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PRISONER OF WAR STORY

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This is a story about the experiences that I had as an officer in World War II as a POW. I served as a 2nd Lt. Battery A, 909th Field Artillery Battalion, 84th Infantry Division, 9th Army.

We were fighting in the Siegfried Line in the Northern part of Germany very near to Belgium and to the Netherland just east of Aachen. My job was a Forward Observer which meant that I went up and assisted the infantry by directing artillery fire from my battalion on to targets of opportunity wherever I felt it necessary or where the infantry officers desired assistance.

Our story starts on November 26, 1944, the day after Thanksgiving. I was going forward from our Battery location up to the infantry command post in a little town called Geronzwieler, Germany. Just before I left, I received a message asking me to pick up the Padre (Chaplain) and take him with me. In my jeep was my driver, my sergeant, another officer who was being trained by me as a Forward Observer, and we stopped by the Regimental Headquarters picked up the Padre and drove into Geronzwieler. As we arrived in Geronzwieler, we could not find the command post immediately and we drove almost out of the village, a very small village, and as we realized that we were at the end of the town we stopped, backed up and as we started to go forward again, the Germans fired a mortar barrage at us and a mortar landed just behind me in the ground, missing me by about three feet. Mortars are a very high trajectory shell. Normally, this would have killed me, but the mortar didn't go off, it was a dud which was one of the first of many experiences I had that were life saving. I jokingly said I'm glad the Padre was with me because God wasn't ready to take the Padre and I happened to be sitting next to the Padre at the time.

Because of the mortar barrage, we sought safety in a building until the

barrage ceased which only lasted a few minutes, then we found the command post which was located in a three story school building at the eastern edge of the town. I went in and found my other officer from the battery who was manning the post, Lt. Edward Henderickson, better known as the "Judge" because he was a lawyer from Texas. The Judge was very nervous and very much on edge. He took me up to the top of the building and pointed out the various points of reference, the base points, the registration points, so on and so forth, and where the Germans were located, and where our men were located and so on which is the normal thing that a Forward Observer does. But I noticed that he was very, very nervous and I asked him about it and he indicated to me that the Germans were sending 88 millimeter shells occasionally as introductory fire into the building and the scary part about it was that they were generally going through the second floor and the Judge was operating on the third floor. Now an 88 high velocity shell that the Germans used was probably the most scary artillery weapon of the war. It was scary because it made a terrible screeching, whining sound and just tore the living hell out of anything it hit.

Well, I kind of laughed at the Judge and said, "Ok, I'll take over." So the Judge left and I proceeded to go back up to the third story to see what was going on. About this time another mortar mirage comes by and as I started packing up to begin, there was no roof on this building, the mortars had completely obliterated the roof and so I started to head for the basement until the mortar mirage ceased and as I did, an 88 shell came screeching through the air and literally passed underneath my feet through the second story of the building. Now I don't mind telling you that I was about as scared as I'd been or ever want to be in any situation because that shell just literally freezes your brains and scares the living daylights out

of you.

So I ran downstairs for a while, there was no actual fighting going on, it was what we referred to as a static position. The Germans were in their foxholes and their bunkers and we were in ours, and all we were doing as artillery observers was merely protecting the infantry from an attack or observing targets of opportunity, a tank or infantry or what have you, so there really wasn't anything of great importance to be done, but you had to be alert and it was your job to be there in case there was any target that came forth.

I went back upstairs and it seemed like every time I went up the stairs the Germans either threw an 88 or a mortar barrage at me, it was almost as though they had an artillery observer spotting me and when he saw me go up the stairs, in a matter of minutes, I was being inundated with some kind of fire. This went on all day and naturally I became almost as nervous as the Judge was when he left by running up and down these stairs all day. That night we were down in the basement of the command post and the infantry came and said, "We've just captured a Pill Box fifty yards in front of our lines." Now you have to understand that we were fighting in the middle of what the Germans refer to as their Defensive Siegfried Line, a series of Pill Boxes and reinforced concert abutments that they were using to defend their homeland. And having run up and down stairs all day, I immediately became very excited about the possibility of being in that Pill Box where the Germans couldn't shoot at me with artillery and where I could look right down their throats and bring fire right down on top of us. So I pleaded with my liaison officer, Captain Walsh, and ask him if I couldn't go up in that Pill box. Well, he as very reluctant to allow me to do that because I was being exposed right out in the front lines and they don't like to put

their artillery observers that far out in that type of exposed position. Now, as I said, "I'm going to be in the Pill Box, they aren't going to be able to get to me anyway, and I said, I will be safe." So he reluctantly granted his permission. So the next morning the infantry sent a runner down to take me and Roy and up to the front, our sergeant stayed behind to man the radio and we were going to communicate to him by radio and he then was going to communicate back to the base. My mission that morning was to register the Battalion in on the base point. Now, one of the things that all artillery battalions must do is register every day to make sure their guns are accurate. This is done to correct for atmospheric changes and any other change that may have occurred during the night. And so every day you must register on the base point which is then mathematically tied in with all the other guns in the battalion. My instructions were to go up to the Pill Box and then to register the battalion in on the base point at about 7:30 in the morning. So we started out of Geronzwieler and as we started the runner said to me, "Do you mind if we don't go back up the path we just came down because there's a German sniper on that path." Well, I thought that was a pretty astute judgement on his part, so I said "Ok, let's take a short cut," and so we started taking a short cut through a beet patch and all of a sudden we are outside of Geronzwieler in the grey dawn of German morning and we were absolutely alone and I said to myself, "Is this what it's like being in the front lines? Nobody around." Later on I found out from one of my prisoners of war that the 104th Division was on our left flank and there was actually a 400 yard gap in our lines which was covered by patrols every hour. We were in the middle of that gap. We got up about half a mile outside of town and the runner became a little disoriented and he said, "Lt., I'm not sure exactly where we are, you stay here and let me

go ahead and recognizer." I said, "Fine." There was a slight rise or a little hill in front of us, the runner goes up on the top of that hill and immediately a fire fight breaks out. Machine gun fire, rifle fire and I thought "Oh Boy, we've run into a problem up there and this runner is dead." So we sat there for a few minutes and a lone figure comes up over the hill waves at us and says "Come on." It was the runner and so we walked up over the top of the hill and we walked up to some soldiers in fox holes and said good morning to them and there was the Pill Box to our right and we walked down a trench. There was some soldiers close by and we had gotten about half way to the Pill Box when out of the grey dawn comes this good old German accentuated voice saying "hands up, coom out." And with that, the three of us like the three stooges came together and fell down in a heap and the Germans thinking we were trying to escape started shooting at us and one of them nicked my jacket but didn't hit my arm, it just tore piece out of the sleeve and I reached for my 45, fortunately I didn't fire it because what we had done was walk into the German lines, we had gotten to the wrong Pill Box, when you realize there are thousands of Pill Boxes around, it is understandable and it is not very desirable or delightful to admit that we had walked into the Germans literally said good morning to them and they had welcomed us with not opened arms but with mauser fire that was very, very close to hitting us. Needless to say we immediately became the guests of the Third Reich.

Many thoughts go through ones mind at that particular moment. I'll share with you two thoughts that went through mine. First of all, there was only twenty yards or so over the edge of that hill and many times after I was a prisoner why didn't I run for it. I would have had a chance of making that break in the dark and maybe getting away. However, upon contemplation,

those soldiers in the fox holes we had originally passed had followed us down the trench because they had realized we were Americans and were only a matter of yards behind us and besides that there were Germans in front of us who were watching us and had their rifle trained upon us that if we had tried to run for it I'm sure we'd have been shot and the machine gun was only a few yards away as well. So my chances of making it were very slim. Fortunately that's not what I did.

