

Dr. Gerhard Kaschuba
Carl-von-Linde-Straße 7
85716 Unterschleißheim

Unterschleißheim, 9th November 2006

Germany

Mrs
Laura Edge
5528 Briar Glen Drive
Saline, MI 48176-9537

Dear Madam,

may I introduce myself first. My name is Gerhard Kaschuba, I'm a historian and I'm working at a high school in Munich, Germany. In addition, I'm very interested in the aerial warfare of World War II. At that time, my uncle was a pilot in the Luftwaffe. He was killed on May 12, 1944 (see copies).

I got your address from Heinz Hungerbühler, Usingen.

According to MACR 5359 your father Lawrence L. Witt was S/Sgt. and the right waist gunner of Lt. Harold Tuckers B-17 G of the 96th Bomb Group, which crashed down near Kransberg. Can you tell me his story? What happened to him?

Mr. Hungerbühler sent me a photo of your father's crew. Their B-17 is named "Our Baby". The type of this bomber is B-17 F (without chin-turret) as you know, not B-17 G. Is it possible, that the downed B-17 G on 12th May 1944 had the same nickname?

Two names (Slemensky/Grueter) on the photo differ from the MACR 5359. There I read Sleminsky and Greuter. What is correct?

Do you have any information on that mission? I am interested in further material on that day.

Thank you very much in advance



Dr. Gerhard Kaschuba
Carl-von-Linde-Straße 7
85716 Unterschleißheim

Unterschleißheim, 8th November 2006

Germany

Mrs.

Laura Edge
5528 Briar Glen Drive
Saline, MI 48176-9537

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Edge



bereits Kommandos des Bodenpersonals der II./JG 27 aus, um die am Fallschirm herabschwebenden amerikanischen Besatzungsmitglieder, denen noch rechtzeitig der Absprung gelungen war, gefangenzunehmen und zum Platz zu bringen, wo sie danach gründlich durchsucht werden.

Keller



Jochen Prien

Hamburg, Germany - illustrated Gruppen history of JG 27

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Unterschleißheim, 14th December 2006

Germany

Jochen Prien

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Mrs

Laura Edge
5528 Briar Glen Drive
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also authors:
Gerhard Stemmer
Peter Rodeike
David Johnston
Winifried Bock

Dear Madam,

Thank you very much for your parcel with the article about your father's fate and the other material concerning 12 May 1944. It was very interesting and useful for me.

Heinz Hungerbühler told me that you want to write a book about the above cited air attack. In this case I presume that you have rich material from US-sources. Perhaps you can help me in some cases.

Therefore I have some questions concerning your article. You wrote, that 96th Group A flew lead, Group B low and 452nd Group C high position. Can you tell me on which side of the 3rd bomber division the high groups were positioned on that day? You can find a diagram as attachment. I got it from Mr. Laurent Fournier, France. He is working about 12 May 1944 too. The block diagram is not complete as you can see. Concerning to Mr. Fournier the high groups were positioned on the left side (in flight direction). Is this correct? I am interested in the flight order of the 3rd, 1st and 2nd bomb division. Do you know, where I can order the wanted files?

What's about spare chutes? How many spare chutes were on board of a B-17 Flying Fortress? You wrote, that some airmen of the 96th Bomb Group were brought to Merzhausen airfield as POWs. I have copies of a book about Jagdgeschwader 27 from Jochen Prien. There I found some pictures concerning to the 12 May 1944. Can you identify some of the men on these pictures?

Have you heard about the fate of the former Major Günther Rall? He was shot down by P-47 Thunderbolt (presumably 56th Fighter Group) in the area north of Frankfurt a. M. There exists a book in English language from Jill Amadio, which contains the whole story. If not, I can send you a copy.

I had contact with Horst Petzschler two years ago. He told me that he flew a Me 109 on that day.

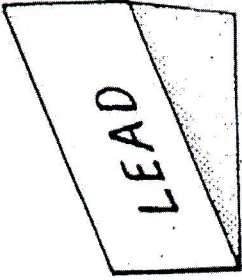
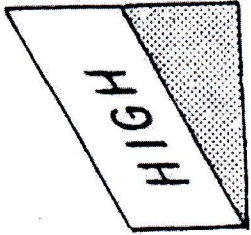
yes

Thank you very much in advance

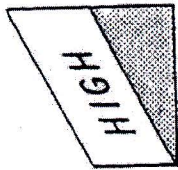
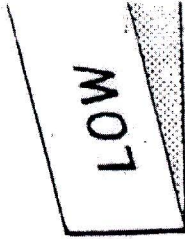
Gerhard Kaschuba



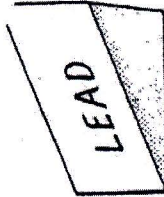
attachments



4th COMBAT WING



452nd C Grp



96th A Grp

45th A COMBAT WING



96th B Grp

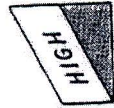


452nd A Grp

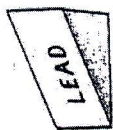
45th B COMBAT WING



452nd B Grp



94th C Grp



388th A Grp

45th C COMBAT WING



388th B Grp



13th A COMBAT WING



13th B COMBAT WING

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE BLOCK DIAGRAM OF
THE 3rd BOMBER DIVISION ON MAY 12th, 1944

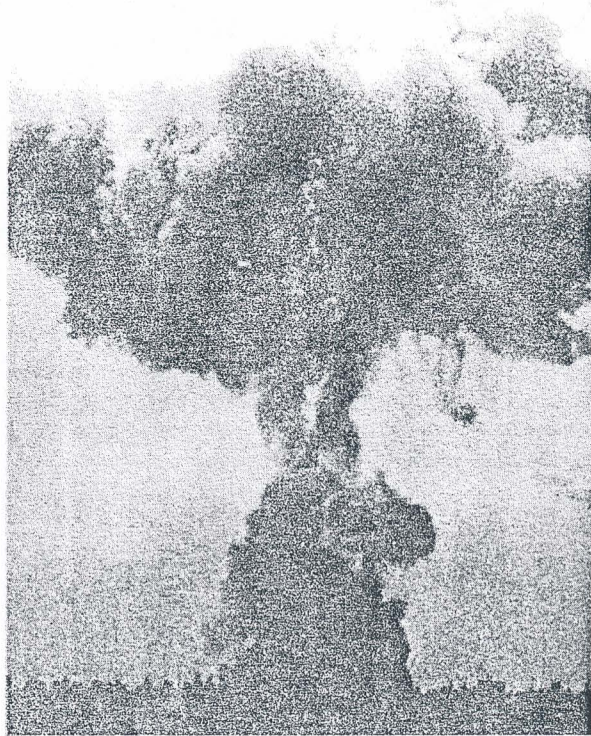
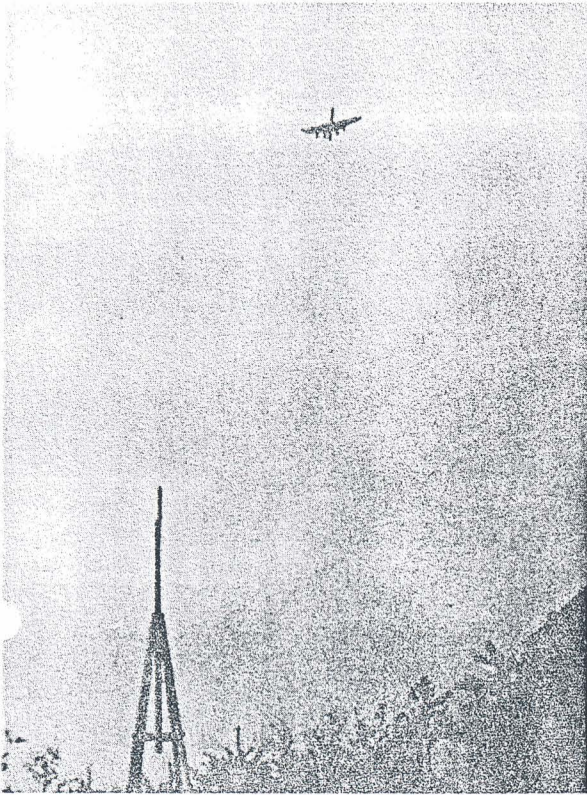
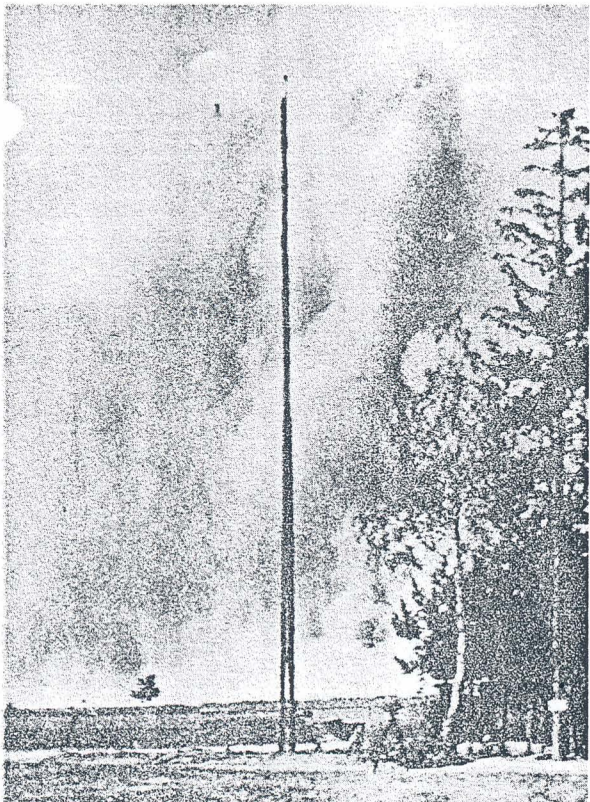


Abb. 481 a - g: Sieben Aufnahmen vom Abschuss eines amerikanischen Viermots in unmittelbarer Nähe des Platzes Merzhausen. Vermutlich zeigen sie die von Lt. Heinz Schlechter am 12. Mai 1944 gerammte B-17, die hier mit abgerissenem Leitwerk zur Erde stürzt. Während die Maschine durch Aufschlagbrand zerstört wird, schwärmen



translation

Pictures:

Seven American Heavies shot down in the immediate vicinity of Merzhausen

Picture of plane: B-17 with torn off tail plunges to earth
machine is destroyed by impact

already commands from the ground staff
11. JG 27 to the parachute floating down
American crew jumped in time

brought to the place where they are
thoroughly searched

Messerschmitt Bf 109 im Einsatz bei Stab
und 1./ Jagdgeschwader 27, 1939-1945
by Jochen Frien
Peter Rodeike
Gerhard Stemmer

Dr. Gerhard Kaschuba
Carl-von-Linde-Straße 7
85716 Unterschleißheim

Unterschleißheim, 11th January 2007

Germany

Mrs
Laura Edge
5528 Briar Glen Drive
Saline, MI 48176-9537

Dear Madam,

I send you a few copies out of the book: Jill Amadio, Günther Rall. A memoir. Luftwaffe ace and Nato General, Santa Ana/California 2002. The pages 223 and 224 are missing, because they are without print.

I have doubts that parts of the story are correct. Here and in the internet (see copy) I found, that Günther Rall and Hubert Zemke, former commander of 56th fighter group, fought against each other on 12th May 1944. The article you will find enclosed is about the kill of Lt. Col. Preston Piper and Lt. Willard D. Johnson, Zemke's wingmen on that day. They landed with their parachutes near villages in the county of Heidelberg and became POWs. Therefore I think that Zemke and his comrades not flew in the Gießen area as planned. There must have been an error of navigation, which brought them in this area. They were shot down by pilots of the I./JG 5 from Herzogenaurach near Nürnberg.

Thank you very much in advance

Gerhard Kaschuba



The Zemke Fan was first tried on May 12, 1944. On that mission, Hub Zemke's element lost one of its four P-47s to an abort. The remaining three were attacked by seven Messerschmitt Bf-109s. Zemke immediately ordered them to form a Lufbery circle. The Luftwaffe leader cut across the circle and, in a dazzling display of deflection shooting, downed one P-47. A few moments later, he repeated his performance, leaving Zemke alone in an unfriendly sky. With no recourse, Zemke went into a barrel-rolling vertical dive at full throttle and escaped. (Years later, he learned that the German sharpshooter was Maj. Günther Rall, the Luftwaffe's third-ranking ace with 275 victories.)

northeast of Hanover, Germany. Known today for its historic and classical stallion parades, in Rall's time the city of Celle was more famous for its proximity to Hitler's crucial synthetic oil production facilities in Wietze.

One month after he'd taken up his new command, Rall got the usual order to scramble. The signal was relayed from German Naval ships in the North Sea, which were tuned in to the frequency of the US Eighth Air Force. Word was that an attack of eight hundred bombers, escorted by twelve hundred fighters, was imminent. II./JG 11's main mission in their Bf 109s was to engage the long-range American fighter escorts so that the Luftwaffe's well-armed but heavy Focke-Wulf Fw 190s could attack the bomber stream, a tactic that succeeded in bringing down hundreds of Fortress and Liberator bombers. Because of the weight of their extra cannon the Fw 190s were vulnerable to attack, or "bouncing," by Allied fighters. Teaming up the Fw 190s with Bf 109s meant the lighter planes could protect them.

It was 5:25 a.m. May 12, 1944. Rall was awakened by the Division Commander.

"When the American fighter escorts reach the Zuider Zee, I'll send the fifteen-minute alert, then the five-minute alert, and the cockpit alert," said the commander, "then you can scramble."

The signal came soon enough. The squadron met at a rendezvous point over Steinhudermeer, west of Hanover, with Rall's group of Bf 109s providing top cover for two groups of Fw 190s, numbering a total of fifty aircraft. The heavier fighters would engage the stream of bombers and the Bf 109s would engage the fighter escort.

