

OFLAG 64 MARCH
JAN. 21, 1945 - TO FINAL LIBERATION
AT STALAG VII B MOOSBURG, GERMANY
APRIL 29, 1945

This is the account of the march of 1,282 american officers and 109 enlisted Men POW's from Oflag 64 in Schubin [Szubin] from Jan. 21st and ending with liberation in Moosburg April 29 from the diary of John P. Sandford as kept at the time.

JAN. 21. to Exin [Kcynia]: 21 km 12.6 miles

Long and snafu appeal in cold ... light snow ... 1,282 O's & 109 EM march out of gate in platoon groups with 1 RC box each ... sleds ... join refugee wagons ... soon a pell mell mob ... 2 official breaks all day ... Colonel's (*Goode*) bagpipes lead the way. Constant adjustment of "packs" ... clothes and heavy articles cast along road. Evening quartered in quadrangular farm buildings at heated, lighted barn ... refugee wagons in quadrangle.

JAN. 22. to Eichfelde [Polanow]: 25 km 15 miles 27.6 total miles

Sick left behind ... slow-marching group formed ... others march out ... still stream of refugee wagons ... dead horses by road ... lads "GRRR" at horses ... guards do a lot of yelling but column poorly organized ... stragglers ... civilians (German) seem taunting ... billeted in small barns. Heard small arms fire.

JAN. 23. to Charlottenburg [Falmirow]:
 7 km 4.2 miles 31.8 total miles

Told guards had left at 0400 ... "LIBERATION" free 10 hours ... Brass set up CP's ... told to remain in the area ... Polish women bring cherry preserves ... help cook around fires ... singing ... bash RC box ... rye for cereal ... dig latrine ... rumors ... Poles say Russians 5km away ... Germans return ... told we march at 1600 ... small guard of SS Latvian troops take over ... snow ... many officers take off across the fields cross country ... snipers in white tour around in truck ... bazooka men on road billet in group barns ... sleep in stable on carted straw. Bill's (*Warthen*) RC box stolen in last hour of daylight.

JAN. 24. to Lobsens [Lobzenica]: 8km 4.8 miles 36.6 total miles

Casually form into platoons ... march out ... some try hiding in hay ... column well strung out ... loads lighter since most RC boxes almost empty ... Poles along the way give bread, cheese, milk etc. Spend some time in LOBSENS [Lobzenica] - town gives food out of cooking pots, bread, ersatz cheese ... SS in town severe - try to hold down the populace ... strutting officer with potato-masher grenade pushes child off sled ... bullies his way around - old Schubin guard rejoins us ... 17 escaped O's caught - threatened shooting ... billeted in barn ... speech by Oberst "Be gentlemen - don't try to escape" ... shoot in hay - Col. Goode (been sick) informs Oberst he's not been easy ... Himmler has sent SS troops to guard us.

JAN. 25. to Flatow [Zlotow]: 18 km 10.8 miles 47.4 total miles

Column better organized - issue of thick soup - cold - cobblestone towns ... arrive FLATOW [Zlotow] ... other columns of Russian & British POWS stay in barn at commando farm ... frozen Russian ... fire of slats.

JAN. 26. layover in Flatow [Zlotow]:

Rain ... issue 1/4 loaf of bread.

JAN. 27. to Jastrow [Jastrowie]: 19 km 11.4 miles 58.8 total miles

March organized ... to Jastrow ... sleep in warm cowbarn ... get milk.

JAN. 28. to Zippnow [Sypniewo]: 20km 12 miles 70.8 total miles

Cross snowswept tundra ... bitter cold ... goon truck stuck - holds up the column sleep crowded in a church ... warned not to break up fixtures.

JAN. 29. to POW camp - Rederitz [Nadazyce]:
6 km 3.6 miles 74.4 total miles

March across more tundra - barren - to Westhofen Bks - large German camp in the middle of nowhere - seemed half deserted - arrive early at Polish Oflag XI D ... had been vacated - beds ... stoves ... potatoes galore ... help ourselves to fuel etc. - rumor of a lay-over. 766 men are left.

JAN. 30. to Machlin [Machliny]: 16 km 9.6 miles 84 total miles

Fear of being taken by Russ. causes Germans to move us out at 1 PM. Deep snow first two hours - again wagons and confusion - small groups of goon combat troops in white ... arrive in dark at Machlin ... warned town packed with volkssturm - no political discussions - split in groups of 50 - sobbing woman won't billet us - put in another barn with orderlies. Column had about-faced in dark. Issue 1 loaf of bread.

JAN. 31. to Tempelburg [Czaplinek]: 14 km 8.4 miles 92.4 total miles

March by large lake and up long steep hill ... see many German vehicles being towed - group split in two - sleep in eaves of barn - some cheese for cigar - milk - thaw.

