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EX Report No. 617
Date 17 May 45

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Date
Initials

WAR DEPARTMENT
War Department General Staff G-2
Military Intelligence Service
Washington

Prepared by
CPM BRANCH

GOODE, Paul R., Col., O-8651, 175th Inf.

ESCAPE)

EVASION)

LIBERATION)

From Stalag 7A, MOOSBURG, GERMANY

Missing in action 13 Jun 44

Date of capture 13 Jun 44

Reported P/W 21 Aug 44

Liberated 29 Apr 45

Escaped 29 Apr 45

Rejoined Allied forces Moosburg, Germany

At Moosburg, Germany

None

Previous interrogation

Arrived in USA 16 May 45, Washington, DC

Home address 120 N. 12th St., Corvallis, Oregon

Age 53

Length of Service 31 years.

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EX-Report No. 617

Prepared by MIS-X Section, CPM Branch

Liberation From STALAG 7A
MOOSBURG, GERMANY

COL. PAUL R. GOODE

175th Infantry

Capture

On the night of 12 and 13 June 1944, with authority of the division commander subject crossed the VIRE canal with the "D" company of his regiment with instructions to clear up a five-mile stretch of woods and occupy two towns. They crossed the canal about four miles from the regimental headquarters in the vicinity of LISON, FRANCE. Previously two companies had attempted this on the 12th of June, and they were driven back. The division commander said to make the attempt anyway, and Col. GOODE said it was hopeless, but the commander said that was all right. Instead of going right to the high ground opposite the canal, subject took the company back across the canal in daylight and marched into the woods and held them there until dark. After dark they moved on along the canal bank. They ran into one outpost where they killed all but one man who got away. About a half a mile from the first village they ran into what subject thought was a rather weak opposition and he told the company commander to attack at once which he later did. The best information that subject could get was that it was a battalion of the 17th Panzer Grenadier Division which had been sent in to reinforce the local garrison, and the fight lasted until about 2100 hours. By this time Col. GOODE had expended all the machinegun ammunition, all the mortar ammunition and most of the rifle and carbine ammunition, and he then surrendered. He had at that time 28 wounded men and 20 unwounded out of approximately 300.

Germans Moved Americans Back

The Germans moved the Americans out a distance of a few miles to what was apparently regimental headquarters, and from there they were taken to a headquarters in the vicinity of ST. LO on 13 June. Subject was then moved to a cage at CHALONS-sur-VIRE, where there were about 800 prisoners,

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most of them from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions, and the conditions at that place were extremely bad. There had been no food but the Germans finally arrived at a point where they killed one beef a day for about 800 men, and there was some cabbage for soup. There were about 125 aluminum pans which were passed from hand to hand for mess kits.

From there subject was taken individually to corps headquarters where the interrogating officer, who was a judge from COLOGNE in civilian life, greeted him with his name and organization which he had not disclosed. The address of his family was known because it appeared on his identification disc which they examined. Subject told the interrogating officer that he intended to tell him nothing, and he said they had ways of making him talk. Subject said nothing. Actually the conversation was rather general, and concerned conditions in GERMANY.

Taken to Rennes

Subject was then taken by ambulance a distance of about 30 miles to the first really organized prison camp at RENNES where he found about a thousand British and American enlisted men, and at the time that he arrived there, which was about 18 June, about three American officers and 16 British and Canadian officers, including a lieutenant commander from the Fleet Arm of the Royal Air Force. The number of officers increased gradually to 50, and the enlisted men to perhaps 1,300, including both British and Canadian. The camp was very badly run, and the food was limited to a weak tea in the morning and for dinner one or two slices of bread and a soup made largely from badly spoiled potatoes and what vegetables the Ps/W could find from the French colonials who had their stuff in stock since 1940. The name of the commandant, subject does not know, nor was he ever able to find out. For several days there was no water as a result of the bombing of RENNES, and due to the fact that the Germans did not furnish water there was a great deal of sickness from men drinking water used for fire protection. There were no bathing facilities, and the sanitary conditions in the camp were extremely poor. There was no effort made to feed or house these men properly.

En route to the camp at RENNES, subject attempted to escape and after slipping out of the ambulance, he was physically held by enlisted men who were terrified that if he escaped the Germans would shoot them. By the time he had convinced them that he was a commissioned officer the chance was gone.