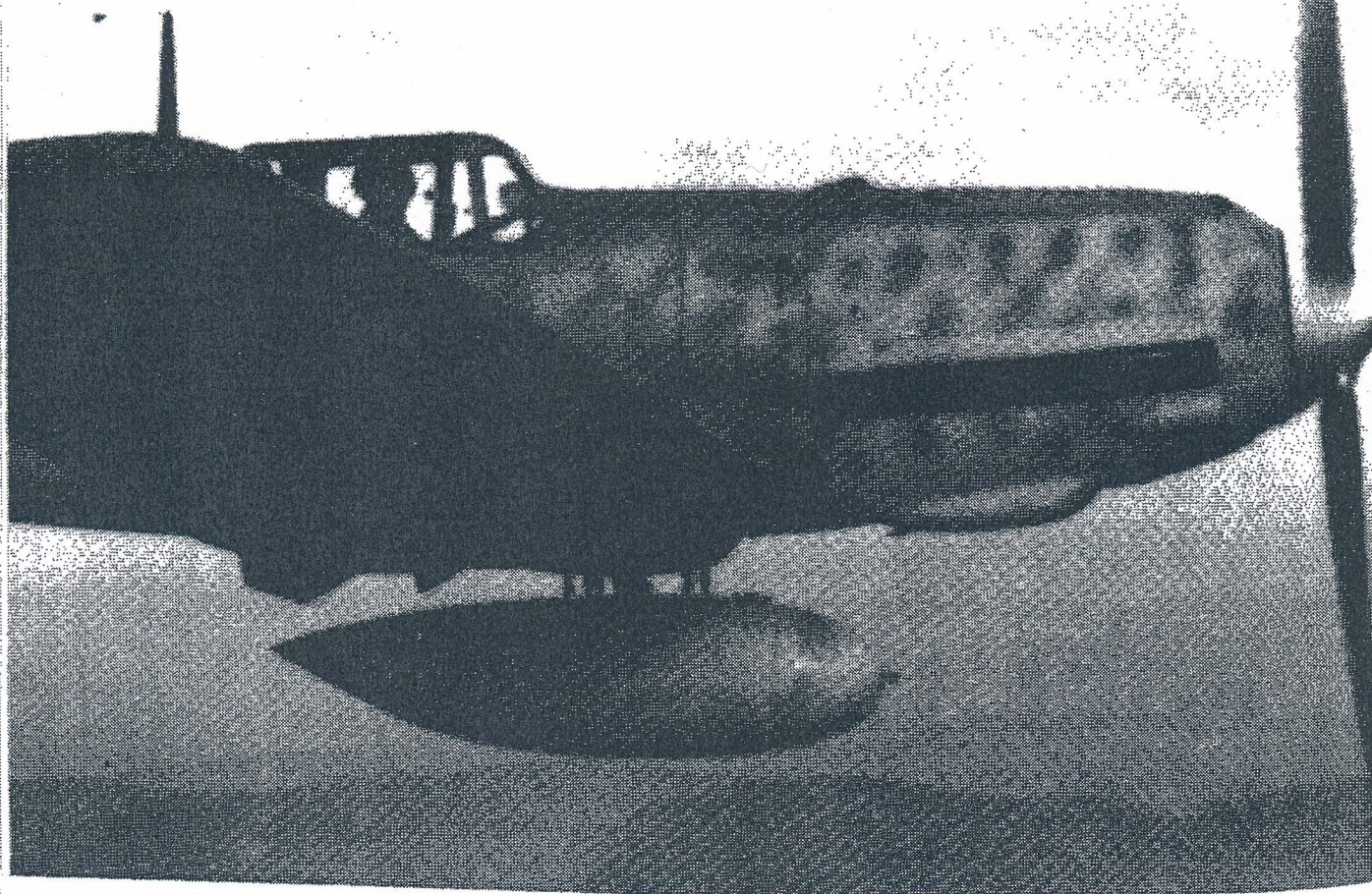
Before dawn that day Second Lieutenant Robert "Shorty" Rankin, a flight commander with the 56th Fighter Group of

the Eighth Air Force at Boxted, was among those to receive the order to escort a group of B-17 bombers whose targets were Germany's six oil refineries.

The most victorious Allied fighter unit in Europe with more aerial victories than any other during World War II, it was known as the Wolf Pack and commanded by Colonel Hub Zemke. Rankin, a 25-year old from Washington, DC, who was to make USAAF history that day, was excited because Zemke's Fan was to be tried out for the first time and he was ready for action. Hub had perfected what was to prove one of the most successful aerial combat tactics of World War II. Dubbed the Fan, it broke up the usual group formation once the groups reached their designated area and allowed the P-47 Thunderbolts to spread out fan-wise in a 180-degree arc instead of remaining in formation. An extra section was maintained in the center of the Fan. Zemke reasoned that if his Group went out well in advance of the B-17 Fortress bombers it escorted, the unit stood a good chance of routing Luftwaffe aircraft assembled for a mass attack and would more easily be able to break them up. The tactic had gained official approval just the day before, on May 11, from Major General William Kepner's Eighth Air Force Fighter Command headquarters at Bushey Hall, north of London.

Taking off from Boxted that morning, Zemke's 56th flew in tight formation across the Channel towards Frankfurt, hoping to fool German radar into thinking the fighter group was a bomber strike.

"We needed to get there forty-five minutes before the B-17s arrived," said Rankin. "We knew the Germans would bring in fighters from several different airbases, that they'd form up into groups, climb, and head for the bomber trail. Except there would be no B-17 bombers. They'd find us instead, the fighters."



Side profile of a Bf 109E with its external fuel tank

The ruse was to work like a charm.

When Zemke's Wolf Pack set out that day each flight was given a heading for a fifteen-minute period.

"Then we were to turn and do a reciprocal and come back to the designated area," said Rankin. "When we got over Frankfurt, flying in from the north-west, our altitude was around 25,000 feet."

In the meantime, Rall and II./JG 11 were about to appear, flying in from the north-east, intent upon attack.

As the confrontation between the titans, the P-47s, the Fw 190s and the Bf 109s, drew near it was to become one of the

most significant combat encounters of the air with both sides sustaining heavy losses.

More than eight hundred Allied bombers and twelve hundred escorting fighters, and two to three hundred German fighters would clash high above Nazi Germany. Over the course of the day dozens of dogfights took their toll on aircraft and men but for Günther Rall, his date with destiny had the name of one of Zemke's pilots written all over it. Wingman Captain Joseph Powers, killed later flying a P-51 in Korea, has been credited with downing Rall although in Powers' combat report it is difficult to verify. One young pilot, however, remembers many details of that day.

Cleon Thomson, barely twenty-five years old, had graduated and was commissioned at Marianna Army Air Field in Florida six months earlier. Assigned to what he called "the hottest fighter Group in the European Theater," May 12 was his first mission as a fighter pilot.

"I was flying wing to Lt. Rankin who was the flight leader of the team of four," wrote Thomson in his declassified Encounter Report. "We were designated for target support. That meant we would fly into the target area ahead of the bombers to intercept any upcoming enemy fighters. This is exactly what happened when four of us found about thirty Bf 109s assembling over a bunker station, a vertical radio beam that held German fighters in position above a cloud layer. Without hesitation Rankin busted into this group of German fighters and they scattered like a covey of quail."

Thomson's job was to protect his flight leader so he could shoot, enabling Rankin to down four enemy planes within minutes.

Rankin recalls that the Bf 109s still had their external fuel tanks attached at the beginning of the encounter.

"I decided I needed to get some of these guys," said Rankin. "I pressed the attack and they saw me coming. Then all of a sudden they dropped their tanks. I was kind of excited watching twenty or thirty tanks flopping down into space but I kept on and then they just split and the fighters took off in every direction."

Rankin latched onto two of the fighters, following them down at breakneck speed.

"I was indicating 575 [mph] and was bordering on compressibility because what happens is your controls get real tight and they can lock up on you. I noticed that the first Bf 109 I was on started to buffet. It was really severe. He was trying to pull out of it and he couldn't.

"I'd given him just a short burst, pulling the sight through him and in doing that, I'd blocked the plane so I couldn't see if I had any hits on him or not."

Following his quarry down, Rankin was able to observe the buffeting and knew the German plane was in trouble. Time to go.

"I put both hands on the stick and pulled with all my might. I was pretty strong in those days" remembers Rankin, "and we finally broke out barely brushing the treetops with the altimeter registering 1,500 feet. The Bf 109 crashed and exploded."

S. 223
S. 224
been
been
BID: HANSON

II .JG 11's twenty-five Bf 109s pressed towards the stream of Allied bombers that Zemke's P-47 Thunderbolts was escorting. "When I arrived at the rendezvous point with my escort fighter group," said Rall, "I radioed the Fw 190s that I was here above at my usual altitude. Then we all cruised south. I was flying at 35,000 feet and was soon able to pinpoint the bombers coming from England by their contrails. As we reached our position we went into battle formation and dropped our external tanks. The Fw 190s were at 26,000 feet. It was very unusual for Bf 109s to fly at such a high altitude because they could stall. We had no pressurization or heat, and it was darned cold."

The size of the Allied force took Rall's breath away. The eight hundred B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators, both long-range bombers, flew in a mainstream formation and twelve hundred fighters covered the airspace from the Hartz Mountains, the tallest in central Germany, all the way down to Stuttgart, a distance of approximately two hundred miles. The Allied aircraft seemed to form an endless canopy, as if to blot out the sun.

"I'm sure the earth below must have been trembling because the thunder from those thousands of engines was tremendous." Rall was also impressed with Allied logistics. "How did they manage to coordinate so many squadrons stationed at doz-

ens of different bases and have them meet at the same time in the air, in the early morning darkness?" When Rall saw them coming he instructed his pilots to spread out in battle formation, keeping a good distance from each other.

Almost immediately he received a call over his earphones to take over the whole formation because the leader below had radio failure. Annoyed, Günther now had to descend from 35,000 feet to 26,000 feet as fast as he could to take command. He immediately rescinded his order to spread out.

"Damn. OK, close in." The Bf 109s ran straight into a P-47 fighter formation. "As I dived down, I went on the attack against the first three, closing into the leading element. In a left turn I shot up the wingman. There were horrendous flames because these long-range fighters had large fuel tanks. Then I turned to jump on the other one. I aimed and fired but he went into a split-S and I lost sight of him. I learned much later it was Hub Zemke, leader of the group." Rall's wingman suffered engine failure and bailed out but the battle was far from over. "I jumped on the nearest P-47, came really close and hit him, and he went down in flames."

Now, faced with a sky filled with the enemy, Rall quickly took advantage, diving down and hitting a target, pulling up, diving again and hitting another. But when his wingman bailed out with engine problems and Rall whirled his Bf 109 in a tight split-S, he found himself face to face with four P-47s sitting abreast of his windshield. Rall was well aware that a P-47 was much faster in a dive and had much higher structural strength than a Bf 109 but he realized he had no other choice than to descend.

"If I turned left or right or pulled up I would face American guns. Then one of their wingman hit me in the engine and chased me down from 26,000 feet to treetop level. He hit my engine, hit

my coolers, and then I got one more tremendous hit."

The final burst of fire from the enemy cut through the left side of the cockpit. Günther felt a sharp pain in his hand as it controlled the throttle. A bullet had sliced through his thick leather glove and severed the thumb.

With the hand useless, he thrust the stick between his knees because he needed his other hand to wipe the ice off the windshield. The ice began to melt when he dived steeply down from the high cold air mass to the warmer lower one and he couldn't see through it to judge his altitude. Clearing a small patch in the windshield, all he could see was clouds.

"I saw the left wing then the right wing starting to come apart. I pulled on the stick harder and allowed the plane to stall out."

Still the P-47 followed. Later Rall was to wonder testily why the darned pilot didn't go home to England. "He knew I was finished. I was right on the edge of the 109's structural limits because when I pulled up my wings were wrinkling and the color was blistering off the fabric. I knew I had to bail out so I put the aircraft to the stalling point." The plane rolled over backwards and Rall found himself hanging upside down. He quickly



Rall's left glove showing the bullet's damage

jettisoned the canopy and began to bail out.

"At least the American couldn't follow me, his P-47 was no longer maneuverable at this low altitude. He could see I was half out of the cockpit trying to bail out. Finally I was able to free myself but as I jumped I got hit in the neck by the cable of my microphone. I could see the tail of my plane as I was hanging out and it reminded me of Marseille who had died by hitting the tail of his plane. Then I was tumbling in free-fall but I couldn't reach the release handle to open the parachute. I felt as if I was in a washing machine. I couldn't even figure out which way was up. But as my arms and legs swung around and around they had a stabilizing effect and I was able to pull the ring, opening the parachute at just 325 feet."

Günther's first thought as the chute billowed above was: Ah, I have cheated death once again so I can return to Hertha, as I promised her I would. His next thought was of his orthopedist in Vienna, who had told him, if you have to bail out look for a tree with plenty of branches. Luckily, Günther did just that. He landed several feet up a tree, cushioned by branches. But when he released the straps to free himself from the chute he rolled down a steep slope into a trench.

"My thumb had finally stopped bleeding but it hurt like hell. Even so, I was very, very happy!" Tucking his hand tightly under his right arm Rall followed a narrow path through the trees into an open meadow. By now his focus was off survival and on to the throbbing injury. In an instant, however, the pain was forgotten as Günther faced another threat. Before him stood a very apprehensive, very angry farmer, pitchfork at the ready. Rall, who was wearing an American-style air force jacket, greeted him and the other farmhands who came running.

"I tried to identify myself because he saw my jacket and

thought I was the enemy. I told him I was a German but he continued to glare at me, waving the pitchfork threateningly."

"Who are you?" the farmer demanded.

"Major Günther Rall, Luftwaffe."

Amazement and a broad, delighted smile instantly told Günther that his name was recognized. He mentally blessed those state radio broadcasts of his victories for saving his life. After surviving so many crash landings and injuries, how ignominious to die impaled on a pitchfork. But Rall's unbelievable luck, like a cat with nine lives, still held.

"The farmer and his helpers knew me right away. I was still in agony but very happy. They took me to the farmhouse and gave me some juice because I was dehydrated from the loss of blood, and offered me a couple of their hand-rolled cigarettes."

Günther's thumb, severed at its base, was still inside his glove. Surprisingly, he could see the thumbnail unscathed and free of blood, shining white beneath a gash in the glove where the bullet had torn through the leather. He also had a piece of shrapnel from either an enemy bullet or a piece of his own plane lodged in his elbow, where it remains to this day.

Wrapping his hand in a cloth as best they could as the Allied bombers continued to stream overhead, the farmer and his farmhands led Rall to their farmhouse where they passed the time entertaining him with stories of their service in World War I. When the raid was over the farmer called for an ambulance and Rall was taken to a hospital in nearby Nassau in the Lahn Valley.

"I told the doctor there, who needs two thumbs? It's a surplus."

Two days later an anxious Hertha arrived from Vienna. She'd been told by Günther's NCO that her husband had been shot down but was alive. She had no idea of the extent of his injuries.

With no airport close to the hospital in the Lahn Valley, she traveled by train, nervous she'd miss her stop in unfamiliar territory. She constantly asked her fellow passengers if the station she needed was coming up next. Finally, one of the passengers asked why she was so anxious.

"My husband was shot down and I'm going to the hospital to see him," she said.

"What's his name?"

"Günther Rall."

"Oh, the ace! We heard it on the radio. He's fine but he lost his thumb!"

The incident was news all over Germany. Reports of the activities of heroes such as Günther and their exploits were used as propaganda morale-boosters by Hitler's government-controlled media and broadcast daily over the radio.

A week after their reconciliation, the Ralls, accompanied by a military aide, departed for their home in Vienna, Günther's injured hand in a cast.

Unfortunately, he had left his doctor's care too soon. The wound refused to heal. It was apparent that bone fragments were still embedded inside the flesh. He needed another operation to remove the splinters. This time he went to the air force hospital in Vienna, where Hertha was able to assist in the surgery.

"Three days after I got back home after the second surgery, an ambulance arrived to return me once more to the hospital. I asked, 'What's going on?' They replied that I had contracted diphtheria. The wound had become infected and I must return for treatment and be quarantined. Our apartment had to be fumigated."

Once more in a hospital bed, Rall asked how the infection had occurred. He was told that an American pilot from a downed

KRAICHGAU

**Beiträge zur Landschafts- und
Heimatsforschung**

**Folge 19
2005**

**Herausgegeben vom
Heimatverein Kraichgau unter Förderung
der Stiftung „Kraichgau“**

„Bisch du do owwe rumgfloge?“

Luftkämpfe im Raum Heidelberg-Mannheim am 12. Mai 1944

Gerhard Kaschuba

Was geschah am 12. Mai 1944? – Augenzeugen berichten

Am 12. Mai 1944, einem strahlenden Frühlingstag, flogen wieder schwere amerikanische Bomber und Jäger ihre Angriffe gegen das Deutsche Reich. Die Luftkämpfe mit deutschen Jagdflugzeugen wurden wie so oft von der deutschen Zivilbevölkerung vom Boden aus verfolgt. Besonders für die Kinder waren diese Kämpfe am Himmel ein besonderes Ereignis.

