

A S I R E M E M B E R I T
O F L A G 6 4 A N D B E Y O N D

20 Jan. 45 - Was informed this morning that the camp is to be evacuated in 24 hours. Everyone has enough RED CROSS food to last about one week. Everyone in good spirits.

21 Jan. 45 - Attended mass , left camp at 0830. The column consists of 1459 American Officers, 2 W.O. and 136 E.M. The column extends about one mile; it is very cold. The afternoon is getting VERY COLD. The road is filled with Polish peasants who are leaving their homes. Tonight we bivouaced in a well managed Polish farm. We slept with the animals. During the night a cow gave birth to a calf - life goes on.

22 Jan. 45 - We started off again this morning with less officers - some of them took-off during the night, some can't make it. We have broken up into three groups: 1) those who can go ahead, 2) those who think they can make it, but walk more slowly and 3) those who cannot make it and must stay behind --- we do not know ^{what} will happen to this group. My friend from Knoxville, W.K. Jones may be in this group. The walk today is about the same as yesterday - cold and tiresome. My feet are sore and my right leg hurts very much. My boots are frozen. Early this morning the guards were normal, but this afternoon they have become jumpy and arrogant. I think they have information concerning the Russians. The grape-vine has it that they are very close; we can hear large guns in the distance - German or Russian we do not know. It is getting dark and we are approaching a farm where we are to stay.

23 Jan. 45 - I awakened to relieve myself and realized no guards could be seen. Later we were told that the Russians were very close. It is presumed that the guard company has left. As I write this we are in a barn - some are eating others are waiting to be over-run by the Russians. We must wait and see. Later in the day the S/S reconstituted the guard company and we were again under the control of the German Army. We later found out that the original guards were Latvians and did not want to encounter the Russians.

24/? Jan. 45 * - The march continues.

(Writers Notes - from here on dates become confused)

? 29 Jan. 45 - Arrived OFLAG IID. 805 personnel in group. Fuel, barracks, lights, water and food.

? 30 Jan. 45 - We have been informed that IID was a former POW camp for Polish prisoners who were marched out. At 1300 hrs. approx. 740 officers departed under guard. NOT ME. I had had enough - finish. I hid, watched them leave. Now I am ~~XXXXX~~ half way home. Some time later; went scouting the camp. Lt. Brown found fresh meat, bread, sugar, jam, oatmeal and barley. A complete kitchen was located - ~~XXX~~ need I say what happened, a feast.

1 Feb. 45 - We are making ourselves comfortable. One doctor was left behind to attend to the sick - everyone is trying to make them comfortable.

2 Feb. 45 - We are still eating well and are comfortable. What next?

3 Feb. 45 - We can hear BIG guns, the Russians must be close.

4 Feb. 45 - Russian and German patrols in immediate vicinity - ~~XXXX~~ artillery landing very close, we are moving to the kitchen celler for protection.

5 Feb. 45 - THIS LOOKS LIKE THE DAY. We were greeted by the Russians with small arms fire in the celler. A polish speaking Officer finally convinced them that we were Americans. They marched us to an adjoining Polish camp ~~near~~ by. German artillery coming in, things are getting HOT. Polish casualties. The situation is too uncertian, we are evacuating to Zippnow for the night.

6 Feb. 45 - After a good night sleep in Zippnow we are leaving in a 1½ ton truck for Jastrow. Our first meal after liberation at a Red Cross Station. Johnston and Ireton were rolled by a Russian soldier. Our move from Jastrow is to be by 3/4 and 2½ ton truck. Spending the night with a very lovely Polish family.

7 Feb. 45 - Up at 0830, breakfast with the family, my coffee and a few other things, and some of theirs. It is taking us hours trying to find out where we are to go. It is our understanding that they are trying to assemble all Americans who were liberated in a large artillery camp. We finally made it for the night.

8 Feb. 45 - Finished a meal at a Polish Soup kitchen.

9 Feb. 45 - We received information that our group (36 U.S. Officer might leave tomorrow for Warsaw by rail, hopefully the information is correct.

10 Feb. 45 - Information received that most left, less 10 of us. We think we can arrange a plane ride for Lublin tomorrow morning. Tonight we remain in Bromberg.

11 Feb. 45 - 0900, we are at the airport - all full, no seats. We have been told tomorrow, maybe.

12 Feb. 45 - It is snowing - no flying today. Problems - the Polish Authorities say we can fly when weather permits, the Russians say we must have a permit (but from whom?). We will stay at the airbase tonight in hopes that things will look better tomorrow. We may have to endure the train.

13 Feb. 45 - We are at the airport - still no passage. We are eating at the Pilots Mess now. Only 4 of the original 10 left, the others took the train.

14 Feb. 45 - We are at the airbase. A few moments ago a German plane came over and gave us a few bursts - they went after the Douglas. Later we found out that the plane was shot down on the other side of town. No ride today. We are staying with a Polish family tonight. A five o'clock meal and conversation, then another meal at 2030 hrs. At the 1700 hrs. meal we had cognac. We ended the last meal with champagne; however, the family is not that well off - I think they are reciprocating for what we gave them - coffee, sugar and other items we had saved from our Red Cross food.

15 Feb. 45 - Airborne at 1207 hrs. for Lublin. Diverted to Warsaw due to bad weather. Will stay tonight in a farmhouse area near the airport about 20 Km. from Warsaw.

16 Feb. 45 - Airborne Warsaw 0907 hrs. for Lublin. Arrived Lublin and contacted Red Cross. Received tickets for soup. Met a very nice gentleman who took us to a restaurant for a meal. This is the closest to civilization we have been yet. Received an invitation from a very nice lady to use one of her bedrooms, a very fine sleep.