FEB. 1. to Heinrichsdorf [Siemczyno]: 6 km 3.6 miles 96 total miles

Last attempt with sleds - most break down loads - a few hardies pull on - sleep in barn with reaper for ramp .. slippery hill ... long haul for water and wood - rain late afternoon - potato peeling detail finds jars of food - potato and soup issue with many slipping and falling - bread stolen from goon truck.

FEB. 2. to Zuelshagen [Suliszewo]: 17 km 10.2 miles 106.2 total miles

A few sick left behind but all urged to make the march if possible since CO of district is Nazi. Billeted in attic of small church - floor covered with school charts ... maps of Germany - two small charts of a MG defensive position. Cart straw for bedding.

FEB. 3. layover:

Town full of SS troops who accuse O's of stealing - situation momentarily tense roadblock of logs built during night - Germans live off the land - butcher hogs - soup issue - rain.

FEB. 4. to Gienow [Ginawa]: 17 km 10.2 miles 116.4 total miles

March via Dramburg [Drawsko] ... Janikow [Janikowo] - quartering party sent ahead - small village barns in quadrangle - herd of registered cows - sleep in loft - Henkenhagen.

FEB. 5. to Zeitlitz [Siedlice]: 21 km 12.6 miles 129 total miles

Via Wangerin [Wegorzyno] ... Ruhnow [Runowo] (R.R. & Troop Train). Barn and cluster of buildings. 180 leave by boxcar. 550 O's left in group.

FEB. 6. to Regenwalde [Resko]: 22 km 13.2 miles 142 total miles

Marine barracks - 1/6 loaf of bread - soup and oatmeal.

FEB. 7. to Lebbin [Lubinek]: 20 km 12 miles 154.2 total miles

Via Plathe [Ploty] - crowded barn - no aisle - issue of spuds - 1/8 loaf bread

FEB. 8. to Stuchow [Stuchowo]: 20 km 12 miles 166.2 total miles

Via Greifenberg [Gryfice] - Russian, English, Canadian POWs herded along road at fast pace - guards beating them with rifle butts - forlorn sight. Stay at large estate & farm "Castle House" Russian arbeiter in dirty cramped quarters give cottage cheese with sugar, biled potatoes, bread. Young woman sobs while we eat - show snapshots assure them the war will soon be over - they refuse to accept cigarettes. German issue of soup.

FEB. 9. to Stresow [Strzezewo]
(Outskirts): 14 km 8.4 miles 174.6 total miles

Via Justin [Gostyn] - French POWs pass on road. Sleep in barn - shifting hay - Bill (*Warthen*) has G.I's. Issue spuds and gravy

FEB. 10. to Dievenow [Dziwnow]: 17 km 10.2 miles 184.8 total miles

Via Fritzow [Wrzosowo] - scenic "tourist" country - neat, trim cottages named - town chock full of children of the Goering Home for Children - stay in barracks at airport for seaplanes on island - air school with many singing marching youths in attendance.

FEB. 11. to Neuendorf [Wiselka]: 15 km 9 miles 193.8 total miles

Via Leimbrink [Granik] (Resort town) - cottages with trim blue shutters - neatly stacked conical wood piles - farm on miniature lake - sleep in loft with no "aisle" space.

FEB. 12. to Swinemuende [Swinoujscie]
(Ostswine [Odra Warszow]): 24 km 14.4 miles 208.2 total miles

Via Misdroy [Miedzzydroje] - 17:00 told we would march on to the naval barracks - promised beds etc. - arrive naval station - sleep on floor with excelsior - have heat- go to draw ersatz tea - told men have to get it themselves - thick stew for Germans - destroyer at berth - two flak ships with record of and type planes shot down - naval O's with swords. Swedish ships. (This is a destroyer base)

FEB. 13. to Garz: 8 km 4.8 miles 213 total miles

Soup issue - 1/2 loaf bread obtained from German kitchen crew for pack of cigs - light snow - a few very sick left behind - ferry ride - rain - billet near airstrip - many planes camouflaged in woods - stay at small farm - groups 50 - spuds and marge.

FEB. 14. to Stolpe: 8 km 4.8 miles 217.8 total miles

Modern barn but crowded - view of Oder River - close guard - get spuds under pretense of fetching water - soup issue.

FEB. 15. - layover:

Raw day- cook around fires - soup issue - speculation rife as to RC boxes.

FEB. 16. to Murchin: 23 km 13.8 miles 232.6 total miles

Rain - 100 sick left behind -they to go by R.R. next day. - told we are going 15 km - go 23 km to Stalag 1B - Cross bridge fitted with demolition bombs. Ground floor of barn next to door. G.I's start.