Walter Winterbauer aus Lobenfeld, Ldkrs. Heidelberg, erinnert sich:

„Ich war im Hof der elterlichen Wohnung in der damaligen Mühlstraße, heute Klosterstraße, und sah zwei amerikanische Jagdflugzeuge vom Dorf her (Richtung Süd nach Nord). Gerade über uns war ein deutsches Flugzeug, das ich an den Balkenkreuzen erkannte. Jetzt sah ich, wie ein deutscher Flieger herunterging, fast senkrecht hochzog und schoss. Eines der beiden Flugzeuge begann zu brennen, zog eine Rauchwolke hinter sich her und flog Richtung Spechbach. Dann sahen wir, wie da oben einer am Fallschirm hing und Richtung Spechbacher Wald herunterpendelte. Er trieb auf einen Baum zu. Hausherr Johann Christen und der Förster Georg Edinger liefen, mit Pistole und Gewehr bewaffnet, Richtung Absprungplatz und wir Kinder natürlich hinterher. Wir wollten auch einen „Ami“ sehen, denn wir wussten gar nicht, was ein „Ami“ genau ist. Die Männer jagten uns zurück, aber wir folgten bis zum Waldrand. Oben am Weg zum Sperbelbaum sahen wir einen Fallschirm am Baum hängen und daran den Piloten. Die Fliegerhose hing in Fetzen herab. Der Pilot hatte Brandwunden an den Beinen. Die beiden Männer forderten den Amerikaner auf herunterzukommen. Der Mann ließ sich den Stamm hinuntergleiten und auf den Boden fallen. Er wurde gefangen genommen und ins Dorf Lobenfeld geführt. Dort brachte man ihn in das Haus der Familie Christen.

Der deutsche Pilot flog eine große Schleife, kam ganz tief herunter und wackelte mit den Tragflächen. Da sagte unsere Oma: ‚Was ist denn jetzt mit dem, freut der sich noch, weil er den abgeschossen hat?‘ Ich entgegnete: ‚Ja, sicher!‘ Der hat uns bestimmt gesehen, wie wir da unten standen.

Wir Buben gingen nach der Festnahme des Piloten hinauf zur vermeintlichen Absturzstelle auf dem Spechbacher Berg (Seeberg), wir waren bei den ersten, die dort ankamen. Wir sahen einen Krater. Es lagen Räder und sonstige Teile herum. Die Maschine stak ganz drinnen im Erdreich, nur das Heck mit dem Seitenleitwerk ragte noch aus dem Boden heraus, so tief hatte sie sich in den Acker hineingebohrt. Man sah nicht mehr sehr viel, es war ein riesiges Loch, das war alles.“

Elisabeth Schmitt, geborene Christen, aus Spechbach, früher Lobenfeld, Ldkrs. Heidelberg, die Tochter von Johann Christen erzählt:

„Bei dem Amerikaner handelte es sich um einen riesigen Mann mit Brandwunden an Händen und Beinen. Er äußerte den Wunsch sich hinzulegen. Man brachte ihn in unser Haus und legte ihn auf das Sofa. Meine Mutter wandte ein altes Hausre-

zept an. Sie rieb rohe Kartoffeln und bedeckte damit die Brandwunden. Danach verband sie den Amerikaner.“

Ein weiterer Augenzeuge, Fritz Schramm (†) aus Spechbach, berichtet:
„Ich war damals Schreiner bei Hugo Braun in der Hirtenstraße. Die Fenster der Werkstatt waren geöffnet. Wir hörten Maschinengewehrrattern und schauten aus den Fenstern. Wir sahen zwei Flugzeuge – eines davon trudelte in Richtung Dorf. Wir dachten schon, es stürzt mitten ins Dorf hinein. Die andere Maschine konnten wir dann nicht mehr sehen. Darauf sahen wir zwei Fallschirme am Himmel. Kurz vor dem Dorf änderte das Flugzeug seinen Kurs und flog Richtung Lobenfeld. Hugo Braun ist gleich mit seinem Jagdgewehr raus und den Berg hochgelaufen, wir hinterher. Einer der beiden mit dem Fallschirm Abgesprungenen ist zwischen Lobenfeld und dem Spechbacher ‚Sperbelbaum‘ mit seinem Schirm in einem Baum hängen geblieben. Der Pilot hatte Brandwunden im Gesicht.“

Edgar Berberich aus Lobenfeld berichtet:

„Der andere Pilot kam beim Kloster Lobenfeld herunter. Nachdem er gelandet war, befreite er sich von seinem Fallschirm und versuchte nach Westen in Richtung Langenzeller Wald zu entkommen. Zwischen den Feldern und dem Waldrand verläuft ein Feldweg, der ‚Schaftrieb‘ genannt wird. Dort fuhr Herr Rudy, der Besitzer einer Konservenfabrik, mit seinem Auto. Vermutlich hatte er den Absprung des Piloten beobachtet und versuchte, ihm den Weg zum Wald abzuschneiden. Der Amerikaner erkannte die Aussichtslosigkeit seiner Flucht.“

Hilde Holdermann aus Lobenfeld schrieb in ihr Tagebuch:

„Ich und der sich auf Heimaturlaub befindliche Wehrmachtsangehörige Erwin Gimber erblickten einen Fallschirm am Himmel. Hinten beim Brückle sahen wir, wie der Mann sich von den Gurten befreite und den Hang hinauf lief, Richtung Langenzeller Wald. Als Erwin rief: ‚Stopp, halt, Hände hoch!‘, blieb er stehen und hob die Hände. Er hatte Brandwunden an den Händen. Wir nahmen ihm den Gürtel ab, um einen Fluchtversuch zu verhindern und gingen zurück zum Kloster Lobenfeld, wo er am Brunnen etwas Wasser trank. Ein ganzer Zug Schaulustiger schloss sich uns an. Als wir bei uns (= Gasthaus zum Kloster) vorbeikamen, stand die vierjährige Gisela auf der Treppe. Plötzlich lief sie auf den Mann zu, wir hielten an, das kleine Mädchen schaute ihn an und sagte: ‚Bisch du do owwe rumgfloge?‘ Trotz Schmerzen und Angst versuchte er ein kleines Lächeln.“

Edgar Berberich aus Lobenfeld berichtet weiter:

„Karl Engel aus Lobenfeld war damals gerade als Soldat im Urlaub zu Hause. Er stand am Kreuzweg (heute Verkehrskreisel) und sah die Gruppe, die den amerikanischen Piloten zum Rathaus eskortierte, auf sich zukommen. Als sie auf seiner Höhe angekommen war, bot er dem Gefangenen eine Zigarette an.“

In der Zwischenzeit hatte man den anderen Amerikaner, der im Haus der Familie Christen verarztet worden war, ebenfalls zum Rathaus gebracht. Die dort versammelte Menge war aufgebracht und stand den beiden Piloten in feindseliger Haltung gegenüber. Der eine der Amerikaner wagte es, die von Engel geschenkte Zigarette zu rauchen. Ein Mann, damals Vorarbeiter im Hofgut, ging zu ihm hin und schlug ihm die Zigarette aus dem Mund. Der Bürgermeister Emil Fellmann, der etwas Englisch konnte, verfrachtete schließlich beide Piloten in sein Auto, einen Holzvergasler, und brachte sie nach Neckargemünd ins Wehrmachtlazarett.

Über die Luftkämpfe gibt es auch eine Schilderung von Colonel Hubert Zemke, dem damaligen Kommandeur der 56th Fighter Group. Er hatte eine neue Taktik, den sog. „Zemke-Fächer“ entwickelt, der an diesem Tag zum ersten Mal erprobt werden sollte. Dazu wurde die 56th FG in zwei Gruppen geteilt. Die aus 24 Flugzeugen bestehende Gruppe A flog Richtung Koblenz und sollte von dort in einen Halbkreis auffächern. Jeweils aus vier Maschinen bestehende Schwärme hatten die Aufgabe, einen Sektor von 30 Grad nach Feindflugzeugen absuchen. Die mit kurzem Abstand nachfolgende Gruppe B sollte ebenfalls entsprechend auffächern und der vor ihr fliegenden Gruppe bei Bedarf zu Hilfe eilen.

Colonel Hubert Zemke berichtet:

„Ich führte vier Maschinen P-47 Thunderbolt der Gruppe „A“. Lieutenant Willard Johnson flog als mein Rottenflieger. Lt. Colonel Preston Piper war Führer der zweiten Rotte mit Lt. John McDonnell als Rottenflieger. Bei Erreichen des Festlands musste McDonnell wegen technischer Schwierigkeiten umkehren. Piper schloss sich mir nun als dritter Rottenflieger an. Wir setzten den Steigflug fort und erreichten eine Höhe von 6500 Metern, als sich unter uns die auffällige Rheinbiegung zeigte. Von dort drehten die Schwärme der 61st Squadron nach Norden Richtung Marburg und die Schwärme der 62nd Squadron nach Süden Richtung Mannheim, während ich meinen Schwarm geradewegs nach Gießen führte.

Nach etwa 65 Kilometern wendete ich, um in Nord-Süd-Richtung aufzuklären. Wir drei durchsuchten systematisch den dunstig-blauen Horizont. Regelmäßig wippten wir mit den Flügeln, um nach unten bessere Sicht zu haben. So hofften wir, feindliche Flugzeuge im Steigflug zu entdecken. Nichts Verdächtiges war zu sehen. Plötzlich vernahm ich im Kopfhörer einen alarmierenden Schrei: „Fairbank“= Rufzeichen von H. Zemke), nach links wegziehen!“ Instinktiv riss ich am Steuerknüppel und trat in die Fußpedale. Beim Herumkurven der Thunderbolt nahm ich das Mündungfeuer der Bordwaffen wahr. Im nächsten Sekundenbruchteil erblickte ich die Konturen einer Me 109 und darüber weitere Maschinen gleichen Typs. Mit Vollgas auf den Gegner zu. 'Fairbank an Daily White Flight (= Rufzeichen von Zemkes Schwarm). Aufschließen. Bildet einen Abwehrkreis.'

Diese Maßnahme war allerdings ein Fehler, denn wir nahmen zu langsam Fahrt auf. Ich sah etwa 1500 Meter über uns sieben Me 109. Sie warteten nur darauf, uns anzugreifen. Den Vorteil von Höhe und Geschwindigkeit ausnutzend, stürzten sich jeweils zwei Feindmaschinen herab, beschossen uns und zogen sich wieder zurück; dieselbe Taktik hatten wir oft bei von uns überraschten deutschen Jägern angewandt. Während des Kreisflugs rief ich wiederholt um Hilfe. Plötzlich stieß eine einzelne Me 109 durch unseren Abwehrkreis und feuerte auf Johnsons Flugzeug. Flammen umhüllten den Rumpf, die Thunderbolt drehte sich und verschwand aus dem Blickfeld. Wo war Hilfe? Ich rief wieder. Piper und ich flogen einen engeren Abwehrkreis.

Während ich nach einer Fluchtmöglichkeit Ausschau hielt, hatte mich eher Verzweiflung als Furcht ergriffen. Beim Versuch zu stürzen wäre unsere Anfangsbeschleunigung zu langsam. Der Gegner würde uns festnageln, bevor wir genügend Geschwindigkeit gewonnen hätten. Dann wiederholte die einzelne Me 109 den vorhergehenden Angriff: sie stieß durch unseren Abwehrkreis und feuerte auf Piper. Wieder sah ich Rauch und Flammen aus der Maschine schlagen. Zwei Abschüsse, noch einer übrig.

Laut fluchend ergriff ich die Flucht. Mit einer heftigen Bewegung der Steuerorgane legte ich meine Maschine auf den Rücken und stürzte senkrecht in Richtung Boden. Um meinen Verfolgern ein schwieriges Ziel zu bieten, flog ich Rollen. Nach unten,

Vollgas, bis an die Grenzen der menschlichen Leistungsfähigkeit. Als sich der Höhenmesser schon mehrfach gedreht hatte und der Geschwindigkeitsanzeiger am Anschlag stand, schüttelte und vibrierte die Thunderbolt so stark, dass sie bald auseinander zu brechen drohte. Es war Zeit, in eine normale Fluglage überzugehen; ich nahm das Gas zurück und zog am Steuerknüppel, so dass sich der Boden unter mir in 1500 Meter Entfernung befand. Ein kurzer Blick über jede Schulter und ein langer Blick nach hinten zeigte mir, dass ich wieder alleine war.“

Welche Schlüsse sind zu ziehen? – Die historischen Hintergründe

Den erhaltenen deutschen Unterlagen zufolge befand sich am 12. Mai 1944 im Luftraum von Heidelberg eine deutsche Jagdgruppe: die in Herzogenaurach bei Nürnberg stationierte I. Gruppe des Jagdgeschwaders 5, abgekürzt I./JG 5. Der Verband war mit dem Höhenjäger Me 109 G-6 ausgerüstet und soll im Raum 05 Ost, S/TS-1, das entspricht dem Gebiet von Heidelberg, drei P-47 Abschnüsse erzielt haben. Die erfolgreichen deutschen Piloten waren der Oberleutnant Walter Krupinski, der Leutnant Otto Jahn sowie der Gefreite Herbert Lieberknecht.

Olt. Walter Krupinski war erst seit kurzem Kapitän der 2. Staffel. Er hatte sich in Russland das Ritterkreuz erworben. Nach dem Krieg bekleidete er in der Bundesluftwaffe Generalsrang. Lt. Otto Jahn gehörte zur 3. Staffel und war seit 1942 bei der I./JG 5. Er war ebenfalls ein erfolgreicher Jagdflieger und erhielt kurz vor Kriegsende noch das Ritterkreuz. Der 20-jährige Gefreite Herbert Lieberknecht gehörte zur 1. Staffel.

Die deutschen und amerikanischen Angaben stimmen hinsichtlich der Abschnüsse und der Abstürze nicht überein. Folgt man den wahrscheinlicher scheinenden deutschen Angaben, dann fand der von Zemke geschilderte Luftkampf nicht im Raum Gießen statt, wie sein Bericht vermuten lässt, sondern in der Gegend von Heidelberg. Dies wird durch die zwei US-Flugzeugabstürze im Raum Spechbach – Lobenfeld und Epfenbach – Reichartshausen eindeutig belegt. Zemke befand sich offenbar wegen eines Navigationsfehlers nicht wie geplant unmittelbar vor dem einfliegenden Bomberstrom im Raum Gießen, sondern deutlich abgesetzt an dessen südlicher Flanke. (Siehe Karte S. 72).

Auch die von H. Zemke geschilderte Reihenfolge der Abstürze bedarf vermutlich der Korrektur. In seiner Schilderung und der ihm folgenden Literatur wird als erster Abschuss 2nd Lt. Willard D. Johnson angegeben, während Colonel Preston Piper angeblich das zweite Opfer der deutschen Jäger wurde. Dem widerspricht eine zeitgenössische Notiz im MACR 4806, nach welcher Preston Piper zuerst abgeschossen worden sein soll.

Nach Zemkes Gefechtsbericht und den offiziellen deutschen Unterlagen fanden diese Luftkämpfe übereinstimmend in einer Höhe von 7000 bis 4000 Metern statt. Die Erzählungen von Walter Winterbauer und von Lt. Otto Jahn zeigen jedoch deutlich, dass sich die Gefechte teilweise bis in niedrige Höhen fortgesetzt haben müssen. Allein schon Zemkes gelungener Fluchtversuch ist ein Beleg hierfür.

Den ersten Abschuss erzielte laut deutschen Angaben Olt. Walter Krupinski in 7000 m Höhe gegen 11.52 Uhr. Demnach müsste er Lt. Col. Preston Piper abgeschossen haben. Dessen Thunderbolt schlug vermutlich zwischen Epfenbach und Reichartshausen im Gewann Schimmel auf. Der Pilot blieb nach dem Fallschirmabsprung in einem Baum hängen und wurde gefangen genommen. Er hatte die schwereren Verletzungen der beiden abgeschossenen Piloten. Daher dürfte es sich bei Preston Piper um denjenigen Amerikaner handeln, der von Frau Christen gepflegt wurde.