17 Feb. 45 - Spent most of the day trying to make some kind of contact to get money - if you eat you need it. This is the first time we have been conscious of the lack of money - no luck. This afternoon I took my first bath in 5 weeks.

18 Feb. 45 - Attended my first Mass since I left the Oflag. This evening we attended a Polish Army show.

19 Feb. 45 - Attended a Polish movie this afternoon, a pre-war one. We are having a difficult time finding food. The Red Cross gave us a ticket for a meal at a restaurant.

- 20 Feb. 45 - Went to the Kino Applo.
- 21 Feb. 45 - Attended party given by a Polish captain. Food. Escorted home by three Polish guards - they don't like the Russians either. Earlier in the afternoon received a meal ticket and 1000 Zlotys.
- 22 Feb. 45 - Informed this morning that all Americans - don't know how many have been rounded - up - and British personnel are to leave for Odessa, Russia at 1200 hrs., We left at 1900 hrs.
- 23 Feb. 45 - In a box-car again; however, we are not under guard this time. Moving rather slowly. Cold, but we have a wood burning stove.
- 24 Feb. 45 - Still in the box-car. Understand it is about one day more to our destination.
- 25 Feb. 45 - Still moving - no Odessa. Eat what we have been given, cook on the floor.
- 26 Feb. 45 - Still moving, think we are going in circles. Food issue, all raw.
- 27 Feb. 45 - After six days in a box-car we finally arrived in Odessa. Met by a Russian General. Sold my German blanket for 400 rubles to buy food.
- 28 Feb. 45 - Today I think we are officially under the U.S. Army command. A medical officer, Major from Poltava, a U.S. Army Air Base in Russia and a Major and Captain from England arrived. The grapevine has it that two or three tons of supplies will arrive tomorrow.
- 1 Mar. 45 - Supplies arrived - everything American. Some of the officers were permitted to visit Odessa under the supervision of a Russian officer.
- 2 Mar. 45 - More rations. Had a reunion with other Officers from the Oflag. They are staying at another location.
- 3 Mar. 45 - Still in Odessa under the supervision of the Russians. For some reason they are holding back on the food. Saw an American movie.

- 4 Mar. 45 - Visited barracks #1, was told that we had mail brought from 64 - 2 letters, both from home. Rumor has it that the ship to transport us home will be in this afternoon.
- 5 Mar. 45 - Still in Odessa. No ship.
- 6 Mar. 45 - The ship is here. We leave tomorrow.
Mar.
- 7 ~~XXX~~. 45 - Heading for the boat - band playing. The ship (Mortan Bay - English) got underway at 1400 hrs.
Mar.
- 8 ~~XXX~~. 45 - The sea is very calm. Accomadations crowded, but comfortable. We are at present passing through the Sea of Bosporous. Turkey is off our bow - we can see houses.
Mar.
- 9 ~~XXX~~. 45 - One day in Istanbul. Again underway, destination unknown.
Mar.
- 10 ~~XXX~~. 45 - Sailing.
Mar.
- 11 ~~XXX~~. 45 - Still sailing. Attended Mass.
Mar.
- 12 ~~XXX~~. 45 - Port Said, Egypt straight ahead. Transported to a British camp via LCT. American~~s~~s came from Cairo and have done a wonderful job.
- 13 Mar. 45 - Drew clothing - complete outfit. What a wonderful feeling to be clean again. Living in tents on an island.
- 14 Mar. 45 - Money issue (100.00). Vaccinated for small-pox. Visited Port Said. The Egyptians overwhelmed us trying to sell everything.
- 15 Mar. 45 - Restricted to camp today - we are to leave tomorrow. Filled out leave request and address - looks like the States for sure.
Mar.
- 16 ~~Mar.~~ 45 - Up at 0430. Packing and preparing to leave. Aborad ship (Samaria) 0930. Destination rumored to be Naples.
Mar.
- 17 ~~Mar.~~ 45 - The food is excellent, the library is great - catching up on my reading.
Mar.
- 18/19 ~~Mar.~~ 45 - Mass 0715 hrs. Still sailing.
Mar.
- 20 ~~Mar.~~ 45 - Naples 0800 hrs. Met by Red Cross Reps. Toilet articles, do-nuts and a sweater. Went to a large contonement, ate lunch then moved to the Terme Hotel used by ~~XXX~~ Air Force personnel who are returning to the States. The hotel is very large; a resort formally used by wealthy Italians.

21 Mar. 45 - Up at 0715, breakfast. Morning spent filling out forms. Visited PX this afternoon - what a thrill to see so much. Show tonight - Bing Crosby.

22 Mar. 45 - Processing.

23 Mar. 45 - Visited Naples, then back to the Hotel.

24 Mar. 45 - Hotel.

25 Mar. 45 - Palm Sunday, attended Mass.

26 Mar. 45 - Visited Caserta, Hq. Allied Forces. Received new ID ~~XXX~~ card.

27 Mar. 45 - Waiting to leave.

- L A T E R -

New York, New York. Boy does the OLD LADY look good. On leave.

- P O S T S C R I P T -

Places I Remember

Amiens, Fr.
Limburg, Gr. (XII A)
Stubin, (Oflag 64)
Exin
Charlottenburg
Eichfelde
Lobsens
Flatow
Jastrow
Zippnow
Redawick
Brombergh
Lublin
Odessa
Istanbul
Port Said
Naples

People I Remember

Lt. Ireton
Lt. Barnum
Lt. Brown
Capt. Vasile
W.K. Jones
Bill Luttrell