The second thought and this is the ironic twist of fate here; just before coming forward, I had read the Stars and Stripes, the Army Newspaper. The Stars and Stripes was telling a story about how Germans trying to surrender and not knowing any English was trying to surrender by saying "Hands up, come out!" This was the initial thought when this German said this to me was that he was trying to surrender and that we were going to capture ourselves some German soldiers. Needless to say I was wrong about that. We were then disarmed and taken to the Pill Box that we could see that was about fifty yards away at the time. This was the forward Pill Box which was called the Fighting Pill Box you might say and we were immediately searched and of course I had in my jacket overlays and things that were targets marked for base points and so on like that. The base point, by the way, was a cross road. They took my K-rations which I had taken with me to eat that day and so forth. We were then taken back to Company CP where the captain there stole my watch from me and then we were walked back to the Battalion CP which was some 200 yards to the north of one of the roads nearby. Then we were taken downstairs and the Germans started shouting something and showed us a picture and I have often laughed about this because they showed us a picture of a girl in a negligee being embraced by a guy. And the story goes that Jane was married to Bob, who was over seas in the Army. She

worked in a defense factory, and he had been gone for a couple of years, she was going out to dinner with Jack, her boss at the plant where she worked and she was in the boudoir getting dressed and the door bell rang and she yells out "Come on in, fix yourself a drink." So Jack comes in, fixes himself a drink and he walks in the boudoir and sees here not completely dressed and gets all excited and immediately grabs her and starts embracing her. She is trying to resist his efforts but begins to succumb and then looks in the mirror and in the mirror is a picture of her not in the arms of Jack but in the arms of the specter of death. The summation of this was this could be your sweetheart, your sister, your wife or your daughter back in the United States. The irony of this was that when I came over seas, I had been engaged to a girl I had graduated from high school with and shortly before I was captured, I received a "Dear John" letter. I had often thought that this was the height of irony for the Germans to have thrown this particular idea at me and I thought "Boy, if you guys only knew how close to the truth you really are!"

We were kept at the Battalion CP for a short period of time and then about 7:30 in the morning we were put in a little jeep like vehicle and taken to the Regimental CP. The Regimental CP was about 200 yards beyond the cross roads which was our base point. As we drove across the base point in the jeep and we pulled up 200 yards beyond at the Regimental CP, an artillery shell landed in the middle of the base point. What was going on was, since I was not answering or was not available and nobody knew where I was, the Aerial Observer for that Battalion was registering the Battery or the Battalion in that day on the base point and there is only a matter of five seconds after I drove across that base point that they hit that base point. This is another one of the so-called miracles that I consider

contributed to my being alive today instead of dead. It was a matter of five seconds in timing, or I would have been right in the middle of that base point when they did that.

I had taken my officers insignia off my shirt as we were instructed to do when we went up in front and as I arrived at the Regimental CP they wouldn't believe I was an officer so I reached in my pocket and pulled out my Second Lieutenant Bar and my Crossed Cannons and put them on. We were kept there a short period of time and then we were taken back to the Division Command Post and there we were confronted by a German officer who spoke to us in German. He was merely trying to find out if we understood German or not. What he was saying was "sprechen sie deutsch?" ("Do you speak German?") and when we didn't respond he spoke to us in English and said "Don't you stand at attention when an officer speaks to you?" We immediately braced. We were kept at the Division Headquarters in a private home with German guards for about four days. During which time we were interrogated two or three times. The officer who did the interrogation spoke perfect English, had been a purser on the cruise lines that sailed from Liverpool, England to South Hampton, South Africa and spoke excellent English. One of the things that I would do would be to talk about anything non military with them, but anything having to do with the military I refused to discuss. Interestingly enough, he had captured an artillery sergeant and in his pocket was a book that listed the tables of organization of the American artillery and the Germans confused with the British. In Britain, a Battery is twelve guns, in America it is four guns. They were getting all confused with the numbers on this thing. You can imagine when they tried to figure out the table of origination of a Battalion and three Batteries and instead of a total of twelve guns there was a total of thirty six guns. This guy was

getting all confused with this thing. I don't know why, but he was. Finally, after the third interrogation when I refused to cooperate with him with regards to anything having to do with military information he indicated, "Well, since you're not going to be cooperative, I'll see to it that you are put in a prisoner of war camp in western Europe where you have to sweat out the air raids every night." I smiled to myself as I walked out.

Another interesting situation was an American GI was brought in late one evening suffering from frost bite. He was in terrible pain. This soldier had been in an attack on a German machine gun and had gotten within thirty yards of the machine gun and all of his comrades had been killed. He had pretended to be dead and laid out there for two or three days and during that period of time, this was in November, proceeded to freeze his toes until he couldn't move. The Germans brought him in and once he started unfreezing, the pain is intense. He prayed to God and to Jesus and kept us awake all night one night with his screams. By twist of fate, after I got back to America, sometime in July, when I was leaving Miami, Florida for Fort Bragg, North Carolina for my next assignment on the train platform was this young man and he had been taken to a German hospital and his frost bite had been corrected and he had been released and recaptured and back in America and came out of it alright. The way he looked and the way he sounded that night in that little house in Germany, I would have never believed he would have saved his toes or be able to walk again.

Roy and I were then separated from our runner who by the way was very, very mortified that he had taken us into the German lines and so forth and we were taken about thirty miles away to a little town called Krefeld which is near Dusseldorf. We were taken to a headquarters building for the German artillery command for the entire western front. We had an oppor-

tunity there to see a situation map from the North Sea to Switzerland showing the disposition of every American and every German and every English and every French unit from the North Sea to Switzerland and I'm looking at that and I'm saying "Boy, now if I could just figure out a way to get out of here and get that map and get back to the American lines, wouldn't I be a hero!" I didn't have that opportunity. We were kept there and it was interesting, there were two Lieutenants there who spoke English and they immediately wanted to talk to us because we were American. One of them had gone to the St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia and had been a messerschmidt pilot and had been shot down and injured his leg and could no longer fly and therefore he was now assigned to this staff at General Headquarters. The other was from Brooklyn, was born of German parents and had come back to Germany in 1939 to visit his parents and was not allowed to leave again. We had been there about an hour or so when a staff car pulled up out in front and the most beautiful, spit and polished perfumed shined officer I'd ever seen arrived and he was the Commandant of all German artillery on the western front and he came in to question us. Now Roy with me was a first Lt., and so they took him first and never bothered to question me. I am not sure what happened when Roy went in there but Roy came back out and told me that hey had told him "We have some questions we want to ask you and you better answer them because we will get them and stay within the rules of the Geneva Convention." The Geneva Convention says that you cannot torture prisoners in order to get information out of them. Roy claims that they asked him a number of questions and that he lied to them and gave them some false information and they accepted it. I can't say what he did or did not do or whether he was telling me that because I wasn't in the room and they never questioned me. After the Colonel General left we were taken to a

school near by and we were kept there over night and were joined by two Air Force GIs who were shot down in an air raid that night. (The night before.) The next day, we had one of the most unique experiences that I think I can recite.

We were to be taken to a prisoner of war prison in Dusseldorf and they had no transportation for us. We literally hitchhiked on whatever vehicles we could get transportation on from Krafeld, the thirty miles to Dusseldorf. We were on wagons, we were on dump trucks, we were on other kinds of trucks, we rode with people, we rode without people, it was a very interesting experience. It took us several hours.

When we got to Dusseldorf, we found out that the 8th Air Force had bombed Dusseldorf the night before. The streets were in a shambles, almost impassable. There was mortar and bricks and cement everywhere and there were also 200 to 500 pound bomb duds lying in the street. One of the GIs with us had an Air Force leather jacket. On the back of that was a Swastika going up in flames and fourteen bombs underneath it. As the four of us were herded through the city, the Germans saw this jacket and recognized us as American prisoners of war, and spat at us and cursed us and threw stones at us from a distance and so forth. We finally persuaded our friend to take his jacket and turn it inside out. And I very honestly was afraid too, but we were able to successfully walk through without any incidence other than glares and threats. Frankly, I felt we could have been shot in the back.

