

THE TREATMENT
OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR
IN GERMANY

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BY

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PREFACE

It is the purpose of this thesis to give a clear picture of the life of an American prisoner in Lager A, Luft IV, Pomerania, Germany. It also gives me an opportunity to show how the Red Cross worked in prisoner of war camps and how I and thousands of other prisoners owe our lives to this wonderful organization, which was backed by our Federal government.

In this manuscript I have tried to describe the religious, social, and economic life of men hemmed in by barbed wire and German guards. We are deeply indebted to the Y. M. C. A. for sending books, musical instruments, and sports equipment to keep up our morale. We greatly appreciate the part of American and British religious and medical men in making life more bearable.

Material for this thesis was gathered from the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College library, Red Cross bulletins, and from my personal diary as a prisoner of war.

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INTRODUCTION

At eleven o'clock on the morning of May 30, 1944, my squadron bombed Aschersleben, Germany. The ack ack was rather light going into the target. I had the feeling that it was a "milk run." We made our bomb run, circled, dropped our eggs, and made a left bank with the other Triangle J's.¹

I was looking out of the right waist window with my chest chute strapped on my harness. Shortly after the city disappeared from sight I accidentally hooked the handle of my ripcord on the hand grips of the fifty calibre machine gun and my chute spilled out all over the waist. I looked at it, and the other waist gunner looked at it, and then motioned toward a bag near the tail wheel which contained a spare one and other equipment. I unbuckled the useless chute, changed, and was back at my waist position when we got it.

Our plane was leading the element when Focke Wulfs and 109's hit us head on. The plane on our right banked left, picking up speed to catch the element ahead. We heard later that they got home all right. The B-17 on our left was hit and burning; it went up in the air and then fell straight down. Our number 3 and number 4 engines (the ones on the right) began burning and throwing smoke

¹ The Triangle J was the mark of the 351st bomb group, which was located at Polebrook, England. The triangle was the mark of all First Division heavy bombardment airplanes. Along with the Triangle J used by our bomb group were smaller markings, usually within the triangle, denoting the squadron to which the plane belonged.

back along the side of the plane. We peeled off to the left and began losing altitude. The left waist gunner got some fast shooting on his side, but none of the Jerry planes was in my range of fire.

I finished buckling on my leg straps and--wonder of wonders!--for a first try, they fitted quite well. I usually carried my G. I. shoes² tied with wire, and I got hold of them, and tried to put them on my harness ring. The alarm bell sounded while I was fumbling with them, and my buddy motioned that I didn't have time to put them on. I threw them down and went to the waist door and pulled the escape knob. The door stuck and I had to kick it. The moment the slipstream caught the door and jerked it off, I jumped head first.

The current of air picked me up and carried me under and past the tail of the plane. I began falling through the deathly quiet of the clouds. I could hear German planes circling overhead and half wondered if they would shoot me down. As I passed the door of the plane it was fluttering in the air like paper.

² While on combat missions we wore heated suits. These consisted of heated gloves, coat, trousers, and sandals. Electricity from the plane furnished the necessary heat to warm them. Under our heated gloves we usually wore silk gloves so that when we had stoppages in our machine guns, we could remove the gloves and work with the silk ones to prevent frostbite, which so many airmen had experienced. Heated sandals went on over wool socks and over these we wore flying boots, which had rubber soles and leather tops. Flying boots and sandals were uncomfortable for walking and were an excellent means of identifying one as a member of the air corps. Therefore, we carried G. I. shoes in case we had to bail out over enemy territory.

Remembering orders I tried to hold my ripcord and keep from opening my chute as long as possible to keep the Germans on the ground from following my descent; this would give me more time after landing to get away. I could see other white chutes around me. My buddy who had jumped out after me had already opened his chute. I was falling in a good position with my feet toward the ground when I pulled the ripcord, the parachute opened with a snap, and I found myself drifting down. The swaying of the chute made me sick and I wanted to vomit. It seemed as if I would never reach the ground, but suddenly in the last few seconds my chute fell rapidly, and just missing a barbed wire fence I landed between two small woods. I landed on both feet without too much of a jar, gathered my chute up, and rushed into the trees.

Entering the woods, the first thing I noticed was a pool of water into which I dumped my chute. Rapidly I took off the remainder of my harness and tossed it into the water along with the rest of the impedimenta I had on me. Looking around, I noticed that the underbrush had been cleaned from among the trees, and there was very little place to hide. The wooded section was no more than an acre in extent, and I headed toward one edge of it trying to get away from the place where I had landed. I considered burying myself in the water using a straw through which to breathe in order to escape the notice of the Germans, but the pool was too shallow.

I broke out of cover, and found myself about two hundred yards from a road. Seeing a cyclist passing along this road, I fell to the ground, and crawled back into the shelter of the trees. But the cyclist stopped and looked in my direction, and knowing that I had been seen I came out with my arms in the air.

Germans converged on me from all directions. Among the first were a boy and a girl about twelve years of age. The boy said "Kaput," and smiled. Just then the cyclist came up-- he was wearing wooden shoes. While going toward them I had passed a clump of bush, and had thrown away my escape kit. He apparently noticed it, because upon reaching the road, where a large number of people had congregated, he said "Pistole."³ An old man came up to me, and without warning struck me in the crotch with his knee, slapped me, and kicked me around. Next I was taken toward the spot where I had hidden my parachute. The chute was found and soon afterwards the packet which contained my escape map and French and German money. I was then forced to put the parachute on my back, and in the hot sun I had to walk about two miles into the village

³ The knives and army 45's which had been issued combat crewmen in the United States were taken from the men upon arrival in England by order of the commanding officer of the group, and we were forced to fly our missions without side arms. This was due to the fact that the Germans would kill us if we shot any of them after being downed in combat. The German who said "Pistole" obviously had seen me throw my maps and money into the bushes, and thought I had thrown away a pistol. This made them afraid of me.

with nothing on my feet but my wool socks.

A man with short trousers and knee length stockings, who seemed to be the mayor and was treated with much respect by the people, met us and accompanied us on into the town. As we were walking along, my photograph was taken by a German cameraman. The man with the stockings took me into the courtyard of a German home, where I was questioned as to my name and where I had come from. A German girl who spoke faltering English tried to talk to me, but I pretended I couldn't understand what she said. I made myself understood that I wanted to go to the toilet, and while there threw my "escape pictures"⁴ into the hatch. Coming back to the bench outside the door, I motioned that I wanted water. The German woman pumped water herself for me until it was cold enough to drink, and also gave me two apples to eat while nobody was around, but she made signs that I was not to let anyone see me eating them. While I was in the courtyard, a blind German soldier came tapping in, and asked questions of the owner. There were also many curious women and children who looked at me. I gave the German owner my name, rank, and serial number. The name of the town was ---Bukhorst. (I fail to recall the first part of this name.) It was a small cross-

⁴ "Escape pictures" were pictures taken of air corps combat crews dressed in civilian clothes. Each man was given a picture of himself. These were to be used in conjunction with the aid which any of the occupied countries in Europe might give to any allied airman shot down in their territory.

roads village located in the state of Hannover.

Toward evening two German soldiers carrying rifles and dressed in gray came into the courtyard and took me into the street where a small German car was waiting with another American soldier in it. This man was not one of my crew, but a Warrant Officer from another downed plane. As I started to enter the car, one of the soldiers swung his rifle as though to strike me, and cursed me in German. Every time we passed a bombed ruin, he would curse my fellow prisoner and me.

It was still daylight when we arrived at the town of Gardelegen. We were taken into a room, and immediately searched. All of the gum in my pockets⁵, my knife, handkerchiefs, and other loose materials were taken from me. I still wore my heavy flying clothes, and was not forced to strip for the searching.

After this I was taken to a comparatively new section of a German jail. Here I was placed in a cell, and the iron door clanged behind me. On a bed beside the wall was a gunny sack filled with wood shavings for a mattress. There were no other facilities in the room except a bowl and spoon. The bars of the prison looked upon a garden, and I could see a German woman walking in it. Not too far off was a road, and along this road would come large numbers of

⁵ Usually air corps crews carried large amounts of chiclet gum. This was chewed even at high altitudes with oxygen masks on. The two main purposes achieved by this were to prevent nervousness on the part of the gunner and to relieve the dryness in his mouth.

civilians always singing German songs. Occasionally one would stop and look through the peep hole in my cell door as though I were a caged animal.

After perhaps an hour, I was taken under guard to an administration building. Here I was taken into a room where an officer dressed in a green uniform met me. I saluted him, and was saluted in return. Our orders in England committed us to the saluting of German officers if by any chance we were shot down behind enemy lines. I was questioned briefly by an interpreter, and the officer laughed at my two handkerchiefs, then gave them back to me, but they kept my gum.

I was then returned to my cell for the night. I was allowed to go to the toilet, and found most of the guards were young boys who laughed at me, and seemed in a happy mood. I was given some German bread, sausage, and imitation oleo-margarine. I could not eat this type of food, and the jailer seemed surprised. I sang American songs in the cell to keep my spirits up, and the Germans did not interfere. That night I was not too uncomfortable in spite of the cold night air, since I still had my flying clothes on.

The next morning I was taken from my cell, given some German sandwiches made with sausage, bread, and butter, and taken outside the building. Here I found the Warrant Officer who had been with me the day before, and about four other Americans, one of whom was seriously hurt internally. We were placed in an old German truck, the wounded man along with the rest of us. We were then taken to a railroad station, and placed on a train.

After a short interval we reached the town of Stendal. Here we were taken off this train to await another. We were allowed to get water and go to the toilet. The soldier who had threatened me when I was first taken into the custody of the German military was still guarding us. I warned the rest of the Americans about laying off this bad egg, who I felt might injure any of us. The other guard was a young man of about twenty-five who was quite large, but didn't seem to have much sense.

I noticed that Stendal had a large roundhouse with many locomotives in it, and I wondered why our air force had never struck the town. I kept this information in my mind hoping to be able to get it back to our G. H. Q. at the first opportunity. While we were in Stendal, the Warrant Officer tried to get me to escape with him, but all he had on his feet was heated shoes while I wore only wool socks. I knew we couldn't escape without shoes so we gave up the thought at this time.

The people looked at us curiously. A woman came up to the wounded bombardier, and tried to help him, but was roughly shoved away by the older guard. A large civilian started screaming angrily about us, and making threatening gestures toward us, and the guards did nothing to keep him away. When our train came in, and we started to place the wounded man on board, this civilian viciously kicked one of the American officers who was helping to carry him, and nothing was done about it.

We six Americans with the two German guards were placed

in the vestibule between two cars. The young guard seemed pleasant enough. Both of them carried sub-machine guns. Also crowded in the vestibule with us was a German soldier with full field equipment. Looking at him and the size of the pack he carried, I thought an American soldier's back would have been broken under such a load.

The prisoners with me begged the guards for cigarettes, but they would not give them any. It was fortunate that I did not smoke. Some of the men were half crazy from the lack of tobacco since they had been shot down. The German soldier in the vestibule finally rolled them one cigarette.

During the trip one of the men needed to relieve himself and sought to find a German word expressing it. The guards only laughed at him, and he was left to get along as best he could. What a relief it must have been to him, and was to us when we reached Hannover. The trip had seemed enormously long.

The city of Hannover by the light of the morning sun was nothing but ruins with walls standing and a station waiting room under the ground. Over the platform the twisted framework with the glass broken out was all that remained of the station which had once stood there.

We were taken through a waiting room filled with people who looked at us with hostility. We could have escaped, but we kept close to the guards; since we still wore our flying clothes we feared retaliation on the part of the crowd because of the bombings. We were taken to a platform, where we waited some time for a train to come along. During this

time the civilians gathered around us and for a while it looked as if we might be attacked. Trains coming and going seemed to be overflowing with civilians and German soldiers craning their heads from the windows at us. I saw a deer carcass lying on the platform apparently just brought in from some forest. The station was full of Russian women who were pulling baggage wagons and working on the tracks.

Finally our train arrived, and we were placed in a half way decent coach in the Continental style, the corridor being along one side and the seats on the other. We had another long journey ahead of us, and during this time whispered among ourselves about escape. We were allowed to go to the latrine; one guard watched it while the other stayed in our compartment. During the night, one of the guards, still holding his sub-machine gun, fell asleep or else acted as though asleep, but it was the vicious one, and I cautioned the other prisoners. None of us ate the German bread which we had been given, because it was so unpalatable. We knew however that the guards might do something to us if they found it so we dumped it out of the car window.

The next day we arrived in Frankfurt-on-the-Main, and found that city in a condition similar to Hannover. All of this time the wounded bombardier had not received any treatment, and we had tried to make things as easy as possible for him. We knew that he needed medical attention, but there was nothing we could do about it.

A curious crowd of Germans looked at us as we left the station. We were placed on a street car, and taken out of

the city some distance. As we rode along I noticed huge iron works which had never been touched by our bombs. We were finally taken from the street car and bearing the wounded officer were forced to march the remaining distance to the interrogation center, a distance of some four blocks. When we arrived there, we were lined up, and an English-speaking German corporal sent the wounded man to the hospital, and the rest of us under guard to cells. I was placed with about ten other men in a cell with benches scattered around it and with a sewer pipe on one side, which meant a floor full of leaking water. The room was scarcely large enough for five, and since it was impossible to lie on the wet floor, we sprawled like contortionists in any manner possible on the benches. Thus I passed another night in the hospitable air of the German Reich.

Late the next afternoon, I was taken to a room for interrogation. There I was offered a cigarette. At first I declined, but thinking of the tortures that my fellow prisoners were undergoing for lack of a smoke, I told the German I wanted one. He acted very kind to me at first. He asked my bomb group, and my station in England. He showed me a book complete with all of the English markings of the First Division.⁶ He showed me the Triangle J, but I did not give

⁶ The air corps like the army had divisions with specified numbers of bomb groups included within them. These bomb groups usually were composed of four squadrons. The division with which I went into combat was the First Division which had most of its planes located in the English Midlands.

any sign that I knew any of the insignia. He then told me that the Allied forces had sent parachutists as spies and saboteurs into Germany and that if he could not identify me I would be turned over to the SS troops. He warned me that in order to be identified I would have to give the names of five of my comrades or tell him the insignia of the aircraft in which I had been shot down. Toward the end of our talk he became very threatening, but I declined to help him.

As I was taken from the room I passed Briggs, our radio operator, in the corridor. He was the first member of our crew that I knew to be alive, but I gave no sign of recognition. We had been instructed not to acknowledge other crew members because our every move would be watched by German eyes, and listened to by German dictaphones.

I was then taken to a cell higher in the building than the one I had previously been in. I was shoved into a room crowded with men, but still having room enough for one person on the bed, which I immediately accepted. It was there that I met Caporoso, a boy from New Jersey, with whom I later became pretty well acquainted while living in Luft IV. I spent another night in this room, and gave the boys the cigarette I had got from the interrogator. It was pitiful to see and hear American officers begging for smokes from the dirty Germans and to have them laugh and call our men baby killers.

The next day I was transferred to solitary confinement. I did not mind this much since I had more room, and it was

quiet and peaceful--contrary to most people's ideas of going crazy by oneself in a cell. Under the bed and in places not observed by the Germans, but noticeable to Allied prisoners were inscriptions made with pencil marks telling us not to talk. The jailer brought me some German soup. He took the greatest delight in calling me a baby killer.

We had been told that if we did not give any military information while being interrogated the Germans would probably let us alone and we would not be kept beyond ten days for further questioning. The next day to my surprise and delight I was taken from my cell (which probably meant that my interrogation was over), and led to a prison pen enclosure having two buildings, and in this enclosure again to my surprise I found all except five of my crew alive and well. I met Briggs, the radio operator; Lt. Crawford Hicks, the pilot; Young, the engineer; and Vasilik, the ball turret gunner. We recounted our experiences among ourselves. I learned from the other boys that our plane had gone on some distance burning, beyond the point where Reid, the other waist gunner, and I had bailed out. Geldermann, the tail gunner, in jumping had broken an ankle.

We spent the night in filthy barracks lying together on a big bundle of hay for warmth. We were given soup and bread by English airmen who acted as the heads of the prison enclosure under German control. On the walls of one barracks literally covering every square inch of space could be found the names of thousands of American and English airmen who had

been shot down in Germany. The night passed uneventfully, with each of us glad in his heart to have some of his friends with him despite the bad conditions. Lists of men were continually called the next day for shipment, but we spent one more night in the enclosure.

I learned later that captured Allied airmen of the United Kingdom and Italian theaters of operation were filtered through identification or interrogation centers such as the one at Frankfurt. After this the prisoners were sent from these centers by transport to the Dulag Luft transit camp at Wetzlar, Klosterwald, and held there from three to thirty days.⁷

Although we did not know it at that time, we were now on our way to Wetzlar. We were walked down to the railroad station in long lines and the German civilians stood on the curbs, most of them silent, but some of them making threatening gestures as if to cut our throats, and others spitting at us. When we reached the station, a different one from that at which we had come in a few days previously, we found that our train had not arrived. On a siding alongside of us stood a Red Cross coach in which we could see many of our wounded. We waved and talked to them. It was surprising to see how cheerful these boys were in spite of the horrible experiences through which many of them had just passed. Apparently the Germans never could and never will understand why

⁷ Taken from "Dulag Luft," American National Red Cross, Prisoners of War Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 3 (March, 1945), pp. 3-4.

