance – about 25 feet down, chamber was roughly 30 x 30 with bed-board slats used to shore up the sides to prevent dirt or sand slides or cave-in. (To explain, each inmate slept on straw mattresses, held up by bed boards.) These boards were the ones used for our Tunnel. It doesn’t take much imagination to realize that many inmates ended up sleeping (if they could?) with a board for their head, shoulders, butt & heels. About every 50 feet, or so, we had a small chamber big enough for a “digger – helper” to sit cross-legged to facilitate the boxes (mostly Red Cross food boxes) which were filled with dirt/sand, or empty to be used as sleds with ropes fore and aft to be pulled back & forth. Under no-see by the Guards (again under close watch our many Camp Helpers) we put the dirt/sand up in the attics between rafters of the Barracks.

We had left instructions with a Col. Drury, who was left in the Local Hospital, to use an agreed “Password” 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry to let us know when all was clear of Germans so we could come out, (we were prepared to spend days down if necessary). He thoroughly botched up our deal with him by yelling to us through the POT to “come on out, it’s OK. We thought this sounded too much like a threat, and so did not respond for a day or two (?). But then we decided to get out, and Bill Fabian who was by far the best of our combined physical shape (believe me it wasn’t very good) to use his brute force to nudge the Pot upward so others above could remove it for our Escape.

To Hervey’s daughter Katherine, in the same letter Bill included the following:

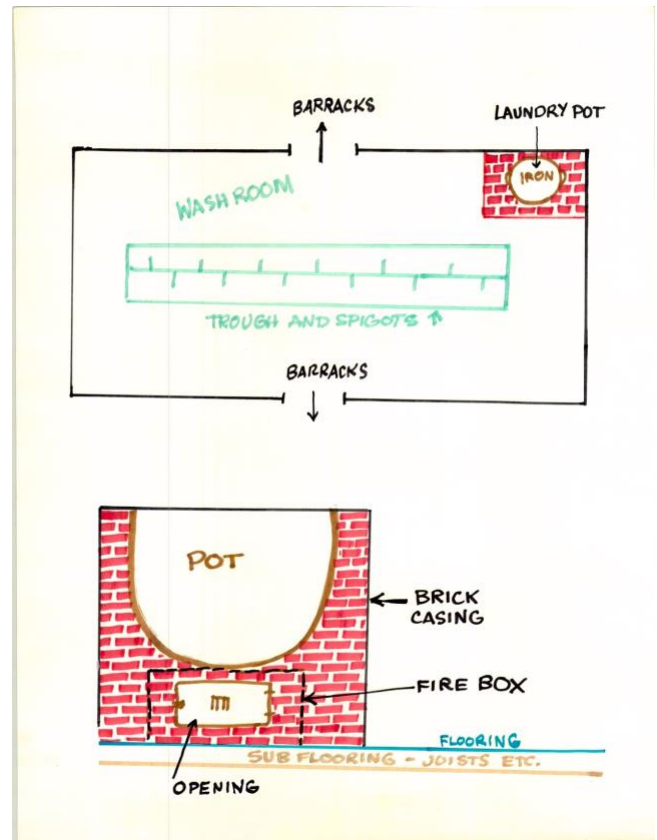
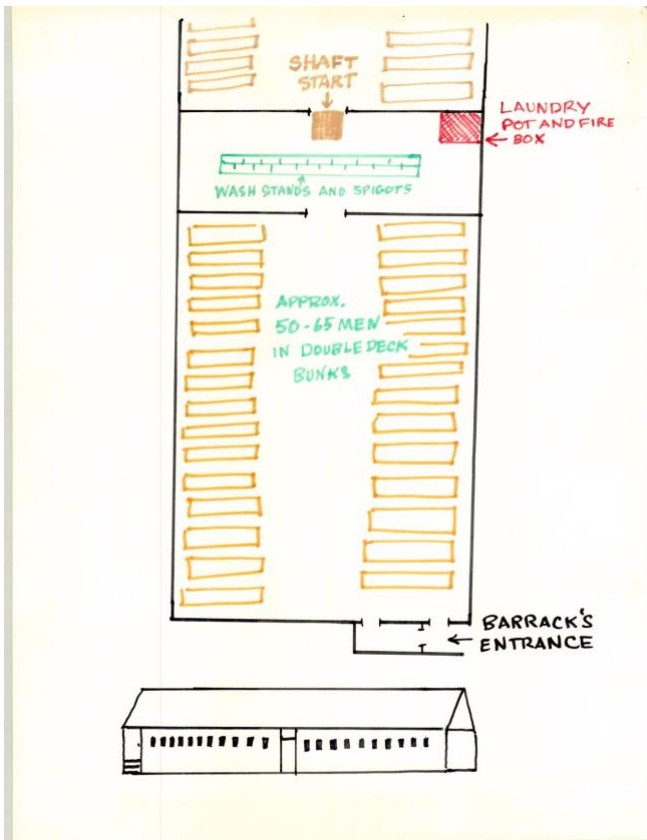
Quite frankly my memory fails me at this point, but I cannot remember what happened to Hervey. Somewhere along the line Spud & I lost track of him. At any rate, we were all so excited a being what we imagined as “Free”, that the next hours or days are a bit lost. I know we took off to the village, countryside, and were really treated well by the Poles – shelter, food, secrecy, whatever – we made our way East. I know that Spud & I met up with The Russian Army somewhere.