We were then put on a street car and rode across the Rhine River on a street car. I don't know why, but I thought that was a very humorous situation. ON the other side, we walked about a mile and we were taken to a dungeon, which was actually sixty feet underground. I'm not sure what it was originally, but it looked like a dungeon. No body else was there and we

were there, the four of us just kind of took care of ourselves and we were there all day and that night about midnight, all of a sudden a bunch of American GIs came in and they woke us up, I was wakened actually by the sound of Judge Henderickson's voice. What had happened was that the Judge and a bunch of our boys had made an attack upon the Germans. The Germans had realized that they were going to do this and mouse trapped them. Allowed them to come in and then had machine guns set up about fifteen inches above the ground level and fired at anything that moves. After they were trapped in this situation and after several efforts, to fight their way out they were forced to surrender. So all of a sudden the 84th Division had a little egg on its face. Captain Walter Downey, the Battery Commander, said that after that experience in the first week of serious combat he began to wonder what was going on in this war, he trained us for a couple of years, thought we had a pretty good organization and lost three of his officers in the first week of combat. He was not too thrilled, he actually went to bed, he was so upset about the situation for a while. We were there for several days in this dungeon, a very primitive situation. We were then put on a train for what was described as a two day trip to Stalag XI B in Fallingbostal which was up near Hannover north of Dusseldorf. We were put in box cars, fifty men to a car and locked in. The only opportunity to use the facilities or relieve ourselves was a hole in the floor in one corner of the box car. We were given enough food for two days, primarily black bread and horse meat and the trip actually took four days, the last two days we had no food. Conditions in that situation were really pretty rugged. As I said, once in a while the train would stop and we were allowed to relieve ourselves, but most of the time it was done at the hole at the other end of the car. At night, in order to sleep, twenty five of us would go to one end

of the car and stand up for two hours, the other twenty five would lay down and sleep for two hours. Then we would reverse and go the other way. Needless to say, we were not in the greatest condition when we arrived at Fallingbostal. When we got to Fallingbostal, we joined five thousand French prisoners of war. We were put into a separate compound and there we were joined by some other officers who had been captured and also some English and Canadian officers who had been captured up in Holland. We were kept there until the 19th of December. We were captured on the 26th of November so it's been about three weeks now that we have traveled around Germany as prisoners of war. This is, if you recall, just after the Battle of the Bulge which started on the 16th. The Germans briefly told us that they were shipping us out to Poland because they needed the space for the prisoners they had captured from the Battle of the Bulge. We were put on another box car, there were fourteen of us. Fourteen American officers in a box car with four German guards. We were put on a train and again we were told this was a two day trip and we were taken right out of Hanover back through Berlin, saw the horror devastation in Berlin, through Frankfurt on Oder, and in to Poland. We had a number of stops along the way, we were fed along the way periodically in rail yards and so forth where the Germans would have soup kitchens set up for their soldiers and they would also serve us. We were given food for four days and it actually took about six. We arrived in Poland at Altbergund, Stalag 64, on Christmas Eve. I think the most memorable situation that I can recall of that experience was when on Christmas Eve, we are a very small train going across the snow covered Polish rural landscape and the Christmas spirit actually took over that car. American soldiers, prisoners of war, and German guards started singing Christmas carols in American, and in German. It was as though the war had

gone away for an hour or so and one of the Germans was a non com who had a beautiful voice and he sang the song Lilly Marlene. I have never forgotten that song, and anytime I ever hear that song I think about that experience. It was a delightful experience. We arrived at Offlag 64 where we joined fifteen hundred other ground force officers. These were officers who were either infantry, artillery, engineers or what have you. For the first time, we felt a little bit of what shall I say, relief. Because once we got inside that barbed wire we were in an American officer run camp. The Germans controlled the exterior, they had the guards, they had the barbed wire and they called the shots, outside the barbed wire, but inside the barbed wire, we had a Senior American officer, a staff, we were organized just like any other American armed encampment in the United States. I will never forget the feeling of relief and so forth that I got when I got in that camp and first met the officers there.

Our Senior American officer was Colonel Paul Goode, a Colonel from the 28th Division, and every new arrival had to be cleared for security so that the Germans couldn't sneak a spy in there. They posted the names of the new arrivals every day. On Christmas Day, they posted our names. A very good friend of mine, a young man that I had caddied with during high school and gone to high school with, Herb Hayes, who had been captured previously came around to see me and he had also wrote a Christmas Card home to his wife that day and in it, he said Bob Corbin walked into camp today. Sometime around the 10th of February, 1945 this card arrived in Dayton and his wife immediately got ont he phone and called every Corbin in the phone book until she got hold of my Mother. This was the first that my Mother knew I was alive because naturally the Americans didn't know what had happened to me and they reported that I was missing in action.

My Father, having been a soldier in World War I knew that the chances of anybody missing in action coming out alive were slim and none had given up and had thought he had lost a son in the war. But my Mother never gave up and she prayed every night that her son would come through and fortunately her prayers were answered.

We had fairly decent conditions in this camp because we had Red Cross parcels available to us every week. Each man received a Red Cross parcel. I can't tell you what that means to a prisoner of war. I can't tell you how much I respect and supported the Red Cross through the years because of that experience. They would take the meat out of the parcels and that meat would be used to serve our meals in the mess hall. All the other things, the milk, chocolate, cheese, raisins, pate, anything else that was in that Red Cross parcel we were given and allowed to keep. so one of the ingenious things that prisoners of war do is to make the most out of what they have. So we use to take the cans that the Red Cross things come in and we made little ovens and little stoves out of them. We would use the waxed cardboard from the cartons as fuel and we would make chocolate cakes, chocolate puddings, various and sundry other things out of our bread that we got and our crackers that we had and the cheese and our raisins, and the chocolates, milk and so on like that. Interestingly, the milk was in a klim package. K-L-I-M which is milk spelled backwards and the many ingenious ways in which we used the packages, stretched them, to the best possible utilization. We even made ice cream by making a mix of chocolate and sugar and milk into a paste and going out and getting snow and mixing it in and making ice cream out of it. We had all kinds of activities, I learned to play bridge while I was in the camp. We played six hours a day, had a tournament there. Whenever a German ferret or soldier would come in, the first thing we would

do in the camp was to say "Goon coming in!" Everybody would stop what they were doing and stare at this Goon as we walked around looking at our barracks and I can tell you that the Germans always felt a little uncomfortable with forty or fifty pairs of eyes staring at him but this was our routine. We had an appall which was a count twice a day, morning and afternoon, in which they had to count us to make sure that we were all there.

I arrived there as I say, on the 24th of December and we had a tunnel. In one of the barracks, they were working on a tunnel. I was never in it, never saw it, because it was in another barracks. On January 21st, the Russians were starting their blitzkreige through Poland at the time and the Germans decided that they were going to march the prisoners of war out of Poland back into Germany. this was Hienrich Himmler's idea to try to have some kind of a negotiating point, a hostage type of situation that he could negotiate with, either the Russians or the Americans. So we were told to get ready to pack up and leave. We had several hours in which to do this, maybe a day at the most, I'm not sure and so we built little packs to carry on our backs and we were given a Red Cross parcel and those of us who didn't smoke were allowed to keep our stash of cigarettes. We took those with us. We got ready to leave and our officers had decreed that those men who had worked on the tunnel could hide in the tunnel and so we stood there and finally went back in our barracks for two hours. ON January 21st, the Germans tried to find the last twenty members of the prisoners of war cadre there who were hiding out in the tunnel. They were unable to find them and finally we started out. We were told we were going to walk sixty miles west to Stettin which is on the Oder River on the border between Poland and Germany. I said there is NO WAY we could walk sixty miles. I had never

walked that far in my life before, and I figured there was no way we could do it. But about fifteen hundred prisoners of war, one hundred fifty guards from a Latvian SS group. We walked out of that camp that day and walked about fifteen kilometers to a farm where we were bedded down. I thought I would be real smart because it was very cold, it was zero outside, there was six inches of snow on the ground and so when we got to this farm there was some sheep in one of the barns and it was very warm where the sheep were whereas in the barn area where we were going to be bivouacked but it was going to be very cold and so I thought I'm going to be very smart, I'm going to sleep with the sheep. The unfortunate part about it was that the sheep didn't sleep. They were awake all night. We tossed and turned and so forth. The next day we walked another fifteen or twenty kilometers and that day we could hear the Russian's small arms fire and the German's small arms fire which means that we were within a mile or so of the actual fighting that was going on. The next morning we went to a small town and we were again bivouacked in some barns and the next morning we awoke to find out that our Germans were gone. We had one German officer with us, the Oberst Lieutenant, Lt. Colonel for our protection in case we were accosted by German soldiers and our guards were sent back to fight the Russians. We were later told that they set up an ambush and as the Russians came through the small town we had just cleared, they wiped out a detachment of Russians. Five hundred of our boys took off that day. There was no one to keep them from it, I could have taken off too but I choose to stay together because I felt that a thousand American prisoners of war would be a lot safer than walking around the country side in Poland where I didn't speak the language, where I didn't know what was going to happen to me and therefore I opted to stay. My buddy, Lt. Kauffman did take off and leave. I later on found that

those people who did take off and got through and made it were sent back to Warsaw by the Russians and then were taken by train to Odesa, Greece and there they were put on a steamer finally and they got home some time in June which was actually after I got back to America. They weren't sent back until the war was actually over. They were encouraged to fight. One of my colleagues, Representative Russ Guerra, who was also captured and who escaped back to the Russian lines actually did some fighting with the Russians until he discovered he was doing most of the fighting and they were watching him. He decided that was for the birds, and left and went on back. So we stayed together and we kept walking and instead of going to Stettin, which was where the Russians were and due west of us, the Germans started walking us north toward the Baltic Sea along the eastern side of the Oder Estuary and we would walk fifteen or twenty kilometers a day, we would sleep in barns or schools or barracks, once or twice a barracks and our food during this stretch was an inch of black bread a day, some ersatz coffee, some soup and ten or twelve boiled potatoes which was what they fed to pigs in the large collective farms in western Poland.