Knapp darauf, in 4000 m Höhe, erzielte Lt. Otto Jahn bereits um 11.55 Uhr den zweiten Abschuss.

Otto Jahn erinnert sich:

„Ich war am 12. Mai 1944 als Leutnant der I./JG 5 im Einsatz und flog eine Me 109. Wir befanden uns mit unserer Gruppe im Raum Heidelberg. Damals waren bei Mannheim Sperrballone aufgezogen. Diese Fesselballone wurden von starken Drahtseilen gehalten. Ihre Verankerungsseile konnten zu Beschädigungen an Propellern und Tragflächen der angreifenden Flugzeuge führen. Es gab zwei unterschiedlich große Ballonmuster, deren Einsatzhöhe zwischen 800 und 1800 bis 2400 Metern betrug.

Mir gelang an diesem Tag der Abschuss einer P-47 Thunderbolt; es war mein erster Kontakt mit einer Maschine dieses Typs. Ich erinnere mich noch gut an den grünen Tarnanstrich des Flugzeugs. Der Amerikaner flog auf die Sperrballone zu, ich dicht hinter ihm her. Er riss seine Maschine rauf und runter, um mich abzuschütteln. Der US-Pilot war ein ausgezeichnete Mann. Im Messerflug raste er durch die Ballonsperren hindurch. Ich konzentrierte mich vollständig auf den Gegner und sagte mir: ‚Wenn der das kann, kannst Du das auch!‘ Schließlich befand ich mich über der niedrig fliegenden Thunderbolt, kurvte auf sie ein und gab einen Feuerstoß ab.

Nach diesem Einsatz meldete sich bei meiner Dienststelle in Herzogenaurach eine im Raum Mannheim stationierte Flakeinheit, die diesen Abschuss bestätigte. Erst durch diesen Hinweis erhielt ich Kenntnis von meinem Luftsieg über eine Thunderbolt. Der Amerikaner soll angeblich bei Mannheim notgelandet sein.“

Im Raum Heidelberg-Mannheim sind für diesen Tag jedoch nur Abstürze, keine Notlandungen von US-Maschinen bezeugt. Die Bestätigung des P-47-Abschusses durch eine Flakeinheit bezieht sich aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach nicht auf O. Jahn. Bei dem von Lt. Otto Jahn abgeschossenen Amerikaner müsste es sich eher um 2nd Lt. Willard D. Johnson handeln. Dieser landete mit seinem Fallschirm beim Kloster Lobenfeld und wurde dort von H. Holdermann und E. Gimber gefangen genommen. Vermutlich war er es, dem vor dem Rathaus vom Vorarbeiter des Gutshofes Fellmann die Zigarette aus dem Mund geschlagen wurde. Seine Maschine ist auf dem Seeberg auf Karl Freys Acker aufgeschlagen. Die von Walter Winterbauer und der Lobenfelder Dorfjugend inspizierten Überreste eines amerikanischen Jagdflugzeuges gehörten also nicht zum Flugzeug des Lt. Col. Preston Piper, sondern sind der Maschine von 2nd Lt. Willard D. Johnson zuzuordnen.

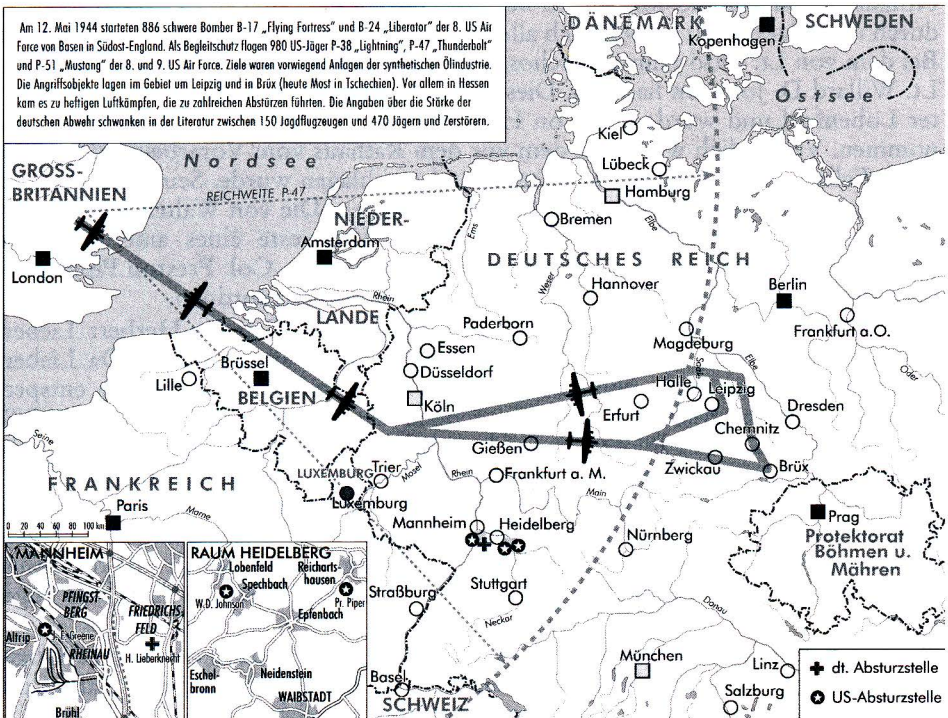
Um 12.07 Uhr soll deutschen Unterlagen zufolge der Gefreite Herbert Lieberknecht einen dritten P-47-Abschuss in 4000 m Höhe erzielt haben. Da Lieberknecht den Einsatz nicht überlebte, mussten seine Staffelnkameraden den entsprechenden Gefechtsbericht verfassen. Tatsächlich war über Mannheim ein dritter US-Jäger abgestürzt. Dem Piloten 1st Lt. Jack Ellis Greene gelang der Fallschirmabsprung. Er landete mit gebrochenem Arm auf dem Dach der Mannheimer Sunlichtfabrik in Mannheim-Rheinau und wurde dort von einem Werkmeister gefangen genommen. Die von O. Jahn erwähnte Flakeinheit dürfte demnach eher Lieberknechts als Jahns Luftsieg beobachtet haben. Wahrscheinlich wurde von deutschen Stellen dieses US-Flugzeug dem Gefreiten Lieberknecht später als Abschuss zugeschrieben.

1st Lt. Jack Ellis Greene soll jedoch vor seinem eigenen Absturz eine Me 109 abgeschossen haben. Hierzu gibt es einen amerikanischen Bericht, der den Kampf irrtümlich über Frankfurt a. M. statt über Mannheim lokalisiert.

2nd Lt. William Davenport berichtet:

„Ich flog ‚Icejag Red Two‘ (= Rufname von W. Davenport), als sich 1st Lt. Jack Ellis Greene, 2nd Lt. George H. Buttler und ich von der 62nd Fighter Squadron auf eine in einer Höhe von 14000 Fuß (4200 m) fliegende Me 109 stürzten. Lt. Greene, der ‚Red Leader‘, griff die Me 109 an und schoss sie ab. Das Feindflugzeug stürzte unter schwarzer Rauchentwicklung zu Boden. ‚Red Leader‘ zog dann in einer Steilkurve nach oben und ich sah Flammen aus seinen Turboladerleitungen schießen. Sein Flugzeug ging in starke Schräglage über und 1st Lt. J. E. Greene sprang mit dem Fallschirm ab, wobei sich sein Schirm in etwa 14000 Fuß Höhe direkt über der Stadt öffnete. Wir flogen einen Kreis und drehten dann nach Hause ab.“

Dabei kann es sich nur um das Flugzeug des Gefreiten H. Lieberknecht gehandelt haben, der mit seiner Me 109 G-6 „weiße 12“, in der Nähe von Mannheim-Friedrichsfeld abgestürzt ist. Im Gegensatz zu Greene gelang es Lieberknecht nicht mehr die Maschine mit dem Fallschirm zu verlassen. Der Abschuss von Lieberknechts Me 109 durch Greene soll nach US-Unterlagen gegen 12.30 Uhr erfolgt sein. Ein Luftkampf als Grund für den darauffolgenden Absturz von J. E. Greene wird in dieser Quelle nicht genannt, ist aber anzunehmen. Im Raum Mannheim-Heidelberg sind keine weiteren P-47-Abschüsse durch andere deutsche Jagdflugzeuge gemeldet. Es besteht derzeit ein nicht auflösbarer Widerspruch zwischen Greenes und Lieberknechts Abschüssen bzw. Abstürzen. Nach Lage der Akten müssen sie in engem Zusammenhang gesehen werden, können aber derzeit nicht befriedigend erklärt werden.



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En de dunkla Zeit

Irma Guggolz

Mein Freind,
de Bergahorn vun gegeniwer,
-en Himmelsstirmer
de ganz Summer lang-,
wie ausgraubt guckt der heit
zu mir do riwer,
so bludd un ohne jeden
Zwitschersang.

De Herbstwind haddem
sei schees Gwand fortgnomma.
Goldgäl schwimmts jetz em Deich
grad unnadroo.
Mein Troscht: ball kann scho
s Floggaweiße komma
un ziegt meim Boom
sei Schneekrischdallklaid oo.

Musch bloß e klooine Hoffnung hoo
uff morga,
noord bisch aa en de dunkla Zeit
geborga.

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☆BOEING B-17F & B-17G FLYING FORTRESS☆

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Station 136, Knettishall, England, 1943-1945

333 TOTAL MISSIONS

306 COMBAT MISSIONS, 19 APHRODITE MISSIONS, 5 CHOWHOUND MISSIONS, 1 POW MISSION, 2 REVIVAL MISSIONS

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1211TH Quartermaster Company, 1284TH Military Police Company, 273RD Medical Dispensary

1751ST Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company, 2019TH Engineering and Fire Fighting Platoon

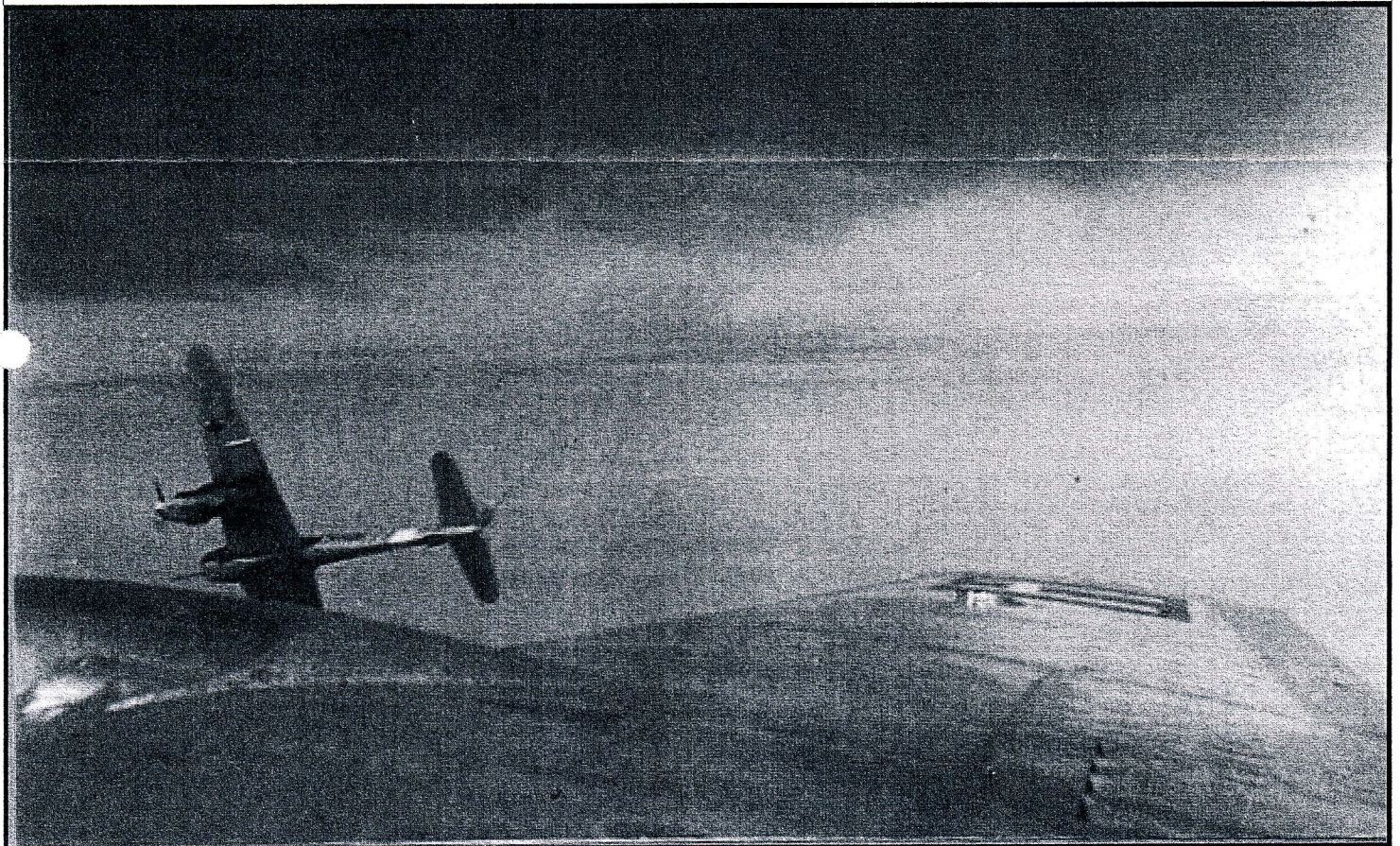
452ND Sub Depot, 29TH Station Complement, 587TH Postal Unit, 877TH Chemical Company, 214TH Finance Detachment

560TH Bombardment Squadron, 561ST Bombardment Squadron, 562ND Bombardment Squadron, 563RD Bombardment Squadron

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This famous photo of an Me-410 peeling off the wing of Manuel Head's plane *Lady Godiva* was taken by Victor LaBruno

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The Fate of the German Fighter

The following is an exchange of correspondence between Gerhard Kaschuba and Manuel Head regarding the famous photograph of Head's plane taken on the Brux, Czechoslovakia mission. Kaschuba later had the photo enlarged to 20" x 24" and believes beyond doubt that this was indeed the Me-410 shown peeling off the right wing.

Dear Sir,

My name is Gerhard Kaschuba, and I'm a historian working at a high school in Munich, Germany. In addition, I'm very interested in the aerial warfare of World War II. At that time, my uncle was a pilot in the Luftwaffe. He was killed on May 12, 1944.

Presently I'm preparing a research project on the May 12 event. This was a day of a great American air strike on German oil plants in the Leipzig area and Brux/Bohemia. The 388th took part on that mission, bombed Brux and was twice attacked by Germans on the way back to England. The Germans belonged to the 2nd Group of the Heavy Fighter Unit 26 and were equipped with 26 aircraft of the type Me-410. My uncle, 2nd Lt. Paul Kaschuba and his radio operator Sgt. Karl Bredemeir were involved in that attack and died that day.

Their aircraft had the registration number Black 13. There is a photo, taken by Victor LaBruno, radio operator of your aircraft, which shows a German 410. There is a possibility that this is my uncle's plane.



2nd Lt. Paul Kaschuba

My questions are:

Which bomb squadron did you belong to?

What are the names of your crew?

The above-cited photograph shows an Me-410 turning to the right. The person who shot down that a/c was supposed to be top turret gunner T/Sgt. L.S. Cadena. Is that correct?

I kindly ask if you could write down the memory that you have of this event. I'm especially interested in a description of the attacks of the German twin engine planes in the Saxony area on your way back. How would you judge the attacks of the Germans? How did the Germans attack that day, and from which direction – in climb or descent attack?