The remainder of Bill’s letter described experiences after meeting up with the Russian Army after escape and later returning to the US in February of 1945.

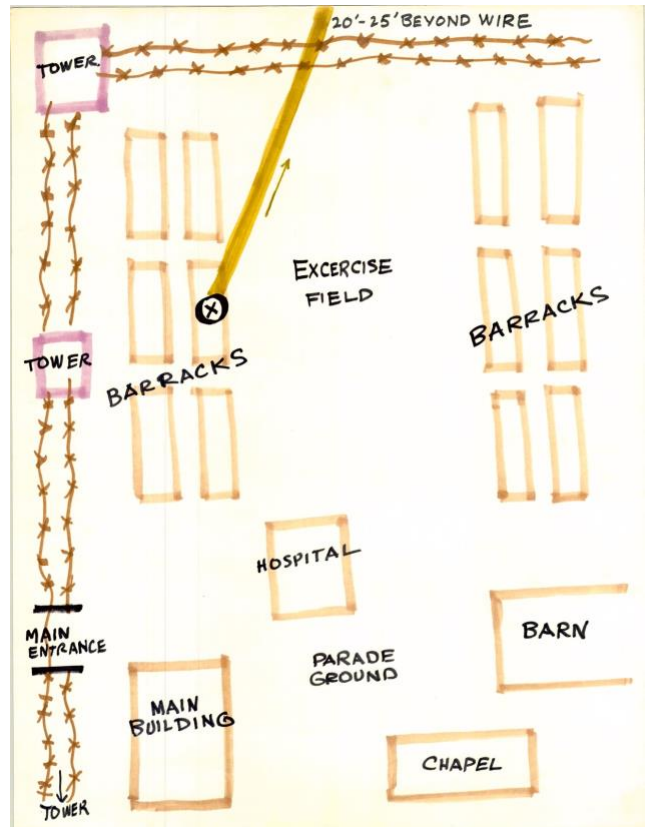
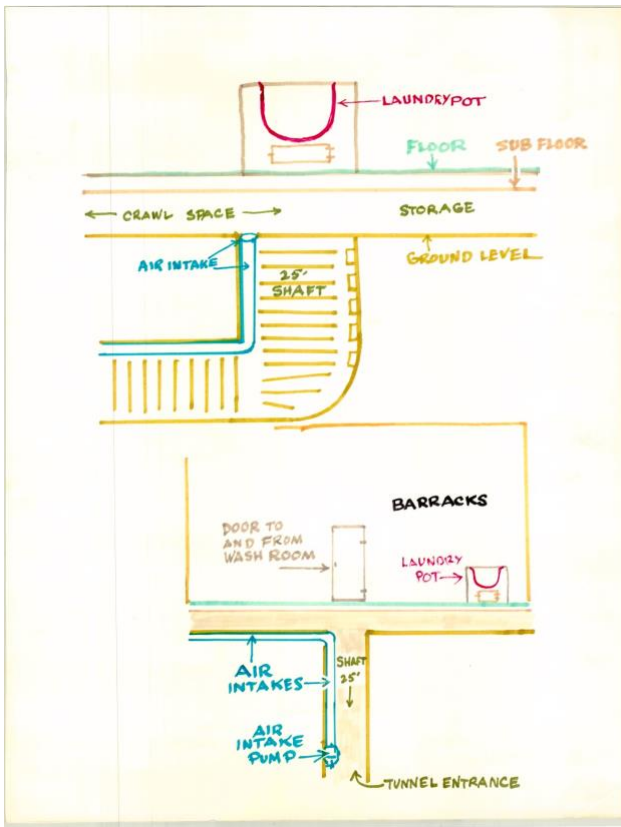
\* \* \* \* \*