Americans can be cheerful under the most trying circumstances. Finally our train pulled in, and we were loaded into a coach full of bicycles. The guards occupied one end of the car, and we were herded like sheep, officers and men, into the other end with the bicycles. Inside the coach was a baggage-woman, dressed in blue striped pants and a black and red cap with a German swastika on it. I found all of the German railroad officials were dressed in hats and uniforms of red and black, and unless one knew he would probably take them for soldiers.

We arrived at Wetzlar after a comparatively short trip from Frankfurt. We were marched from the valley where the station was located through the curved, cobbled streets up toward the top of the hill, a distance of some two miles, to the separation center. As our long line of prisoners passed by, the Germans came out to stand along the sidewalks and stare at us. I was not too comfortable while walking because it was warm, and I had wool stockings on my feet and heavy insulated flying clothes on my body. I was unshaven, demoralized, and tired. Many of the men with me were wounded, and it was a supreme effort for them to reach the prison camp.

We passed a large factory with huge stacks towering in the air which had been as yet untouched by our aerial bombardments. Later I was to know from men who came through Wetzlar after me that our air force finally struck and destroyed this factory.

Reaching the top of the hill we passed a prison camp

nearing completion. We entered an administration building on our left where we were stripped, all of our old clothing was taken from us, and new and clean American clothing and Red Cross boxes were issued to us. This made us all very happy, especially to have something to wear on our feet. We were then taken to the German showers where we were allowed to shave with razors and blades taken from our Red Cross parcels. We were given a limited time to shave in cold water, and it was quite a problem getting the almost-week-old growth from our faces. It was one of the most pleasurable moments of my life when we came from the shower building feeling clean and with a more hopeful outlook on life.

In order to give a clearer picture of how much this clothing and food which we had just received was needed, I quote from a report dated August 11 by Col. Charles W. Stark, USAAF, senior Allied officer at Dulag Luft.

It is impossible to emphasize how badly all Allied officers and men coming into Dulag Luft are in need of food, clothing, spiritual, and mild recreation relief....Our aim is to make the camp as pleasant and nerve calming as possible....

[Red Cross supplies] have reached us quite steadily, and we are able to clothe and feed the officers and men very well. I wish it were possible to film a "before and after" picture. The change from a semi-clothed and semi-exhausted condition to a comparatively normal state is amazing. In fact, so great is the morale lift that some of the transports leave here in much the humor they would have leaving on a football trip.

Particularly does the well-planned Red Cross "Joy Box" (the capture parcel) receive praise. This case truly assumes the part of the present at Christmas. The fact that the contents of the capture parcel are essential items is ex-

cellent evidence that the Red Cross has investigated, and given much thorough consideration and thought to our needs.⁸ The result has been a wonderful success.

After we left the wash house the guards took us to a bull pen fenced with barbed wire, which contained many small army tents. One side of this enclosure was for officers and the other for enlisted men. We were assigned to quarters in the tents, and were then shown to the mess hall, a shed with wooden tables and benches where some decent food was given us; it had been sent to Colonel Stark by the American Red Cross, and had been prepared in German army field kitchens. Afterwards many of the men relaxed pleasantly with American cigarettes and a feeling of well-being.

That night searchlights lighted up the enclosure and the men were warned on going to the latrines to walk slowly and to stay away from the barbed wire. It rained during the night, but when we awoke we found that the sky was clear.

Late in the afternoon of the next day to our surprise and delight Lieutenant Bianco, our co-pilot, and Lieutenant Mitchener, our navigator, who had been held longer than the rest of us at the interrogation center, arrived at the enclosure. Thus our whole crew was together once again with the exception of Sergeant Geldermann, our tail gunner, who was in a German hospital; Lieutenant Kunz, our bombardier, who had been shot by a German 20 mm. cannon and had died in

⁸ Op. et loc. cit.

the plane and gone down with it; and Sergeant Reid, the other waist gunner, who was still being held at the interrogation center. Our pilot, Lieutenant Hicks, told us he had barely got out of the plane before it exploded into two pieces and floated to the ground. Lieutenant Mitchener later identified our dead bombardier to the Germans. This day passed uneventfully, and we spent one more night at Wetzlar.

I did not then know what disposition the Germans intended to make of us, but later when I reached home, I found information concerning our future in the American Red Cross Bulletin, which made the statement:

When sufficient prisoners are accumulated and have been reprocessed, a railroad transport usually comprising about 90 men is made up and dispatched to a Luftwaffe permanent camp. Three transports or more a week are dispatched. Depending upon the location of the permanent camp and transport conditions, the journey varies from two to five days.⁹

The next day in the forenoon, officers and men were lined up, and the Germans asked us if we would make the trip to permanent prison camps without attempting to escape. We were told that if we refused, our shoes would be taken from us, and we would be placed under close guard. Anyone not wishing to abide by German regulations was told to step forward from the line. Of some two hundred of us, a Belgian flight officer attached to the British army stepped forward with his head wrapped in bandages, the one man amongst us all not wishing to accept anything from the Germans. After some of

⁹ Op. et loc. cit.

our officers had talked to him, he agreed to acquiesce and the whole of us were allowed to keep our shoes. I later found that this Belgian had had many of his family killed by the Germans. He eventually escaped.

At about the last moment before we were to leave, Sergeant Lowell Reid, the other waist gunner, arrived, and I was one of the most pleased men in the world to see him. Shortly afterwards we were lined up in a column and marched down to the railroad station where we waited for some time before being placed in German boxcars for the long train ride ahead of us. Some twenty-four of us were crowded into one end of each boxcar, and the other end was taken up by a few German guards. Our boxcar had formerly been used to haul horses, and much of the excrement was still on the floor, although a covering of wood shavings made a resting place for us.

Ulius Briggs, our radio operator, and I stuck together. We were so crowded in the boxcar that in our corner we all sprawled our legs over one another. We had been given an American Red Cross parcel and a loaf of German bread to take with us. We were still unable to eat the German bread inasmuch as it was so different from the white bread to which we had been accustomed.

In each boxcar the Germans placed one police dog to prevent any thought of escape which we might entertain. We had been warned that if our parole was broken, we would be shot. They told us that this parole was recognized by the American army, and that our own country under these conditions would

not make any objections.

It is not pleasant to recall the next two nights which we spent in the boxcars. Occasionally the train would stop, and the men would be allowed to get out to go to the latrines. We bypassed Berlin, and crossed the electric inter-urban lines which ran into the city. Finally we reached Stettin, in the German state of Pomerania. This night we spent in the railroad yard, and since railroad yards were primary targets at that time we prayed all night that our bombers would not strike.

German civilians asked our guards what type of prisoners we were, and they were told that we belonged to the army. This was done to avoid any attacks that might be made upon us if they had known that we were members of the American air corps. While in Stettin many of the boys traded cigarettes for German beer, the first that they had ever had. The next day our train pulled out for Grosstychow. We passed through Belgard, Pomerania, where I noticed another roundhouse choked full of German locomotives which would have made a sweet target for an Eighth Corps raid.

At Grosstychow, we found awaiting us German guards with steel helmets and fixed bayonets, also a large group of German police dogs, which were making an unholy furor when we arrived. Briggs and I left our breed in the boxcar-- which we later regretted--since we had been assured that we would receive food upon arriving at the prison camp. We still had sufficient sense to retain the remainder of our Red Cross

parcel, for which we were duly thankful later.

We were now near Luft IV, which as I learned later, was

....situated about 12 miles from the town of Belgard (Pomerania), in an isolated clearing.

The first arrivals, numbering 64 airmen noncoms, reached Luft IV on May 14 last (1944). Several hundreds more reached the camp between May 14 and July 19.¹⁰

It was during the period between May 14 and July 19 that I arrived at Stalag Luft IV. I had not had any opportunity to place my experiences on paper prior to my imprisonment there, but as soon as I arrived I immediately began writing my day to day observations on any type of material available. This consisted of the wrappers from cigarette packages, paper soap containers, discarded German letter material, and the wrappers off Canadian chocolate bars. I had a stub of a pencil approximately an inch long to write with.

I realized how fallible the human memory is when it comes to relating things of the moment at some future date: therefore, in this diary I tried to record faithfully those things which might be of interest to the American people.

The Germans would take any material from us which they felt might give them military information. In my attempts to keep them from obtaining an insight into the psychology of our thinking, I buried my notes in cans underneath our window. I often watched German guards walking over my cache. Even the police dogs, which are supposed to have a keen nose,

¹⁰ "Stalag Luft IV," American National Red Cross, Prisoners of War Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 12 (December, 1944), p. 3.

passed by the hiding places without sniffing at them.

Our barracks and even some of the men were continually being searched. It was fortunate for me that my barracks was searched only twice during my stay.

My diary of necessity used short sentences, oftentimes with words left out in order to confuse the Germans if they had ever taken my writings from me. Many names were indicated by a single initial, and I abbreviated many words. In order to make the whole clear to the reader it has been essential that I edit the diary. My later reflections or comments appear in brackets. I have used footnotes to explain matters which might not be plain to the public. Extra material will be found in the appendix.

CHAPTER I

JUNE 1944

June 8, Thursday.

We marched from the railroad station and along pine woods to our prison camp. I carried the remnants of our Red Cross package No. IV¹¹ and my initial kit.

Two vicious looking German police dogs in back of us, and German guards surrounding us, several with metal tommy guns, were our only company.

We passed a swift running brook I should have liked to fish in. After several miles we moved around a corner and there was Luft No. IV.

The camp is divided into pens. Our enclosure, A Lager, has two double nine-foot-high fences stretched around it. Lookout towers are in the corners and in the middle on the four sides. The tallest towers are in the south-east.

We have ten barracks housing one hundred and sixty men in each and sixteen men in a room. The rooms have double-

¹¹ Quite similar to the No. IV package was the No. X-1 package which contained 16 oz. whole powdered milk, 8 oz. processed American cheese, 16 oz. oleomargarine with vitamin A added, 12 oz. corned beef, 12 oz. pork luncheon meat, 6 oz. liver paste, 8 oz. tuna or salmon, 15 oz. prunes or raisins, 7 oz. U. S. Army Types 1 or 2 biscuits, 8 oz. chocolate bar (Ration D), 2 oz. soluble coffee, 1 oz. salt and pepper, 6 oz. jam, 16 multivitamin tablets, 8 oz. lump sugar. "In addition to the foods listed, each package contains four or five packs of cigarettes and four ounces of soap. Some packages also contain chewing gum."--Clara C. Cerveny, "Supplementary Rations for Prisoners of War," American National Red Cross, Prisoners of War Bulletin, Vol. III, No. 4 (April 1945), p. 4.

deck pine bunks, a double cupboard in front of each bunk. A blue porcelain cup (large), a white bowl, knife, fork, and spoon were issued to us. The metal has Rostfrei Feinstahl Solingen engraved on them.

June 9, Friday.

Yesterday we were lined up after reaching the prison camp, and taken one by one through a building where we were made to strip down and to undergo a thorough search by the Germans for articles such as compasses, escape kits, knives, or anything that might give us an opportunity to break out. [Naturally our parole had elapsed on reaching the camp and most of us had in mind some thought of getting away.]

The Germans did not give us any Red Cross package on our arrival, and Briggs¹² and I were thankful we had brought the remainder of our Red Cross food with us. Our cans had all been punched, but we were allowed to enter the lager with them. [Cans were punched to prevent us from hiding contraband in them, accumulating a food supply for escape, and to make us eat the food hurriedly so the Germans could get the cans.]

On entering the barbed wire gates we immediately ran

¹² Ulius C. Briggs of Ukiah, California, was the radio operator on the B-17 of which I was a crew member. He was in the same barracks in the prison camp with me. In Number One Barracks, next to us, was Stephen Vasilik of Asbury Park, New Jersey, the ball turret man on our crew, and in the barracks with him was Francis E. Young, the engineer on our crew. In Barracks Nine across the parade ground from me was Lowell A. Reid of Nacogdoches, Texas, the waist gunner with me when our plane was shot down.

into some of the men who had been attached to our squadron and had gone down a short time before us. Among them was John Anderson¹³ from Texas. After being assigned to our rooms, we were interrogated by some of the boys who had got there ahead of us, and found some of the flyers we had known at Dalhart, Texas, where we had taken advance flight training. These friends of ours told us that they had been in the camp some two weeks and had been fed mostly German bread and dehydrated saurkraut. I told Briggs when we first entered the gates that these boys all looked hungry, and he said "No," but it turned out that my guess was right. [It was a pleasure to me to give some of my Red Cross cigarettes to the boys who had not had any for a long time. I also gave some of my friends a tin of salmon which had been punched and which I could not eat. These boys told me that they had been putting clover between their bread in order to give them a little more sustenance. There was a great deal of clover around the barracks.]

June 10, Saturday.

Many of the barracks are not occupied here in the lager. This is a new camp, and there are many signs of activity going

¹³ John Anderson of Sulphur Springs, Texas, was a member of the 509th squadron, 351st bomb group to which I had been attached in England. He lived in "Mother Mouse Cats Home for Homeless Children" as we called our barracks in the squadron. He and his crew had been shot down during one of the missions our squadron made on Ludwigshaven. I had been on this mission. He was a member of my room all of the time I was in prison camp and later was with me on the Pomeranian March.

on around the outside of the enclosure, where other buildings are being put up for other lagers. I have been walking around the barbed wire and occasionally I meet someone whom I knew in England or the United States. [The German carpenters in putting up the buildings used a buck saw to do all of their sawing.]

June 11, Sunday.

Many of the boys who have been with me on my trip from Wetzlar to this camp are in the same room with me. Briggs has been placed in Room Ten and I am in Room Nine or as the Germans express it "Stube Nine."

Two of the boys in this barracks, Barracks Two, were crowded with me in one of the lice-ridden cells back at Frankfurt. Bailey,¹⁴ one of the men, has a large amount of whiskers and as a result of not shaving, his face is broken out with sores. He tells me as soon as he shaves these sores will disappear. The other of these boys is Caporoso in Room Ten. [Caporoso was a New Jersey boy whose father owned a nursery. He and I spent many pleasant hours together talking about the correct way to grow flowers.]

June 12, Monday.

We have been given four postcards and two letters which we may send home during the month, and which I filled out and mailed. We have been questioned in the Vorlager (entrance compound containing the storehouses and the searching quarters)

¹⁴ See "Roommates" in appendix.

as to our home address, occupation, and other information. Besides having our name, rank, and serial number, the enemy is able to get information as to where we live in the States if we get letters¹⁵ to and from our folks. I have already sent postcards from Wetzlar notifying my mother that I am well and safe.

June 13, Tuesday.

Our commanding officer is an old man of about sixty with a crippled arm, who goes around with a perpetual squint in one eye, and wears breeches with buckskin in the crotch. He holds the rank of lieutenant. We call him "corpus delicti." (He was a prisoner of the English in World War I, and was well treated. He had a son who was a prisoner in World War II, and in American hands. Previously he had been in charge of prisoners at Heydekrug, East Prussia, and was reportedly much more lenient with them than with us.)

We have had arrivals practically every day, and the barracks are gradually filling up. Barracks Four has become the hospital barracks for this lager.

June 14, Wednesday.

Today an American soldier was shot and killed by a German guard through the fence. He was climbing into his window when shot. The bullet went through his body and lodged in the wall across the room. Some were sitting at dinner eat-

¹⁵ Many of the men did not send cards or letters to the States because they believed the war would be over before they ever received packages or letters in return.

ing when this occurred, and others were outside practically nude taking sun baths. I and others of my room went over to his barracks (Number Eight) and watched him being carried across the parade ground into the hospital barracks.

June 15, Thursday.

The German guard who yesterday shot one of my fellow prisoners is being court-martialed by the German authorities. He makes the statement that the American P. O. W. spat in his direction. The latest news we have about the wounded man is that he is still alive after being taken to a hospital at Belgard. [We were all filled with hatred at the German guard, and if we could have reached him, he would have been a good German, which is to say a dead one.]

NOTICE FROM THE GERMAN COMMANDANT TO US

"15. June

"Kriegsgefangenen- Lager Nr. 4 der Luftwaffe

"Order given to camp guards:

"All guards have the order in case they are insulted by prisoners of war--for instance by affronts, abusing terms, throwing of stones or other objects, provoking spitting in the direction of the guard, insulting gestures, or in case of being beaten or punched--that they have to immediately arrest the offender in order to protect their military honor. Should the arrest by special circumstances not be possible, the guard has to make use of the bayonet, if this is not practicable, the guard has the order to fire. This order

also refers to insults uttered by an accumulated crowd of prisoners of war.