They took us through the forest, they took us through the back roads and then they took us across the Oder Estuary back into Germany. The Russians by-passed us and went directly to Stettin and didn't bother coming north because that was not a militarily acceptable target and once they got to Oder and Stettin they stopped. Well, the Germans actually got us to the Oder and got us across the Oder and we walked for forty two days, covered about five hundred kilometers, which is about three hundred fifty miles. We started out with about fifteen hundred American officers and five hundred of us finished. The five hundred who took off on the third day were gone and then on two different occasions, the Germans sent out people who could no

longer walk, who had foot problems or who were ill from some disease or other to camps like Buchanwald or Dachau. I had a serious time about two thirds of the way through the trip when I had amoebic dysentery and almost didn't make it. When the last group of two hundred fifty were to go out, there was room for one more and there were three of us in the dispensary being considered for that one spot. The Doc who was a good friend of mine because I had given him some pipe tobacco and he was a pipe smoker, offered me a seat on that train. It wasn't a seat exactly, you were in a box car again. "Doc," I said, "instead of going on the train, why don't you let me ride in the food truck today," which was a truck that leaped frogged column and prepared our food, "I think if I had a day of rest, I'd be alright." So he did. The next day, as we were walking through the next town after I had rested that one day on the food truck we found some Red Cross parcels on a sleigh that was being pulled by some Germans, we became very excited and our officers demanded that those Germans find those Red Cross parcels and get them for us. The Germans did. They got one parcel per each two POWs involved in that trip. I was sharing everything at that time with a friend named Lt. Dallas Smith from Baltimore, Maryland, and I told Smitty, you can have anything you want in that Red Cross parcel but I get the Kraft cheese. I took the Kraft cheese and that bound me up and stopped the dysentery.

Some interesting things about the trip. We buddied up together, two fellows would buddy up together because we would not have sufficient blankets to keep ourselves warm individually so everybody had a buddy. Mine was Dallas Smith. We shared everything equally. Whatever we had, the other guy had. We had a technique whereby when we had some margarine, we would take our bread and one of us would cut the bread would spread the margarine on it then he would hold it out to the other to choose which one he wanted.

this was done to prevent anybody from accusing the other of taking the bigger piece or whatever and therefore we forded problems at this time. One day, in Poland, we came into a small town. All of a sudden, the Polish people realized these were Americans and within minutes, they had opened up their doors and literally whisked hundreds of us in to their homes. I went into a home with two old Polish ladies and they hugged me and kissed me, saying, "Americanish, Americanish." They handed me a loaf of bread and wanting to reciprocate I gave them a pack of cigarettes. They immediately gave me another loaf of bread and so I gave them another pack of cigarettes and these two loaves of bread became invaluable to Smitty and I in the trip across Poland.

Another time a young boy came up as we were having our morning break, and he says, "haben sie seifa?" ("Do you have soap?") "Yah, Yah," I said. He reached in his pocket and pulled out a handful of onions. I gave him a bar of soap that I had gotten out of the Red Cross and he reached in his other pocket and got another handful of onions. Well, that night when we cooked our potatoes and we added a few onions in there, I can tell you that the Polish potatoes with onions were far better than just plain old Polish potatoes. It was like a feast.

The reason I got the dysentery was because I drank some water out of a well. We never did that, we were always very careful that we boiled all the water we drank. The only time I made the mistake, I got amoebic dysentery and that almost did me in, I lost about thirty pounds in a fifteen day period.

We arrived in a little town called Parchim and we stayed there for a couple of days and rested. We were put on a train and taken down to Hammelburg to Stalag XIII B, the infamous Hogan's Heros Stalag that you've

seen on television so much. When we arrived there, we joined about one thousand GI officers who had been captured in the Battle of the Bulge and thirty five hundred Serbians. We arrived on March 5, 1945. Another four day train trip. How we ever were able to take a train from Parchim which is north of Berlin to Bavaria where Hammelberg is located across the heartland of Germany with the air raids that the Americans were putting on all the trains in Germany at that time defies logic, but we did it. When we arrived at Hammelburg, we found that the conditions were very poor, the food was terrible, we had lice, a terrible situation and no Red Cross parcels. In discussing the lice, I can't tell you what a horrible feeling it is to feel a creature crawling across you skin. Every night before we turned out the light and went to bed, everybody would take their GI underwear and turn it inside out and go through and pick off all the lice they could find. They would also reach under their arms and so on and do the same thing. On March 27th, all of a sudden we heard a fire fight outside of the camp. We knew the Americans were across the Rhine River and that they were within about fifty miles of us. General George Patton had sent a task force of tankers from the 4th Armored Division in a daring attempt to rescue us out of that camp. Whether or not it was done because his son-in-law, Lt. Colonel John Waters was a prisoner of war in that camp or not, we will never know. But Colonel Waters was there and he and a German officer in attempting to protect us from being shot inadvertently by the tankers were proceeding under a flag of truce toward the Americans trying to advise them where we were located and a SS soldier shot him in the rear end, in the anus and severely injured him. He was in terrible pain. As you can imagine anybody shot right in that area would be. The Americans fought their way into camp chasing the German guards away. About seven hundred of us jumped on to

their vehicles or walked out of camp. I had always felt that if we had ever got outside of the barbed wire with a reasonable amount of time that you would have a fifty-fifty chance of escaping and getting back to American lines. So I jumped on a half track. the half track I was on immediately broke down about a mile outside of camp but the Americans had foreseen this and they had a vehicle that immediately hooked on. It was like a wrecker to the half track and we started out after the column chasing the column down the road. Now you've heard of nights being so black that you couldn't see your hand in front of your face, this was one of those nights. We were going down the road, I'm sitting on the front of this half track holding on to the hood latch with my one finger, my legs dangling down in front, between the half track and the wrecker at thirty five to forty miles an hour and I can't see anything. Neither can anybody else. We finally catch up with the column and as we do, I see some guys coming back with some bread and we had run into a German PX supply truck, so I ran up and grabbed two loaves of their German bread out of their truck, brought it back and put it in my pack. We started up and immediately ran into a road block right outside of town. Two panzerfausts (basookas) wiped out three tanks, twenty men were killed and we immediately retreated back the way we had come, back through the village, and into a bivouac area. About 4:00 in the morning, Colonel Goode called us together and told us that he felt that if we wanted, and had a gun, we could stay and help the tankers fight the Germans who were closing in on us. We were welcome to do that. If not, the rest of us were going to walk ten miles back to camp and give ourselves up or we could try to escape. I went to Lt. Jay Drake of the 104th Division who had been one of my good buddies, and I said, "Jay, let's take off." As I said, I always felt that if we were outside of camp we had a fifty-fifty chance of escap-

ing. Jay said, "Okey." I went to Dallas Smith, and said, "Give me the water bottle." We had a little green water bottle that we kept our water in and he says "Why?". I say, "Jay and I are taking off." He says, "No." I say, "What do you mean?" and he says, "I'm going with you." I said, "Alright, come on, let's go." and so we took off through the woods. About an hour later, artillery shells started landing in the trees near us, not exactly where we were, but near us. The Germans were starting to go after the tankers, who eventually were all captured. We walked through the woods and the woods were filled with people. Mostly, GIs trying to escape. We came within two hundred yards of the German machine gun nest and the Germans weren't going Halt, Halt, Bang; the Germans were going Bang, Bang, Halt! We decided that it was too risky to be walking around during the daylight in this woods with the Germans waiting for us so to speak with their machine guns. So we found a fir tree and we dug out underneath the fir tree. We laid there all day long and put the leaves up and built kind of a fortress for ourselves and we stayed there. Germans walked through the woods, Americans walked through the woods. We stayed there. Finally about 8:00 that night, we took off. We circled around away from where the German machine gun nest was and probably got about a half mile to the south of that and when we got to the edge of the woods, we've got a big problem. Here was a big open field in front of us and a full moon. This was about 10:00 at night so we sat down cause we didn't know what else to do and we literally fell asleep, because we had been up for two nights and two days. We woke about midnight and we looked out and the good Lord had come through again. There was a fog there, so under the cover of the fog, we walked away from the Germans in the woods and out into the German country side. We walked about three or four hours until it started getting light in the morning. We