FEB. 17. to Jarmen: 27 km 16.2 miles 232.6 total miles

Issue box knockbrot - 1/6 loaf bread. Via Guetzkow (Nazi jugend having glider contests on hillslope - poorly blown bugle - banner - fanfare) Stay at estate of countess. No room in loft- stay in cow barn with staff- Col. Goode "Been on the road longer than Abie's Irish Rose". Countess has officer son

POW in USA -assured he is fine - she persuades Oberst Schneider to let us lay over next day. Issue RC Box 10.

FEB, 18. - layover

Sick with G.I's. Good day - most bash all day by fires. Strength now 490 out of the 1391 who started.

FEB, 19. to Leppin: 11 km 6.6 miles 255.4 total miles

Turn north 2 km from large town of Anklam - via Demmin (large city - colorful) where almost pick up RC boxes after column back-tracks. Arrive - Oberst speech "assured transportation soon. March is almost at an end. Two days at most. I've got RC boxes for you." Issued Canadian boxes. Ersatz coffee wagon at noon starts.

FEB, 20. to Dargun: 22 km 13.2 miles 268.6 total miles

Sleep by thrasher in aisle. Large farm but flimsy buildings.

FEB, 21. layover:

High wind forces us to change fire area to spot next to small pond - kids with onions in pockets slip by guards to trade. Beautiful day of bashing.

FEB, 22. to Neukalen: 17 km 10.2 miles 278.8 total miles

Via Dargun - stay in sectioned barn at near edge of fair-sized town - barn is fairly large and in good appearance - marched through streets to chow of boiled spuds, thick barley soup. Much trading for "Brot" - civilians want coffee. English speaking jugend in uniform - specs - friendly - actively trading ..Col. Goode forbids trading of clothes or D bars. No fires. "Trading Alley" with guards allowing furtive women to barter brot, saccharine, etc.

FEB, 23. to Basedow: 19 km 11.4 miles 290.2 total miles

Via R.R. Center of Malchin (some evidence of bombing). G.I.'s working on tracks .."Any officers there?" "Yop" "How about a three day pass?" Rain - move out from under hole in barn roof. Goon issue 1/6 loaf bread, soup and spuds. Been getting ersatz daily at noon halts since 19th.

FEB, 24. to Cramon: 18 km 10.8 miles 301 total miles

In loft over sheep with goon horses in aisle. Fires in hollow.

FEB, 25. to Plauerhagen: 22 km 13.2 miles 314.2 total miles

Walk cross country by lakes and through woods - rain - arbeiter sneak out food from house - rat race after milk with guard going in one door and lads coming out the other - a Merry Go Round.

FEB, 26. layover:

Rain. No fires.

FEB, 27. to Lutheran: 16 km 9.6 miles 323.8 total miles

Small farm with French workers - woman coffee-mad - barter in kitchen after knocking on door "Ich habe kaffee" - get brot, saccharine, onions, sargum. Sugar from the French. Issue 1/2 RC Box #10.

FEB, 28. nach Siggelkow: 15 km 9 miles 332.8 total miles

Via Rom, Luebz ("Hey fella, ya needa haircut!), NEWBURG - circuitous route across country in a long "short-cut" in sight of Parchim. Air raid sirens scream. Town of Siggelkow - "Welcoming "

group in top hats and tails. Sleep by door under light owner gives firewood - fires in street. Bakery with huge loaves.

MAR. 1-5 - Siggelkow layover:

Waiting for transportation out of Parchim - marked by constant trading - bashing issues of soup, spuds, and 1/6 loaf of bread daily

March 3: Bill (*Warthen*) operates for brot. 1/4 RC #10 (USA)

March 4: Greeted by pistol-packing guard. 2 officers missing in Parchim. Appel. Get shoes fixed for soap by refugee cobbler. He examines shoes carefully, looking for "ersatz" ingredients - surprised to find none.

MARCH 6. - to Parchim: 8 km 4.8 miles 337.6 total miles

Up at 4:30 am - march to train. "U.S. POW" painted on car roofs.

MARCH 7 & 8. - train trip to Hammelburg:

Sweat out air raids and hope for the best. Arrive station evening of 8th.

MARCH 9. - to Lager Hammelburg: 4 km 2.4 miles 340 total miles.

March up mountain overlooking picturesque valley to lager - Hammelburg - Oflag X111B - gathered in riding ring - greeted by general - "crowded- that's war". Enter in groups of 100 - searched - grass soup - shower at 11:00 PM - quartered at 0200. **Our first march is ended.**

MARCH 10 - 27: Lager Hammelburg (Oflag XIII B)

Col. Goode finds himself senior officer and takes charge. POW's mostly taken in the Battle of the Bulge were unorganized, dispirited and unkempt. "Shave & clean up by morning! Long-time kriegies take the new ones in hand.

March 27th: Rescue Day by Abe Baum's 10th Armored Infantry Battalion, See separate accounts.

PART II - HAMMELBURG TO MOOSBURG

MARCH 28: Entrain at Hammelburg,

1/4 #10 RC Box courtesy of Serbs. Ride in box car with Col. Goode & staff.