The following photos were taken of fairly large posters drawn by the late Kriegy William R. Cory depicting various aspects of the Tunnel Project at Oflag 64. They were used at a presentation, probably at one of our Oflag 64 Reunions.

First photo – tunnel entrance  
Second photo – tunnel hidden door  
Third photo – tunnel shaft  
Fourth photo – tunnel path



Tunnel Entrance (1) and Tunnel Hidden Door (2)



Tunnel Shaft (3) and Tunnel Path (4)

This letter was purchased online. It was written by Leo W. Fisher, after his return home, to families of Kriegies still in captivity at Oflag 64. It included some very helpful information for Kriegy families.

Copy

Augusta, Ga. December 14, 1944

Dear Friends:

I have just returned after being a Prisoner of War for 19 months ---- seven months of this in Oflag 64. When I was exchanged, I promised the boys I'd tell the folks at home all the "dope on the dump." As I have over 300 addresses, I'm sure you will forgive the mimeograph form.

I have tried to answer every question I think you would ask if you could talk to me. If I have omitted anything you'd like to know more about, write me:

1st. Lt. Leo W. Fisher  
Ward 8, Oliver General Hospital  
Augusta, Georgia

and I'll be happy to give you more details. Best wished to you.

-----

Oflag 64 is about 90 miles due south of Danzig, and about 120 miles due west of WARSAW. The nearest large town, 40 miles northwest of camp, is POSEN. The camp is in a town called Schubin by the Polish and ALTBURGUND by the Germans. Before the war the camp was an academy for teen-agers. The town is on one of the most used Roman routes to the Baltic Sea. It is mentioned in history as early as 1055. Fire destroyed the town in 1840. With the growth of America, many of its inhabitants migrated to this country. The population now is about 3,000 Polish and German. There is a Nazi Youth Camp one-half mile from Oflag 64.

The camp area is about five acres with fifteen buildings inside the wire. When I left the Camp on July 26, 1944, there were about 600 officers and 56 enlisted men inside the wire. Colonel T. D. Drake, who was Commanding Officer, was exchanged with us, and now Colonel Millett (pronounced Millay) is the Commanding Officer.

The physical treatment by the Germans has not been bad. There is no brutality or pushing around. Their only harsh treatment comes by the constant searches of personnel and property by the Gestapo, and by the severe ration of food and fuel. The German food ration for a day for one man is hot water for breakfast, barley and potato soup at noon and night, 1/7 of a loaf of black bread per day (about 2 slices) is issued. A weekly ration of 1/4 of a pound of beet sugar, small portions of jam and some very valuable cheese (to judge by its smell it must be antique!)

This ration is supplemented by a food parcel from the American Red Cross, and it is this parcel which really feeds the men. It contains about 17 articles ---- sugar, marg, biscuits, bully beef, spam, salmon, sardines, cheese, chocolate, and powdered milk. All this combined makes an adequate if monotonous diet. On Thanksgiving last year, the food for the day was: Breakfast, Oatmeal; Dinner, Meat and Vegetable Hash; Supper, Prem and mashed potatoes, peas and carrots (from British Red Cross Parcel which we got sometimes in lieu of American)

The food is prepared in a main kitchen by officers and men, and served in a mess hall, eight and ten officers to a table. The cooking facilities are meager, but the boys have made their own utensils from tin cans from the food parcels.