found another wooded area and we hid out and we spent the day there. The second day, all day we could hear people traveling on a road we knew there was a river up there, there was a bridge and it was guarded cause we could hear the German guard talk to people as they came across the bridge. So we knew we had to get across that river some way or other. When darkness came, we started walking toward the road. It was so dark again that we almost walked into a German army unit walking down that road. We came within fifty yards of the road before realizing there were Germans fifty yards ahead of us quietly walking down this road. So we stopped and waited until they had gone by and then we went across the road and we got down to the river. We searched up and down the banks of the river trying to find some kind of a raft or boat or something, and there was none. So we found some logs and the Germans had given us Polish overcoats, we took those Polish overcoats and put the logs through the sleeves and created a little raft. We took our packs put them on there, took our clothes off and Dallas Smith, I'll never forget this, jumped in the cold water naked. He took that raft across the river. Then he came back to get our clothes, grabbed our shoes and we put our clothes, tied them up in a bundle and put them up over our head. I was not a very good swimmer and so I bounced across this river which was about twenty five yards wide. It was very swift current. When we got to the other side, much to my dismay, I found out that I didn't have my shoes, that I had Jay's shoes and he had my shoes and he had been swimming across and my shoes were all wet and his shoes were all dry. But my clothes were all dry and so I split up some of my dry clothes with them and I put on my wet shoes. On the other side of the river was a cliff. We had to climb up that cliff. We got about half way up and we were exhausted. When we had been with the tankers for awhile, we had gotten some of their ten-in one rations,

and one of them was a can of bacon so we took the bacon out and sliced up three slices of bread and put three slices of raw bacon on there and ate it. Now I know that today, that sounds terrible, and I would never do that today, but I can honestly tell you that was one of the greatest tasting pieces of bacon that I ever had. We got up on top, we walked for about four or five hours and we came to another little village. It was raining while we were walking, we were quite damp both from the fiver and from the rain and uncomfortable. We decided we wanted to try to find some kind of shelter for the night and so we came to another river and we really didn't want to swim that river so we looked around and we found an abandoned farm house and an abandoned little barn behind it. We found a ladder and we climbed into the loft of this little barn, like a garage, and pulled the ladder in behind us, laid down and went to sleep. We woke up about 9:30 in the morning and one of the things the tankers had told us was when they released us was that they had also released a thousand Russian prisoners of war while they were coming to us and these Russian prisoners of war had gotten into a German PX warehouse and looted the heck out of it. While we were looking out of our little barn door, we watched the Germans capture about twenty or twenty five of these Russians about two hundreds yards away from us in this little valley that we were in. It was a beautiful little mountain valley I might say. We noticed there was a railroad that went across in front of us and there was a road that went up the side of the valley and just north of were we were. Had we gone another fifty yards that the river split and became two small streams. We were calculating that we could follow the stream that went along the left side of the valley and have cover to get across the valley and we saw a bridge on the other side and we figured we'd just go across that bridge and we'd be back in the woods the next night and we'd be

able to get away. While we're watching, down the road on the other side of the valley came a small contingent of four Germans and a non com and out from under this bridge we were going to go across came a German with a birp gun. This German was guarding this bridge. The German soldiers proceeded to mine this little bridge and while they are putting the mines in the bridge the non com proceeded to walk over to the house where we are. Now we are about a quarter of a mile or half mile away from where they are I would say and we are in the barn and we see him walk around this house, well we knew the house was completely boarded up and he couldn't get in because we had tried the night before and all of a sudden we realize we are trapped in this little barn and we didn't like that feeling and so we were ready to get back out of there when we picked up the ladder and we started to the door because we though he had gone back to his buddies and I look through a crack in the barn and I whispered, "Hold it!" Because here came the soldier again and he stopped right at the corner of our little building and walking down the railroad track in front of us was another German and our non com yells, "Hallo, haben sie eine cigarettan?" ("Hello, do you have a cigarette?") The German says "Yah, Yah." The non com goes down, lite up a cigarette and the German goes his way back across the valley and the civilian goes down the railroad track and is out of sight. We threw down the ladder and proceeded to jump out of the barn. It was only eight or ten feet from the ground. Much to my horror on the ground were my GI gloves. Once again, God was really looking out for me because if the German doesn't see the other German and ask him for a cigarette, looks down and sees my gloves, I might not be here today. I can tell you that I was standing right inside the door with a knife that I had obtained in my hand and if the German had decided to look into that barn, one of us was going to die. Fortunately it went the

other way, I picked up my gloves and started back up into the woods. As I got just outside the barn I discovered candy laying everywhere. Cartons of candy, one carton probably a foot square and two feet long was filled with candy and I picked it up in my arms and Jay and Smitty are running up the hill and I am staggering up this hill behind them. I get about two hundred yards up the hill and I am exhausted so they come back and relieve me of the candy. We go up and find a group of fir trees that provide good cover and we went into there and sat down. A P47 comes over and does a little bombing in the village and we are yelling at it like fools. It's a wonder it didn't come down and strafe us but it didn't.

So knowing that the area where we were planning to go across was being monitored by the Germans, we walked about a mile or two north along this little stream and found a spillway in the stream with some little logs across it. One of our other colleagues had put these logs there we later found out when we got back into American lines, across there and we walked across the spillway, went across the valley and up the other side and so forth.

The third, fourth and fifth days were rather uneventful. We were in basically virgin forest territory saw no people, came across a bicycle one day, never saw anybody with the bicycle. We would walk during the night, hide out during the day. At night, we would sleep three abreast and you slept on your side so that each guy would sleep on his right side for a while and then one guy turned over everybody turned over. The guy who slept in the middle, had the best deal because he was kept warm by the two guys on the outside and I know it sounds very suggestive but I can honestly tell you that that wasn't a problem in that situation. We had some deer look at us one day and so forth.

During this period of time I think I developed a concept of a divine being who was looking over us and manipulating us like puppets on the end of a string and I have held to that feeling for years ever since that day.

On the sixth day, we were walking in the woods one morning early about 4:00 and we hear an artillery shell that lands near us and we immediately dove to cover and stayed there. About 6:00 in the morning we crept out and walked about another half mile, came to a hedge row and we could hear vehicles down in the valley, now we are in terrain similar to the eastern Ohio, West Virginia area where we have foot hills so to speak. I wanted to go out in an exposed top of one of these hills and look down the valley to see if that wasn't an American vehicle down there cause it sounded like an American vehicle. The reason I say an American vehicle is that an American vehicle had a smooth sounding motors where the German's ran very rough like a diesel motor runs. Jay and I were arguing whether or not I should go or not. He didn't want me to go because he thought I was exposing myself unnecessarily. While we are arguing, a German staff car pulls up to the exact spot where I intended to go and a truck full of German soldiers and four or five German motorcyclists and about twenty soldiers come to that spot. They looked around and then left. If I had gone out to where I had planned on going, those Germans would have seen me right there and probably would have shot me. At this point and time we noticed that the artillery fire had ceased. We had such speculation about this. The war was over and so forth but every once in a while we could hear shell fire but it wasn't as concentrated as before because before when we walked at night, we could walk without any concern toward the shell fire and knew we were walking west. We also had a compass to help us find our way I might add.