"Der Kommandant"

[This order was placed on the bulletin board by the German authorities after the American P. O. W. was shot. The board was located on the side of the mess hall. The German officers in charge of the camp never signed their names to these orders, and we prisoners believed that this was done to prevent retaliation from the Allies after the war was over.]

June 16, Friday.

We learned to our regret and as fuel to our hatred* that our fellow P. O. W. died today in the hospital. In the opinion of every American in this lager, it is cold-blooded murder. The guard was patrolling the fence some distance from the P. O. W. and therefore had no right to shoot and kill him. The whole lager has been aroused by this killing, and it is quite possible that a German guard may be killed in retaliation.

June 17, Saturday.

The guard who shot one of my fellow prisoners was tried by a German court-martial. He has been sentenced to duty on the Russian front. In the mind of a German soldier, this is equivalent to being shot.

June 18, Sunday.

During the day we have many German spies or snoopers who walk into our rooms and listen to what we say, and at

* For the hatred prisoners feel toward their captors see Agnes Newton Keith, "All Are Guilty," The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CLXXVIII, August 1946, p. 43.

night stand outside our windows and listen to our conversation. There is much loose talk going around among the prisoners in this barracks. Sometimes we deliberately make information of the most ridiculous kind in order to play a joke on our German listeners. They will not admit that they understand any English. [When Germans were around we would often talk of tunnels in the hope they would wear themselves out looking for something that did not exist.]

June 19, Monday.

Some of our boys speak German and through them we have been able to purchase a pencil and a package of playing cards of German make for this room. One of the snoops is an old German man who has six sons, all in the German army, but according to him he does not think much of the Nazi party. This may be just a ruse. [German guards would be friendly to get information from us, then cut our throats.]

June 20, Tuesday.

This is a wonderful day for me. I had the dubious pleasure of having my hair cut with a two-edged razor blade and a comb. Scissors are unavailable at the present. My friend and member of my crew, Steve Vasilik of New Jersey, acted as my barber. Having a hair cut of this kind is not only one of the most painful things in the world, but makes one's mind tend to think of the pleasures of barbering back home.

June 21, Wednesday.

There has been a great deal of discussion between the

men in the lager who were the first prisoners in this camp and those of us who came in later about who should get the first Red Cross parcels that come. The older men whom we have called old combat men state that they did not receive any Red Cross when they came down and therefore, if there isn't enough to go around, they should have first choice. The rest of us who came down later say that we are American soldiers the same as they are and therefore entitled to as much Red Cross as they get. Today we received our first Red Cross. There are not too many parcels here yet and we have been allotted one half a package per man per week. We have all been thinking of these boxes and living for them from day to day. This is one of the happiest days of our lives.

June 27, Tuesday.

We get up at 8:00 o'clock in the morning, eat, and have roll call at 9:00 o'clock. Each barracks lines up alongside of its barracks leader. Pete Peatross is ours. Another roll call is at 3:00 P. M. and we carry our four-legged stools and two blankets to formation, and sit on them until our German lieutenant shows up. Then we stand at attention until a count is made. The glue has come out of many stools and these are carried away in a one-horse wagon to be reglued.

June 28, Wednesday.

I looked at our home-made calendar. (It was made of card-

board by Harry W. Arfman of Del Rio, Texas. It had the months, weeks, and days on it.) After a breakfast of black bread, and coffee and Spam from the Red Cross package we started playing "Monopoly," a popular American game. Five of us played, and we had a lot of fun. Our room was on detail this morning. We swept the barracks hall, and cleaned out the indoor latrine and the washroom. Our whisk brooms are made of a flowery yellow brush; these are the only brooms we have. [These flowers grow around Oklahoma A. & M. College at Stillwater.] The floor of our room gets greasy from butter and meat scraps. We use cloth mop rags of cut-up R. A. F. cloth. It is a gray-blue cloth.

We shave in the reflection of our faces on the window panes. [Later, Arfman put tar on the back of a broken window pane and made a mirror.] Ambrose, our room leader, is a tailor and he cuts up clothes and fits them. He is the fashion plate of our camp.

Dinner this noon was cabbage soup, black bread, coffee, and Red Cross corned beef. We were issued Red Cross prunes, raisins, butter, cigarettes, and half an Emergency Ration D Bar of chocolate. This food certainly helps.

Supper tonight is corned beef, oleomargarine, boiled potatoes with jackets on, and German senna tea. It tastes like the senna tea my grandmother used to make. Adding "Hasty Made Coffee" to this drink still leaves a tea taste. ["Hasty Made Coffee" is an instantaneous coffee made with boiling water. It came in our Red Cross package.]

June 29, Thursday.

Last night our first commissioned officers arrived in camp. They were Captain Vinson and Captain McKee, medical doctors¹⁶. Everyone in camp rejoiced to have our own doctors instead of a German doctor. But, from all the reports that I have got the German doctor knows his business and takes as good care of us as our own medical men.

[Later after our men had been run from the station and many had been bayoneted and bitten by dogs, we heard that he told the red-headed Captain of the Guard that if he mistreated any more of us, he personally would kill him. From what I heard of him I believe that he would have done so.]

We have a great many crippled men in camp. Many have bad burns, some are without legs, and others have no arms. Our medical facilities are limited to first aid mostly. We are trying to get medical stuff here as fast as possible but this is a new camp and it takes time to do anything.

At afternoon formation the men of my barracks didn't dress their lines to suit our German lieutenant; as a result the whole formation was dismissed and called back in about fifteen minutes. At the end of the formation the president of the softball league announced Class A teams of barracks who were to play each other, and a meeting after the game.

Dress in June (warm weather attire) is as follows:

¹⁶ Refer to "Religious and Medical Leaders" in appendix.

heterogeneous pajama bottoms (varicolored) and shoes (black or brown); English blue shirts, with brown U. S. Army summer trousers and shoes; shorts and nothing else; bedroom sandals sans trousers and shirts, varicolored underclothes. We have complete R. A. F. uniforms both coat and trousers, battle jackets, brown high topped British flying boots, our own shorter winter boots (U. S.), and heated shoes.

Hair dress varies from a la Buffalo Bill to shaven heads. Heads with short hair are cut with a razor blade and comb like my own. Many think the war will end soon and persist in wearing long hair, not wishing to greet civilization with a barren appearance. During these warm sunshiny days gray German blankets are spread on the grass and the boys recline en deshabile to get a tan, many a red burn. Briggs has a beautiful brown tan.

My bed partner, Bly, who sleeps on the upper bunk, and I were on room detail. We had to get four loaves of bread, a pound of butter, and a pitcher of German coffee this morning. At noon we got hot water in a large pitcher, and I got a pail of soup composed of barley, parsnip, and meat. It wasn't bad soup. In a few minutes we receive our Red Cross rations.

Last night my roommate, Joe Aldape (a Spanish-American from Galveston, Texas), agreed to teach me Spanish. I think of my Spanish class in college and wish I could remember more of it.

CHAPTER II

JULY 1944

July 4, Tuesday.

Today we played ball as we have always done on this day, but it was behind barbed wire. A show was put on in front of Barracks Three. We had Groucho Marx, the Hunchback of Notre Dame, and Frankenstein. One boy was dressed as a monkey with a G string. The amusement broke the camp monotony. German officers and soldiers looked on.

German officers usually wear a blue gray uniform, riding boots, a cap with braid on it, and solid white shoulder epaulettes. Sergeants have the same uniform except they have braid trimmings and pips on their shoulders. One pip is a buck sergeant, two a staff sergeant, and three a technical sergeant. They and the privates wear boots coming half way up their legs. All wear an eagle on their right breasts holding a swastika in its claws.

A rumor went around that we were to get beer today but this never materialized. We got hot water and soup for dinner, and no potatoes for supper.

This paper that I am writing on is getting short, and I am wondering where I will get some more.

We made some new playing cards from biscuit boxes and sugar boxes and painted them with a mixture of coffee and water. They look good and are serviceable.

These are the writings on our Red Cross boxes:

From: American Red Cross - U.S.A.
 To International Red Cross Committee
 Contents 4 Prisoner of War
 Food Package No. 10
 Gross Weight: 47 lbs. Cu. Ft. 1.32

July 5, Wednesday.

Today was a novel day for me. I ate my first Limberger cheese and liked it. Perhaps I was hungry. Two others, Arfman of Texas and Behre of Louisiana ate it. We three have a lot of fun with the others. In spite of the smell I like it. The Germans issue it quite often. It is put up in triangular cakes wrapped in tinfoil and is packed in round wooden boxes. We receive two other kinds of cheese; one is wrapped in a round tinfoil tube like toothpaste. [Before we left camp most of the room was eating Limberger cheese. It generates a lot of gas, however, and eating too much of it hurts you. When it was issued, we always went to other rooms and got quite a lot of it from the new men. We kept it in the bottom of the chimney and when the guards searched our room they always hurriedly closed the chimney. Later I tried some American Limberger in San Antonio along with rye bread, but our Limberger cheese isn't as good as the German.]

Red Cross rations are getting low in the warehouse, and we are supposed to get some Friday. We hear rumors about getting more food into the camp but are never sure just when it will arrive. Rumors are bad for our morale but they are

something to keep you hoping, especially when food is concerned.

Today a guard in the northwest corner tower aimed a machine gun at a P. O. W. He cocked it and fired, but it was empty. He was reported to the camp leader, who notified the German lieutenant in charge of our lager, and the lieutenant reprimanded him. The Geneva Convention prohibits guards from such cruelty to prisoners as aiming guns at them.¹⁷ Many of the guards who are just off the Russian front have a playful habit of following us around the compound with light machine guns aimed at our backs. It is not a pleasant feeling to be the man inside of the barbed wire.

Chess sets are becoming prominent around here and Room One in our barracks has a nice carved set made out of wood, but smaller than the one in my room. Behre and I along with many others in the room made a good wooden set and Behre got some medical pills to color it orange and black. He is a very good chess player.

July 6, Thursday.

It is 3:30 P. M. and I have just finished losing a "Monopoly" game. We had a formation at 3:00 o'clock and by order of our German lieutenant we now wear shirts and trousers.

¹⁷ "Any corporal punishment, any imprisonment in quarters without daylight and, in general, any form of cruelty, is forbidden."--"Treaty Series, No. 846, Convention between the United States of America and Other Powers," Title III, Section V, Ch. 3, Article 46, p. 129, The Army Medical Bulletin No. 62, Reprinted March 1944.

This morning I played softball with my roommates in Room Nine, against Room Four. We got beat eleven to sixteen. Barracks Eight and our new men are moving into the new compound north of ours. German soldiers are wearing white summer uniforms with a Gott Mitt Uns belt, and a hip holster with a pistol. Guards patrol our fence, and the watch towers have two lights mounted in them and a machine gun in the center. Today our furniture and floors were G. I.-ed¹⁸ and now they are nice and clean.

Every night we talk. Last night it was about the Civil War again. The northern boys say the blacks are taken advantage of in the South. The southern boys say no. We get nowhere fast. I am called in as a consultant, and I give my opinion.

Slang terms used here are: "finito," finished; "beaucoup," plenty; "I'll kid you not"; "I'm not joking"; "chow," food.

I wrote out the names of Oklahomans in our camp today. Among them I found two Stillwater men. I got this list from Rodgers, an Okie boy.¹⁹

It is so hot in our barracks at night that we take our small French windows out, and put up shutters. It's a wonder that we all don't suffocate. German guards with police dogs roam through the camp area, placing their ears next to the barracks walls to hear what we have to say. At night

¹⁸ G. I. as used in the army means "Government Issue," but as used here, it means having the floors scrubbed clean.

¹⁹ See list of Oklahoma men in appendix.

everything in camp is as bright as day. The guards in our enclosure do not wear side arms.

July is a warm month. We believe this country is about the same latitude as Canada. Much of our conjectures have to be approximate.

Sam Bly and I are on K. P. tomorrow. I never have liked it.

During supper another argument came up over eating Limberger. Some in the room say that anybody who would eat it would eat an old dead horse. The argument was very funny, but not to hungry men.

July 7, Friday.

Room Eleven has one man in the hospital with diphtheria, and their room has been quarantined. Today the whole room moved en masse to the hospital. They took with them one of the two new decks of cards that we had in the barracks. Only a few rooms have been hit by the disease so far.

I looked around the other rooms in the barracks last night, and most of them have "Monopoly" games. Lots on the "Monopoly" board are named after states. Everybody is proud of the state he comes from. The boys from Texas take a lot of joshing because most of the Air Corps seems to have trained there at one time or another. Naturally most of the men from Oklahoma are called Okies, and we are proud of the title.

July 8, Saturday.

Our room is on camp duty today. The four men drawing

high cards shovel coal and peel potatoes. We change around on the duties.

Scrap paper is taken to the next barracks and used in the stove to heat water for our shaving and bathing. [The stove in our barracks was too small to heat water.]

We received British rations of meal, milk, butter, candy, biscuits, and mustard. The bread we got from Jerry this morning was moldy--as it usually is. [We usually cut the mold off, losing much of the bread.] German standards of living are far lower than ours.

The milk "Nestles" (British sweetened milk in a thick form) is far better than our powdered milk.

German papers say that we have taken Cherbourg peninsula.

July 9, Sunday.

Services were held at 11:00 A. M. and at 7:30 P. M. The two Protestant ministers here are doing a good job. They are both gunners. I borrowed a Bible from Goff²⁰ and started to read it. He had it with him when he came down. The Germans took the brass off it.

No Red Cross rations today.

July 10, Monday.

I read the Bible through to St. Mark. It is very in-

²⁰ Goff was a boy from Texas who along with others from his state was in the next barracks from me at Amarillo, Texas, during 1943 when I was taking a course in airplane engine mechanics. I met several more of these boys in England and others at Luft IV while I was a prisoner.

teresting and about all the reading we have except for a few fiction books brought in by the hospital cases.

We received British jam and German beer for the first time. Both tasted good to us.

Johnny Battstone²¹ of Cleveland cut my hair and about six other heads of hair in the room. He is pretty good at it.

An argument started over cigarettes in our corridor between W. and P.²² from the room across the hall.

It rained today and roll call was held inside.

July 11, Tuesday.

Seventy-five new men arrived in the compound and are quartered in Barracks Three.

The news today is that Florence, Italy, has fallen.

July 12, Wednesday.

Men from B Lager on the north are brought to our compound for sick call. [Lagers were separate enclosures, each of which included ten barracks. The lagers were separated by barbed wire. All of the lagers put together made a prison camp. I often use the word "compound" interchangeably with the word "lager."]

July 13, Thursday.

We received our Red Cross rations. We were badly in need of them.

²¹ See list of roommates in appendix.

²² It is impossible for me to give the names of some men without their permission.

A pinochle deck was made out of biscuit boxes.

July 14, Friday.

Somebody flew a kite and nearly got shot. I was making the round of the compound with Young and a guard pointed his rifle toward us and shouted. Then another guard got the kite.

July 15, Saturday.

The compound is two hundred and twenty-five times three or six hundred and seventy-five feet wide and seven hundred and eight feet long. [I measured it at three feet between each stride. This is the distance inside the warning line.]

The Jerries compared our faces with their photographs. The pictures were taken when we first came down and looked quite wild.

Our religious bulletin reads like this:

Church Services Everyone Invited

Protestant Services

Sunday Mornings at 11:00

Sunday Evenings at 1930 [7:30]

Prayer Service at 11:00 during the Week

Bible Studies at 1930 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

Catholic Services

Every Sunday at 11:00

Every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 7:30 P. M.

[Every time a formation was held during the hours for our services, we held them afterwards.]

July 16, Sunday.

We received about forty more men into the compound, who were assigned to Barracks Three. The latest "Poop from the group"²³ is that our army is about seventy miles from Paris. Many bets are made in the room as to the authenticity of this report inasmuch as we usually know as much as the new men coming into the compound. These men usually do not read the newspapers and do not know a great deal about the progress of the war.

It rained today. If it rains too hard, we are allowed to stay in the barracks to be counted, and then if the rain stops, we are called out into a formation at which the whole group is to stand bareheaded. Today we were told by a German interpreter who speaks English that we are supposed to salute all German officers or we will be punished. The Jerry who tells us has spent some time in the States as have most of the ferrets who stand outside our windows at night listening to our conversation.

The Germans have many women in this camp who do all their work around the barracks and cook for them. We are forbidden to have anything to do with them on penalty of death. Naturally we couldn't do anything if we wanted to since we are separated from them by barbed wire, and guards are always be-

²³ Latest information, usually gossip.

tween them and us.

There is talk of a Red Cross dentist being sent here. It is just rumor of course, but we really do need one badly. We have scabies, crabs, and venereal disease among the men but these are being eradicated as fast as possible. We do not have the proper toilet facilities for cleanliness or the drugs which are necessary to combat these things, but get along on what we do have.

Many of our men speak German and read it. The Germans give us a paper called The Camp and one called the O. K. Newspaper, both written in English, also the Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung and the Beobachter Zeitung (both written in German). Through this avenue we are able to make out what is going on at the various fronts.