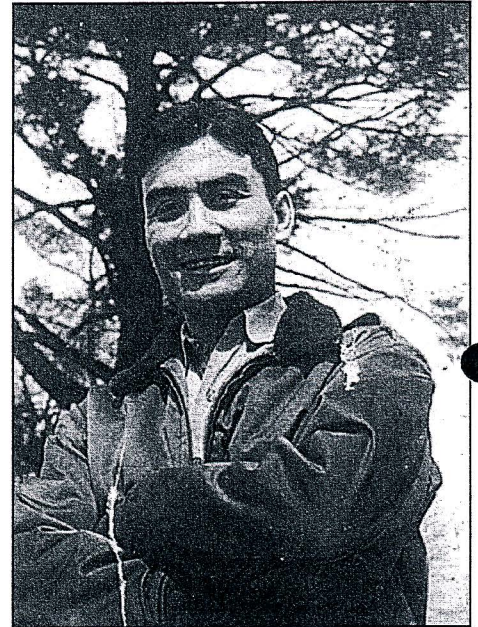
Yours Sincerely,

Dr. Gerhard Kaschuba
Carl-von-Linde-Str. 7
85716 Unterschleisheim

Dear Dr. Kaschuba,

I have wondered who might have been flying the German fighters attacking our formations, and after some 50 years your letter arrives. Quite a surprise! I doubt that we can ever identify the crew. The photograph taken by Victor LaBruno was exactly what I saw when I turned my head to see what had disturbed my right wing. I recall saying, "What in the hell is he doing here?" And in a fraction of a second it was all over. The only identification we can make must come from the picture, and I see nothing there that would be unique to your uncle's plane. You will note from the enclosed copy of the 12 May 44, Brux mission summary from "The 388th at War" that we were attacked by a number of Me-410s plus Me-109s and FW-190s. The tail gunner on our crew (Donald W. Sestak) claimed two Me-109s, and a waist gunner (James F. Coker) claimed a probable Me-109.

Victor LaBruno was assigned to my



Manuel Head

crew for this mission only. He was stationed in the radio room with Joseph A. DeSantis, the radio operator. During the mission they shared the open hatch above the radio room with one .50 caliber machine gun. When the Me-410 attacked, they were struggling with each other for room to shoot. LaBruno obviously won, and got his photo.

In the copy of the summary of this mission from "The Mighty Eighth War Diary" you see that we put up 886 heavy bombers (814 effective) aimed primarily at oil production. Our 3rd Bomb Division sent 140 planes to Brux. Most of those planes probably came from the three bomb groups (96th, 388th, 452nd) that formed our 45th Bomb Wing. The 96th BG and the 452nd BG formed the lead wing of three aerial groups into Brux. The 388th BG and, I surmise, the 452nd BG, formed the second aerial wing into Brux. The 13th Bomb Wing (95th, 100th, 390th) must have formed a third wing to attack Brux.

Now note the losses attributed to each bomb group.

(Continued on page 5)

Fighter's Fate

continued from page 4

The 96th BG lost 12 B-17s and the 452nd lost 14; we, the 388th, lost one. The other groups had similar, single digit losses. We watched that battle (between the lead wing and the Luftwaffe) from Frankfurt to Brux. The Luftwaffe formed ahead and above the B-17s, dove head-on through the formation, turned clockwise, climbed and then repeated the attack.

They were like a swarm of wasps. Each attack was awesome. Planes collided, explosions occurred; B-17s drifted back from the formation. Debris floated down and then came the parachutes, forming a staircase of white blossoms.

The radio traffic was minimal, just terse comments, but on one attack a B-17 pulled straight up and hung there while the radio advised a deputy leader to take over. After a few passes the Luftwaffe swarm began to thin and stretch out as their losses mounted. Then we were near the IP, and the Luftwaffe departed.

My recollection is that the attack on the 388th BG was all from the rear. I saw nothing of the battle, except for the Me 410 peeling off my wing, and 2nd Lt. Loslo's B-17 with a fire beneath his wing, near one engine's exhaust. That fire flared like an aluminum-magnesium fire as the crew contemplated their options.

Soon the nearby crews got anxious, and radioed him to move away from the formation. The pilot complied, but his neighbors still considered him too close, so he drifted further back. Suddenly the rear fuselage door flew off. A crewman sat in the doorway with his feet dangling. He took several looks down, but made no move to jump; finally someone made up his mind for this first crewman. He shot out of the doorway as if ejected, and the rest of the crew followed like trained 'chutists.

As to your questions:

My squadron, et al - 562nd Bomb Squadron, 388th Bomb Group, 45th Combat Wing, 3rd Air Division, 8th Air Force.

There were three crews. The 1st Head



The Crew of *Lady Godiva* following her crash-landing. Front row, kneeling: Herera and Basoco. Standing: Coker, Powell, DeSantis, Stuart, Head, Sestak (on engine), Hindsley, Crossin.

crew originated in the United States and stayed together for the first 10 or 15 missions. The 2nd Head crew kept the same gunners but acquired a different co-pilot, navigator and bombardier. The 3rd Head crew had a whole new set of crewmen. I have not found the names of the 1st or 3rd Head crews.

Here is what I have of the 2nd crew:

1st. Lt. Manuel A. Head, pilot
 2nd Lt. Max T. Stuart, co-pilot
 2nd Lt. Francis W. Hindsley, navigator
 2nd Lt. Monte H. Powell, bombardier
 T/Sgt Eugene M. Crossin, engineer and top turret
 T/Sgt. Joseph A. DeSantis, radio gunner
 S/Sgt Joseph Herera, ball turret
 S/Sgt James F. Coker, waist gunner
 S/Sgt Donald W. Sestak, tail gunner

Originally, there were two waist gunners. One of ours requested relief from flight duty, and was assigned to ground armament.

The only picture of our aircraft is enclosed. It was taken with the 2nd Head crew when we crash-landed at Honington, a major repair depot near our field, Knettishall. We were returning from a 12 June 44 mission to Amiens/Glisy Airfield where we were peppered with flak that short circuited our landing gear controls.

The rotors were frozen in place, and

so the gear could not be cranked down.

The name of our plane, *Lady Godiva*, was painted on the nose behind the crew. We named it *Lady Godiva* because it has no camouflage; it was bare, nude. The plane was #42-97184.

T/Sgt. L.S. Cadena was the top turret gunner in a 561st Bomb Squadron plane that claimed an Me-410 destroyed. In the plan view of the 388th formation there is an A group of three aerial squadrons and B group of three aerial squadrons. My plane was in the B group, high squadron; most probably all 562nd crews. Cadena was most likely in some other aerial squadron. Our possibilities are the 562nd gunners (in the tabulation of enemy aircraft encounters) that encountered Me-410s; three are six destroyed, six probably, one damaged, and one no claim. How you narrow the search from here, I don't know.

I don't recall any attacks on the return trip; so if they occurred they made no impression. In the excerpt from "A History of the 452nd Bombardment Group" in re the Brux mission, there is a page from "The First and the Last" by Adolph Galland wherein he writes that a second sortie was successfully mounted by the Luftwaffe.

(Continued on page 13)

The Greatest Combat Group *continued from page 3*

had to deliver and when they wanted it delivered. I then set up the mission with the air crew(s) to make the delivery.

Fersfield Project

The Germans had the Buzz Bomb which was targeted on London. The Allied Forces wanted to develop a counter force to be used against Germany. The decision resulting from this need was to move the 560th Squadron to a nearby satellite field named Fersfield.

The Squadron Commander was Colonel Roy Forrest and the Operations Officer was named "Sandy." War weary B-17 and B-24 aircraft were flown to Fersfield and stripped of all equipment not necessary to flight. A radio or radar altimeter was installed and also a radio flight control which could turn the aircraft to any desired heading. The mission was for a pilot and a co-pilot and initially an engineer to take this aircraft, loaded with high explosives (about 20,000 pounds) up to 1,000 feet. While still over England the Pilot would put the aircraft into a slight dive and set the flight controls, while the other crew members would arm the explosives. The entire Crew would bail out on a static cord before the aircraft reached 500 feet above ground.

If the bailout was not accomplished by 500 feet, the crew would stay with the

aircraft until it bottomed out and rose to the high point, approximately 700 feet. At this point a mother ship, flying about 10,000 feet, would take over lateral control of the aircraft by radio and begin the flight to a selected German target.

Just before reaching the target, the mother ship would cut the fuel supply to the engines of the drone by radio so that it would crash into the marshalling yards in the heart of the city. The technical aspects of the drone were the responsibility of high-powered scientists and engineers. The job of the 560th Squadron was to deliver the drone to the target.

I did not participate in the Fersfield Project (as I was in the other operations mentioned), and so my memory of this effort may not be as clear as that of those men who were directly involved. Therefore, I would ask that those members of our group who were at Fersfield send in their specific accounts.

In fact, I would suggest that anyone having more information on these three missions or any other aspect of Knettishall activities please convey that to the Newsletter Editor.

Andy Chaffin
Group Operations Officer

German Fighter *continued from page 5*

How would I judge the attacks of the Germans that day? Aggressive. Head-on attacks from 12 o'clock high were devastating.

The attack on the first wing demonstrated that.

Why did the Me-410s attack from the tail? Perhaps they were less maneuverable, perhaps a tail attack was required because of the mix of airplane types (Me-410s, FW-190s, Me-109s), perhaps the pilots were being introduced to combat against the heavy bombers.

From which direction? From listening to the gunners, the Luftwaffe came in level on our heading. Our tail gunner stated that each of the Me 109s bore straight in toward his twin .50 calibers

until they exploded. Bold, but somewhat overzealous. The tally was 46 bombers lost versus 65 German fighters lost. The target was heavily damaged, but it was visited again on 24 Aug 44, and six more times after that. It was an essential plant, and along with the other oil plants, very important to the Third Reich. There is much fodder in the strategic bombing and German defense for historians. You might be interested in the United States Strategic Bombing Survey summary report at: <http://www.anesi.com/ussbs02.htm>.

Good luck to you, and when you reach a milestone, keep in touch by sending me a progress note.

— Manuel Head

Peterson *continued from page*

It pulled us off the runway, but we really didn't care. We quickly shut the engines down and left it for the ground crew to take it from there.

We were taken to de-briefing, to tell what happened and how we made it back; Then stopped off at the mess hall before heading for the sack.

We'd survived another mission on which we'd "gone for bust!"

We made it back all in once piece, in an airplane named "Star Dust."

I gave a long and heartfelt prayer when I was finally left alone,

To thank the Lord for all His help in getting us safely home!

I removed the navigator and was assigned one from the pool;

Who flew with us on our final missions proved he'd studied while in navigation school

That night the old navigator broke his arm falling off a bar room stool!

They quickly sent him back to the States as both a hero ... and a fool.

A term used by the Airmen when the struggle got really bad.

Was a flyer was "Flak Happy" – and that the condition our whole crew had!

So they sent us to a "rest home" to forge and rest and heal;

Where we spent a week doing nothing ... trying to forget how missions made us feel

The home had been a small castle; now Red Cross supervised the day.

They organized activities, but writing home was more my way.

Mostly the things that filled our days were sleep and eat and rest;

And walking the landscaped grounds ... this I liked the best.

When I went into the "Flak House" I had a third of my missions to fly.

In leaving, I had only twelve – I felt optimistic and ready to try.

We went on to complete our missions for a total of thirty-five.

Then home to the arms of our loved ones ... just grateful to be alive!

Joseph P. O'Donnell

Joseph P. O'Donnell served in the 483rd Bomb Group, 15th Air Force, World War II.

His B-17 was shot down on May 10, 1944. He was captured, and became a prisoner of the German Government (POW # 1414).

He was held in Stalag Luft IV and was a participant on the forced march from that camp.

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I tried to get The Polish
Committee to cut the size
in half but to no avail.
They said you would not
be able to read it. . . .
and another

Sincerely
Joe O'Donnell
POW #1414

April 7, 2007

Hello Laura.

I thought you might
be interested in this article.
It certainly confirms that
another Luftit existed.

I just received word
from the Polish Wall
Committee (not a brick pathway)
The brick will be made
of Red Braun Scanets
10 $\frac{1}{4}$ " x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ " and a cost
of \$115.00 per brick. This
includes money transfer
& exchange, postage and
handling and advertisement.

"Fifty Men from Żagań"

pg 6

Żagań, today, is a vibrant town of 30 thousand on a picturesque winding river Bóbr. Machine, cooling, and textile industry flourish in the area. Żagań is famous for its 700 year long history and even the fact that it was the capital of the region at one time. It had fallen under Prussian rule since 18th century. Its name was changed to Sagan during WWII. It also gained a sad name of a POWs factory. About 200 thousand Allied Forces POWs went through the camp in Żagań. The tradition of the kind has existed in the area for a long time. The camps for the POWs existed there even during Napoleonic wars, the war between Prussia and France, and WWI.

pg8

Germans planned to organize one more camp for the pilots in Żagań area, Stalag Luft 4. There is a name Sagan-Belaria in the documents from 1944. The camp, however, had been relocated to Tychowo (Gross Tychow) in the Pomerania in the early stages of organization.

pg 12-13

There were pilots of all nationalities represented in the Royal Air Force, also Americans, in the POW camps. Stalag Luft 3 was under the Luftgau III commander, Rudolf Hoffman, both territorially and disciplinary.

pg 13

The purpose and importance of the temporary camp Oberursel near Frankfurt upon Mein was very special in the German Luftwaffe system. All the pilots taken hostage were brought there first. They were subject to long-lasting interrogations for days, even weeks at a time, and during those, German intelligence officers tried, often with threats and depriving the prisoners of food and water, get the most amount of details out of the POWs, get to know their political views, and convince them to cooperate. The pilots used to be taken from Frankfurt to the division camp Wet-zlar and from there to one of the permanent POWs camps.

I cannot find page 1

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PACKAGING CENTERS

The new packaging center at 23rd and Chestnut Streets in Philadelphia has recently produced more than 13,000 standard food packages a day. On one day in the week which began June 12, the volunteers turned out 14,008 packages. Both the Philadelphia and St. Louis plants have begun evening shifts for the benefit of persons who are not able to volunteer for service during the day.

The St. Louis center had a visit from a group of Polish Wacs who are taking their training at Jefferson Barracks. The Polish girls were much interested in the contents of the packages and amazed at the speed with which they were turned out.

Workers at the New York center have received many letters of praise and thanks from European prisoner of war camps. They have also heard at first hand, from several recent repatriates who have visited the plant, about conditions in German camps, and how the men receive the packages.

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt visited the Center on June 21 and complimented the volunteers on the production of more than 4,000,000 food packages in this Center. The visit was arranged by Mrs. T. H. Roulston (Marjorie Hillis, the author), chairman of the packaging service of the Brooklyn Chapter.

Volunteer workers at the packaging centers are now turning out five different types of packages for prisoners of war and civilian internees. These comprise four types of food packages and the medical kit. In addition, the General Supply

Office of the Red Cross at Harbor-side, N. J., is making up the "capture parcel," which is given to newly arrived American prisoners in transit camps as a gift of the American Red Cross.

Stalags Luft III and IV

Following a visit to Stalag Luft III last February, a representative of War Prisoners' Aid of the YMCA reported that, on January 10, 1944, a new compound known as Lager Belaria had been opened. The new compound is "situated on a hill outside the little town" (presumably Sagan), and about three miles from the main Luft III camp. The main camp is composed of four compounds, or Lagers, known as North, East, South, and Center. Up to last February, Lager Belaria contained only British flyers mostly transferred from the Center compound. The South and Center compounds are now all-American, and the North and East all-RAF.

For the number of prisoners transferred last January from the Center compound, Lager Belaria was reported to be spacious and comfortable, but, the report added, "the men expect this Section to grow at least to ten times its present size." The opinion expressed by the men was that Lager Belaria was the best of the five at Luft III.