On the seventh night as we crouched beside the side of a road we came

across a big electrical cable. We almost cut that cable, later on found out that that was an American cable, we didn't know that at the time, we didn't bother to find out. We walked a little farther, about a half an hour or so very dark, one of those nights where you couldn't see anything in front of you and all of a sudden our woods stopped and went to the south. No more woods in front of us. We walked about ten yards stood there talking, should we move forward or should we follow the woods cause we had made a practice to stay in the woods at all times because of the cover it gave us. We decided that we would take a chance and walk forward. We had taken about five steps when we heard Germans whispering. We knew that they were within ten, twenty or twenty five yards of us whatever, there were Germans. They knew we were there because we had spoken out loud. Question is, what do you do? You can't see them, it's so dark, you can't see them and I said "we can't stay here, let's get up and walk away, if they start shooting, hit the ground." We got up and walked and they didn't do anything. We walked about half a mile when we came into a little gully. Over on the other side of the gully, I noticed somebody moving, it was a German civilian, he had a gunny sack on his back and it made him look like he was about eight feet tall. He comes walking toward us, says "Morgan," we said, "Morgan," "Morgan," "Morgan," which is "Good Morning" in German and we went our way and he went his way. We had come to a town and we were circling around this town and since they had seen us we decided to go in a different direction so we went north and we found a pine thicket. We hid out in the pine thicket. We woke up the next morning and found out that we had found ourselves a thicket that was five yards off a trail that was used by German workers to go back and forth in the fields that they worked at. About 8:00 in the morning we noticed a patrol of heavily armed Germans walking to the east about fifteen

yards away from us and we heard a tank down in the valley. I wanted to sneak down and take a look at this tank and we were out of food by now. We had no more food, our food was gone. I started down dodging from tree to tree but I was just too exposed that I could not take the chance, so I came back. We knew we were getting close to something but we didn't know exactly what so the next night we only walked about a mile or two and we came to a barn and we climbed up into the haymow of the barn and went way back in the corner of the haymow and way down in the corner and hid out and went to sleep. We were awakened in the morning by a farmer and his two kids getting their feed for their stock out of the barn. They were about ten feet away from us but because we had hidden out in the corner of the haymow, they hadn't seen us. We sat there all day long and they had a dog that could smell us up in the barn and all day long the dog growled and acted very peculiar and they kept telling him to shut up and we kept saying "Yeah dog, shut up!" but they never found us. That night we climbed down out of the barn about 9:00 after it was dark, found some raw potatoes down there and ate them. We started walking, we were just really in terrible shape. We could only walk two, three or four hundred yards at the most and that would take us ten or fifteen minutes and then we would have to rest. As we walked that night, we found out that we were walking out of the woods, and we were getting into a big valley and what we were coming into was the Mainz river Valley which as a huge, huge valley. We found out that daylight starts about 5:00 in the morning and there was no more trees so we walked back about a half mile back into the trees and Jay said, "You guys stay here, I want to reconnoiter a little bit," so he did. He had been gone about fifteen minutes and we saw movement in the woods a little ways away so I whistled and Smitty says "That's not Jay!" Sure enough, it was three young

German boys. They came and we lay perfectly still, they came with in fifteen yards of us, crouched down and got a cache out of the ground, lit up a cigarette were there for about five minutes, never said "Hello", never recognized we were there, never saw us, I don't think, and left. Jay came back shortly thereafter and he said, "I have found a hiding place for us in the woods." He had also almost gotten caught. He had come upon a cabin and he was reconnoitering around the cabin when the owner and his wife came back. He was able to get away without being seen. We found this hiding place in the edge of the woods which overlooked the valley that had been a german machine gun nest where three days before the Germans and the - Americans had had a tremendous fire fight. We sat there and could look out over the valley and were watching the farmer plow the fields, a very domesticated situation. We looked out about three quarters of a mile away, I would say, there was a road and down this road were coming vehicles, were watching and all of a sudden, I said, "Ya know, those look like American vehicles. That looks like an American jeep, a two and a half ton truck, a half track, like a weapons carrier, and so on and so forth." Smitty who was our resident pessimist said "Oh no, those were captured in the Battle of the Bulge and are being used by the Germans." Well, I said, "Ya know, the road kind of circles to the left from here and the woods kind of go close to the road, let's take a walk down through these woods and see if we can't get close to that road and find out." So we started walking down the road, we came upon a deserted Pill Box, went in and found some candy on the floor and just ate it, dirt and all, because we were so hungry and we are walking through the trees. The trees were shattered from an artillery barrage and two civilians who absolutely ignored us so we walked on down and we got about fifty yards from the road and a big two and a half ton truck goes by

with a big white star on it. We knew that was an American truck, so we ran down to the road and the first vehicle that comes by is a First Cavalry Jeep and there we are, Polish overcoats, ten days growth of beard jumping up and down and saying, "Hey, here we are, we made it, we got back!" A guy comes out of his jeep with his 45 pointed at us and he says, "Who in the Hell are you?! What the hell are you!" We said, "We're the American prisoners of war, we escaped from the prisoner of war camp." I showed him my dog tags and he said, "Yeah, we been looking for you guy." He said, "About half a mile down the road, there is an engineer headquarters, they'll take care of you." He didn't offer to drive us down there, he said walk down there. So we walked down there and when we got to headquarters we found out that we were thirty five miles behind the forward elements. We had been in American lines for two and a half days. When I had first heard that tank when we almost ran into that group of Germans in the staff car, we were in the American lines at that time. They put us up, they deloused us, they couldn't find any normal uniforms, the only thing they had was some tropical uniforms they had that were available so we put those on and went to bed. Ate, so on and so forth. I couldn't sleep. Now, all the time that I was escaping from the camp, when the three of us were in the woods we had no trouble sleeping at night, just trouble when we all turned over and so on like that but that first night back I couldn't sleep. My nerves were all a jingle, jangle. We found out that we were three of twenty five of the seven hundred people that had tried to make it, who had made it out. We later on found out that our buddies who walked back to camp had been taken to Nurenberg and in the marshalling yards of Nurenberg, the 8th Air Force came by and bombed them. One hundred thirty one men were killed and four hundred and some were injured. I'd have to say that I wouldn't take a million

dollars for the experience of being a prisoner of war and what I learned out of it and what it taught me about the true value of life, but I wouldn't give you two cents to do it over again. I lost thirty pounds in those four months, weighed one hundred thirty five pounds when I was recaptured by the time I got home one month later. V-Day, I weighed one hundred eighty three.

We could have gone back to the hospitals which is what we should have done and been flown back to the United States but we were smarter than that. We decided to go back to the Re-Po Depot route. The Re-Po Depots are the replacement depots where they brought the replacements up to replace the casualties. We got on a train and went back finally to Paris where we were bivouacked in a hotel and that night we went over to the officers mess and we didn't get enough to eat so we went over to the Mayflower Hotel which was the Red Cross headquarters and we were sitting in a coffee and donut bar there talking to the bartender and telling him how much we appreciated the Red Cross and how valuable the Red Cross had been to us and so on. He disappeared and a few minutes I looked over my shoulder and here comes the Director, the Assistant Director of the Red Cross in the Mayflower and said "We understand that you're escaped prisoners of war and that the Red Cross was very important to you." and we said, "Yeah, that's right." The director said, "Would you mind coming up and telling us your story." "Well, I guess not." This was about 8:00 so we go upstairs and tell them our story and everything and we wanted to get out and see the bright lights of Paris, and "Oh no, you can't do that! The chef's prepared a five course dinner for you." So at 11:00 at night, we had to sit down to a five course dinner and took til 12:30 to eat. By that time, the metros had stopped and we had to walk back to the hotel. But they were excited about it and were very

thrilled. The next day we were to take the train to Camp Lucky Strike and get on the boat and to back to America. On the reverse Re-Po Depot trip, one of the things that happened to us wherever we were taken they gave us a PX ration. They wanted to be nice to us. The PX ration was candy, cigarettes and toiletry articles and so on. Plus the fact that while we were in the city of Worms waiting for a train to take us back to Paris we stayed in the Mayor's house. Jay and Smitty picked up some souveriers as we were packing up to leave the hotel, the chamber maid comes in to clean up the room and I said to Dallas, (Dallas and I were staying in one room and Jay was staying in another), "Dallas, why don't we get rid of some of this junk we have accumulated?" Cause we'd accumulated all kinds of stuff. Dallas said, "That's a good idea." So we packed u all the stuff we didn't want and gave it to the chamber maid. She looks at us real funny, sits down on the bed and Smitty says, "Parti, Parti, go on, go on." She looks at us very quizzically. Nobody had ever given her that much loot before without asking for something in return. Jay said, "Send her over to me!" He loads her up too. About ten minutes later, we go down the elevator, come out of the elevator on the first floor and here she is, backed up against the wall of the hotel with the hotel manager shouting at her about stealing all of this stuff and she says "No, No, they gave it to me." He says, "Did you giver her this?" We said "Yeah." What we had given her had amounted to enough bargaining power on the black market to last her for a year or two and the hotel manager couldn't believe that we had given it to her, but we did. We got on the train and went to Lucky Strike, got on the boat and came back to America.

That's the story of Bob Corbin's prisoner of war experience. As I said, I wouldn't take a million dollars for what I learned, because I learned what

true values are in life but I wouldn't give you two cents to do it over again.

Thank you.