We have about five thousand dollars in our camp fund to buy things with, but the Jerries won't let us buy anything. This money has been furnished by our officers. [The only pay non-commissioned officers received was from their commissioned officers.]

Today we made a domino set out of the wallboard in back of our beds and had a lot of fun playing with it. Making games keeps us busy, which is the thing for us to do.

July 18, Tuesday.

I woke up at 8 o'clock this morning and saw guards all around the enclosure. I counted thirty-three altogether and they have on steel helmets. We have been expecting seven thousand eight hundred prisoners from Heydekrug, East Prussia,

two thousand four hundred Americans and five thousand four hundred British. Over two thousand of the Americans arrived today, and are in the Vorlager. These men were forced to run from the station to the camp by the guards, who set the police dogs upon them. [I later saw personally the scars from one of the bitings on a boy in the hospital, and his whole lower leg was a mass of blue scars. This boy was Robert H. Smith of 111 Yale St., York, Pennsylvania.]

The man responsible for these runnings and bayonetings is the red-haired Captain of the Guard that the Germans have over us. The night before he had his men running through the woods to make them angry so they would mistreat our soldiers the next day. While the Heydekrug men were running, he drove along in his car shooting his pistol and screaming at the top of his voice. We knew he was a tough customer because when we are at formation he comes along our ranks calling us swine and other choice German words, and we cannot retaliate with the guards in the towers training their machine guns on us.

At the station at Grosstychow the guards took delight in sticking these boys in the buttocks when they were at the latrines. Many of them have been carried into this lager on stretchers as a result of bayonetings and beatings.

It took two days by boat for them to come from the harbor near Heydekrug to a port north of Stettin. They were packed into the hold like cattle, and could constantly hear the scraping of mines against the ship's side. If the ship

had been sunk, very few would have survived. One of them went mad and jumped overboard, and the German marines shot at him in the water. [This man should have been under observation in a mental hospital. He had shown signs of insanity while at Heydekrug. He had walked up to a fence and a guard had started to shoot him, when a German-speaking English airman hollered at the guard that the prisoner was crazy.]

These prisoners were brought here because the Russians were close to their old camp and they had to move. Many Germans wanted to go with them according to their stories. We are sending out what food we can spare for them, but it leaves us short.

While at Heydekrug, there were twenty-five prisoners who escaped, three okay, seventeen recaptured, and five killed. Because of this we expect to have the Jerries cut our rations in reprisal.

Among the new arrivals I met my old comrades, Brown and Lunde²⁴. The latter was very badly burned around the eyes when he jumped from his burning plane. [Later these burns went away and a white ring was visible where the burn had been. Many who came into camp were burnt, but gradually these burns disappeared.]

The German lieutenant was angry today because many of us

²⁴ These are men I had met at Dalhart, Texas, while undergoing advanced flight training.

have been smoking in the ranks. This smoking has been going on for some time and usually the formation will be dismissed, and we will be recalled in ten minutes to stand in parade again. Butts are concealed in the palm of the hand, and the Germans have a hard time finding the guilty men.

Razor blades are scarce and I use mine as long as they cut. I shaved today by means of a mirror made out of a broken piece of window glass and a piece of black paper from a Red Cross box pasted across the back.

"Slim" Barnhardt²⁵ built a game called "Battleship" which will be all the craze around here soon. [It turned out to be very interesting as a game that I played a lot although almost consistently being beaten at it. Barnhardt did not invent the game.]

July 19, Wednesday.

This noon more prisoners arrived at the receiving compound (Vorlager). Many English are among the arrivals. They come straggling into our compound in groups of fifteen to twenty. Many are brought in on stretchers. The rations at supper were cut to feed the newcomers in the Vorlager compound, who are quartered in circus-like tents. Large water tanks on wagons water them, and the one-lung Diesel tractor car of the Germans is running all day long to supply them with food and clothing from the Vorlager. We hear the refuse

²⁵ Refer to list of roommates in appendix.

wagon booming. It uses suction to clean out toilets. It scared us at first because it explodes.

July 20, Thursday.

New German officers came along with our German lieutenant and looked us over. There is some trouble at night over cutting up in the ranks by our P. O. W.'s. Some of the men wrestle or throw gravel at each other. The gas given off by the men in the ranks is unbearable at times. The German food is mostly gaseous--cabbage, cheese, potatoes, and kohlrabis.

Throughout the compound we have tents, which are being filled with incoming prisoners, placed in the spaces between barracks. There are forty of these tents, each eighteen by fourteen, and intended to house about twenty men. It was the job of each room outfit in the wooden barracks to put up three tents.

Staff Sergeant Bugg of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, one of the newcomers, told me that Lt. C. P. Peck, a pilot from my own town, has been killed.

July 21, Friday.

I went around to most of the barracks and tents today, and got the names of new Okie men. Wheeler of Enid, Oklahoma, went with me. I was nonplused when introduced to one Oklahoma boy by him. I said "I'm glad to meet you!" He said "Are you?" I nearly fell over and was wondering if I should take a swat at him. I decided he did not know any better. I met Nabors of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and we talked about forming a state

organization for ex-P. O. W.'s. [He later went home on repatriation for a bad leg.]

B. in our room was found to have body lice and he bathed regularly for a long time and hasn't found any more. We all air our bedding and wash well trying to keep clean. This is a hard job because of the new arrivals in the camp who bring new live stock along with them. In the midst of this A. and A. are found to have crabs which they probably picked up from one of the toilet seats; one of the boys in Room Five has been known to have had them, along with a great many new men who have just come in. They have to shave the hair off around the penis and treat with "Blue Ointment." [We all made daily inspections which at times were rather comical aided usually with verbiage from other occupants of the room.]

July 22, Saturday.

Many more men came into our lager from the Vorlager compound today. We had fourteen hundred and ninety men in this lager; we now have twenty-eight hundred. While walking around the enclosure I met three men who went to my gunnery school at Las Vegas, Nevada. These men, Max Dahm, Rief who belongs to the same church I do, and Karnowski from Chicago told me a lot about Heydekrug.

Max Dahm and I got to talking and he had an interesting story to tell me. His plane was blown up and he received five hundred and seventeen pieces of metal in his body. His left arm, brown as it is, cannot hide a large red welt next to his wrist, which was broken by a German 303 bullet. His shoulder

has a large red spot where a 303 shell hit him. He still has plenty of metal in him; he has just let me feel a piece of iron over his left eye and just under the skin. He spent ninety days in German hospitals and lost twenty pounds during that time. [I first met Max Dahm at the gunnery school at Las Vegas, Nevada. Later we met again at Amarillo, while I was taking an airplane mechanics course. The next time we met was in the prison camp at Luft IV. He had been shot down some time prior to my going overseas.]

Mr. Bob Hope of Hollywood, who indirectly caused this man a broken bone in his ankle, may recall when the bleachers fell during a performance of his at Las Vegas with Vera Vague, Jerry Collona, and a foreign actress. [As the graduating class, we were supposed to get front seats, but were put on bleachers in the rear. They collapsed, and I fell five feet, which didn't make me feel too good.]

The boys indulged in a little game at which four men each held an arm or a leg of the victim and a fifth man poured water down his belt; it was highly enjoyable. Eldon Anderson, a man in our room, enjoyed an airplane ride on a bed slat which we looked upon with the contemplative eyes of former airmen.

July 23, Sunday.

For the first time in my life I went to a Roman Catholic service held outdoors near the fire pool²⁶. The English priest

²⁶ The fire pool was a pond of water next to the mess hall, opposite my barracks, about thirty by sixty feet, with sides of rock. This water was used to extinguish fires. There was always danger of fire in the wooden barracks, and the mess hall was the only building that had running water.

was bald because of some earlier sickness, and he was wearing a black robe with a yellow piece over his neck. I enjoyed the service even if I am a Protestant. At night I went to the Protestant services held in the mess hall. The English priest is the first ordained minister we have had to date except Mears, a Texas minister and gunner, and one other Air Force man who is a preacher.

For supper we have a mixture of carrots and potatoes. Food is always a good topic of conversation, which can always be made to continue for some time.

July 24, Monday.

The watch tower in the center of the north fence is being torn down and another being built farther east. The guard towers are built with open fronts for better observation.

French soldiers under guard work all over the camp. They work at building roads, and digging ditches for pipes, along with German soldiers who are being punished for something. There are also a great many civilians working around the camp and many women who work in the offices.

We got paid today from our camp fund, one dollar and thirty cents. We received two two-mark pieces, one one-mark piece, and one fifty-Reichpfennig. It is the first time we have been paid. We are supposed to have a canteen to buy a few necessary things but this is non-existent.

July 25, Tuesday.

I played bridge and "Battleship" most of the day. The

rest of the time I spent reading Damon Runyon's stories. It is cold enough outside for a coat.

July 26, Wednesday.

It is the nicest day we have had in a long time. Many are bathing and washing clothes. Our room was on detail again and had to sweep the hall, clean out the latrine, and sweep the washroom.

July 27, Thursday.

We G. I.-ed our room today. Later I played "Battleship" with Ben. Last night our two American doctors walked around the enclosure in shorts wearing caps with two bars on them. This looked rather incongruous, but we got a kick out of it.

July 28, Friday.

Holes are beginning to appear in my soles and I don't know where I'll get another pair of shoes.

July 29, Saturday.

This morning we had a lightning storm and a small hut in the next compound (Lager B) with ten men in it, was struck. One man was killed instantly, one blinded, and the eight others shocked. [Later one of the boys who was shocked told me about it. It seems the lightning melted every nail where it struck and nothing was left but the boards.]

We usually get hot water after supper to make coffee. It's a lifesaver. We received our Red Cross box this afternoon; it included one package of cigarettes, coffee, cheese,

pate, Spam, and raisins.

Everything was full of green grass when we came here, but now it is all trodden down, like having cattle in a pasture.

A new German lieutenant inspected us today so perhaps he will take the place of old "corpus delicti."

Following is a bulletin from B Lager:

29, July, 1944. Late this morning one man was killed and eight others were injured when lightning struck a hut in Lager B. According to the doctor who was called immediately, the men were lying on the floor of the hut, when the lightning struck. They were taken to the Mess Hall and one man was given up for dead. The others were moved to the hospital in A Lager. One man was burned in the shoulder, one in the left eye. The others all sustained minor burns and shock. A more complete diagnosis can be made tomorrow when the mens' nerves are back. Several men walking near the hut suffered shock.

July 30, Sunday.

I went to church at 11:00 today. We have two English ministers, Jackson and Morgan²⁷. A chorus of nine men rendered a song. The song brought back memories of home and many started crying or sobbing. I felt that way myself. Today the man killed by lightning in Lager B was buried in the cemetery north of camp. He was a Canadian, and had been a prisoner for three and a half years.

We watched uniformed Germans do a right turn. It was like machinery.

²⁷ Jackson never got along very well with the Nazis and was later sent back to England. The Reverend Morgan was with me later on the "Black March" across Germany.

Two months ago today our plane was shot down. This is our anniversary. I went over to see Young, our engineer, and we discussed what had happened at 11:15 on May 30. I wanted to see Europe, and now I am doing it at the expense of the German government.

Yesterday all sixteen men in my room each bet five dollars in a pool on the date of the armistice. I picked September 2. This evening future usage of the winnings was discussed.

Last night B. was hypnotized by an amateur in our room. He stood up, tossed a cigarette away (thought it was burning him), and lifted his arm above his head. He was breathing hard, sweating, and actually hypnotized. He was hard to bring back to consciousness.

Two hundred more men are expected in today. Two men from each room filled a long gunnysack mattress and pillow with shavings for them.

Joe Aldape is in the bottom corner bunk singing Spanish songs. He does this about every night. Some of the boys are playing "Monopoly." Sam Bly is making a belt from the cellophane wrappers of our cigarette packages. I won three packages of cigarettes today playing poker at a one-cigarette limit. Pete, our barracks leader, won two packages. One of our favorites is seven card stud poker. [It is a wilder game and took more cigarettes to play than five card draw or stud.] Usually five card draw or stud is played.

It's raining out now in a series of short showers. This reminds us of our earlier days here.

During the last few days our two outdoor toilets were cleaned out by the Russians with German guards watching them. All American P. O. W.'s contributed one cigarette apiece; these were collected and given to the Russians for this task.

We lack running water here for washing, toilet, and room usage. Two large seven-foot-tall green pumps with a handle ending in a curl furnish our water.

An epidemic of diphtheria constantly hangs over our heads. We are very grateful for the shots that we received back in the States.

Today we elected Bailey to replace Ambrose for room leader. Ambrose did not want to assume the responsibility without the cooperation of the room, and this led to an argument. Our room is the noisiest in the barracks. [I can say one thing about Room Nine, we never had a dull moment.]

July 31, Monday.

Caporoso versus Clark, a battle ensued in the corridor outside of my room and one of the men was blacked out. The fight was a short one; it started over table manners.

I noticed that the library has With Fire and Sword by Sienkiewicz. It is a very long book but interesting.

It rained all last night and today.

Sam Bly and I were on K. P. today. We had cabbage soup for dinner and barley soup for supper. No Red Cross came in today.

Tonight's roll call was held in the hall. A German sergeant says O. K. after he is through counting us, and that tickles us.

Raum²⁸ came over and we played "Monopoly" in the afternoon.

Trading is rampant in the compound.

An Okie meeting was held, but it was interrupted by the Germans so it was called off.

Many of the tents we put up went down when the men inside them forgot to loosen the guy ropes and the rain made them taut pulling the pegs out of the ground.

²⁸ Raum is a Pennsylvania boy that I met while at Dalhart, Texas.

CHAPTER III

AUGUST 1944

August 1, Tuesday.

It rained this morning and the fire pool was nearly filled up.

I played pinochle in the afternoon with our home-made cards.

I watched the Jerries bring in a load of peas, meat, and barley. The meat was very lean and not up to our standards. A K. P. dropped a bag of peas from the wagon and the paper bag strewed peas all over the place. It made us very angry because food is so scarce that we cannot afford to waste a bit of it. Each barracks takes its turn on seconds for chow if there is any food left over from the first serving.

We got two books to read in our room. They are the first we have had since arriving here. We rotate them around the room.²⁹

German guards with rifles now come into the compound when we have roll call.

I lost a chocolate bar in a pinochle game.

August 2, Wednesday.

A German army inspector looked our parade over today.

²⁹ The books were sent by the Y. M. C. A. and other organizations. At first they were passed around rooms, and then a library started in a tent and later moved to a barracks room. From there it moved to a room in the mess hall, and finally to a small building a little larger than four doghouses.

High ranking German staff officers wear red stripes down the sides of their trousers.

After a dinner of nothing but potatoes we peeled rotten carrots for three hours.

I was in the room when someone shouted, "All out!" and running outside I found a German lineman hanging to a high tension wire he had been stringing to the new high center tower. A big mob of P. O. W.'s gathered to watch him.

The man's face turned as black as coal. The Germans were running around shouting and doing nothing. Finally one of them shinned up the pole and got him down. It had taken twenty-five minutes, and by this time he was dead.

The guards didn't like us watching. One of them shouted something like "Shoot!" and we all started running away from there in a hurry.

Afman in our room who had been a lineman told us that back in the States he could have had him down in five minutes and saved his life. But all of us decided that a dead Kraut is a good Kraut.

A large "circus tent" was set up for men coming in tomorrow. It has a lot of big holes in it.

While we were eating bread and butter this morning I got into an argument with Alex³⁰ over his mouth gargling. He does it at night and it keeps me awake. He sounds like he is strangling. My bedmate Bly snores at night and we have a regular

³⁰ Refer to Alexander in list of roommates in appendix.

orchestra.

August 3, Thursday.

About three hundred men arrived.

The men in the compound have made a lot of sailing boats and are trying them out in the fire pond. It is fun watching them sail. There are many different varieties of ships.

I was very industrious today: I played "Monopoly" and "Battleship," washed my clothes, and shaved, besides sending two letters home.

The Germans issued an order about stealing carrots. (Men had been taking them out of the cellar)

The latest news is that Warsaw has fallen.

We are supposed to get Red Cross tomorrow.

August 4, Friday.

We now have 3,174 men in A Compound. We received some new ones today. The compound now boasts three "circus tents" one hundred feet long to house the new prisoners.

The guards have bayonets on their rifles. There are two guards in the center tower and they use binoculars to watch us.

We received Red Cross today.

The present exchange here is one can of coffee for three packs of cigarettes, one can of butter for three packs, and one bar of chocolate for nine packs.

August 5, Saturday.

More prisoners arrived today escorted by guards with bayonets.

We received Red Cross in the form of butter, cigarettes, and jam.

Many of the men are acrobats and they stand up on each others' arms and do tricks. It is fun watching them.

A snoop came prowling through the barracks and looked our room over. The Germans keep spying on us.

August 6, Sunday.

I went to church today and heard an English padre preach a sermon about Joseph and the commandments.

We received an American prisoner who had been thrown out of Ost 6ls, Stalag VI at Bergisch-Neustadt. He couldn't get along with the prisoners there; he told them that he had been sent to take charge of them. They believed he was a German spy. We are keeping close watch on him. [The Germans finally sent him away for fear we might kill him.]