The Ps/W left RENNES about 5 July in two boxcars holding a total of 50 officers. There were about 1,300 British and American enlisted men on the train; the cars were crowded and practically all of the Ps/W had dysentery and many of them were wounded. It took them 23 days to get to CHALONS.

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The officer in charge of that train was Oberstleutnant HUNTER. A man of about 45 years of age and apparently commissioned in the field artillery, he stated that he was a merchant from HAMBURG. The cars were kept locked the entire time, and only on one or two days, as a special concession, the doors were opened for perhaps a half an hour. The food varied; some days there was one-third of a loaf of bread, about a two-inch piece of sausage and a large bowl of exceedingly good soup, on other days there was no bread and no water. The cars were tightly sealed and while the officers themselves were not crowded, the condition of the men was extremely bad. There was no opportunity for exercise, and the only water anyone could get was that brought by guards once a day.

Some Escapes

During the trip four British officers escaped from the other officer's car, and the rest of the officers in that car were treated for the ensuing days much worse than previously. Subject also added that before they reached their destination the train was strafed once, but there were no casualties. They were also on the edge of a bombing, the nearest bomb falling about 100 yards away.

The Ps/W managed to loosen several boards in the car and although the Germans inspected the car daily they never saw the hole. Subject is very frank in saying that he ordered another officer to make this hole and he accepts full responsibility for it. Fifteen officers managed to escape out of this hole. The hole was rather small, and subject could not get through it. He went back to take off some clothes and the train stopped and he was there when the hole was discovered. Oberstleutnant HUNTER was very much excited and sent for an SS lieutenant who was aboard with two SS companies. They selected subject and four other officers to be shot. Col. GOODE spoke to them at some length and they started arguing among themselves and agreed to delay the execution. They took 20 officers from the other car and put them in with the officers in subject's car; then they mounted a machinegun and made them get down on the floor of the car. Any man that got up off the floor or spoke would be shot. In the car next to that of Col. GOODE, a French parachute sergeant was shot and killed for reaching up to an opening in the car to get a book he had left there. The name of the man responsible for this is not known, but he was an unteroffizier and a very voluble Nazi. The morning after the escape Col. GOODE was shot at from a distance of about ten feet by a German.

Train Attacked

That night the train was attacked either by some Free French or some of the 1,100 political prisoners who were with the train and got

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loose. The Germans claimed to have killed a car load, but all subject knows is that he could see the fight that took place in all four corners of the train which lasted about an hour and a half. During that time the SS had other things to do than to execute the Ps/W. The conditions in that train generally speaking were by far the worst that Col. GOODE had experienced in the time that he was a prisoner, and he got off the train with snow white hair and weighing about 170 lbs. He thinks that a very definite effort should be made to have Oberstleutnant HUNTER find the guard who was responsible for killing this French sergeant.

Chalons - To Trier

The Ps/W arrived at CHALONS on 28 July. The place was an interrogation center, and it was run by a Major VON COSWEIN who had been a prisoner of war in ENGLAND in the last war. Col. GOODE was in solitary for five days at CHALONS. Among the 18 other officers, there was no complaint about the treatment except that Ps/W were in solitary.

The Ps/W left CHALONS somewhere about the 3rd of August and subject's recollection is that there were 600 officers packed 50 to a car. Six days later they finally arrived at TRIER. The trip was extremely bad, and there were no toilet facilities except a can about the size of a #10 commercial can. The major difficulty was not so much in the packing of the cars, which was excessive, or the heat, but the fact that the trip which should have taken a day or so took six or seven days.

To Limburg

The Ps/W left TRIER very suddenly about 9 September. The parcels which they received were borrowed from the French or the Serbs as there were no American parcels there. The commandant borrowed them and issued the parcel during that month, and issued another parcel as the men got on the train. Subject has no complaint against the commandant at TRIER. The trip from TRIER to LIMBURG lasted only one day, and the Ps/W spent a relatively pleasant day on the train. Subject states he had a bag packed for an escape attempt, but unfortunately he could not make it. The map that he had concealed in his kit was found when he got to LIMBURG and caused considerable excitement and an interview with the commandant.

To Oflag 64

The Ps/W left LIMBURG, which was, subject thinks, Stalag 12A, to go to Oflag 64 which was the first officers' camp to which he was sent. Subject arrived there on 16 October.