Speaking of parcels, the next-of-kin parcels were coming through in fine shape and fairly regularly. Two months best time, and 19 months (my own) was the worst. The boys have no complaints of the things you folks are putting into them. Banana flakes make pies and cakes. Raisins, too are versatile -- and can be distilled to make a paint remover called "Oflag Gin"

In the summer, the diet is helped by carrots, peas, radishes, onions, etc., grown in the Camp Garden. The winter is the time when food becomes a problem, but not a too serious one -- no one starves -- but everyone is very hungry most of the time.

The winter also presents the cold. The climate in that part of Poland is about like Illinois. With adequate indoor heat, it would be all-right. But the Germans issue one-half of a coal brick per man per day. The bricks are smaller than one regular house brick. They used a peculiar type of stove, which gets very hot even on the coal rations, but only throws the heat about six inches away. We take turns hugging this big pile of tile, but at least it gives us something to hug!

On each bed are two American and two German blankets. The mattress is straw, with straw pillows. The bunks are double and run from four to a room (for Colonels) to about 72 to a ward for other officers. The enlisted men have a separate building.

The water is good --- and cold. We get one hot shower of seven minutes' duration a week. The Germans furnish towels, sheets and pillow cases changed every two weeks --- maybe. Laundry is done mainly by the men, although it can be sent out. It return after a month ---- more or less. It's a great surprise when it comes back.

The Prisoners are dressed in American soldiers' uniforms, brought by the YMCA and the Red Cross. In most cases it is adequate.

Sports include handball, basketball, basaball, ping-pong, badminton, volley ball, horse shoes and various indoor games, all supplied by the YMCA.

For a while there were walks once a week --- five miles outside the wire, with guards, of course. Also for three weeks we were taken into Schubin to the local movie. These all were discontinued sometime ago. They may be in effect again.

Mail was coming through farly well. It took an average of 90 days to arrive. The men beg for photos, and especially colored ones, those made with color films. Also they want longer letters and never mind what the Red Cross bulletin says.

We have a small theater built by the ingenuity of the officers. Also an excellent band, whcih gives us light and heavymusic of a good choice. Each Friday is play night and once a month we have a three-act play. The costumes are homemade. We have put on "Three Men on a Horse" "Brother Orchid", Variety shows, "Petrified forest and "The Man Who Came to Dinner".

We also have a newspaper, "The Item" which is run by Frank Diggs, ex-city editor of the Washington Post. The paper is published once a month and will be a valuable file of camp events for the future.

Another news agency for news of the day is our OFLAG BULLETIN ----- published also by Frank Diggs and his staff. This is published daily and coverts German papers and radio to the American way of seeing things. We keep up with current events fairly well.

There is a good Hospital inside the Camp and we have nine American Doctors in charge. Over the period of the first year, less than 1% of the Camp population was hospitalized, and then only for colds, and minor injuries from playing games.

When you man comes home agin (be he brother, husband, father or sweetheart), he'll have a few words in his vocabulary which you won't understand. Here are a few examples:

	Meaning in American	"To eat"
Bash		
Kriegie	"	Prisoner of War
Big Operator	"	"Big Shot" ie. Amon Carter
Kriegitis	"	Industrial decessae caused by confinement in POW camp. Not dry behind the listening posts.
Beardless	"	
Bashomaniac	"	One who "Bashes" with frenzy
Gefangeners	"	German for Prisoner of War
Rumor Bird	"	One who lays bad eggs, "The War is Over", type
Bash-Hound	"	The "don" who has food left on Friday
Firebug	"	One who hugs the stove like a lover.
"Smokeless" Heater	"	Stove made of tin cans, makes fog like burning building.

And these are not all, but you'll know the rest soon, when the boys come back.~~back~~.

Many of you wonder if the Camp will be rescued by the Russians. My personal opinion is that the Germans will move the Camp further into Germany before this happens. They cannot afford to lose all these officers in one group.

Now in closing I must beg that this information be ONLY FOR YOU. DO NOT write to this to the boys over there. THIS IS IMPORTANT!! I tell you all this in order that you may know and understand better how you loved one lives. Tell the boys you have heard from me ---- but DO NOT discuss this letter.

My prayers are added to yours that your loved ones will soon be back in this, the best country in the world, and in the arms of those he loves and longs for every minute of the day and night.