August 7, Monday.

Ten new men came in tonight. I played poker and won two packs of cigarettes. We received our rations of cheese, liver pate, and cigarettes. I read some prose and walked around the enclosure with Raum. We aired our blankets to keep them from being lousy, and many of the men spread them out on the grass and lay down on them.

August 8, Tuesday.

We have pinned on the walls of our room pictures of Cathie Dyckhoff (a German actress), a Mexican girl, a Hawaiian girl,

and three Indian chiefs.

We received the German newspapers, Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung and the Volkischer Beobachter. We have a home-made map of Europe made by Arfman and various maps from German papers. We are thus able to follow the different fighting fronts.

Today was uneventful. I read prose and played poker.

We now have potatoes and gruel for supper.

This camp has three thousand four hundred men in it.

August 9, Wednesday.

Sam Bly, my bed partner, and I were on K. P. We peeled a bucket of potatoes. The camp has received thirteen thousand Red Cross boxes. We are to receive shoes and clothing soon.

The books we have been reading were taken up and tomorrow we will receive others which we haven't read.

It is raining hard tonight.

We aren't supposed to swim in our fire pool, but today a boy I know only as "Shorty" went in. He acted up on the rails surrounding the water, then did a dive. The Germans did nothing about it.

This afternoon an airplane buzzed us.

We received twenty-seven new men.

August 10, Thursday.

I played chess with Joe Aldape. We had a lot of fun. I

beat him with the help of a German guard who came in and saw us playing. He seemed to know the game quite well and helped me to win, which made Joe mad.

It has rained and is very nasty out.

We have a bread crisis and our ration has been halved. We were receiving a fourth of a loaf every two days.

While we were making the rounds we saw a German guard take a woman and stroll into the woods. This occurs quite frequently around here, and having nothing else to do we usually know of anything that goes on within our sight.

We had hot water after formation with which we made coffee. This always cheers us.

August 11, Friday.

We now have a variety of egg-beaters in the room made from a piece of wood and the bands taken off milk cans. These are used to mix up everything, especially milk.

We had four roll calls today at which men keep fainting in the ranks. Many have dysentery, and the Germans don't like to have them leave the ranks to go to the latrines.

Our room received seconds for supper.

August 12, Saturday.

Last night a German police dog tried to get into our room. Behre took a swing at him with a stool, which only increased his anger, and he tried to tear the shutter off the window. The German guard outside was quiet. Most of the boys ran out of

the room, but some of us climbed to the tops of our bunks while Behre bravely tried to ward off the dog. (As I look at it now, I seem to sense the humor of the situation with Daniel P. Behre swinging his stool and the rest of us clinging to the tops of our bunks hoping the dog wouldn't break down the shutter.)

Vasilik will cut my hair tomorrow.

This forenoon a man fainted in the front rank while at parade, and in the afternoon another fainted behind me. They get sick at their stomach and dizzy.

I saw a game of cricket between two teams of the English hospital boys. They use an overhand throw and a cork ball. A man with an odd-shaped bat somewhat like the end of an oar tries to hit it.

Tonight at a jam session held in the Red Cross room the first piece rendered was "Honeysuckle Rose." The orchestra was on the east side of the room and consisted of a guitar, a bass violin, a trumpet, and two clarinets furnished by the Y. M. C. A. A red-headed, red-faced, freckled boy from Heydekrug was the vocalist.

Our room received two shaving brushes, two blades, four combs, and two shaving sticks from our Red Cross supplies.

More men came into the lager.

August 13, Sunday.

Sayings we have in our room are "Course you will," and "You talk, I'm tired."

I went to church this morning. There was an attendance of about five hundred. The choir rendered a song, and the chaplain preached. A noisy ball throwing was going on, but it stopped when we asked for quiet during the service.

The entrance compound is having a section divided off by barbed wire where the hospital will be moved.

August 14, Monday.

A Red Letter Day--I received a pair of eight and one half shoes with hobnails.

The population of A Lager is 3,640, that of B Lager is 2,772. One hundred and sixty men came in today.

We have seventeen thousand Red Cross packages on hand.

I walked around the compound with an M. D. and talked about his hospital. Other camps send their sick here.

This morning at parade B Lager had to wait for one man who was probably asleep so the Germans made them stay longer on the parade ground.

August 15, Tuesday.

A large number of men were moved from B to C Lager. Most of these men were those who had been living in tents. More prisoners arrived from the outside world and moved into C.

The guard rails have been set farther out in the enclosure of C Lager than in A Lager. The barbed wire posts have bent tops whereas ours are straight, and their barracks are painted black instead of green as is ours.

We received raisins and chocolate. After formation this evening we made coffee. At such times we usually discuss some topic. Tonight it was "teeth."

I received two postcards to write home.

Wheeler wrote out religious songs on cardboard to be used in church.

August 16, Wednesday.

A bulletin board was put up on the mess hall. It carries Jerry warnings, Red Cross telegrams, and the number of men in the camp, which is: British, eight hundred and forty-five; and United States, fifty-eight hundred.

I walked around the race track with Steve Vasilik.

I am reading A Conan Doyle's Short Stories.

August 17, Thursday.

I finished Doyle's book.

More Red Cross rations came in today. Clothes are being given out and the other rations will be issued tomorrow.

Roll call was very long tonight, and it was dark before parade was over.

Everyone seems to be growing a beard now; we have all types.

Every time hot water is issued, there is a rush for it. [We never did have a hot water stove in Barracks Two, but always had to run to other barracks to get it.]

Sam Bly and I are on K. P. tomorrow.

August 18, Friday.

Red Cross rations were handed out. These consisted of coffee, jam, cigarettes, fish, sugar, chocolate, and milk. The Germans have warned us that food must not be thrown down the washroom drain or our German rations will be cut. [The food they were referring to was of a sort not edible by P. O. W.'s such as dehydrated saurkraut.] We received mutton soup water for dinner.

German communiques in the newspapers say there is fighting around Bialystok, Poland.

The Heydekrug men moved into D Lager. Ambrose moved out of our room with Frank, his partner. Robert Colihan moved out of our room to D Lager, and his pal Chester Kraska stayed. [A Lager which had been overcrowded with men seemed rather empty after these men moved. The tents were vacant and those of us left in the compound scrambled for the wood shavings in some of the tents to fill our mattresses.]

August 19, Saturday.

We all chipped in to peel spuds. Roll call has taken longer because of the close inspection.

I received two packages of double mint gum for three squares of Nestle's chocolate in a trade.

I played "Battleship" with Joe Aldape and Bart [Bartholemew] winning both games. I also played pinochle.

Two men moved into our room yesterday, Frank Cruz of Austin, Texas, and Russell Ellis of Worcester, Massachusetts.

August 20, Sunday.

I went to church at 11:00 o'clock. Technical Sergeant Mears gave a sermon on "Faith." We sang "Onward Christian Soldiers," "Just As I Am," and "The Old Rugged Cross." A choir of five rendered a special song. The church is outdoors alongside of the hospital so that the sick on the inside who are able may listen to the service.

The hospital is full. There are two English doctors. One of our huge green well pumps has been closed by the Jerry doctor because of contamination.

I talked to Briggs about buying a car. It is very hot. New men moved into D Lager. Dick Lamp, an Iowa boy, replaced Pete as barracks leader. In our room we have argument after argument over practically everything. Ellis won nine packs of cigarettes playing poker.

We received two books in our room today, one of Shakespeare and the other of Byron. Most of the room didn't like the selections but I enjoyed them. Usually the books are drawn for in the barracks chief's room. High cards take their choice, so we try to send a man that is lucky, but sometimes he turns out to be unlucky and then we draw books like the above mentioned ones. Books like A Tree Grows in Brooklyn are at a premium.

After this I played "Battleship" with Eldon Anderson. This takes a long time and one gradually becomes hoarser from calling the shots.

"Tex" from Room Four brought down our ration of cigarettes and prunes from the Red Cross boxes.

The German officer in our lager came in and looked over our room. He complimented us on its cleanliness, and felt of the cloth in my shirt, saying it was very good. The German uniforms look very cheap and shoddy. He also complimented us on the handkerchief covers we had placed on our cupboards to keep out flies and dirt. This shows the versatile hand of Harry W. Arfman.

August 21, Monday.

A camp meeting was held which elected a Red Cross representative, a clothing representative, and a catering man.

Camp Leader Richard M. Chapman appointed a parade leader. For a long time the assistant camp leader did all of the parade calling. This was Hank Sickerott.

Guards still come into the lager at formations. It is a wonder that trouble doesn't happen at times, for many of the men move about and some of the guards look plenty rough.

Three-decker bunks are being put into Barracks One and will soon reach this Barracks Two.

We peel potatoes in the mornings in the washrooms outside of the barracks. They are getting soft and mushy. We have to carry them from an underground cellar in back of the mess hall.

August 22, Tuesday.

We had a barracks inspection by the Jerries, who were looking for more than six slats in a bed. Some had had wide ones and had made two out of them. We usually toss the extra slats outside of our windows and hide them in back of the window shutters until Jerry has gone.

Most of the beds were set crosswise of the room but we have changed them so they are arranged around the walls. The German lieutenant saw this and ordered all the rooms in the compound to do likewise in order to make more open space in the center. [Later we had men sleeping on our tables and some in the hall.]

August 23, Wednesday.

Shorts must be worn by order of Chapman. Many of the men have been sunning themselves stark naked out on the grass.

Because of the diphtheria cases in camp a sanitation commission composed of P. O. W.'s has been formed to try to keep everything perfectly clean and sanitary--that is, to see that this is done.

Our Y. M. C. A. man was here today. It is the first time in two months that he has been here. He usually looks around and talks things over with the camp leader. Before he comes we prepare a list of things we want. We did get two typewriters but the Germans made us send them back to Geneva. They will not allow us to keep a loud speaker in our lager.

We had a good ball game between the mess hall gang and

Barracks One. The mess hall boys won.

We don't look at the bulletin board much because it is plastered with old stuff which has been read many times by the whole camp, so I walked around with Young. We talk about many things; tonight it was about a boat that Young wanted to buy and sail to the South Seas. I wonder if these things will ever come to pass.

Tonight at formation Chapman had on a new coat and pants, which he needed badly. One must keep up his appearance, even with the Jerries.

We still have no canteen where we can buy things with our marks. The Germans are also supposed to furnish us with a combination recreation hall and church but it doesn't seem to be materializing very fast.

The latest "Poop from the Group" is that a German soldier was thrown in the guard-house for taking cigarettes from a P. O. W.

A prisoner slept today in his barracks during roll call and German guards assisted by an American with each finally located him. It gives most of us pleasure to throw a man like that into the fire pool because he keeps more than a thousand men waiting in line until he is found. Usually he has to report to the German officer and explain why he was absent.

August 24, Thursday.

We received shorts, socks, and shirts today. I got two

books to read--Brassbounder by D. W. Bone and a detective story.

I went to the infirmary in this compound with athletes' foot and got some salve to put on it. Afterwards I walked the enclosure with Briggs and we talked about boats.

The guard towers are being moved back. At first they were quite close to the warning wire. It would be hard to tunnel out of here because of the sandy condition of the soil and the distance to the barbed wire.

This camp on May 28 had seven hundred men and it now has sixty-three hundred and forty. We eat kohlrabi with our potatoes. In our Red Cross today we received some English Player cigarettes.

August 25, Friday.

Our bulletin board tells us about family allowances and other things.

A short fat German made us laugh this evening trying to keep up with two German captains who were walking with our lieutenant.

Barracks Two won a victory over Barracks Ten in a ball game today. We get a great deal of enjoyment out of these games.

Among the little things that I did today was trading cigarettes for chocolate.

Many of our boys have dysentery.

August 26, Saturday.

Triple bunks were put in our barracks today. They leave us more space but it will be very crowded in here. Two men exchanged bunks in the room.

Outside the bees are stinging many of the men. The weather seems to encourage them.

Tonight another man fell out of formation. They keep fainting at about every roll call. We believe it is a part of the German campaign to starve all prisoners to death by a gradual diminishing of vitamin-containing-foods.

August 27, Sunday.

I am on K. P. today.

Four more men moved into our room in spite of its being so crowded. Men had been sleeping in the hall.

I loaned Steve Vasilik a book and we talked about hogs.

Tonight I went to church and heard an Englishman preach. The English use good language, but it is quite different from our own.

August 28, Monday.

Mr. Christian Christiansen of the Y. M. C. A. visited our lager along with some German officers.

August 29, Tuesday.

It rained heavily last night.

I heard from Lowell Reid today, and he is okay. (Lowell arrived at Luft IV about a week after I did. He spent approx-

one month in A Lager, and then moved into B Lager.]

The hospital moved from Barracks Four in our compound into the Vorlager, and the tent men are moving into Barracks Four. Numerals were placed on the fronts of the barracks in order to identify them to newcomers.

Today new G. I. shoes were issued by the Red Cross.

I traded cigarettes, which I do not smoke, for the luxury of gum, which many of the new men have when they come into our lager.

We received 2,999 Canadian Red Cross packages into the lager today.

The German sergeant, the "Iron Cross,"³¹ is walking around in the enclosure today. He has told our boys that he intends to get two of us before he leaves. He hates all Americans and delights in using the word swine to us. He and "Big Stoop,"³² a two hundred and sixty pound German, are in charge of the searching of prisoners before they are sent into the compounds. These two head the German "goon parties," which search our barracks regularly. They have beaten a good many of our Jewish American soldiers in the Vorlager. They have an intense hatred of all Jews. (These two Germans were later killed by Russian soldiers; one had his head cut off.)

³¹ The sergeant was given this nickname because of the Iron Cross that he wore.

³² This German was given his nickname because of the resemblance to the comic character of the same name in "Terry and the Pirates." We did not know the Germans' real names.

August 30, Wednesday.

Last night I won four packages of cigarettes in a poker game. These cigarettes will go to buy food.

We played "Monopoly" this morning with our home-made set.

Last night Stettin was hit heavily by the R. A. F. We could hear German fighters going overhead and the heavy concussions made by the bombs. We look forward to these bombings and feel that these raids are really hurting the Germans.

One of the boys in the barracks was in the railroad yards at Stettin one time when it was bombed. He said that rails were wrapped around electric poles and trains were blown up on all sides of the prison train, but it wasn't touched.

Behre brought in forty cakes of Limberger that he collected over the compound. We placed it in the chimney for safe keeping and to avoid smelling up the room.

August 31, Thursday.

Last night before closing-up time a big softball game was held in the center of the parade ground. A solid row of men lined the diamond and it reminded me of games we had had back in the States.

The German lieutenant aroused the whole barracks at about three o'clock in the morning searching for cans. If all the cans are not placed in the regular line-up place the Germans who keep track of them know some are missing. We have heard they use them for ammunition, and we do not believe they have a right to them.

CHAPTER IV

SEPTEMBER 1944

September 1, Friday.

Men are most hateful to one another. It is impossible cooped up as we are to avoid arguments, and with the continual strain placed upon us by our imprisonment we sometimes snap at one another like wild animals.

Our softball team won a game today, and since I did not see it, our star pitcher, Eldon Anderson, was telling me about it.

We received better bread today and a four days' supply at one time. Most of the boys will eat up their ration in two or three days. We are each supposed to receive half of an American food parcel and half of a Canadian food parcel this week.

September 2, Saturday.

After formation in the morning we all pitch in and peel potatoes. In this way we soon have the job done and can do something else.

We get three library books to a room for a week. There is usually an argument over who reads them first and everyone wants first, second, or third on an especially good book. We settle it by drawing high cards.

September 3, Sunday.

This morning I awoke to a cold damp day, which makes it look as if winter is just around the corner.

Church was held this morning in the Red Cross room. After the service an argument started in our room over who is to sit on the chairs. We have not enough to go around, and the Germans have given us benches to finish out.

This evening a big tough football game was held on the parade ground and it was very exciting. The Germans watch us play but cannot figure out what it is all about.

September 4, Monday.

We received a message from Geneva that it is hard to get food in to us, and so we are cutting our Red Cross rations down to half.

Tonight I checked out from the library a technical book called The Mind of Latin Christendom by E. M. Pickman, Oxford University Press, 1937. The library is in a tent.

We received Red Cross rations today, which gives us a few joyful moments.

I saw Tommy³³ today and he told me that "Tex" Saunders who had been with me at airplane mechanics school in Amarillo has been killed in action.

A boy in Room Ten came down with diphtheria today. We wonder if the barracks will be quarantined or what the Jerries will do.

The boys are having a big dice game tonight, using some of the British cigarettes called "Cravens" and "Players" for

³³ Thomas L. LaMore of Waco, Texas, was in Amarillo taking airplane mechanics training at the same time I did. He was shot down over Europe and spent a long time with the French underground. He speaks French fluently.

money.

Latest in our crazes is that of whirling one's dog-tag around like a propeller in an airplane. Some put as many as four chains which they have borrowed from others together.