Record of travel from OfLag 64 Schubin to OfLag XIII-B Hammelberg

Date	Destination	Distance	Weather	Remarks
Jan 21, 45	Wegheim	21 km	-20°	150 Sick Couldn't continue trip
22	Eichfeld	24 "	"	"
23	Charlottenburg	7 "	"	Liberated + released
24	* Lobzen	9 "	"	3/4 loaf Bread
25	Flatow	19 "	"	1/4 " "
26	Rest			
27	Jastrow	18 "	10°	1/4 Lb. Oleo. 100 sent to Hosp.
28	Zippnow	16 "	Blizzard	
29	OfLag II-B	8 "	"	80 left in Sick
30	Machlin	12 "	-0	
31	Templeburg	14 "	Blizzard	1 Loaf Bread
Feb. 1	Henrichdorf	7 "	0°	1 Loaf Bread 1/4 lb Oleo.
2	Zulshagen	19 "	"	
3	Rest			
4	Gienow	17 "	+0	
5	Zeitlitz	20 "	"	100 Shipped out sick
6	Regenwolde	20 "	"	
7	Lebbin	20 "	"	
8	Stuchow	20 "	"	
9	Zoldekow	20 "	"	
10	Dierekow	14 "	"	
11	Neuendorf	15 "	"	
12		16 "	"	Air Corps base 1 loaf bread
13				
14	Garz	9 "	+0	
15	Stolpe	15 "	"	200 Shipped out Sick
16	Rest			
17	Reizow	23 "	"	
18	Dandelin	27 "	"	Red Cross Parole 1/4 loaf Bread
19	Rest			
20	Zemmin	11 "	20°	1/2 loaf bread
21	Wolkow	21 "	"	Red Cross " 1/4 loaf Bread
22	Rest			
23	Neukolen	17 "	"	1/4 loaf bread
24	Basedow	19 "	"	1/2 " "
25	Cramen	22 "	"	
26	Flauerhagen	22 "	"	1/2 " "
27	Rest			
28	Lutheran	17 "	"	1/2 Red Cross Parole
	Zigalekow	14 "	"	1/4 " " 1 Loaf bread
Mar. 1-5	Waiting transportation			
6	Parchim	11 "		
7-8	Trip by Train			
9	OfLag XIII-B Hammelberg			Searched + debused took all day and all night, in Barracks 800 on 10th
18 Days		574 Km		

German issue food 1 Cup soup 6 potatoes some days

left Schubin 1301 officers 11.7 A.M.
 Arrived Hammelberg 23 officers 6.7 P.M.

Mar. 10th Erzatz Turnip potato - Green Horserd. ² More. Cheas. 1/2 loaf Bread
 No issue
 Mar 11 " Stew
 Mar 12 " Cabbage Soup - Purple passion 1/4 loaf Bread
 Mar 13 " Turnip potato soup - Purple passion 1/4 loaf Bread
 Mar 14 " Turnip potato soup - Purple passion 1/4 loaf Bread
 Mar 15 " Stew
 Mar 16 " Potatoes + Turnip Soup - Green, Horserd
 Mar 17 " Buttered Beets - Turnip Soup. Cheas. 1/2 loaf
 Mar 18 " Stew
 Mar 19 " Turnip potato soup - Green, Horserd 1/2 loaf
 Mar 20 " Red Soup Turnip Soup 1/2 loaf
 Mar 21 " Turnip Green Horserd
 Mar 22 " Stew
 Mar 23 " Noodle Soup - Red, Green Horserd
 Mar 24 " Turnip
 Mar 25 " Turnip
 Mar 26 " Red Soup Turnip
 Mar 27 " Turnip
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up all night, deloused 5 AM. Somy reception.
 General moving in. Arranging
 General Police. Camp very dirty. Can hear Art
 no change. No Red Cross Packages. Rumors
 lots of Rumors. Art. No
 1 Pk for 4 People. Given by English, moral Bom
 made Stew. full for first time in weeks. With Coffee.
 Beets good. Good Allied Air Shows. P 47 Squad down at
 Church. sunbaths. News Good. Lots of Rumors. Art. No
 Art. Moving farther South. Sound like. Near worms. Sound
 Art all night. Lots of Bombing. And Near I think
 Art Attacks Nearly Continuous. Formation. Car Saw
 I. Chas. broke. Mired. Moral low. Very
 Lots of talk about Germans. Art. Moving. Art. Moving
 Believe will be liberated in this week. (Germans)
 Please shut up. Rumors. Good. Good. Art. Moving
 Rumors. A Spanish Full Coffee. Art. Moving. Art. Moving
 Art. Moving. Hope deals for. Art. Moving. Art. Moving
 Art. Moving. Watched. Art. Moving. Art. Moving
 Rumors we move out to tomorrow. Hope they are and hope
 only 20 miles away. Hope they are and hope
 don't move. This is to good in distance. Hope
 Lots of Germans going back in distance. Hope
 setting up defense on hill to our front. Hope
 Names of those who think they can make
 I get on it. better chance to get away. Hope
 A.M. To. Hope. Chas. move. Hope
 Americans must be close. hear fire
 Americans must be close. hear fire

liberated Art - that is the
 German Gen. turned the Camp over
 to our Col Goode the SAA, and he left

fall in 3rd march. we moved back to
 where the tanks were only 11erz + 6 1/2 Tracks. we loaded as many as possible
 started to move, about 1130, went about 10 miles and ran into a German Art. Rd block
 lost two tanks decided to try another route. lost another. Then about 4 AM. decided to
 set up defense. Germans hit us just after day light knocked out all vehicles. am
 now playing hide + seek in the forest. Rork, Dave + I. its about 300 pm.
 Recaptured. returned to oflag. several got killed and lots wounded.
 more recaptured animals. rumor move today. by train 50 to a car.
 moved by train toward nuenburg. our planes dropped bombs near oflag.
 Sat 31 Still on train. Air very active (scared as hell)
 Sun 1 (APRIL Fool) (EASTER.) Arrived oflag XIII-D Nuenburg. Air still active though
 God were off the train, we had 5t in our (40 + 8) car.
 mon 2- more of our Groupe arrived - dont believe any one escaped, News of
 others killed or wounded. Rumor we move from here. Art. Acti.
 moving fast. Guess well move about to-morrow. Spear head reported
 about 50 miles away. hope I make it this time I take off
 marched to - Pfeiferhutte 10 km.
 wed. 4 - left oflag at 1330 had 1 Red Cross parcels issued to us. Bombed By P 51's same dead + woun.
 slept in woods by road. No food issued by Germans. Cold + clear (I am getting nervous in the sea
 Thur. 5 - Walked 10 km. ^{Nuenmarkt} stood in mess line from 1230 for 200 am then walked 10 more km before daylight. var.
 all night. 1 Cup Soup. 1/3 loaf Bread. no sleep. Clothing wet. all wet. Moral bad. No Art. back
 rain all day. Got 1/3 Red Cross parcels. Hiked. Beets. Beans. Blat on bench. Stiff As hell.
 Fri 6 - Left Group. did some trading. Got Tummy full. Slept in Barn. still in vicinity. Beilmeries.
 Sat 7 - Still near Beilmeries still living off country. Hear art. and cant be far off. Germans think
 was picked up yesterday. with different Groupe. Had 17 pan cakes for breakfast. This is a picnic
 moved 37 km to Neu stadt. Brew 1/2 Red Cross parcels. No German issue since Thursday.
 moved to Neay by born 3 km. dont mind staying the duration here. plenty to eat. Art. Art.
 Germans say eight more days hope theyre right. Split with Hart + Bill.
 moved 17 km 1/3 loaf J-F. Red Pk. I got 10 lb. car in wine. Lots of Air Craft Saw P 28's knockout