Later advices by cable have stated that Stalag Luft IV, situated near Stalag Luft III, was opened in May and that "several hundred American airmen" have been assigned to the new camp. It therefore seems likely that Lager Belaria has been made part of Luft IV since the visit in February last.

The YMCA had provided ample

Photographs

An increasing number of photographs from American prisoners of war are now reaching relatives and friends in the United States. The recipients of pictures showing groups of prisoners, camp scenes, or camp activities of general interest are urged to send the originals to Prisoners of War Bulletin, American Red Cross, Washington 13, D. C. Copies will then be made and the utmost care taken to insure that the originals are promptly returned.

If the individuals shown in pictures can be identified, the recipients are requested to furnish the names to Prisoners of War Bulletin at the time the pictures are submitted. Whenever pictures of unidentified prisoners are published, readers will understand that the names of the persons shown are unknown to the American Red Cross. The Bulletin will publish whatever identifying data is available.

equipment for ice hockey to be played in all the Luft III compounds last winter, but, unfortunately, there had been no ice up to the end of January. Fencing has become a very popular sport at this camp, and also the building of model planes. Long lists of requests for wood, paper, and other materials, for making model planes, had been sent to the YMCA at Geneva. It is customary to divide materials equally among the various compounds, and no doubt the allocation of supplies has now been extended to cover Luft IV.

Colonel Spivey, senior American officer at Luft III, wrote on March 20: *The spring air and a feeling of hope pervade the camp. The boys are playing softball and football, and are outside a lot. I am happy, because they have been shut in a lot this winter. We have been blessed with good health.*

Prisoners of War Bulletin

July 1944

Published by

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Washington 13, D. C.



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FALLINGBOSTEL, GERMANY - STALAG XIB AND 357
Monday, 16 April, 1945.

FALLINGBOSTEL, GERMANY - STALAG XIB AND 357

COPY

" 1985 would seem to be the year of the Fortieth Anniversary. The defeat of the German Ardennes offensive, the Rhine crossings and eventually VE and V^J Days later on in the year. It is worth remembering, however, that on 16 April it will be the Fortieth Anniversary of the Liberation of Fallingbostel, not the town, but the two massive POW Camps that were here in Oerbke.

3/4 - Very little remains today of these camps, once known as STALAGS XIB and 357 and very little is known generally about their history. One hears stories of Russians and Poles burning down barracks and of 'Concentration Camps'. This brief account may put part of the picture straight of what actually happened. ^{BRIEF}

In 1935/36, the German High Command found that there was a considerable lack of training grounds for its new army. A decision was made to establish a large military area near Luneburg, on what are now the NATO ranges. The area was to be controlled from Hohne, with training camps built at Fallingbostel and Munsterlarger. Huge numbers of workers were shipped in to build the new barracks and in 19³8 the 'complex' we now ~~occupy~~ occupy was opened. These barracks were designed to hold a full German Division while they trained during the summer months, returning to their normal stations for the winter.

On the outbreak of War things changed. Units used the new barracks to bring themselves up to scratch before moving to the fronts. 'Landschutzen' or ~~Hmx~~ Home Defence battalions were raised and Fallingbostel was no exception. These units were used to guard vital installations and POW camps, one of which had been set-up in the old hutted compound once used by the workers who built the barracks. This camp was known as XIB and by the middle of October, 1939, was full of Polish soldiers captured the previous September. Primarily, XIB was a 'Working Camp'. The prisoners were formed into 'Arbeitskommandos' and sent out to the local farms and factories each day, returning to the Camp each evening. Farm-work ^{l a} allowed their rations to be supplemented with locally grown produce and life would seem to be bearable.

The following May saw the German invasion of the low-countries, and the subsequent arrival of over 40,000 French, Belgique and Dutch prisoners in XIB. Over-crowding became a major concern and in such conditions disease became rife. It became an annual occurrence that Typhus manifested itself in epidemic proportions but worse was yet to come.

The invasion of Russia in 1941 brought to Fallingbommel thousands of new prisoners. In the first train-loads at least 12,000 arrived. There was precious little space in the XIB compounds and anyhow the High Command had issued an Order that Russian POWs were not to be treated in the same manner as the Europeans. The Germans gave the excuse that since the Soviet Union had not signed the Geneva Convention her prisoners did not come under the protection of the Red Cross. Consequently in Fallingbommel, a new camp was set up.

Known as Stalag 321 (Bergen/Belsen was 311 !) this camp was to see some of the worst outbreaks of Typhus and sheer disregard of human life. The numbers of Russian POWs had not been even thought of. On their arrival, 321 was no more than an open field with a barbed-wire fence. There were no huts, drainage or even the hint of washing facilities. Many of the POWs were lousy and soon they started to die in their hundreds. By the middle of 1942 at least 6,000 had perished, mainly due to Typhus and under-nourishment. Spring 1943 saw conditions so bad that the camp was closed down. Those prisoners that had survived were either moved to the main camp, XIB, or to the Russian camp at Belsen.

Meanwhile, XIB itself was becoming more and more overcrowded. The problem was slightly alleviated by the construction of compounds at the factories using this forced-labour, such as Bomlitz, Walsrode and even as far away as Hanover. Things were only better for a short while. In September 1943 there was yet another mass influx of prisoners, this time Italians who had been interned when their country surrendered and the Germans moved in. They too were used as forced-labour and of all the nationalities, apart from the Russians, they were to lose the greatest number to disease.

By mid-1944, the number of POWs held on strength in XIB was over 96,000. However, there were very few from the United Kingdom. It wasn't until D-Day and more importantly, the battle of Arnhem, that the British were brought to Fallingbommel. The first 400 Arnhem POWs arrived at the beginning of October 1944, soon to be ~~more~~ followed by other train-loads. The majority of these prisoners were wounded, some severely, yet everyone was made to march the kilometre or so from the station. Amongst these men was a man who was to do more for XIB than the rest put together. RSM John Lord was by nature a Grenadier Guardsman, but had transferred to the Parachute Regiment. A natural leader, he saw the conditions in XIB as a challenge and immediately set about himself to try and improve them. Starting with his own Paratroop soldiers, he literally dragged them out of the mud. He insisted that the men would wash and shave as if in barracks and that they took some form of exercise, even if it were only walking around the wire. The discipline of the British was to have a significant effect throughout the rest of the Camp, to such a degree

that even the Germans would jump when ordered to do something by him ! RSM Lord was to remain in XIB until liberation, having refused transfer to a non-working camp where life was far more comfortable.

By mid-1944 the Germans were being squeezed on all fronts, especially the Eastern Front. The massive Russian advances were causing mass evacuations of POW Camps and one of these, Stalag 357, came to Fallingbomel from Poland in August 1944. The new camp was set up where the old Stalag 321 had been. The Germans had used some of the Italians to build a new series of compounds into which 357 was moved, This camp consisted mainly of Allied aircrews and soldiers although a large contingent of Polish underground fighters captured during the Warsaw Uprising were also to arrive shortly afterwards.

Initially 357 was a well-run camp. The majority of prisoners were NCOs and therefore were not obliged to work. There were tensions however, between the Airforce and the Army, primarily due to the outlook each group had towards captivity. The AirForce were all for causing as much trouble to their captors as possible. They had brought with them an Escape and Intelligence Organisation, called 'Tally Ho'. Its primary function was to aid by any means, escapes, but, through coded mail, it was also supplying information on German dispositions, morale and, in one case the thickness of tank armour. The Army, on the other hand, wanted as little trouble as possible. Things came to a head in January 1945, when it was decided to have a vote on who should set down the overall policy. Several contenders were put forward, from both the Army and Air Force, with a resounding victory for an RAF, W/O, James 'Dixie' Deans. Without a doubt, Deans was 357s' answer to RSM Lord in XIB. Here again was a man with outstanding leadership, and he saw the Camp through to the end.

By February 1945, both Camps were in a deplorable state. The constant lack of food and medical supplies were causing huge problems. For XIB matters were made worse by the influx of American prisoners captured during the Ardennes Offensive. With no space in the overcrowded huts, they were forced to live in huge tents. In 357, the Germans had removed all the bed-boards and mattresses in a reprisal move against alleged bad treatment of German POWs in Egypt. Still more camps were being evacuated as the Allies advanced, thus 1,000s of new POWs were arriving, many after long forced-marches. March 1945 saw the crossings over the Rhine. The Germans were getting worried as were the POWs. Many thought the Germans would hold them as hostages, while others thought they would be shot out of hand. In both camps, the prisoners formed 'defence committees', just in case.

POW STRENGTHS OF STALAGS XII B & 357, 1.9.41. to 1.11.44.

<u>Date.</u>	<u>Stalag.</u>	<u>FRENCH.</u>	<u>BRITISH.</u>	<u>BELGIQUE.</u>	<u>POLISH.</u>	<u>"SUDOST"</u>	<u>SOVIET.</u>	<u>TOTAL.</u>	<u>WC</u>
1.9.41.	XII B.	40,586.	27.	4,537.	1,346.	8,085.	-	54,581.	5
1.12.41.	XII B.	39,044.	-	4,480.	1,272.	7,342.	11,785.	63,923.	5
	XID (321)	-	-	-	-	-	10,797.	10,797.	94
1.1.42.	XII B.	39,033.	-	4,475.	1,229.	7,336.	10,211.	62,284.	5
	XID.	-	-	-	-	-	5,688.	5,688.	71
1.2.42.	XII B.	38,737.	-	4,371.	1,151.	6,936.	9,736.	60,931.	54
	XID.	-	-	-	-	-	1,119.	1,119.	44
1.4.42.	XII B.	38,273.	-	4,019.	1,107.	7,131.	10,820.	61,350.	
1.5.42.	"	37,886.	-	4,007.	1,107.	7,063.	12,574.	62,637.	61
1.6.42.	"	37,692.	-	4,001.	1,096.	6,167.	15,240.	64,196.	51
1.8.42.	"	36,909.	-	3,941.	1,064.	5,606.	17,900.	65,420.	61
1.9.42.	"	36,950.	-	3,941.	1,064.	5,355.	18,710.	66,020.	61
1.10.42.	"	36,638.	-	3,929.	1,063.	5,259.	18,896.	65,785.	61
1.11.42.	"	36,339.	-	3,927.	1,063.	5,245.	21,390.	67,964.	61
1.12.42.	"	36,280.	-	3,928.	1,043.	5,213.	23,163.	69,627.	61
1.1.43.	"	35,509.	-	3,911.	1,023.	5,207.	24,873.	70,523.	61
1.3.43.	"	33,721.	-	3,812.	998.	4,881.	23,869.	67,281.	61
1.4.43.	"	33,814.	-	3,806.	997.	4,806.	22,708.	66,131.	61
1.5.43.	"	32,994.	-	3,802.	985.	4,765.	22,212.	64,758.	61
1.6.43.	"	32,905.	-	3,789.	986.	4,750.	21,951.	64,381.	61
1.8.43.	"	31,963.	-	3,767.	952.	4,576.	26,098.	67,618.	61
					(+ Dutch 262).				
1.9.43.	"	31,978.	-	3,730.	950.	4,316.	24,233.	65,836.	57
					(+ Dutch 629).				
1.10.43.	"	31,925.	-	3,723.	942.	4,312.	23,367.	78,574.	54
					(+ Dutch 654).				
					(+ Italian 13,651).				

(POW STRENGTHS cont.)

<u>Date.</u>	<u>Stalag.</u>	<u>FRENCH.</u>	<u>BRITISH.</u>	<u>BELGIQUE.</u>	<u>POLISH.</u>	<u>"SUDOST".</u>	<u>SOVIET.</u>	<u>TOTAL.</u>	<u>WORKING</u>
2.44.	XIB.	31,474.	1,926.	3,680.	896. (+ DUTCH 655). (+ Italian 27,948).	4,421.(Serb)	23,647.	94,701. (3,269 Offrs).	82,902.
4.44.	"	31,333.	1,951.	3,656.	885. (+ Dutch 642). (+ Italian 26,666). (+ US 3).	4,224. "	24,966.	94,326.	80,544.
5.44.	"	31,077.	1,949.	3,640.	882. (+ Dutch 641). (+ Italian 26,626).	4,070. "	25,004.	93,889.	80,258.
9.44.	"	30,736.	1,894.	3,630.	863. (+ Dutch 638). (+ Italian 25,911).	4,038 "	27,584.	95,294.	82,317.
11.44.	357.	-	6,323.	-	- (+ US 3).	-	-	6,326. (10 Offrs).	174.
	XIB.	30,571.	3,615.	3,628.	2,603. (+ Italian 2,814). (+ US 90).	4,009. "	30,230.	78,208.	63,271.
	357.	-	3,613.(?)	-	-	-	-	3,613.(?)	?

JOSEPH P. O'DONNELL
20 O'Rourke Dr.
Robbinsville, NJ 08691-3913



*Mrs. Laura Edge
5528 Bear Glenn Dr
Saline
MI. 48172*

TRENTON NJ 086
10 JAN 2008 PM 2 L



0817649337

Samuel H. Graybill Jr.
8 Tremont St.
Provincetown, MA. 02657

16 Jan., 1985

Capt. Roderick de Normann
Officers Mess,
Royal Hussars (PWO)
B.F.P.O. 38,
West Germany.

Dear Capt. de Normann,

I have received your letter of 30 Dec., 1984 and would like to offer the following memories.

I was in Heavy Weapons Company H of the 232nd Battalion, 42nd Infantry Division. About 20 of us were captured on Jan. 18, 1945, in Sessenheim in Alsace, during but south of The Bulge. Our forces were thin and scattered because of the larger battle up north. After crossing the nearby Rhine River on small boats, we were marched to Baden-Baden, then to Gernsbach; locked in box cars to Ludwigsburg, near Stuttgart; finally box cars to Hanover, Fallingb., & Stalag XIB on Feb. 8, 1945. The box car experiences were particularly harrowing because of the crowding, the cold, the lack of any sanitation, and the strafing by Allied aircraft.

I never knew the size of Stalag XIB. It was divided into fenced areas consisting of a few buildings. These were wooden, long, narrow one storey buildings with a low pitched roof. We were normally restricted to our own area. In my area, we were mostly American, with a few Britishers who had been prisoners for several years farther north. The next building in our area housed Russians, also prisoners of long standing. My building was on the edge of the camp, next to the outside fence, with an unfinished autobahn beyond the fence. The run-down buildings were double-ended, with washing facilities (filthy areas seldom with any water) in the center of the long building, back to back. Latrine trenches were outside, roofed over, but open to the cold wind. Ours was strangely located about 3 feet above the general ground level, on a slight rise. That climb became more exhausting as our strength waned on the German diet. Approximately 500 men lived in each half-building. Beds were made of rough wood, stacked to the ceiling. I was fortunate in being located next to an outside wall, where beds were only two-high. In the center of the building, they were four or five high. Each bed frame, about 30 inches wide, held two men who had to bend in the same direction, "spoon-style", to fit into the raised side members. These structures were rickety and often collapsed, sometimes trapping several levels of occupants.

The only heat was body heat from the high concentration of bodies. As the meagre diet reduced our energy, we seldom left the building, or even our bunks, except to use the very cold latrine or for twice-a-day roll calls. Otherwise, there was nothing to do except sleep or talk, often about food. A few paperback books, captured with their owners, made the rounds.