Lucky boy! In my drawing today I got strawberry jam for the first time.

Almost every day German Focke Wulfs fly over us and stunt. They must know that we are "terror fliers," and are trying to impress us. Some fly very low over the camp and seem about to crash. We keep hoping. On their sides they have black crosses with white around them.

It is still cold today as if winter was on the way.

The potatoes we peel are smaller and more rotten than ever.

A "Man of Confidence" is to be elected to represent the camp in our relations with the Germans. He is to be over the compound leaders.

Some of the boys here have their own remedy for crabs; one insists that "Cuprex" is the thing.

One boy says that "Horseshoe Glue" is the best thing to stick furniture together with.

Another boy mentions that if one wants to transport liquor illegally he should put his whisky into the spare tire.

A pinochle and bridge tournament is supposed to start soon.

September 5, Tuesday.

Short guards here carry short rifles and tall guards carry long ones. The Germans have different types of rifles just as we do in our army.

We have made a chandelier out of a milk can for our room, which helps, but even this must be turned in to the Germans along with the cans we lower into the stove to give us hot water at night.

There have been extra guards around the compound for the last three days, so we think that another batch of prisoners is due soon.

I walked with Young this evening around the compound and we talked as usual of things we want to do when we get home.

September 6, Wednesday.

It turned out to be a warm day today. Tonight "Chowhound"³⁴ ate a whole maggot from the Limberger cheese for a chocolate bar. One boy found a young seahorse in his sardines. It was a very curious thing.

The "Man of Confidence" was voted on today. We don't know the verdict yet. [We had politics in the camp and the men who came from Heydekrug did not get along with those of us who were in camp before they came. Heydekrug had been established in 1943 and had many things that Luft IV did not. Naturally when the Heydekrug men started to take over, the men at Luft IV did not agree with them. Lager A backed Chapman, the old Luft IV leader, against Paules the Heydekrug leader.]

³⁴ This was George Belleville of our room. He was the hungriest man I've ever seen--hence the nickname. For the effect of hunger on prisoners see John Buxton, "Below the Tide of War," The Atlantic Monthly, Vol. CLXXVII, June 1946, p. 41.

During the day I walked around the enclosure with Young and later received some more Red Cross.

An accordion is being played full blast by "Big Gee"³⁵ in Room Eleven tonight, and we all listen and want him to play our favorite pieces. Music is a wonderful thing at this time and brings us closer to home and loved ones.

During the day Barracks Two was deloused. Once you get lice they are very hard to get rid of.

Football is eclipsing softball, and "Beaucoup" Behre³⁶ in our room is the coach for our barracks. We have many good football players among us. Eldon Anderson is one of the best.

September 7, Thursday.

B. discovered body lice in his pajamas. They cluster along the seams and lay white eggs. These lice are large and have a furry tail which drags across your body so you can tell that they are around. The men are all starting to look themselves over, to wash their clothes, and to air their bedding.

Paules was elected "Man of Confidence" which is the same as Allied camp leader; [this placed him over all lagers.]

September 8, Friday.

A German captain inspected our room for cleanliness. Some of our shelves were dirty.

³⁵ Edwin Gee from Washington was nicknamed "Big Gee" because of his size.

³⁶ Behre was given his new name because of his frequent use of the word "Beaucoup."

A Jerry snoop, who can speak good English, comes to listen to our conversation. We have watch words like "Stormy Weather" to let the boys know that he's around. A Jerry term we use is "Nix Verboten" (No! Forbidden!).

A new Jerry officer by the name of Major Steel has replaced our old lieutenant, "corpus delicti." He has only one eye, and wears a patch over the empty socket much of the time.

We have a young blond German, who also has only one eye, who works around the office and counts us. We call him "Roger Dodger,"³⁷ and he comes from Lithuania. He is learning to speak English. He likes to hear our boys play hot American music on the piano.

September 9, Saturday.

Two hundred and fifty men came into Lager A right after dinner. They were from St. Wendell, Luxembourg, where there was a new camp of four hundred men. The U. S. Army was advancing in this region and they had to move. They are stationed in tents between Barracks Five and Six.

September 10, Sunday.

I went to church this morning. Technical Sergeant Mears preached us a good sermon. He is an ordained minister, and he knows how to appeal to the men. The church (Red Cross room) was crowded.

³⁷ Since his name was Roger we added "Dodger" which rhymed and gave him a new name.

Last night it was very cold, and I used all three of my blankets and a jacket.

More body lice were discovered today and a Jerry sergeant came around to look the place over.

September 11, Monday.

My date for the end of the war has gone. Apparently I'm all wet when it comes to guessing. It's taking a hell of a long time for us to end this war. [Bailey of Oregon, a former Okie, won the room bet on the war's end.]

September 12, Tuesday.

Jerry newspapers were distributed to us today. We use them for toilet paper, which is very handy when men are as sick as some of us are. But we pay for them, which makes it very sad for us. We have boys here who can read German and tell us what the papers contain, but we always look upon them as propaganda. The Jerries punish their own soldiers if they catch them reading the papers we are given. [The Germans did not want their men to know how the war was going.]

A high ranking Gestapo officer in green inspected our rooms today.

Stettin was bombed again last night and we watched the antiaircraft fire through the shutters in our windows. One boy cut a wider hole between the shutter slats to look out. We even had a few get up in the loft to peek out through the gable doors. If a Jerry had spotted us looking he would have shot at us. In D Lager a boy looking out was shot at by a German officer with a small pistol but luckily he was not hit--

or anyone else in the room. We could hear Jerry fighter planes going toward Stettin but it seems most of them were pretty late.

We have the feeling that as long as our bombers are hurting Jerry they can even drop a bomb on us and we won't care. One of the flares dropped by a bomber fell into one of our lagers. [Flares are dropped at the beginning of the bomb run on night trips.]

Red Cross was received again today.

Twenty-five new prisoners came. Some of them had just got out of a hospital at Stargard where they had been for some time. One boy tells us that the Germans have a hospital for their own men across the road from the hospital for Allied prisoners there, and he says that the German doctors do not try to save the arms and legs of their wounded like the French doctors at the P. O. W. hospital. Instead they cut them off because they have so many to handle.

Today after waiting for two hours in a long line I got another book from the library, The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire by Gibbons.

September 13, Wednesday.

Roll call in the evening was attempted several times because it was interrupted by air raid alarms. Finally, we were sent to our barracks. [We were not afraid of bombings because our Air Force had been briefed we were there.]

Tonight hypnotism was practiced in the room again, and

Behre was put to sleep. It is getting to be a fad here. It is really unbelievable the things that it can do.

The Germans issue us Polish cigarettes, but nobody can smoke them; they have one hollow paper end and a lot of wood in them. They are called Haudigen.

September 14, Thursday.

No bread in the last two days. But bread and potatoes came in tonight.

I read Gibbons' The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, published in 1829.

September 15, Friday.

Red Cross rations were issued.

During the day four Focke Wulfs played above us.

I saw S/Sgt. Edward White of Natick, Massachusetts, who had been in my barracks at Dalhart, Texas, over in B Lager, and talked to him across the barbed wire. He told me that Lowell Reid is in the hospital, and that his room is quarantined. Two rooms of my barracks are also quarantined for diphtheria. The German sign is Quarantane.

A cold wind blew tonight.

The newspaper, Volkischer Beobachter, of August 17 mentioned a meeting of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill.

I patched the seat of my pants.

A crap game is in progress with cigarettes as the stake.

September 16, Saturday.

The population of our camp is 7,382 men of which seven hundred are English.

We had a dice game tonight.

September 17, Sunday.

It is a pleasant day. We had church services.

I walked around the compound with Young. Football is in full swing. We have an umpire and a yardman.

We were short changed on our food this evening.

September 18, Monday.

The Germans inspected us for cans that must be turned in.

We had two air raid alarms today. A guard grabbed one of our men by the hair when he stuck his head out of the window.

September 19, Tuesday.

A German plane stunting above us crashed and exploded one-half mile southwest of camp. He was slow barrel rolling and couldn't pull out. A black cloud of smoke went up and 20 mm. ammunition kept going off. Now we have another German to add to the number we got.

September 20, Wednesday.

One hundred and thirty-four men came in from Wetzlar. Some were shot down the 11th of this month.

September 21, Thursday.

All cans are to be turned in by 10 o'clock in the morning.

I walked with Young. We usually walk around the compound five or six times a day.

A time for rejoicing--bread came in.

September 22, Friday.

Twenty-nine new men came in from the hospital today.

[These hospitals were scattered all over Germany.]

A carload of Canadian Red Cross parcels arrived.

The guard tower on our east was taken down in a hurry--the guards are used to taking them down and putting them up. They have a high tower in the center, and don't need this one.

September 23, Saturday.

Received our Red Cross today. A load of bread came in tonight. Our men are ordered to break up Red Cross boxes.

[These boxes were made of heavy cardboard and we used to rip them apart and fit them over the slats in our beds. We used them also as a foundation for our "Battleship" games, and as storage for heterogeneous materials we owned. But the Germans did not like the uses to which we put these boxes, and decided to keep them. They were torn up and flattened, and then piled in huge bundles which were tied, placed on trucks, and hauled away. We believed their ultimate destination could be found in the manufacture of some German war products.]

September 24, Sunday.

Received more Red Cross. No church services tonight.

We have a man in camp with a yellow sweater.

A jam session was held in the Red Cross room in the afternoon. Goodwin sang at this meeting.

September 25, Monday.

Trouble over tin cans. [If the Germans did not receive as many cans as they sent in to us, they oftentimes would delay our Red Cross, and even threatened to take it away from us.]

Our old lieutenant, "corpus delicti," is back again.

Two hundred and fifty men went into D Lager from Wetzlar.

The weather is turning cold.

September 26, Tuesday.

We received cigarettes today. Two Red Cross loads on wagons entered the lager.

It is cold and nasty, and we need more clothing.

A German pronouncement which began "To All War Prisoners" ran to the effect: "All German officers must be saluted. Anyone not saluting will be punished accordingly. Any German material that is destroyed or maliciously damaged will have to be paid for by the commissioned officers of the American army, and the culprit must be punished." [This was read to us by a German sergeant during roll call.]

We have new parade announcers.

There is trouble over who gets the books to read.

Our diet never changes. We received some Jerry jam today. [It tastes like plum jelly and is made out of coal.]

All of the men in tents moved out after dinner to the

new C Lager diagonally across the prison road from A Lager. On their backs they carried their pallets, which got wet from the rain. Nick, the lager leader, was lagging behind.

We get a kick out of the refuse wagon and the Jerry driving it. We call it V-1 because of the explosive noise it makes when it sucks the night soil out of the latrines.

September 27, Wednesday.

Today men moved from D into the new C Lager. It is a cold and windy day and the dirt floors of the now empty tents dried rapidly. [The men in the tents had moved into rooms as soon as possible.]

The Ober Lieutenant was made Hauptman. [This was "corpus delicti" our former Lager Commandant.]

I ran around the racetrack with Steve to keep in trim. The inside perimeter of the guard rail is the racetrack.

Tonight we received miscellaneous clothing from the Red Cross. I got a handkerchief. We usually draw high cards for the few things handed out.

It was B's birthday today. What a place to have a birthday in! [I don't remember to which of the B's in my room this refers.]

There is firing off to the southwest where a rocket is sometimes fired. [We never knew for sure what this was and often thought it was the Russians coming. I later thought it might have been the Germans testing rockets.]

September 28, Thursday.

I bathed in cold water, then got some more and washed my clothes in it. This is very miserable. There are long lines of men waiting for hot water. I hung my clothes to dry on the tent ropes.

The Germans now have two gates in the lager.

Some of their horses look good; they probably have been stolen from Belgium.

September 29, Friday.

We hear Jerry soldiers singing this morning. They join in mass singing.

I made insoles for my shoes out of paper. The soles are getting very thin.

We had a jam session in the Red Cross room this afternoon. A stage is being fixed, and an attempt is being made to make the place into a theater. We have a trumpet, guitar, drum, mandolin, piano accordion, and bass fiddle. Some of the musicians are very talented. Our drummer played with Phil Harris.

We received Red Cross tonight in the form of salmon, coffee, sugar, and milk. One of the boys won a half can of milk by rolling African dice.

September 30, Saturday.

Many in the room lost bets on the closing date of the war.

CHAPTER V
OCTOBER 1944

October 1, Sunday.

Catholic services were held in the Red Cross room and the Protestant services were held out by the water hole with Mears in charge.

It is a very cold day but to warm it up I heard from Lowell Reid and he is okay. The mornings are very cold, and today it rained most of the time.

October 2, Monday.

A jam session was held in the Red Cross room, which is now used as a theater. A wagon loaded with clothing came in as we were in session.

I am on K. P. and have to peel potatoes with eleven other men, or half of the room. We peel in the mornings.

October 3, Tuesday.

Canadian Red Cross came in; it has a large circle around the cross. I started a big credit poker game.

October 4, Wednesday.

The weather has warmed up.

About every nine days we receive hot water for bathing purposes.

Reading German truck tires I see that they were made in the United States.

There are many Shell gasoline stations and Red Crown stations in Germany.

October 5, Thursday.

A representative from Geneva was here today. Our protective powers are Sweden and Switzerland. He inspected the barracks. Every day a different room is assigned to police the barracks.

October 6, Friday.

Bread rationing was cut to one-eighth loaf per man per day. Because of fires in their little coal stoves Barracks Four and Five had their bread rations cut still more. Cold as it was the Germans wanted to conserve fuel and had ordered us to do without fires.

Red Cross came in tonight.

October 7, Saturday.

More Red Cross arrived today which included cigarettes, Spam, and cookies.

For sport today we heard the "Kriege Kats"³⁸ play with Russ Goodwin officiating as master of ceremonies. The boys put on a good show. Red Callahan, a boy from Heydekrug, did some singing, and rendered his own song, something about "Dakota Land." The program also included one boy who is a good dancer, and who closely resembles a girl when dressed as one. Blankets were used for stage curtains, and a stand was used for the orchestra.

Tonight at formation a guard ran amuck among the P. O. W.'s of Barracks Eight. A boy came out late and the guard

³⁸ Lager A orchestra.

thought this was wrong. Clubbing his rifle he swung at the offender and followed him through the massed ranks of the men. He took a mighty swing at him, missed, and fell on his shoulder. He raised up with his finger on the trigger pointing at the Americans who had crowded together as one bunch with their hands up in the air. He didn't shoot and our Lager Officer ran over to him and started calling him down.

It was a miracle that someone wasn't killed. All of the barracks in the compound continued to line up under the steady voice of Goodwin our parade caller. The guns in the towers were turned on us and at the slightest movement on our part they would have mowed us down. [As slow as that guard was with a rifle an American could have kicked him all over the place.]

October 8, Sunday.

The guard who nearly killed one of our men is up for a court-martial and we hear that he will be sent to the Russian front.

I got out of bed today itching with red spots all over my body, and went to the hospital with what is called German measles. I was put in the isolation ward with a Canadian boy who has pleuresy and an American boy who has a bad heart and a terribly scarred leg as the result of running by the Germans and their police dogs. Then he took diphtheria, and it has about finished him.³⁹ Both of the boys are awaiting

³⁹ See supra p. 45.

repatriation.

They have blue comforters here in the hospital, which are a luxury to me, and plenty of books to read.

October 9, Monday.

I itch so that I can hardly stand it. They gave us invalid packages today. It is the first one that I have received. It contains a great many liquids.

I started to read The Sun is My Undoing by Marguerite Steen.

October 10, Tuesday.

I couldn't sleep last night and nearly died from wanting to scratch myself. I wash the dishes and sweep the room since the boys with me are so bad off.

October 11, Wednesday.

For exercise the doctors walk around the enclosure. We have two English and two American doctors. The one who treats me is Captain Pollock, an English doctor. I played a game of chess with him today and beat him. He is a swell fellow. [We Americans thought he was the best doctor in the camp.]

October 12, Thursday.

Another one of the boys who received rough treatment from the Jerries had a fit today. He faints and cries and thinks the Germans are going to kill him. The guards were test-firing their guns in the towers, and this set him off.

October 13, Friday.

I received a message from Lowell Reid who is in B Lager. It was good to hear from him.

I find that the doctors and the medical men get to walk around on Sundays with a guard to see the countryside. They really need it after seeing all of this human misery. The medical staff is composed mostly of English. To my knowledge the only Americans on it are two doctors and Charles Stewart of Carmen, Oklahoma, an orderly. [The hospital was overcrowded and the doctors sent back to the lagers those who were not as badly off as others.]

October 14, Saturday.

I'm back home in my own lager and in time to hear a musical program in the Red Cross room.

I was supposed to be on K. P. today, but I only had to help Sam Bly with one meal.

In the barracks tonight a boy is playing a guitar and singing western songs. His name is "Smitty" and one of his crew is in my room. This room has crew members scattered all over the lager.

We have a new card game here now called Red Dog. It takes a lot of cigarettes to play it. [It is a good game for a poor man to stay out of and still have something.]