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Evacuation from Schubin

The Russian advance caused the evacuation of Oflag 64, SCHUBIN, on 21 January. Col. GOODE left about 71 men in the hospital under Col. DRURY and those people have since been returned. There were four men in a tunnel there also. Unteroffizier KNORR, at SCHUBIN, is believed to have killed one, two or three British prisoners in 1940 and at one time did pull his pistol on an American officer and his presence in the camp was protested by Col. DRAKE, subject of R-Report No. 32.

Col. GOODE protested the march and delayed it as much as possible. The Ps/W then marched a distance of 360 miles over a period of 48 days under rather trying conditions. The weather was about ten below zero and there was about a foot of snow on the ground. Subject urged all the men to escape who had a chance to escape, and 241 were successful. Subject said that he governed escapes, because he believes in them, but when there was no chance for a man to live or make a successful escape, he did not let the man escape. When there was a 50-50 chance, he wanted him to take it. Col. GOODE had left Oflag 64 with 1300 men, and he had 490 left after the 48 days. He knew that 241 escaped, 100 were left at a prison camp near FLATOW, and the rest were sent on with guards to LUCKENWALDE. Col. GOODE left four officers at a Naval Station at SWINEMUNDE of which Col. ALGER was one.

To Hammelburg

After the arrival at PARCHIM, the Ps/W were moved by train to HAMMELBURG. Oflag 13B, at HAMMELBURG, was commanded by a Major Gen. GOBEEL. Col. GOODE's relations with him were by far the best that he established with any German officer that he came into contact with. He was an intelligent man, and he came to see the conditions in the camp (which were bad), but he had no hesitancy to reduce what he saw to writing. He said he would take the Ps/W's money and reinforce the ration if possible. He tried, but could not do it. When a small task force from the 4th Armored Division got to HAMMELBURG this man had an order to march the Ps/W. Subject talked him out of the marching for one day. He then said he had an order to move the camp. Subject said it was impossible to move, and he said he knew it was and asked subject for a protest. It was given to him, and he left two officers behind to protect and feed the Ps/W until the Americans got there. He asked Col. GOODE to look after his family which he was very glad to do. He took his guard company and went off to the flank. The only thing he said when the Americans were forced back the next day was that fortunes change. He was a major general, and he could not exercise as much authority as the average company commander in an American company, but subject states he did his duty as a soldier.

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Americans Arrive

About 3 April, a small task force consisting of a tank company and an infantry company from the 4th Armored Division came about 50 miles through the German lines to get the prisoners loose. The man who actually came into the camp was a 1st Lt. W. R. WHEELER, son of Major Gen. WHEELER. Col. GOODE told him he had 1291 officers and he said they had transportation to take them back. Actually they did not, but the Ps/W formed up and moved to the top of the hill. Col. GOODE divided the people into three groups, those who could not physically make it who went back to camp, those that could do it on foot, and those who had to ride. Out of 550 that tried it on foot, subject stated about 30 got through. Those that were to ride got on top of the tanks, but unfortunately a tank was lost before they got started. The group ran into strong opposition and lost another tank and lost some people. The company commander pulled up on the top of the highest hill about six miles from the camp and the thing smelled bad to Col. GOODE. The Americans had about 600 men and at the request of the tank commander every man that could be armed with any kind of a weapon was armed. Col. GOODE took the rest of the group back to camp. The Germans attacked and captured, killed or wounded the entire lot. The rest got back to camp and the people that decided they were too sick to march were marched by the Germans from HAMMELBURG past NURNBERG. Twenty-six had been killed and about 40 wounded by American bombs. Five or six hundred people who were with Col. GOODE were moved out by train to NURNBERG. They left HAMMELBURG at the request of Gen. KAFALAVITCH, chief of staff of the Serbian Army. American tanks were shooting into the Sorbian camp under misleading intelligence that it was a Gorman camp, whereas in fact it was adjacent to a German camp.

To Moosburg

The group stayed at HAMMELBURG about a week, and then was marched to Stalag 7A, MOOSBURG. It took 15 days to cover about 90 miles. There was no particular attempt at control, and escape was extremely easy and many officers did escape and many more just wandered off to live on the country and were ultimately picked up by the SS. Subject stated he wanted to escape, but stayed with the column because he felt the continued presence of responsible people would avoid strong measures on the part of the Germans. Col. GOODE and the SBO, Group Capt. WILLETS, organized the camp at MOOSBURG. It was their intention not to move. When they were finally rescued by Combat Team A, of the 14th Armored Division under Gen. KARISTAD and Gen. COOPER-SMITH, there were at that time about 30,000 prisoners behind the wire.

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