Each of us received a small blanket. For each two-some, one blanket was placed on the bottom of the bed frame to discourage drafts

pat swent up between the slats of the bed. The other blanket was used on top and tucked into the sides of the bed frame. Because of the cold, we never removed any clothing except our shoes. The only time clothing was removed was during "delousing" which I experienced three times at StalaggXIB. Delousing was actually an unpleasant experience despite the infrequent opportunity to take a shower. We were led in groups to a large building where clothes were put in a basket to be exposed to chemicals or steam to eliminate vermin. We spent an interminable time, unclothed, in quite cold rooms, waiting for showers. Finally we entered a large shower room. The ceiling showers looked ominously like gas jets, but we welcomed a few moments of warm water. Then there was soaping up, and finally the water came back on for a few moments to rinse. After a long wait in a cold room, our clothes were returned and the dreaded experience was over. We could only hope we didn't catch a cold or pneumonia. I was never aware of any bug infestation, but had we remained there during warmer weather, I suspect the problem would have escalated.

Each of us had a tin pan or bowl in which our liquid rations were contained. After morning roll-call, outside the building, we received a ration of "barley water," a kind of ersatz coffee. The taste was dreadful, but we drank it or used it for washing. We didn't trust the cold water tap in the building for drinking.

In the afternoon we received a ration of "soup" which sometimes contained bits of vegetables or meat, but was usually an unseasoned, thin broth. The main substance of our diet was one-seventh of a small loaf of dark bread, in which splinters were often visible. A spoonful of sugar and a small pat of "butter" sometimes accompanied the bread. After late afternoon roll-call, another ration of "barley water."

Red Cross parcels were most welcome and probably saved many of us from later illnesses due to dietary deficiencies. Although the parcels were meant to be delivered once each week for each man, we were very fortunate to receive one-fourth that amount. Four of us formed a "corporation" to use our treasured supplies more efficiently. Endless hours, of which we had many, were filled with discussions of the next "meal." Any heating or cooking required shaving away pieces of the building or our bunks, so we had to be certain the exchange was worthwhile.

We hid our possessions carefully. Theft was not uncommon, although we spent most of our time in our bunks. The last people out of the building for roll-call might have an opportunity, but most thefts were made by people in the other half of the building. They would raise a section of ceiling in their quarters, crawl through the attic, find a loose section of ceiling in the other half of the building, reach down to the topmost bunk and search for food.

There was sick call, but only the very ill ever accepted this invitation because no one ever seemed to return. Perhaps they were made well and sent somewhere else, but we had little reason to trust our captors.

A few of our group were sent off to work details, presumably in Hanover. The promise was larger rations if you worked. Russians who lived in the adjacent building were working outside the Camp. They

would steal a carrot, potato or rutabaga and stuff it in their shoe until they returned to Camp. Then the mutilated object became a treasure to be bargained for during the night-time flea market. If you had an American cigarette or other currency from a Red Cross parcel, you could exchange it for food. A rigid schedule of values was developed, but as in any economic system, the market went up or down with the availability of currency i.e. cigarettes from the Red Cross. I will never forget the exotic, strange odor of the Russian barracks. Perhaps one small candle would be burning in that beehive of bed frames and people who were prisoners for a long time. Their clothes were old and dirty from work. Layers had been added as dead comrades relinquished their clothes. The language barrier was circumvented by counting on fingers and the almost life-giving necessity of making a good trade.

We saw very few Germans except the guards in towers along the outside fence. An older Sergeant, apparently a survivor of WWI, took roll-call. He was very precise and military in bearing and probably frightened by this responsibility in his late years. Occasionally, at night, several young German officers would enter the building, look around and leave. We never knew, in the near darkness, why they were there. Usually only one small light bulb burned during the late afternoon and evening; sometimes none. In the northern winter, daylight hours were few, so life became largely a nocturnal experience.

Rumors persisted, as always in the Army. We had no access to news of the war. Some French prisoners presumably had a radio. In retrospect, some of the reports we got were true; others only fantasies. We were, of course, aware of the increased air activity. Hundreds of bombers, sometimes dropping metallic strips to confuse radar, flew over every day the weather permitted. There seemed to be little or no Luftwaffe interference. Sometimes, at night, we could see rocket launchings which might have been V-2 bombs on their way to London, but were likely testing sites well inside Germany.

As the Allies got closer, the Germans in the Camp were getting more nervous. Eventually they started moving out, destroying records as indicated by smoke from the chimney of the Administration building. By then, we could hear distant artillery, especially at night. Several days later, with only a skeleton crew of guards remaining, our Sergeant in translation, wished us well and a safe journey home. He said his futures were certainly brighter than his, and then saluted us. I think most of us suddenly felt very sorry for this old man who had little to look forward to in his last years.

There was a lot of activity in the air, mostly reconnaissance, as several German soldiers wheeled an old artillery piece across the autobahn and hid it in the edge of a clump of trees. We watched at the fence as British tanks appeared and fired several rounds in the direction of the Germans. We cheered as if we were at a football game. The Germans quickly produced a white flag and the resistance at Staßlag XIB was over. We were grateful there was no serious fighting while we remained helpless captives. The date was April 16, 1945. The British 2nd Army, who liberated us, knocked down parts of the fence and threw field rations at us. What we ate made us sick immediately, but we enjoyed it anyway. Despite the holes in the fence, we had no energy to investigate the outside.

(4)

In the days following liberation, freedom brought problems. Our "Corporation" dissolved into irritable incriminations & jealousies. We realized that our sharing had been based on necessity, not mutual understanding and friendship. Rainy weather made living more uncomfortable. Despite a supply of food, inappropriate as it was at first, we were miserable. We became more aware of the dreadful living conditions. The snow and ice on the roof now found its way through holes in the roof and down to our bunks and the floor. We were constantly damp or wet. Apparently the bad weather also delayed evacuation of the Camp. General Montgomery was supposed to appear to celebrate the liberation, but the parade was postponed and never took place to my knowledge. We really didn't care.

A week after liberation, a friend and I felt sufficiently revived to take a walk outside the camp, bumming rides in trucks occasionally. We went to Fallingbommel, where we visited the People's Headquarters of the local Nazi party. It had been looted, but was still interesting to us to see photos of Hitler and similar memorabilia. I found a notebook which was largely unused and therefore a treasure for jotting down notes, many of which I have incorporated in this letter. This "Ausbildungsbuch für Dienstanfänger" apparently belonged to Oswald Narjes of Fallingbommel, born 5/12/25 in Suderbruch. I would be interested in knowing if he has survived. We also stopped at a farmhouse where some old people nervously gave us milk and eggs. It was obvious that they had little to eat themselves, but they were afraid of us, not knowing how weak we were.

A Red Cross truck came to distribute chocolate bars, stationary etc. I remember one of the Russians coming over to thank me for these gifts. I'm sure he had never heard of the Y.M.C.A.

The last night at Stalag XIB was a disaster. The whittling away of bed frames had taken its toll and finally destroyed the structural integrity. The night air was filled with the sounds of splintering wood and frightened and angry cries as bed fell upon bed, upon bed, etc. After a sleepless night, we went by truck to an airstrip about 85 miles away. Many British soldiers and supplies were going ~~to~~ the war in the opposite direction. The Allies were speeding eastward in the last great sweep into Germany. After one more night in Germany, in tents, we flew in C-47's to an airport in England where we were taken to an American field hospital on April 26, 1945.

I hope these memories of 40 years ago are of some interest to you. If any remarks need further clarification or more detail, please feel free to write again. I would be most interested in the fruits of your labours and hope to be notified if and when a history of these camps is published.

Sincerely yours,

Alexander Gorashko

Alexander Gorashko served with the 454th Bomb Group, 15th Air Force during World War II. He was shot down on August 22, 1944 and was held at Stalag Luft IV. He was a participant on the forced march from Stalag Luft IV and was taken to Stalag 357. He was among the group of prisoners who were marched from Stalag 357. He was liberated in May of 1945.

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April 3, 2004

Alexander Gorashko
5224 Hardy Road
Vassar, Michigan 48768

Dear Laura,

Thank you for your letter regarding your father. Its nice to know that people are still interested in what experiences we had back in World War II.

First of all I want to clarify something. I did not meet your father until after he bought my book and gave me a telephone call. I drove down and had lunch with your parents. I did have my picture taken at Miami Beach, but the only person that I ran across there was a former prison camp roommate, John Grogan who has since passed away. John and I took pictures of each other and perhaps I gave your father a copy of that picture that was taken at Miami Beach.

Just about two weeks ago I mentioned to my wife that when it warmed up outdoors I wanted to drive south and have lunch with your father.

Regarding the information that you are looking for. First, let me explain what has happened since I put together that last book "Survival." Our plane was shot down in Hungary.

A witness to our crash has been located and he saw our plane go down. He was 15 years old at the time and said that the tail had broken off and a open parachute was caught on it. This would have been our waist gunner who had been standing next to me when our plane rolled over on it's back and went into a dive. He was killed. I did not know that the tail section had broken off and assumed that he was caught inside the plane just as I was. It was a miracle that I even survived.

Well, I have decided to rewrite my story, with some pictures and add my military experiences from the time I went into the Army until coming back to the States after the war ended in Europe. I have the story all finished except for being edited. I have just checked into the portion where your father and I were at the sick barn, left on a train and arrived at Fallingbostel. There are ten pages and most of it pertains to my personal experiences at that time. About 95% of it is in my original book, "Survival." As I have yet to copywrite my new story I cannot xerox those ten pages and send them to you.

Perhaps I can go through it in this letter and help you understand. When we evacuated Stalag Luft IV on February 6th of 1945 the Germans had to move us out of the area fast before the Russians could liberate us. There are a series of islands that cross Stettin Bay and this is how they decided to keep us from the possibility of being liberated. There are stories going around about how they were going to use us as some sort of bargaining chips in an armistice. Then another story goes that the Americans were going to fight the Russians. A third story goes that Hitler was going to have all the POW's killed unless his peace demands were met. The Germans didn't have any system to feed us and we had to rely on our Red Cross food or whatever potatoes or barley we could steal from the farms where we slept. As it took a week or so of walking to get across the islands. The POW's were getting weaker and weaker.

Once we got across Stettin Bay, by means of these islands, we didn't know it, but they split large groups of us up, with one bunch going north to another prison camp. Another bunch going south and one going west, the way we went. We had more days of rest stops. This was in the vicinity of Neu Brandenburg where there were railway facilities. The Germans tried to abide by the Geneva Convention and get trains to deliver us to other prison camps. About this time the weather began to get cold and nasty. Our bunch, and I

assume your father was there had to wait out in open country for probably three hours, for a train that never showed up. I was in a combine (an agreement with two other guys from our room to look after each other). Many of us got tired of standing and sat down. It was decided to take us back to where we last slept. A freezing rain began. We were cold, wet and shivering. When we got back to our last sleeping barn it was now occupied by other POW's that had just arrived. We had to continue on until they could find an empty barn to put us in. The barn had one side open with a terrible draft and I soon discovered that I had the diarrhea from possibly sitting on the cold ground waiting for that damned train. I hated to leave my buddies, but I wound up going to that sick barn. I was put in a sheep barn with very thick walls. The only heat was from the guys that were there, but it was comfortable. I was given a full Red Cross parcel and fed barley twice a day along with some mint tea. After three days my diarrhea subsided and I had to leave. They moved me into a barn filled with sick and partly recovered POW's. It had one side partly open and was cold and drafty. It was full and no one would let me pick a spot alongside to burrow into the hay. Finally, that I had to go up into the hayloft and take a spot even though no one wanted me next to them.

After a few days, the Germans decided to take us by wagons to Neu Brandenburg about 10 or 12 Km away (a guess). There were several prison camps in Neu Brandenburg. The temperature was in the ^{SINGLE DIGITS} teens and 40 of us were crowded into this large wagon pulled by two horses. We stood all the way. We stopped in front of a prison camp and waited to see if they would accept us. While we were waiting, seven coffins came out to be buried. There was a typhus epidemic in the camp and five to seven POW's were dying every day. With all this waiting we were not allowed to come down off the wagon except to urinate. My toes were becoming numb from the cold. They would not allow us to enter the camp and we had to go back to our sleeping barn at this barn hospital. The trip took 16 hours. Many of us had frostbite. The horses had not been fed all day and one of them died.

The next day, a German General came around and told us we would get more food and a train would pick us up in a few days and take us to a prison camp. About two or three days later we were taken to a railway siding out in the country and we got into railway box-cars. We were told we would have pails with drinking water and for toilet purposes.

There were about seven railway box-cars and each car was supposed to have 38 men. We had 50 men in ours. It was so crowded that one could only sit. There were no pails for drinking water and toilet purposes. We did have some straw to sit on. It probably took an hour or hour and a half to get started. Some of the men still had the diarrhea and they couldn't very well defecate in the straw, as there was only enough room to sit. Someone gave up a Red Cross box and it was lined with straw. Modesty was forgotten as everyone backed away as a sick Kriegie defecated in the box. As it was mostly water we had stay back in case it splattered. The stench was terrible and it took a while for it to dissipate. The box was then passed man to man over to a small open window near the end of the car where the straw was emptied. The box was then lined with fresh straw to be used by the next sick man. For urinating we used a can.

The next afternoon, our cars were stopped in a railway marshalling yard, and we were allowed to get out. Everyone scrounged around for firewood to heat water for a brew. Others looked at railway cars to see if there was anything to eat. In one was a load of turnips and another a load of rotted fish. An air-raid alert sounded and we were all forced back into our respective box cars. We sat waiting to hear bombs exploding. A smart-Ass Kriegie made a whistle sound like a bomb falling and my heart skipped a beat. We continued on. Later in the afternoon the train stopped in the city of Rostock and I was able to persuade a railway worker to get me some water. Late the next day, we entered the

City of Hamburg. It was a bombed out shell with nothing but standing walls. The train pulled into a small train station probably in the suburbs. We sat and waited. After a while a young German woman and a British soldier came by and wanted to know how many were in our car. This was written on a piece of paper. Shortly later, a truck pulled up to the train and they began unloading something. Through the German Red Cross, we were each given a piece of wurst (sausage) and a piece of bread. Needless to say, we enjoyed it immensely. This was the only food given us during this trip. After dark, the train again began to move.

The next morning we arrived at Fallingbostal. They let us out. An air-raid alert was on, but we just kept walking, occasionally looking up at the B-17 bombers passing overhead. We left the village passing by many barbed wire enclosures (stalags, as this was an international camp) and finally stopping in front of a building. This was Stalag 357. Stalag 357 held many British soldiers captured in North Africa. This camp was run by the German Army. It was different from Stalag Luft IV, as it didn't have an inside warning rail. One could actually stand at the fence and talk to someone on the other side of the fence, without yelling. We were allowed to shower while our clothes were being deloused by putting them in a large heated oven. Then, we were put in a huge white tent and later moved into some huge one-story stone buildings inside the lagar. In each building there were five rooms holding 72 men in each room.

Laura, there is lot to write about in this camp and I'm sure your father can remember most of it. I'm enclosing a map from my book that will give you a better idea of our route when we left Stalag Luft IV that cold February morning in 1945.

When the weather gets warm and the price of gas doesn't get too high, I'll contact your father and we can set a date for us to come down for a visit. You must live about forty miles from your father and if you work this could get complicated.

Best wishes,

Al Gorashko

yes
wooden
barrack

September 20, 2005-05-20

Alexander Gorashko
5224 Hardy Road
Vassar, Michigan 48768
Phone (989) 823-2360

Dear Laura,

I hope everything is going well with you. It has been a busy summer for us. We have not had time to take a vacation, even a short one.

Well, I have finally published my book. It took about six months of fooling around with a local printer. Everything had to go through the manager who didn't know anything about printing a book using computer data. If he did, he should have given me more information.

When I met with him, I told him I didn't know anything about how they publish books. I was thinking about an 8 ½" x 11" book because of the picture on the cover. I had brought along the files of the story using Microsoft word 97 with the pictures in JPG.