A Merry Christmas and a hopeful, happier New Year --- And may God be with you all.

## TIN STORE MUSEUM

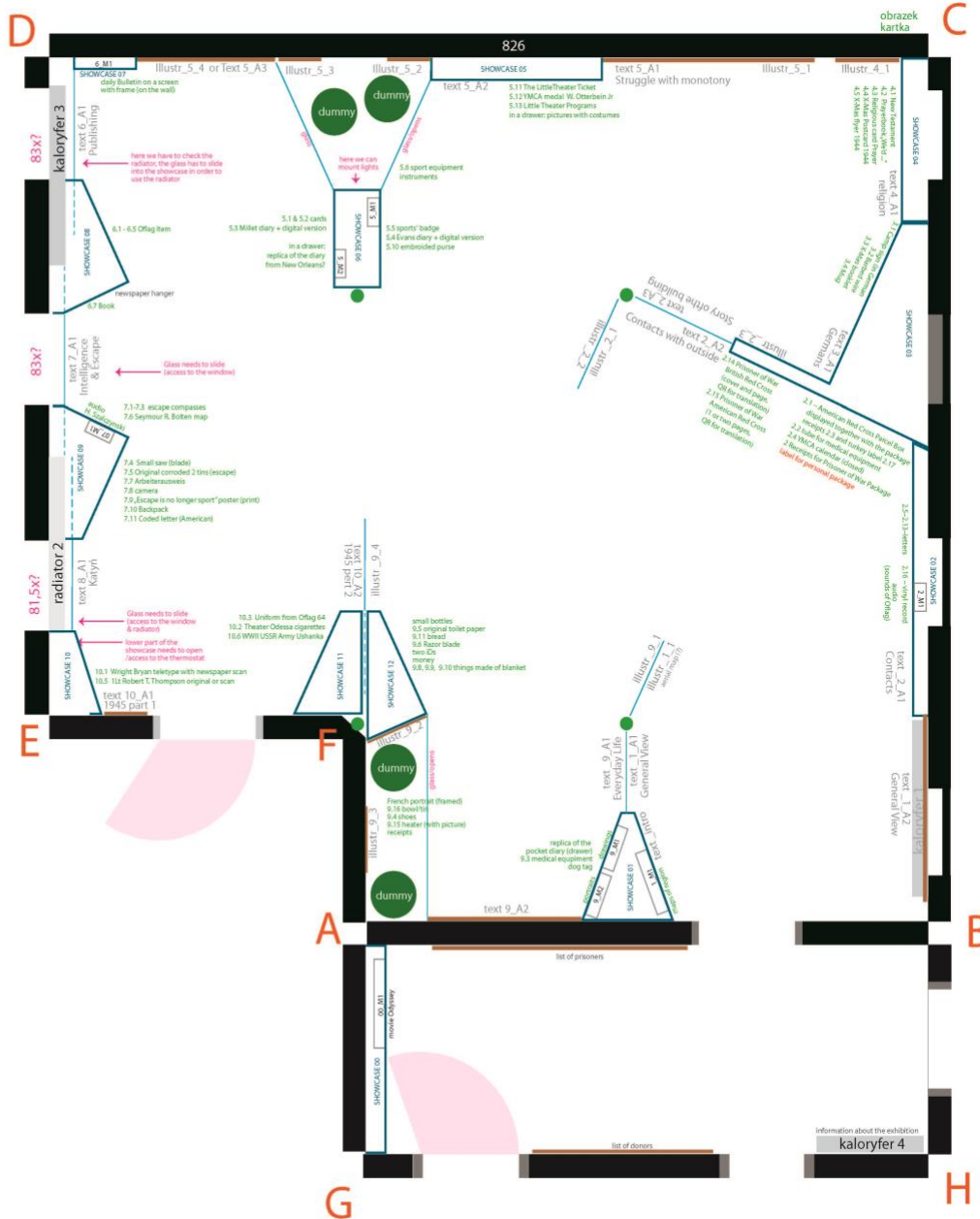
As we've been reporting over the last few issues of the ITEM, efforts have been underway to create a museum on the former site of Oflag 64. Due to the pandemic, the original plan to build a museum on the grounds was put on hold. But Mariusz Winięcki, President of the Polish-American Foundation for the Commemoration of POW Camps in Szubin, had an idea. Maybe, in the meantime, another one of the original buildings previously used at the camp could be used as a museum. After negotiations, the former kriegy Tin Store was offered for rent and the museum team began working to renovate the old building. Since renovation, work began and continues in creating exhibit spaces. Click on the following link to read how The Foundation arrived at the Tin Store opportunity and their changing focus. <https://bit.ly/3NB7SGb>

Photos below were provided by the Foundation.