MARCH 29: on train

Arrive Nuremberg at night during air raid. Bombs, Sirens.

MARCH 30: Nuremberg

Enter Stalag Luft III - tents - coffee from RC boxes given us. British major in white jacket in charge.

APRIL 3: Preparation for moving

Sick leave by train. Issued British RC Box plus 2 cans marge, 1 can biscuits, 2 fruit bars, a barracks bag and khaki pants.

APRIL 4. - to Ochenbruck: 14 km 8.75 miles 8.75 total miles

Last scramble for food - cocoa line - wormy peas - meat grabbed by mobs - goon sugar. We leave from appel formation. Mob - platoon groups but stragglers galore - guards with dogs. At Feucht the head of our column caught in bombing of R.R. yard by P51's which is next to the road. 3 killed. Arrive Ochenbruck 2030 and bivouac in woods. Fires for 1/2 hour.

APRIL 5. - to Pfeifferhuette: 15 km 9.375 miles 18.125 total miles

Leave 0800 after bash of cocoa, oatmeal, fresh meat. Watch a big air raid on Nuremberg. By-passed by another block. Fertile valley - 4 hour halt on outskirts of town of Polling-Neumarkt. Rain - delay - feed in dark on pea soup 0100. Issue 1/9 loaf. March along highway in rain and black from 02:00-06:00. Bivouac in woods. RC white trucks carry the sick. Water from canal.

APRIL 6. - to Berching: 10 km 6.25 miles 24.375 total miles

Column strung out. Leave 13:00 - march to Berching in heavy showers. 1/2 RC Box (British) and 1/9 loaf. Sleep by organ in church balcony - soaked

APRIL 7. - to Sandersdorf: 30 km 18.75 miles 43.125 miles total

Leave 10:00 - column still strung out - to Beilngries (county seat). Climb mountain. Town filled up - hour for meal. March 6 more kilos - arrive 21:00. To bed at 22:00

APRIL 8. - layover Sandersdorf (Sunday):

Large lighted barn - high on a hill next to what appears to be a resort hotel - very trim - beaucoup holtz - fires.

APRIL 9. - to Neustadt: 17 km 10.625 miles 53.75 total miles

Leave 0900. Through Minderstetten - cross Danube on bridge fitted with demolition bombs. Troops in evidence - mostly Luft - 88's emplaced - bombers fly over. 1 US RC Box per 2. Through Neustadt - billet 3rd tier barn at Forchheim. Issue 1/4 loaf.

APRIL 10. - to Niederumelsdorf: 15 km 9.37 miles 63.12 total miles

2nd floor of barn via steps across hill from town.

APRIL 11. - layover Niederumelsdorf:

Beautiful day. Dig potatoes in muddy manure seed bed - wash in stream. 1/12 brot.

APRIL 12. - layover Niederumelsdorf:

2 km for appel formation on road. New potato bed found by a hop field. Go to town nix on trades - next to grocery store - big fleet of bombers - smoke pots - a jettisoned incendiary bomb hits village.

APRIL 13. - to Margarethentann: 4 km 2.5 miles 65.62 total miles.

Short march with much waiting en route - through town - pass radar - large farm. Trade with frau (Get brot saccharine) while waiting in line. Sleep on shifting straw. Issue 2/9 loaf.

APRIL 14. - layover Margarethentann:

Carrots. Sweat out getting milk. Milking arbeit women willing but cockeyed goon guard says nix - teases bull - issue 2/9 brot. French worker gives can meaty soup. Officer shot through lip by radar SS men. On brot detail night.

APRIL 15. - layover Margarethentann:

Appel formation on highway - 1/9 brot issue.

APRIL 16. - to Holzhausen: 11 km 6.875 miles 72.495 total miles

Surprise issue of 1/4 RC Box #10 & 1/4 French parcel. Scramble for wood - 2nd story barn. French parcel has 4 cakes, 6 packs French cigarettes, 5 cans sardines, 2 lbs sugar.

APRIL 17. - to Obermuenchen: 8 km 5 miles 77.5 miles total

Issue 1/2 #10 RC Box & 1/4 English RC

APRIL 18.. Gammelsdorf: 6 km 3.75 miles 81.425 total miles

Farmer in bare feet - across from small stream - fire built in a hurry at night. In a lighted barn.

APRIL 19. - layover Gammelsdorf:

Potatoes, grain picked up and ground. Headquarters moves into farm building.

APRIL 20. - to Moosburg: 8 km 5 miles 86.25 total miles

March the final lap - beautiful countryside. We are divided into groups and enter camp (VII A) - searched hastily - showers - billet - Argentine bulk issue of crackers cheese.

APRIL 29th. - Liberation Day at Moosburg!

Grand total of miles walked -	439
Days on the road -	82