October 15, Sunday.

I went to church today to listen to an English preacher. I had communion. The bread used was part of a biscuit that came in the Red Cross parcel.

Lager A has two Chinese boys, and Lager B has a boy who looks like a Negro, but is a Hindu.

October 16, Monday.

Mr. Albert A. Kadler of the Swiss legation and Bernard Biney of the Protective Powers were here while I was in the hospital. They inquired about our Red Cross, sports equipment, and the treatment of P. O. W.'s.

We had a musical program with Guy Brown, a New York man, as the head. An act showing Broadway and Forty-second street had us all laughing.

October 17, Tuesday.

Three dog houses have been put up to take care of our stores and sports equipment. We checked out a ping pong set and played a game with it.

Autumn is here with the leaves turning red, brown, and gold.

The barber shop has many drawings and paintings in it concerning camp life. To get a hair cut you must sign up at 1:30 every day and then wait your turn. I got my hair cut while in the hospital.

Reed, a New Englander, in Barracks One had just finished a beautiful painting of the camp showing the barbed wire when a German took it from him and put it in the Jerries' own mess hall.

To get any dental work done one must go to the Vorlager. The operating rooms are there.

October 18, Wednesday.

Mr. Christensen and Mr. Soderewig of the Y. M. C. A.

visited the camp today. They inquired about sports equipment, books, a theater, and religious activities.

It rained hard all day and I stayed inside and played darts.

October 19, Thursday.

Two Focke Wulfs painted gray-green with white crosses at the tails passed one hundred feet over camp today. In the evening we again heard intensive firing southwest in bursts of three.

October 20, Friday.

Red Cross received today included cigarettes, fish, sugar, and milk.

I washed my clothes and played softball. We have a softball league.

We received formation orders.

Technical Sergeant Paules, our "Man of Confidence," talked to the Camp Commandant about coal, Red Cross letters to Geneva, and the punishment of P. O. W.'s. [Men guilty of violating some minor rule were to be sent to the new jail. Two were in our room.]

October 21, Saturday.

Jerry has put up new clothes lines, and I hung out my clothes to dry.

October 22, Sunday.

Men who came down when I did are beginning to get mail.

October 23, Monday.

Our lager leaders are Technical Sergeant Chapman, A Lager; Staff Sergeant Miller, B Lager; Staff Sergeant Tray, C Lager; and Technical Sergeant Paules, D Lager. The British in D Lager have Sergeant Clark.

The Germans have warned us not to hang around the provision wagons when they come in. [Americans took things from the wagons, a sad thing.] They told us not to walk around the warning wire at dusk, and not to mass in groups around the enclosure when exercising. Signs near the warning wire state: "Those touching or passing the warn line will be shot at."

October 24, Tuesday.

We have been told that there are over three million Red Cross packages in Sweden.

October 25, Wednesday.

A German officer held us at formation twice because the men in ranks kept moving around and talking.

October 26, Thursday.

It is very cold today.

Six of our men are to be sent to confinement in the brick jail building across the fence on the south as punishment for something they have done. This ranges from ten to fourteen or twenty-one days. Some have hard and some light conditions. [When a prisoner received hard conditions he received only German rations and no cigarettes.]

I am on K. P. today and have to peel spuds.

October 27, Friday.

We had a blanket inspection today and some of the blankets used for stage curtains in the Red Cross room were taken.

The seats of many summer trousers worn by the men are wearing out. The sewing kit I received in my "capture parcel" at Wetzlar is very handy. It is very cold and we need gloves, caps, and other warm clothes.

October 28, Saturday.

A de luxe presentation of the nineties was given in the Red Cross room. Our room received five tickets, and in drawing for them I drew a king. The show had dancing, singing, and general repartee in it. It was very entertaining. Red Callahan Jr., sang his theme song "East of the Rockies."

I drew a size 36 overcoat in the room today and traded it for a size 38. (A few overcoats from the Red Cross came in at a time and all of us who did not have any would draw high cards for them.)

October 29, Sunday.

We got a stove in our room today. It is a small one and burns coal briquets. We use milk cans for stove pipe. A hole had to be knocked in the brick chimney.

Church was held in the Red Cross room today.

A German newspaper printed in English called The Camp was passed around the barracks. Everybody is tickled pink to read a paper in English.

[Of course we all knew that the Germans were probably using these publications for a systematic policy of indoctrination, but it was difficult for us to tell what was propaganda and what was not since we knew only what came through them. (Thomas Kernan has an interesting article in the Reader's Digest concerning Germany's method of spreading propaganda.⁴⁰) But following is a quotation from a short clipping taken from a page of one of the papers that I managed to keep:

Stockholm.--The Polish Exile Government in London are concerned about the wholesale deportations from the occupied Polish areas by the Bolshevists and about the brutal mistreatment of Polish soldiers. Since the beginning of the year, so say the London Poles, 5,000 have been deported from Grodno 10,000 from Bialystok and many thousands from Lemberg into the centre of Russia....

In the prisons at Bialystok indescribable conditions exist and the prisoners are continually subjected to ill-treatment.⁴¹

October 30, Monday.

I read the German paper, Der Adler, and can make out some of it. I played bridge with Behre for awhile. I received cocoa in place of coffee in my Red Cross package.

October 31, Tuesday.

We have had a phonograph in our lager a short time. The barracks have a regular schedule in playing it. We got it in our room for thirty-five minutes. It had "Oklahoma" on it and everybody was kidding Bailey and me. I was in New York when it was running as a show.

⁴⁰ Thomas Kernan, "Germany Sees Us in a Grotesque Distortion Mirror," Reader's Digest, Vol. XLV, August 1944, p. 1.
⁴¹ "Some More Mass Transportations," The Camp, No. 241, April 2, 1945, p. 2.

CHAPTER VI

NOVEMBER 1944

November 1, Wednesday.

We had a long morning formation and had to take out our pots and pitchers for inspection.

November 3, Friday.

A happy day--I received seven letters from home and a picture of my girl. It was very nice.

We had canned ham and eggs from the Red Cross package for supper.

German ferrets searched Barracks Five. They have been catching it quite regularly lately. [This barracks was in a good position to tunnel out. In some camps elaborate tunnels were made. Flight Lieut. Paul Brickhill tells of several such tunnels at Stalag Luft III.⁴²]

Three thousand letters are supposed to be in the Vorlager.

November 4, Saturday.

Our Red Cross today included salmon, milk, and coffee. New supplies came into the Vorlager.

November 5, Sunday.

It is cold and wet.

November 6, Monday.

I taught Briggs how to play chess.

The Germans say that we have ten thousand empty cans in our possession.

⁴² Paul Brickhill, "Tunnel to Freedom," Reader's Digest, Vol. XLVII, December 1945, pp. 39-50.

November 7, Tuesday.

I got a letter from Mom today in the mail. It had been sent the 5th of October. It is sure good to hear from home even if the mail is censored.

One boy received a letter that his wife and mother had both died.

The phonograph was ours again today and we all listen like a bunch of children. Some of the records are broken.

November 8, Wednesday.

Tonight a man by the name of Coley or Groundy of Barracks Nine walked up to the fence separating us from the next lager. He was shot by the German guard, once in the arm and twice in the leg. He was clearly mentally deranged or he wouldn't have tried in broad daylight to climb a fence that did not even lead to the outside.

[All of this boy's crew had been blown up in the air and he had been blown out of the plane. He didn't know how he got to the ground after the explosion. The Germans were completely in the wrong to shoot a man in his condition. He did not die but I heard later that he had lost an arm.] This evening roll call was held in the barracks.

November 9, Thursday.

The formation was very long tonight. It was after dark before it was over. German guards escorted the room K. P.'s to the mess hall under the floodlights to get their rations of food.

November 10, Friday.

It is much warmer today. Some carrots came in and we had a Mulligan stew. All Red Cross rations tonight had the tops of the cans off. Many times our fish is spoiled because of this and we fear ptomaine poisoning. Some of the boys who are hungry chance this and eat it just the same.

It is dark here at four o'clock these days.

November 11, Saturday.

It rained all day. Roll call was held inside of the barracks. We line up on both sides of the long hall and the Germans come along and count us.

November 12, Sunday.

It snowed tonight.

We had a large crowd in the Red Cross room today sitting down to listen to a sermon. Mears, who does most of the preaching, is in quarantine and Padre Morgan was the minister.

November 13, Monday.

It snowed some more and is much colder tonight.

November 14, Tuesday.

This morning we went outside of the barracks and found the ground to be frozen.

November 15, Wednesday.

We read all day long. Many times we have arguments over the books that are brought into the room; each one of us wants to get to read the best book first.

During our stay here I have counted four ox-teams. The Germans hook them to the wagon by a chain around their horns. The driver walks alongside with a goad and prods them to where he wants them to go.

November 16, Thursday.

I got a letter from my honey today that made me very happy. We all look forward to getting mail and we are very jealous when some of the others receive letters and we don't. Most of the time we let the others know what is going on at home.

November 17, Friday.

We have been receiving a little Red Cross every day. Some of the boys who had been at Heydekrug received personal parcels. Many of the American boys have been prisoners since February.

One of the shutters fell off tonight and we were afraid that the Germans would start shooting. We called one of the boys from Room Five across the hall and he talked to a German guard who put up the shutter. The shutters aren't fastened on very well--just a little piece of wood on the outside holds them in place.

We got brew (Jerry coffee) at 7:00 P. M. It is dark and guards escort us to the mess hall and back. We didn't have to peel spuds today. Dick, the clothing man for our barracks, rounded up all of the spare blankets to give out to some new men who are coming in. The guards test-fired their guns to-

day. It spread rumors that the Russians are near. Many of the bullets whine overhead and occasionally even come close to the guards in the towers. The main weapon that they use is a light machine gun.

November 18, Saturday.

This morning there was ice on the pond. Tonight we stood a long time in the line to be counted with a cold wind blowing from the southeast. Many of the men don't have wool caps, wool socks, or mittens.

Some new men came into the barracks tonight; one of them is in Room Ten. We all went in to look him over and to get the latest news.

I find I'm on K. P. for tomorrow. The spud peeling is very cold work on the hands. We have to make up a collection of tin cans from the room and take them out and line them up by the fence.

Tonight I played "Monopoly."

November 19, Sunday.

There are 9,023 in the camp, 2,267 in our lager. We received twenty-two thousand No. X Red Cross parcels and three thousand No. I's and No. II's.

Many of the German guards have glass eyes. They have a specialist at Belgard and some of our boys who need them are sent there for fitting. Some of the Germans wear black patches over their eyes.

November 20, Monday.

Chimney sweeps wearing top hats and black clothes came into the compound today. They have a little metal ball with a cleaning apparatus on it and they let it down on a rope into our chimneys. [Later while on the Pomeranian March I often saw families going to church in old fashioned buggies, and the men wore top hats.]

Many of the "goons" were looking over our barracks today and they searched Barracks Five and Six.

It has been raining every night lately.

November 21, Tuesday.

Oxen drawing water wagons came into the compound. They remind us of how outmoded such things are in the United States.

We go on full Red Cross rations by German request. We cannot understand the working of the Teuton mind--first they want to cut our rations, then they want to give us all we have coming.

November 22, Wednesday.

I received a letter from my uncle and aunt who live in Tulsa, and I was very glad to learn how things were there. We understand of course that the Germans would censor anything that they didn't want us to know. So far none of my letters has been censored.

My body has been itching lately and today when I went to the infirmary I found that I had scabies. Most of the men in the medical staff at the infirmary are Englishmen. They seem

to be far better trained to take care of us than our own Americans.

We have settled several fights between Americans out in the middle of the parade ground with boxing gloves on. Usually the fighters are pretty weak from the lack of proper food and they tire easily, depriving us of a really good fight.

A German plane, a 210, flew over us fairly low and we identified it. We know most of the German planes around now.

We have a saying here to symbolize what we do: it is essen, schlossen, and the third word is unprintable. Our 7:00 o'clock brew ends tonight and we will not have any for quite a while. [We were not supposed to get any more hot water at night.]

It is cold out at night for the German guards and so they have built shelters into the middle of the towers. German guards go on and off duty at odd hours; our guards in America go on at the even hour.

Men here have all types of footwear and many still have on the flying boots that they were captured in.

November 23, Thursday.

Many of the guards wear German flying boots which are much nicer looking than ours.

November 24, Friday.

We now have a fiction library and a technical library. The technical library is to be in a dog house.

Behre's bed has broken down and he has taken all of the shavings out of it and stretched his gunny sack over the bed sides.

November 25, Saturday.

Today we had a varsity show. It was very good. One boy was dressed like a girl and he looked just like one. He danced with a boy and their act was well worth watching. The chorus was dressed up like girls and they made a big hit.

The orchestra has got a new alto saxophone.

November 26, Sunday.

An Englishman gave a talk on psychology in the Red Cross room.

November 27, Monday.

I got a Scotch cap for eight and one half packages of cigarettes. When the Red Cross clothing was issued today I received a pair of winter pants and a knitted cap. There are four thousand English Red Cross packages coming.

It is very cold.

November 28, Tuesday.

It is cold today.

When the Red Cross came in I received cigarettes and raisins.

November 30, Thursday.

Thanksgiving Day--the room next door made a pudding out of chocolate, milk, and biscuits.

The "Kriege Kats" orchestra had an "Amateur Hour." It was very good. Freeman, a New York lad with a handle-bar mustache, was the master of ceremonies, and he "slayed" us.

Ruddy, the boy who plays the piano accordion, is a wizard at it. The orchestra has three saxophones. The Germans allowed us to put boughs on the stage for decoration.

CHAPTER VII
DECEMBER 1944

December 1, Friday.

I am on K. P. It gets dark early.

December 2, Saturday.

We have a very nice Christmas schedule on the bulletin board. It is decorated with Christmas drawings by P. O. W.'s.

December 3, Sunday.

Church. Men sit on the floor. We received a piano from Switzerland today.

December 4, Monday.

Red Cross rations.

A three-foot brick chimney is being built on the mess hall. White-coated Jerries are working on it.

It rained at roll call and was very nasty out.

I found a flea on my knee.

December 5, Tuesday.

I wrote home today.

One hundred and fifty new P. O. W.'s came in today. Some of them are in this barracks. We had them telling us the latest news.

December 6, Wednesday.

Many food parcels came in today. We go on full Red Cross next Friday. Many wrist watches and rings have been traded

for food here.

December 7, Thursday.

Today is Pearl Harbor day and three years later I find myself in a German prison camp. I remember the date I had that night and how on my way I ran into a newsboy with a special edition about the attack.

I have been reading a lot of history lately, especially English history.

A new building is being added to the hospital area.

December 8, Friday.

For the first time a green-coated infantryman counted us. We call him the Green Hornet. Most of the guards are gray-coated air corps men and at least forty years of age on the average.

It is fifteen days to Christmas. Many cigarette parcels have arrived and been handed out to us P. O. W.'s.

December 9, Saturday.

We received more dehydrated cabbage today and had to dump it down the latrines because it was not edible. It should stop up V-1. This is the fourth day in a row we have had it.

A quiz program was held in the Red Cross room today. In between times we had five roll calls; there was a sleeper in Barracks Nine.

We have a saxophone and mouth organ learner in the barracks.

Three years ago today we declared war on Germany.

It rained all day and was very muddy.

Hindman⁴³ went to the hospital today.

December 10, Sunday.

I went to church. Quite fitting for Sunday, the room decided to start a numbers pool. [It was a game of chance. Each player bet cigarettes on a number drawn from a box. If his number was drawn, he won, and was paid off accordingly.] One boy was paid off with seventeen and a half packs of cigarettes today.

Paules, our "Man of Confidence," talked with the Kommandant today.

Some new Y. M. C. A. men visited the lagers inquiring about the educational and religious needs of the camp.

Some boys were allowed to go out under guard and get a Christmas tree. We can stay up until 10 o'clock on Christmas Eve, and until 12 o'clock on Christmas Night, and we can walk around the compound those nights.

Ten thousand Red Cross parcels were supposed to arrive here the eighth and tenth.

December 11, Monday.

Our numbers pool had a meeting today and two men were assigned to a barracks to cover it. We give many cigarettes to the new men coming in, but at this time most of the men have plenty of cigarettes.

⁴³ Refer to roommates in the appendix.

December 12, Tuesday.

We have a lot of fun in the numbers pool and the P. O. W.'s all over the lager like it. We get a chance to meet a lot of different men that we didn't know before.

December 13, Wednesday.

The Germans started a drive today to collect thousands of tin cans.

December 14, Thursday.

One of the men in this room, Bartholemew, came down with diphtheria and now the whole room is quarantined. This is to last ten days. All of our chow is brought to us by other rooms in the barracks and we are allowed to walk around the enclosure by ourselves.

This quarantine hits our numbers game, but Room Five across the hall has agreed to run our business for us, and we will act as the bankers. This gives us something to do.