Thanks to Susanna Connaughton, Vice-President of the Board of the Foundation, for sending the following Tin Store Museum exhibition floor plan. The Foundation/Tin Store team has been extremely hard at work getting things ready for opening. We apologize for the size of the graphic below. You'll probably need a magnifying glass to read everything, but we hope you'll get an idea of what's happening and that work continues to move forward as quickly as possible.

(corridor - ca. 10 sqm and the main room - ca. 52 sqm)



If you would like to learn more, please visit the Foundation's website at [www.szubinpowcamps.org/en](http://www.szubinpowcamps.org/en). You can also follow them on the following:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/oflag64altburgund>  
and/or  
Instagram: [szubin\\_pow\\_camps](https://www.instagram.com/szubin_pow_camps)

Donations to the museum effort are also encouraged and welcomed. If you are able to donate, please do so at [www.friendsofoflag64.org](http://www.friendsofoflag64.org). Your tax-deductible contribution to the Friends of Oflag 64 will help the museum keep the memory of our POWs held in Szubin alive for many years to come.

## GROCHOLIN, POLAND

*Thanks to Sławomir Kowalczyk for sending the following story and photos about his grandfather, Bronisław Lorenc, and the risks he took helping two of our Kriegies, Lts. Maurice Topping and William C. Comstock, who had escaped the march. The story is one that is typical of many Polish families during WWII who put their lives at risk helping American soldiers trying to get back home without being detected by the Germans.*

[January 1945,]  
Grocholin, Poland

It is often said that war brings out the worst in man. It makes you unable to think of anything or anyone other than yourself. However, there are those who at all costs want to listen to their heart, full of goodness that captivates. They are unable to hurt anyone, and help and courage are in their genes.



One of them was Bronisław Lorenc, who during the war found himself in Grocholin, a small town in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship. Although the war was still going on, the town seemed a peaceful place. As calm as it could be in those days.

He started working on the estate of Baron von Rosen. He was supposed to take care of cows and other animals. He did not expect that he would also have to deal with two fugitives who wanted to return home. One [January] day, as the young man was heading to the estate in the morning to get used to his routine and start work, he saw something strange. At first it seemed abstract to him. Two unfamiliar men crouched in a field of grain and waved erratically at him. One of them was of a darker complexion.

Surprised, he looked around to see if there was anyone around, and then quickly moved in that direction. He wanted to ask who they were, but the men gestured for him to be quiet. They looked like they didn't want anyone to know about their presence here.

Without hesitating any longer, knowing that every second counts during this period, they said they wanted food. They did not say a word, but Bronisław understood them. They used a universal language. They pointed to their bellies, and their eyes spoke of this need. It was also not difficult to guess what needs people have during the war. He nodded his head, assuring them that they would get help. He had to do it, even if he risked a lot. He couldn't leave them to fate, which was cruel and had a tendency to mock people. Little did he know then that with that one small gesture he would become their hero. An extraordinary man in the eyes of two men.

He organized the food, which was not so easy during the day, even if it was enough to hit the right time and not eat everything on the plate and hide it in the pocket of loose trousers. It was even harder to smuggle it to the refugees without anyone knowing.

He managed, however, and for his thanks, the expressions of relief and bliss on their faces when they had the opportunity to have something in their mouths were enough for him.

After this little help, he couldn't let them go further into the world. He offered them shelter, using signs and a small amount of German, which at that time was learned by practically everyone. He showed them the barn where he intended to hide them. He knew it wasn't a very good and luxurious place to live, but that also made it the best. Who will look for people in a place not intended for that? They didn't talk much to each other, they didn't know the same languages, but they trusted each other. During the day, Bronisław took care of the animals and played as if nothing had happened, talking to the residents of the estate and the nice Gertrude, whom he often saw and knew practically from the beginning of his stay there.

