

William Warthen

I was at Oflag only from Dec. 25, 44 to Jan. 21st, 05 , when we were marched out. Though you mingled with those from other barracks you talked very little about anything but food, your units , and how you were captured. So until we moved out on the March those of us who were captured from the same units or who had traveled by 40 and 8, were the people you knew.

While on the march you were so wrapped up with anything that might keep you warm, you didn't learn to associate names and faces.

We had three different routes home, and he has memoirs from each of these. One is about those who were sick or hid at time of our 'march out' from Schubin on Jan. 21st. Those, about 100, came back through Poland and Odessa Russia. Another group of about 300 hid or pulled out of the column on Jan. 24th when our guards left for about 12 hours for fear of being taken prisoner by the Russians. About a week later several hundred who were discouraged or sick were moved on two different days by rail to a camp S. of Berlin, at Lukenwald, (a French POW Camp originally), There are memoirs from that group.

About 350 of us stayed together walked for 45 days , and then moved by rail South to Stalag XIII B, Hammelburg, which had been a Yugoslavian Officer POW Camp until the Bulge, when about 1,000 officers captured during the Bulge were squeezed into those barracks.

We, the 350, arrived on March 9th, were there until March 28th, when the camp was temporarily liberated by a 300 man task force, from the 4th Armored, and initiated by Gen. Patton. We thought we were free, then in hours the task force was stopped, and about half returned to our barracks, and were moved by rail that afternoon to Nurenburg POW Camp. Several hundred tried to hide, move by night, and hopefully reach the American Lines 35 miles away. Nearly all were recaptured, about 12 to 14 made it.

Those who were recaptured were moved by rail or marched towards Nurenburg Camp. One of these groups with about 130 Kregies was caught near Nurenburg by an American Bomber, and 29 were killed and many of those were injured. Those who had gone by rail to Nurenburg, were marched out 5 or 6 days later , and in the 2nd hour this group was hit by an American dive bomber and 6 were killed. This group, commingled with well over 1,000 Air. Corp non-coms from Sagan, Luft 3, POW Cam , walked for 14 days and finally reached Mooseburg, Stalag VII A, on the April 21st. There were over 70,000 POWs there from all over the world. We were liberated there on April 29th, over a period of about 20 days all American POWs from all camps were first moved to Camp Lucky Strike in Normandy, then shipped home on mostly Liberty Ships.