We do not have to stand roll call for the Germans, but are counted in our room. This allows us to sleep in the morning and to pull our heads out of the covers so that the guard can count us. The Germans have more trouble counting than any people in the world. [We often wondered how they ever got an army together.] They count to ten and then have to start all over again. Because of this we have to stand much longer than necessary on the parade ground.

Hot water was brought to us to bathe in by other rooms,

and also books which were being sent around to the different barracks. It isn't too bad a life at this time.

The only time we are supposed to leave the room during the quarantine is when we go to the indoor latrine. We do not have a sewage system here and all of our night soil is taken out by the suction machine and distributed on German fields. Russians do most of the dirty work and sometimes use hand pumps. We continue to take up collections of cigarettes for them. Naturally the guards take their rake-off. One of our boys who speaks Russian told them if the guards didn't give them the cigarettes to knock their damned heads off. Apparently the German guard understood Russian for our American boy took off hurriedly.

Tonight hair cutting started and many in the room had their hair completely taken off. It was very funny watching the baldheaded run around. Some of them left Indian locks on top of their scalps. It is strange to see a man who had a lot of hair suddenly turn up without any. They seem to be dwarfs where once they were giants. Hair makes a great deal of difference in one's appearance. After a considerable amount of argument I allowed myself to be sheared and found that I belong to the roundhead clan, also that I had to improvise some kind of headgear to keep my head warm at night. Wearing one's cap to bed has become the mode.

December 15, Friday.

Our room is on the west side of the barracks; it is warm in the winter, but the rooms on the east are always cold.

All of our water and food is still brought to us in quarantine.

December 16, Saturday.

Today at the weekly show there was a numbers drawing watched by a lot of the camp. Ping pong balls are placed in a box with numbers on them and then are drawn out of a hole in the box. [Room Five held the drawing. We were still in quarantine.]

[The portion of my diary from December 17 to January 2 inclusive has been lost; therefore I shall briefly summarize the events in this interim.

Our quarantine in Room Nine lasted until December 24. During that time we did nothing except handle the receipts brought to us from the numbers racket, play cards and other games, and read.

We were allowed to stay out until 10 o'clock on Christmas Eve, and walked around the compound under the floodlights. Some of the boys started to sing Christmas carols, but were called swine by the guards, and stopped singing to prevent any possible trouble.

The corridor of Barracks Two was turned into a gambling house. We had race track games, dice games, and other games of chance. Cigarettes were bet, and they were so plentiful at this time that huge piles of them were stacked up on many of the tables. The guards kept walking through the place and were amazed to see all of these cigarettes.

On Christmas Day we received an American Red Cross package which had not been opened.

A complete list of the contents follows: plum pudding--1 lb., turkey, boned meat--3/4 lb., small sausages--1/4 lb., strawberry jam--6 oz., candy, assorted--3/4 lb., deviled ham--3 oz., cheddar cheese--1/4 lb., nuts, mixed--3/4 lb., bouillon cubes--12, fruit bars--2, dates--14 oz., cherries, canned--6 oz., playing cards--1 pack, chewing gum--4 packages, butter--3 3/4 oz., games, assorted--1 box, cigarettes--3 packages, smoking tobacco--1 package, pipe--1, tea--1 3/8 oz., honey--6 oz., washcloth--1, pictures (American scenes)--2.

The packages were paid for by the United States government, and the contents in large part were purchased through the Department of Agriculture.⁴⁴

Each of our packages contained two American scenes, a Lithograph by Currier and Ives and a gloss finished picture. I started a collection of the gloss pictures, and by going all over the compound and trading cigarettes for them, I got a complete set which I have here today in my home.

In addition to the package our day was made even more pleasant by our Christmas tree and by the program which we had in the Red Cross room. Since the room was too small to accommodate all of our men at once, the program was repeated until everyone had a chance to hear it.

During our time of gaiety on Christmas Eve, a guard lost or was robbed of a pass which would allow one to go any place in Germany. They kept these passes in the sleeves of their

⁴⁴ "The 1944 Christmas Package," American National Red Cross, Prisoners of War Bulletin, Vol. II, No. 12 (December 1944), p. 1.

coats. They threatened to search all of our barracks unless the pass was found or someone admitted taking it. Finally, in order to prevent this pending search, Behre told them he had had the pass, and had burned it by mistake. In reality he knew nothing of it. The guards had promised that nothing would be done if the guilty party confessed, but later Behre was given disciplinary punishment not to exceed thirty days, but they failed to set a date for the beginning of his sentence.

During this time a movement was started to organize a school in the compound. Some of the classes and their teachers were: French, R. J. Cain and George Gagne both of Barracks Two; modern European and American history, M. R. Allen; agriculture, Richard Dabney, a graduate of the University of Ohio; theology, M. V. Mears; and mathematics, a boy from Room Five whose name I do not recall. These classes were held in Barracks Two.]

CHAPTER VIII

JANUARY 1945

January 3, Wednesday.

Today I started teaching two classes of American history with a total enrolment of seventy-four men. Inasmuch as I am a college graduate I believe I can get credit for the boys in the States if we ever get back. We submit our grades to Geneva and they give the students credit for them. We had to go to the Jerries for permission to have school although as P. O. W.'s we are permitted this under the Geneva Convention.⁴⁵

January 4, Thursday.

I enrolled in a French class. This class and most of the others are held in the evening in the washroom.

January 5, Friday.

A German loudspeaker located between A and D Lagers broadcast music all day.

⁴⁵ "So far as possible, belligerents shall encourage intellectual diversions and sports organized by prisoners of war."--"Treaty Series, No. 846, Convention between the United States of America and Other Powers," Title III, Section II, Chapter 3, Article 17, p. 122, The Army Medical Bulletin No. 62, Reprinted March 1944.

January 7, Sunday.

Thirty men left for the States to be repatriated. While a band played "Auld Lang Syne" and the "Air Corps Song" we lined the fence, gave them a cheer, and watched them go. [We gave most of those returning messages for our loved ones; however--forgetful as man's nature is--few of our parents ever heard a word from these men after they reached home.]

January 8, Monday.

There are ice slides all around the compound. The boys pour water on the ground and let it freeze. Then they take a long run and slide along on their shoes.

January 9, Tuesday.

A quizz program was held tonight in the barracks. Everyone enjoyed it.

We have added German to the subjects we are teaching in the barracks at night.

January 10, Wednesday.

Behre and Eldon Anderson were sent to the digger [jail]. Sometime ago Anderson cut a tent rope for a clothes line and told the guard who caught him that he was Clark Gable. Behre was sent for the pass that was stolen at Christmas time.

January 11, Thursday.

We had an identification in our rooms by the Germans.

They compared photographs with our faces. We had two roll calls because of snowball throwing while on parade. A huge snowman has been built on the parade ground.

January 12, Friday.

School is fun after not having it for so long. We have good class attendance.

[My diary from January 13 to January 26 inclusive is also lost so I shall summarize this period. We continued to have school daily and everyone seemed to take an interest in it. I was kept quite busy preparing the lessons to be taught from day to day.

During this period of time Luft IV had a secret news report that was given in each room sometime during the night. The following account by William C. Chastain of Tulsa, Oklahoma, tells more about these news releases.

"Stalag Luft IV had a secret newspaper," Chastain revealed "but it was only printed on special occasions--such as the invasion, etc! The same man never brought the paper to us twice--it was too dangerous.

"He stole in each room at night," said Chastain, lowering his voice a trifle as though he were back again in the barren room, "and when all the men assigned to that room were grouped around him he would read the news out loud."

The paper, laboriously printed by hand, was folded into a square small enough to swallow if the German guards were heard coming. The "news vendor" made the rounds to every room until every man in the camp had heard the news.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ "Ordeals of Being Prisoner of Germans Told by Tulsan," Tulsa Daily World, Sunday, April 28, 1946, p. 15.

The news that we received indicated that the Russians were getting close to us. They were besieging Danzig at this time and had captured Warsaw. This led us to believe that we should soon have to evacuate the camp. According to the recognized rules of warfare, P. O. W.'s must be a safe distance behind the front lines.⁴⁷

The jail where Anderson and Behre were confined was just a short distance across the fence from our barracks. We could see them exercising every day for about two hours, and we would wave at them in order to keep up their spirits.

When they returned they told us their experiences. There were no toilet stools located in the cells, and many of the prisoners had to urinate in their bowls because of the long hours of confinement. The next day they washed these bowls, and ate out of them. Every evening the guards placed two insane men in the jail. One was very happy and would keep everyone awake singing all night, whereas the other was sullen and had a gleam in his eye as if he wanted to kill someone. During the daytime these men were taken care of by hospital orderlies.

Between January 20 and January 27 fifteen hundred men moved out of B Lager. Among them was my pal, Lowell Reid.

⁴⁷ "Prisoners of war shall be evacuated within the shortest possible period after their capture, to depots located in a region far enough from the zone of combat for them to be out of danger."--"Treaty Series, No. 846, Convention between the United States of America and Other Powers," Title III, Sec. I, Article 7, p. 119, The Army Medical Bulletin No. 62, Reprinted March 1944.

Their final destination as I learned later was Nuremburg.]

January 27, Saturday.

Another fifteen hundred men from the various lagers left the camp. In most cases they were the sick both physically and mentally, whose names had been submitted by the room leaders. Five were from our room: Max Dahm, Robert Elkins, M. J. Beasley, Verner Bartholemew, and H. H. Hindman. [Their final destination was Barth, Germany.]

January 28, Sunday.

We hear that the men who left yesterday are still down at the train station at Grosstychow.

January 29, Monday.

B Lager moved out today with the exception of three barracks. The men carried their blankets rolled around their shoulders and makeshift packs hung on their sides or backs.

January 31, Wednesday.

The latest reports are that the first bunch who left have gone by train, but that B Lager still remains down at the train station.

CHAPTER IX

FEBRUARY 1945

February 1, Thursday.

The snow is going fast. The Germans have not allowed any workers out in the Vorlager, and as a result we have not received any Red Cross. [We never knew why workers were not allowed in the Vorlager.]

February 2, Friday.

Thousands of Russian P. O. W.'s came in today. Some wore wooden shoes and walked with canes, drawing sleds. They seemed weary. All of them moved into B Lager. Coffee was taken to the station for our men who are still there.

Last night it rained hard and today everything is slush.

[My diary from February 3 to February 6 inclusive is missing; therefore I want to tell briefly what happened. Because of the intense excitement of the preceding days we were no longer able to carry on school, and everyone kept wondering when the remainder of us would have to leave. Most of us wanted to stay in the camp as long as possible with the hope in mind that the Russians would capture us and we would be sent home in short order.

Realizing the necessity of having a knapsack to carry my food if I had to leave the camp, I spent several days with a needle and thread sewing up an army shirt which could be carried over my shoulder. It had two compartments in it for food.

The Russians stayed in camp about two days to rest up before leaving again. While there they showed an utter disre-

gard for the Germans and for their rules. The Russians did not bother to use the latrines. Their arrival and departure only tended to excite us and to make us wonder when our turn would come to leave.

Lager D left about February 5 and this left A Lager and C Lager remaining in the camp.

Finally on the night of February 5 after we had been locked in our barracks came orders from the Germans that we were to leave the next morning. This left only C Lager in the camp.

Very few of us slept well that night as we wondered what was in store for the next day. We kept the small stoves in our rooms burning fiercely as we tossed everything imaginable in them to keep the Germans from getting anything of value after we had left. Among the articles we burned were all of the nice games we had received in our Christmas packages. I myself burned a brand new chess set. Some of the men even burned clothing to keep the Germans from using it.

As a farewell dinner I invited my friend, Briggs, in from Room Ten to help me consume a frying pan full of potatoes. These were a delicacy which I had got by salvaging potato peelings and re-paring them.

Everyone in the room kept exhorting one another to sleep but I don't believe any of us did that night.]

CONCLUSION

The next morning, February 6, we were awakened early by the Germans and had a roll call at which we were ordered to get our belongings together after eating, and to be ready to move out of the camp.

As a last gesture our mess hall cooked gallons of hot barley cereal which was distributed to all of the rooms in the compound. We ate barley soup until it came out of our ears it seemed, and yet there was a great deal which we had to leave.

Briggs and I had talked over things, and agreed to be partners wherever we might go. He and I had discussed what we must carry, and agreed to take all of the food we could between us.

Soon afterwards roll call sounded; and we were lined up and then started through the gates of the prison lager. Guards were thicker than I had ever seen them before. The towers were firing their light machine guns and we wondered if the Russians were near. We were marched past a warehouse which contained Red Cross packages and each man was handed a full one. Then we were marched off down the road which led out of camp where we paused briefly. Many of us ripped open our Red Cross boxes and dumped the contents into our knapsacks, which were already bulging with things we had stored against the coming of this day.

Soon we were given the familiar Raus, Raus by the guards; we walked down the road, and the prison camp passed from our

sight. Much later I learned that two days after our departure the Russians came in.

This started us on the "Black March" or "Pomeranian March," which was to find me on May 2 in Luttow, Mecklenburg Schwerin. There I was freed at 10:30 o'clock in the morning by the British Second Army.

In the interim between my leaving the camp and my recapture, I suffered untold hardships, and walked over six hundred miles. When the British got to me, I had large boils all over my body, and it required fourteen penicilin shots to overcome the effects of malnutrition.

My final conclusion is that the Germans did not live up to the Geneva Convention for the treatment of prisoners of war. For this the German people should be fittingly punished.

LAGER A DEPARTMENT HEADS

Camp Leader	R. M. Chapman
Deputy Camp Leader	J. G. Vowell
Camp Secretary	J. H. Harrison
Camp Interpreter	E. S. Wild
Red Cross Food-Vorlager	Hank Sickerott
Red Cross Food-Lager A	J. Bendit
Red Cross Clothing	R. Elliott
Kitchen	N. E. Weeks
Accountant	R. L. Booker
Office Secretary	J. R. Borneo
Duty Sergeant	D. R. Clark
General Clerk	E. W. Lee
Mail Clerk	P. H. Gregory
Mail Assistant	F. Tony
Librarian	Joe Harrison
Asst. Librarian	Peters
Asst. to Asst. Librarian	Tom Edwards
Barber	J. M. Gould
German Stores	Sleitberger
Sports	J. R. Donigan

MEMBERS OF MY CREW

351st. BOMB GROUP

509th. BOMB SQUADRON

B-17, "FLYING FORTRESS--WILDFIRE"

- Allen, Marvin R., R. 2, Stillwater, Oklahoma.
Right waist gunner and assistant engineer.
- Bianco, Eugene J., 404 First St., Syracuse (9), New York.
Co-pilot.
- Briggs, Ulius C., 438 N. Pine St., Ukiah, California.
Radio operator.
- Geldermann, Kenneth E., 9417 Hunt St., South Gate, California.
Tail gunner.
- Hicks, Crawford E., R. 4, Box 805, Louisville, Kentucky.
Pilot.
- Kunz, Lester L., Fillmore, Illinois.
Bombardier.
- Mitchener, H. A., 1136 Greenfield Ave., Nashville (6), Tenn.
Navigator.
- Reid, Lowell A., R. 1, Nacogdoches, Texas.
Left waist gunner.
- Vasilik, Steve, Box 478 B, R. 2, Asbury Park, New Jersey.
Ball turret gunner.
- Young, Francis, 1494 Junction Ave., Detroit, Michigan.
Upper turret gunner and engineer.

My roommates in "Stube Nine"

Aishe, Benjamin, 2207 Lincoln, Muskegon, Michigan.
Aldape, Joe, 3912 Avenue I, Galveston, Texas.
Alexander, James, Brandywine Avenue, Modena, Pennsylvania.
Allen, Marvin R., Route 2, Stillwater, Oklahoma.
Ambrose, J. V., Oakland, California.
Anderson, Eldon, Route 1, Sagerton, Texas.
Anderson, John, 320 S. Locust, Sulphur Springs, Texas.
Arfman, Harry W., 320 Scarfield Avenue, Del Rio, Texas.
Bailey, Errol, Mt. Hood, Oregon.
Barnhardt, Ralph, 180 Moore, Concord, North Carolina.
Bartholemew, Verner, Shelby, Nebraska.
Battstone, Johnny, 861 Ruddyard Road, Cleveland, Ohio.
Beasley, M. J., Box 260, F. R. 5, Savannah, Georgia.
Behre, Dan, 8801 Apricot, New Orleans, Louisiana.
Belleville, George, 245 Riverview Drive, Asheville, N. Carolina.
Bly, H. Sam, East Charleston, Vermont.
Colihan, R. T., Minersville, Pennsylvania.
Cruz, Frank, 2221 Holly, Austin, Texas.
Dabney, Richard C., Bidwell, Ohio.
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THE MISSIONS MADE BY MY CREW

DATE	TARGET	FLAK HOLES
May 7, 1944	Berlin	2
May 8, 1944	Berlin	1
May 12, 1944	Merseburg	2
May 19, 1944	Berlin	7
May 24, 1944	Berlin	2
May 25, 1944	Metz	0
May 27, 1944	Ludwigshaven	1
May 29, 1944	Sortau	5
May 30, 1944	Aschlersleben	Shot Down

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