In the evenings he ate dinner with the family he was staying with, hiding food for two men sitting in the barn. He hadn't expected that after some time of such a routine, the lack of food and his excessive rations would be all too obvious. However, he was unable to tell the truth.



His notorious evening walks outside the house were eventually noticed by the evening patrol. Unfortunately, for the first few days he had no idea about it, and he never dreamed of limiting the trip to the two Americans who had revealed their nationality to him a few days ago.

He was being watched.

The Germans knew about the escape.

Only when Gertrude noticed a strange commotion around the estate, did she decide to talk to the young man. She warned him: "Broniek, be careful, because the Germans are interested in you." He could have ignored it, but something in her tone made him believe it. Besides, it was easy to spot a liar in those days. He would do anything to save his life or the lives of his family. He limited trips to the barn, but it didn't do much.

It was one of the worst moments of that period.

He was summoned for questioning. He was questioned about everything and everyone. Calmly at first, but when he remained silent and did not say what they wanted to hear, force was used.

He was silent. He couldn't put innocent people at risk just because they wanted to go home to their families and experience the warmth of love.

Day after day passed, week after week, interrogation after interrogation. It didn't happen often, but when it did, he came back bruised, mostly in places you couldn't see at first glance.

He was persistent in what he did, he knew that in his place, anyone else would have done the same. Even when the nice family of Korbala, with whom he lived, began to suspect something. They couldn't believe that this young man was eating so much. The portions were like two, not one.

The men found their own way of communicating, which helped Bronisław understand who and where they came from. They were two of the thirteen soldiers who also managed to escape from the camp.

Soviet troops liberated Poland.

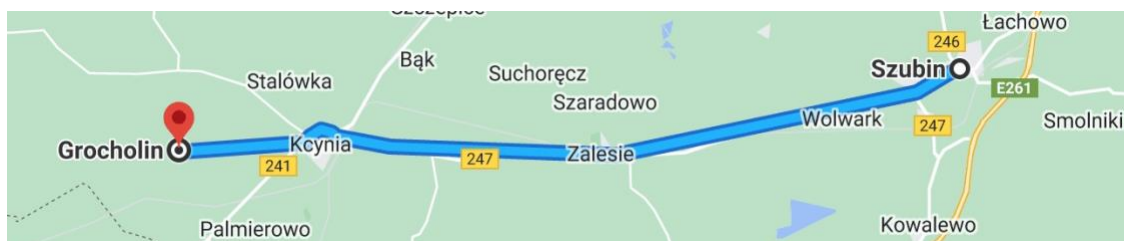
It was that moment of joy and unlimited happiness for everyone. He knew that now he could lead the two runaways out of the barn in peace and let them see the world again, which was not obscured by the sharp claws of war.

Every missing piece that some of the villagers and Korbala's family had lost has finally been found.

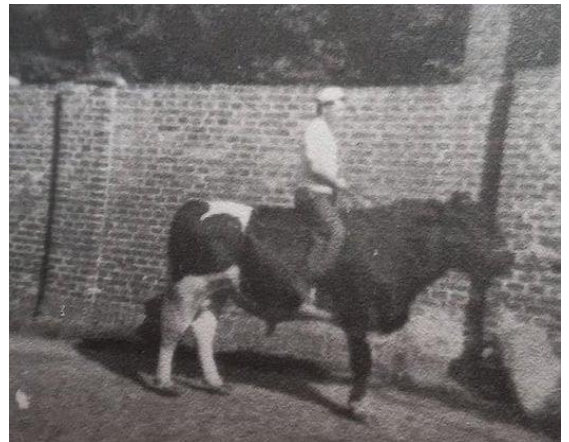


*One of the barns where Kriegies stayed*

They parted at a well, just outside Baron von Rosen's estate, in January 1945. Bronisław received from one man a small piece of paper with the address and their names. The second of them gave him his green sweater, soaked with pride and gratitude, which Bronisław wore for many years.



These photos of the Grocholin estate of Baron von Rosen and barns where many of our Kriegies stayed during the long, cold march are more recent photos. The others are of Sławomir's grandfather, Bronisław Lorenc, who worked at the estate.