Dates	Events
Dec. 4. 1943	Left Camp P.H. Sailed from Hampden Rds. on Liberty Ship. Co. D. Plus med Det. 24-D. 276 EM. Food lousy. Few Men sick. Quiet Crossing.
Dec. 20. "	Landed Casablanca N. Africa. Very dirty stay of two days.
Dec. 22 "	Took Train for Masseno. 100 miles S. of Oran. 30 miles S. of (Sidi-bel-Abbas)
Dec. 24 "	Arrived Masseno. Walked 5 miles to Camp. Cold as hell at night.
Dec. 26 "	Left Masseno for Oran on Adv. Detail.
Dec. 28 "	Left Oran for Italy.
Dec. 31 "	Arrived Napoli. Staging Area #2 Boscutia.
Jan 1-1944	Arrived At front first Air Raid. One German shot down. Sent to 2 nd Bn. 135 Inf. 34 Div. AT San Vittoria. Like & Admire Capt Imar hund Co. H. A Real Soldier. Tough as hell.
Jan 4-1944	Attack Began on San Pietro to Rapido to Cassino. Rough Going. lots of Casualties, Several Narrow escapes. Attack Beginning to bog down. left front night of 15 th
Jan 16. 1944	Joined 5 th British Div. for Attack on Garigliano River. Crossed River Night of 17 th in the First Boat ran into mine field. other Bns. failed to cross or kicked Back. Amphibious Landing failed. Were stuck for 4 days By our Selves Across River. 20 th Attack on Minturno Successful. (Hunter wounded) Relieved on 27 th Returned to div. Control Caserta sent to -
Jan 29. 1944	Piedemonte-di-Alife Division tra Arno.
Feb. 2 "	Sent to Naples with Ray to stage the div through.
Feb. 19 "	Returned to Piedemonte. outfitting. missing an experience in Control Minturno on Adv. detail. to Relieve British. troops Arrive the Night of -
MAR 1 "	Relieved Br. 2 nd Cameronians, occupied defensive positions. Remained on line until
April 10 "	Rest Camp Casanova until
Apr. 22 "	occupied reserve position Castelforte
Apr. 28 "	moved up on mt. Damiano overlooking Castelforte remained until the Attack on
May 11 "	until June 14. Italian General offensive to break the Germans Control in Italy Commenced
	our Bn. Took mt Damiano, assisted French in Castelforte. Spigno, Itri, Fondz
	mt. ALTOS. Roccasecca. Mt Grande. then By motor thru Arzia and took Cori, Velletri,
	And on the morning of June 4 Attack and entered ROME, Continue attack Next
	Day. (Bark wounded) Pushed on seven days. Were Relieved
June 15	Arrived Albano South of ROME. Rest Camp
June 28	Moved North to Part of Rome (Chirichechia
July 7	--to-- 21 Offensive thru Volterra (Rough Going) (OTT-Killed) Villa-Magna, Lesoli Balconavisi
	(RHEILLY killed) to ARNO River.
Aug 2	Rest Camp. Volterra.
Aug 14	EMPOLI for River Crossing (Never took place)
Aug 19	Rest Camp. hivorno + Florence
Sept 15	Move to front south of Firenzouls
Sept 21	Captured at Valli-Buono. 20 miles south of Bologna. by 44 th Mt Div. troops
Sept 22	taken to Rec. Hq. interrogated. Amazed at the German attitude they know war is lost but
	Just keep fighting. escaped on way to Rec. Hq. during Art Barrage, Picked up & seen.
	Moved to Bologna that Night. by truck. No Cigarettes since capture. Except what Ciss Joe gives us.
Sept 23	San Pietro. Locked up in a Barn with a sort of Apartment arrangement. two rooms with Grates on
	Windows. Ellis Wayburne English flier (South African) 20 Boelkarts. St. Troyville, Johannesburg, Union S Africa
	Who had been shot down two days before. Had first hot meal 25 th . plenty bread, and the Guards
	Let us Gather Apples. there are now 9 Officers And 10 P.M. Can hear Artillery South of Bologna.
Oct. 2.	Moved last Night by truck to Ospedalle More English prisoners. And some Sikhs (about 30) joined
us.	Very Cold and uncomfortable. and crowded, one room with about 65 people in it. No Cigarettes
Oct. 4	Added thirty six more people to our already over crowded room. we need Sardinia oil now.
Oct. 5	Moved last Night. Spent 12 hrs. in truck with 44 People. had an Iron Case built under the

ed (Continued) Scared hell out of us. we're on road parallel to track, thought they were after us first part of our outfit got hit. I hope 100 killed. 167 wounded. Today

12. Rain were playing. Got mouse in. betw. bear wren. Stomach taken, must be in a pocket now

13. Just heard. Pres. Roosevelt was dead. That sure is bad. Still at same barn. had 1/2 loaf issue

14. 1/2 loaf 10 potatoes. Still free and kind. Life of Riley. Art no weaver. Air. Air. Air.

15. 1/2 loaf. Weather had last night still with a mist. Art. Air. Air. Air. Air. Air.

16. 1/2 loaf. Weather beautiful one. falling. died 1st night. Fred. Fred. Fred. Fred. Fred.

17. 1/2 loaf. about 1000 plants bombed. around us yesterday afternoon. Sure beat up for. but we

18. moved 22 km yesterday afternoon. to Holt's house. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf.

19. moved 10 km to Obermarchen. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf.

20. moved 10 km to. Obermarchen. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf.

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41. moved 10 km to. Obermarchen. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf.

42. moved 10 km to. Obermarchen. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf. 1/2 loaf.

Sat. May 5. ms. and I are in Eresburg. Got tired of Mooreburg. Rank stayed to

Cover up for us. we're staying with R.T.D. Duff. Plenty to eat & drink

Guest. will go back to Morrow. Got to get a way to get home. make would like to

Sun. 6th my birthday - Am now at Einolshat. have sent for Rank, not for

Rank. had got a food will try for the Coast & home. (Name sweet home)

Mon. 7th at Goppinck. Kenna. & Nat. of a time. My fly from here to Coast

Tue 8th At Mannheim. been to Heidelberg. twice. to day. trying to get a ride

to the Coast. Guest we will fly there to Morrow. Got a small set-up. have

have had a bath and clean clothes. wish to talk I could fly home from here

Wed 9. still at Mannheim. No plane yet. Picked up. been to Slu. Good. Good. plenty

of clothing to do. Go to Leuz. if there is no plane. tomorrow

Thurs 10. Nancy. just flew in. expect to fly to La Hesse. in afternoon.

Fri 11. home in tent. food "Prize" and "Sera". had our physical. Got a hole of

a check-up if was. have found quite a few of our pills. Got a letter

if Bill was. Come in. With I could write make. "Old Shakin' Joe"

Sat 12. still at Mannheim. about to go. think I'll go. About Sunday try to get

home. still thinking. don't seem to see any thing going on. turned about

Sun 13. moved to another area. to day. I guess we will start our processing

soon. To Morrow. I hope we have a couple of excellent food. got sent. Tuna

and a couple of other things. down below. mangle. make

the 15. moved to another area. to day. I guess we will start our processing

soon. To Morrow. I hope we have a couple of excellent food. got sent. Tuna

and a couple of other things. down below. mangle. make

Sun 16. moved to another area. to day. I guess we will start our processing

soon. To Morrow. I hope we have a couple of excellent food. got sent. Tuna

and a couple of other things. down below. mangle. make

Mon 17. moved to another area. to day. I guess we will start our processing

soon. To Morrow. I hope we have a couple of excellent food. got sent. Tuna

and a couple of other things. down below. mangle. make

Tue 18. moved to another area. to day. I guess we will start our processing

soon. To Morrow. I hope we have a couple of excellent food. got sent. Tuna

and a couple of other things. down below. mangle. make

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Name	Pay No.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Atkins, Harold W.	140578	✓	✓	✓	✓
Burgess, Sterling R.	139468	✓	✓	✓	✓
James, Silas S.	140575	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ritchie, James H.	139407	✓	✓	✓	✓
McCormack, Jack W.	073725	✓	✓	✓	✓
Graciani, Henry J.	092213	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kolleg, Michael R.	081211	✓	✓	✓	✓
Boyle, James L.	073021	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ellis, James H. D.	099214	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	073726	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	139469	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	140579	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	099254	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	140780	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	081218	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080820	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080821	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080822	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080823	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Winters, General W.	080826	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080827	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080828	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Winters, General W.	080830	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080831	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Winters, General W.	080838	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080839	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080840	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080841	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080842	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080843	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080844	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080845	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080846	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080847	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080848	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080849	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080850	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080851	✓	✓	✓	✓
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Winters, General W.	080854	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080855	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080856	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080857	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080858	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080859	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080860	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080861	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080862	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080863	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080864	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080865	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080866	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080867	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080868	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080869	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080870	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080871	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080872	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080873	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080874	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080875	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080876	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080877	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080878	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080879	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080880	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080881	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080882	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080883	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080884	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080885	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080886	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080887	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080888	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080889	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080890	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080891	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080892	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080893	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080894	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080895	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080896	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080897	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080898	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080899	✓	✓	✓	✓
Winters, General W.	080900	✓	✓	✓	✓

Boyle
 Pittsford
 Winters
 Eubank
 Doyle