Greg Clingan, son of the late Kriegy James L. Clingan, sent this document that his father brought home with him from Oflag 64. Listed in pencil are several names and addresses of other Kriegies who were in the camp with him (Bob Moorhead, Donald Hunker, Sam Hodges, and Harvey Todd).

**OFLAG 64** Altburgund Einzelheiten:  
 Gruppe Verwaltung den 1. DEZ. 1940 Items:

Von den amer. Kgf. Nr. 3318  
 Name Clingan James L

sind die nachfolgend aufgeführten Ausweis-  
 papiere bzw. Sachen in Verwahrung genom-  
 men worden:  
 From the above mentioned amer. P. o. W. the  
 following identification papers and articles have  
 been deposited in his favor at the Q. M. O.

1. 4 Hunneride  
 2. 1057 Street  
 3. Do Colman  
 4. Sam Hodges  
 5. Harvey Todd  
 6. Bob Moorhead  
 7. Donald Hunker  
 8. 152 Colman Drive  
 9. Oflag VE  
 10. Moorhead P.O. Box

Rückgabe-  
 bescheinigung  
 Returned

Unterschrift — Signature

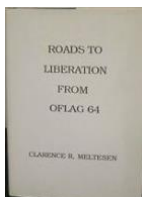
## Publications

We're always looking for a hard copy of books written by or about our Kriegies and their experiences during the war. Please check the website at <http://www.oflag64.us/books-etc.html> for a list of books we currently have. If your Kriegy has written a book we don't yet have or if you have a publication that contains information about any our Kriegies, please let us know.

Currently we're looking for [The Fighting 36<sup>th</sup> Historical Quarterly](#), volume 1 (#1-3), volume 2 (#1, 2, 4), volume 3 (#4), volume 4 (#1), volume 12 (#2). If you have any of these issues and would be willing to donate them, please let us know.

### Are you looking for these? Please contact.....

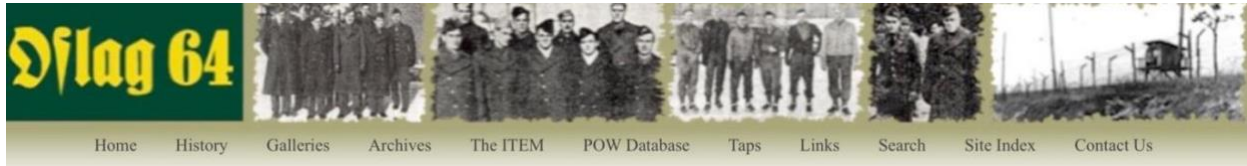
Marilyn Kanners Beckham (Vic's daughter) for a copy of **Vic Kanners' Diary "Horseshit and Cobblestones"**, 3608 W BRADFORD DR, BLOOMFIELD HILLS MI 48301-3353. New email address is: [marilynkbeckham@gmail.com](mailto:marilynkbeckham@gmail.com)



Lynne Meltesen, daughter of the late Kriegy Clarence Meltesen, has sent us a few more copies of his fantastic resource book, **"Roads to Liberation"**. If you would like a copy, please contact Elodie Caldwell at [elodie@oflag64.us](mailto:elodie@oflag64.us). The book is available at no charge but you are asked to pay for S & H. (Thank you, Meltesen family, for making these available.)



Pat Waters, son of the late Kriegy John Waters, sent several copies of the **"John K. Waters Story"** which can be purchased by contacting Cindy Burgess at [cindyburgess92@gmail.com](mailto:cindyburgess92@gmail.com). The price of \$15.99 includes S&H. (Thank you, Pat, for making these available.)



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## Oflag 64 Remembered

Honoring our Kriegy Patriots and Heroes

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The materials may be used by the parties mentioned above to create a history of Oflag 64 POWs as they work to create a new museum in Szubin, Poland where the POWs were interned during WWII. (Please check at least one.)

- Hometown Heroes
- Oral History Project/National WWII Museum
- National Home Front Project
- New Oral History Project/Smithsonian Magazine
- The Memory Project
- Veterans History Project
- Veterans Testimonial Project
- Witness to War Project
- WWII Oral History
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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