Printing the book in that size was going to cost too much, so I decided to make it smaller. This required putting the computer files in a different format and presented them with this. Three weeks later I get a letter telling me that my story must be in a PDF format. He should have told me this right off the bat. I hadn't even heard of such a format and spent several days looking for PDF Software. I located one for \$99 and bought it. The next week, I see a store ad in the paper where one was selling for \$30.

I had a book that measured 6 ½" x 9.25" and I figured this must be a standard size. I set up my computer program for this size.

At my next meeting with the printshop manager I took along this 6 ½" x 9.25" book that I was using as a standard and told him this was the size I was set up for. Weeks later, they printed up a book for my approval and it was a 6" x 9" size and the page margins were all wrong. No way was I going to accept this, so I came home and set up my computer program for a size 6" x 9" book with the proper page margins. More time was wasted.

Finally, a book was printed up in the 6" x 9" size with the correct margins. In checking over the story I found some typing errors that had to be corrected. Also, I decided to add some pictures to the inside and back of the cover. This used up more time and was going to cost more.

Finally, the book was finished and I have 250 copies. They are of good quality paper and will compare favorably with any book on the market. I am quit pleased with it and so are our friends. Some friends are buying two or three of them to give to their friends. My wife has gone through it and found four more typos. They are very small and most people might skip past them without detecting them.

In the beginning I was hoping to print a book that would sell for around ten dollars. My neighbor has a print shop and advised me to print and put together my own books to keep the cost low. I put together five books in an 8 ½" x 11" size and realized that it would take

lots of labor and materials and I really wasn't satisfied with them. The pages were perforated with a plastic spine holding them together. The pages didn't turn very well. The plastic spine cost \$1.50. Printing a page with a picture cost \$1.00. I could not sell the books for around ten dollars for it would cost me almost ten dollars to put the book together. This is when I decided to use a commercial printer to put a book together using conventional book binding.

Because of the higher cost of printing which included pictures, I have to sell the books for \$17.00 plus \$3.00 more if I have to mail them, for a total of \$20.00.

With the experience I had, I can now deal with anyone, for I now know most of the problems involved.

I remember that you were writing a story about your father's experience and wonder how you are coming. Were you just intending on putting the story together just for family reading or doing more with it?

Before sending you a book I thought I would get your approval before sending you one. Perhaps you might think of getting one for your father?

It has been quite an experience. My wife is proud of me. She is selling books like hot cakes.

My doctor's nurse just bought one and the dentist's office girls have been asking when they can buy one.

Take care.

Sincerely,

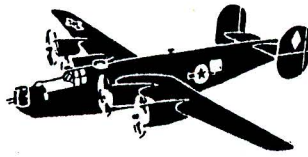
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be the initials 'AL' with a flourish underneath.



BBM-5A-6

AL GORASHKO

MIAMI BEACH AUGUST 1945



Alexander Gorashko
5224 Hardy Road
Vassar, Michigan 48768

July 16, 2008

Dear Laura,

We hope all is well with you, your family and your father.

I have been busy making repairs on our house. The house is 33 years old and things need replacing. We started with new linoleum, then a new roof and now new stucco siding. We are helping the economy!

While waiting for the paint to dry on the stucco panels, I thought I would clean up my library and file things away. I came across the xerox copies of our arrival at Stalag 357 and didn't remember if I wrote to thank you for thinking of me. This letter is my thank you.

I'm not 100% sure about your father's name It is shown as Witt L L , POW serial # 1167 and U.S. Army serial # 16160308

I hope your story of your father is coming along.

I just had an interesting conversation with Joe O'Donnell. Joe's name is shown on page 6 of the xerox sheets that you sent me. I am still trying to find the name of the intersection community where the barn hospital was located. He says that his group was already on the train that stopped to pick us up. He is going to do some checking with a friend in Germany.

He tells me that a new plaque is going to be made for the Stalag Luft IV location and a group will be going to Poland when it is unveiled. There are no details of this yet.

I presume that you have already been in contact with Joe. In case you haven't his E Mail address is jpodpow1414@aol.com.

My computer is old. I bought it back in 1996 and I am still using Windows 98. I need a newer computer as some things coming on the internet won't print out. Also the software being sold today will not work with an operating system so old. Being busy with the house I have not had the time to check on buying a new one.

I can still manage to climb ladders to paint, but in another five years I will be hiring someone to do my work for me.

Best wishes,

Zander's

To meet
Tuesday 19th

11:30 - 12:00

meet by fireplace



DISTI

ALFRED ASCH 455 B.G.
740 B.S.

VINCENT CAHILL 491 B.G.
853 B.S.

EDWARD DEKOSTIC 485 B.G.
828 B.S.

MICHAEL DeWILDE

GIOSUE FIORENTINO 307 B.G.
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ED HALL 307 B.G.
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BOB HAINES 376 B.S.

JOHN HULSER 451 B.G.
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WILLIAM KALLAN

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THOMAS LYONS

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AL GORASKHO

B-24 "ALL AMERICAN" 1990

THIS PAPER
MANUFACTURED
BY KODAK

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MANUFACTURED
BY KODAK

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M. T.

M. T.

October 23, 2008

Hi Laura,

We both enjoyed our visit with you and Larry. It was a nice day. I hope we didn't delay you too long with the visit to our house. I imagine you got home after dark.

I read your article about what your father went through on his last mission and what a great piece of writing. You have lots of talent. Where were you when I was writing my story! I sure could have used some help. As I read the story I could feel the horror of what they were going through. Especially, when the co-pilot bailed out holding onto the navigator's legs. From my experience I know that would never work. The only way they could have done it is if they were strapped together somehow. What I mean is, if the co-pilot had a chute harness on (for a chest chute), and somehow they could have buckled together, they both could have survived. Normally, pilots wear a back chute that is really a seat cushion that they sit on, so if the co-pilot had a back chute on and it caught fire, and he took it off, would there still be a harness for the use of a chest chute? (the spare). It's been years and I can't remember much about a back chute as I only used a chest chute. By the way, the other gunners had their chutes laid on the floor and I knew that if the plane rolled or went into some unusual motion, their parachutes would go sailing. So, I kept my chute within reach, tied with a rope, one tug of the rope and I had it.

I imagine this bothered your father very much and to this day it is still on his mind. I was bothered by our ball gunner going down with the broken off tail section. Everything happened so fast that he probably didn't have any idea of what was happening. His favorite song was, "I'll be seeing you" and through the years anytime I heard the song, it brought back those horrible memories.

Our experience of getting shot down happened in just minutes and probably most of the other crew, found out that the ship was on fire a moment before it went out of control. I felt bad for them, but not as much as for the ball gunner. He had the most dangerous job on the plane, because he doesn't see what is going on in and around the plane itself and it takes a while to get out of his turret. This is what bothered me. I never liked that position and thank God they made me a tail-gunner, because I could get out fast.

Going to Germany where Larry was shot down, visiting the site where it crashed and meeting people who were witnesses is really something. That is great material for the book. I can't wait to buy a copy!

About the hotel, President Madison at Miami Beach, I thought about it when the subject was brought up and got my wartime album out to verify that this was where I was at. I had a black & white postcard of the hotel. I tried printing a copy with poor results. Because the original was composed of dots, scanning the picture resulted in a moire effect. I tried 300 pdi, then 600 dpi and lastly 150 dpi. The 150 dpi was the best, but you could still see the moire effect. Enclosed is what I tried. If possibly you might want the picture for your story, I can make more of an effort to get you a good picture.

If there is any information that I can help you with, please don't hesitate to ask. One of the fellows, Morris Barker who was in my room at Luft IV is a Jr. Vice Commander for the Ex-POW Central Division. If there is something you need to know perhaps we can call on him.

I always feel funny about writing to a writing expert. I hope I didn't screw-up in writing this letter. Maybe in the spring, we can get together somewhere near where you and Larry live. We'll keep in touch.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'AL' with a flourish underneath.



THE PRESIDENT MADISON • MIAMI BEACH

THE MEN OF ROOM 6, BARRACKS 8, C LAGER, OF STALAG-LUFT IV

Louis H. (Tony) Anthony, Apalachicola, Fla.. He was crazy about water and sailboating. He was a tough looking guy. He was of English descent, but looked like a Greek or an Italian. He didn't care much for me. I once said that he didn't look English and he responded by telling me that he would like to run across me after the war and knock my block off. He died in October of 1988.

Al Bachman, Henrietta, Texas. He was indeed a quiet one. I don't think anyone in the room knew anything about him. He never talked much. He had little outstanding personality. He was remembered mostly because of his German name. The goons were constantly mocking him for being of German ancestry and fighting his own kind. Because of this and the fact he said very little, I suspected that if the Germans were to plant a spy among us, this would be the man. He died on March 29, 1996

Morris P. (Tex) Barker, Electra, Texas. A tall, good looking guy with a slim build, just what you would imagine a Texan to be. He had a quiet personality and was well liked. He was in the Budapest prison with some of us. He was a shoe salesman before going into the Air Corps.

Walter Droggt, Central Lake, Michigan. A young hillbilly type of character who entertained us with his off-key singing. He got along well with everyone. His one physical feature that stood out was a wide gap between his upper front teeth.

J.C. Dickerson, West Virginia. A medium height, slightly overweight fellow who came out of the POW hospital and was put in our room during the cold months before the end of 1944. He gave us the impression that he was feeling sorry for himself. He seemed to be more worried than the rest about our February the 6th evacuation of the camp. He wasn't really with us long enough to really know him.

D.E. Erikson, A latecomer to our room and I can remember very little about him.

Chauncey M. Friend, He was another quiet one. He was the ball gunner on Barker and Holman's ship.

Alexander Gorashko, Saginaw, Michigan. The writer of this paper. I was born in Saginaw, on November 23, 1924 of Russian immigrant parents. My father had a grocery store which he sold and we moved to the western shore of the Saginaw bay. I started my schooling in a one room country school. We moved back to Saginaw where my father worked at the Chevrolet Foundry. We also worked as a family in the fields mostly raising and picking pickles. Later, my father started a pickle factory and sold dill pickles to most of the Greek restaurants in the area. My hobby was experimenting with electricity and mechanical things. I wasn't too smart in the academics, but did just fine in chemistry and shop. I went to a trade school and took up electricity. I was a shy person and sort of a loner. I was quite naive about girls and life in general. I was drafted at 18 and requested to be a radio operator in the Army Air Corps. I washed out of radio code class, because my code speed was too slow. and became a tail gunner/armorer on a B-24 bomber. Our air crew was shipped to Italy on the S.S. Santa Rosa, where we became part of the 736th Bomb Squadron of the 454th Bomb Group in the 15th Air Force. Charlie Overton was a waist gunner on our crew. On the way back from bombing a synthetic oil plant at Blechhammer, Germany, we were attacked by 3 German FW-190s over Hungary, set on fire and shot down. Charlie and myself were the only survivors. It was my 14th mission.

Joe E. Greskamp, Indianapolis, Indiana. A natural leader of men. Well versed in sports, everyone was coming to him for answers on questions in sports. He was soft spoken and a sort of shy person, well liked by everyone. He was a radar operator on a Mickey ship flying out of Italy.

John Grogan, Winston-Salem, N.C.. A young, short, husky, likable guy who was a ball gunner. He was quite outspoken about many things, especially Negros.

William B. Holman, Santaquin, Utah. A tall fellow with a likable personality who always joined in on the bull sessions. He always kept insisting that he was not a Morman, because he was from Utah, he thought that everyone thought he was a Morman. He was on the same plane with Tex Barker and Chauncey Friend.

Marvin G. Jones, Hagerstown, Maryland. He was our room leader. He was always talking about civil aviation. He was a good conversationalist. Some of the fellows thought he was trying to impress us with what he knew, but credit must be given to him, he was a good room leader and organizer. The men's liking for him was reserved. As our room leader, he got a pair of scissors and gave us haircuts for two cigarettes.

Allen M. Johnson, A newcomer to our room.

Samual (Jack) London, Boston, Mass. A cheerful extrovert type of guy that brightened up our kriegie life. He was a few years older than many of us and provided many stories of big-city life, especially of the big-band era. He was very knowledgeable about many things, like an older brother. I always went to him for answers to things I didn't understand. He and John Spernyak were on the same crew together. He had a rough time during the latter days of our forced march..

S.M. Love, Pittsburg, Pa. A very short guy who was probably a ball gunner. His name was often ridiculed by the German goons that roamed through the barracks. They said, "how could he have a name like, Love and come over a fight the Germans."

Charles E. Overton, Oxford, North Carolina. The only other member of my crew to survive. The son of a tobacco farmer. A happy go lucky guy that adapts to any situation. He had a few sexual experiences before going into the Air Corps. A very good poker player, so good, that going overseas on the S.S. Santa Rosa, he got in a card game with some officers and won all their money. Once in Tucson, Arizona, I was walking down a street. A girl was walking in the same direction and I began talking to her in hopes of doing something together. She said that she was meeting an airman in the cocktail lounge of a nearby big downtown hotel. I kidded that I didn't believe her and she invited me along to meet him. It turned out to be Charlie. I didn't drink and go to bars in those days, so Charlie and myself went our separate ways during our free time when we weren't flying or going to school. During our forced march from Stalag-Luft 4, we got separated several times and getting together when the guys in our room found each other during our rest stops. We got separated for good and I never saw or heard from him again. We got together again in 1989 when he and his 2nd wife stopped by for a visit.

C.A. Phillips, Muskogee, Okla. A tall slim guy who always joined in on the conversations. He was once an enlisted man in the regular Army Air Corps as an airplane mechanic. He joined the aviation cadets to be a pilot and washed out. His stories about the aviation cadets and the old days in Oklahoma kept us entertained.

Donald W. Pierce, Middletown, Conn. A good looking guy of medium height. He was an avid sports fan. He flew with the 8th Air Force and was stationed in or near Scotland. He told of the pretty Scotch girls in Scotland. His best asset was that he was always happy. He was a good singer and whistler.

Carl E. (Peanut) Richardson, A newcomer to our room, didn't have much of a chance to know him.

Earl A. Schrotzberger, Centerline, Michigan. A quiet average guy. He read and spoke fluent German. He would sometimes read excerpts to us from the German newspapers that we got occasionally. I never heard him speak German with any of the goons that roamed though the barracks. He died in 1977 and left a wife and no children.

John Spernyak, Corning, N.Y. A fellow crewmember of Jack London. A real outspoken character with a temper and gall. He was of Russian descent with fairly dark features. One of the German goons walked into our room, pointed at John and said, "American Indian" and walked out of the room. John's face got red as a beet. John said, he was real mad at getting shot down as he had half a cigar-box full of morphine syringes he had taken out of aircraft first-aid kits to sell after he got back to the states. I think we were being conned by an expert!

Richard A. Thill, Chicago, Illinois. First met him in the discharge room of the Budapest prison. He was a young, good looking, cheerful, likable guy with a crew-cut. He must have had several years of agricultural college behind him as he sure knew a lot about agriculture. In the morning, he would yell out, "it's a beautiful day in Chicago." He made things just a bit more cheerful. He was one of my closest friends in the camp. He, Dave Walsh and myself were together during the forced march after we got separated from the other guys from our room. I got a case of the diarrhea and had to leave them, as I was put in a barn for sick kriegies. They were the last ones from our room that I would see on the forced march. He died in San Diego, Dec. 6, 1972.

David A. Walsh, Springfield, Mass. A handsome six-footer, sort of on the quiet side, but you knew he was smart and had class. He seemed to know a lot about medicine and surgery. He used to tell us about how doctors wanting to be surgeons would put a piece of thread in a matchbox and practice tying knots by putting two fingers inside. He probably went to medical school after the war. He was a nephew of Senator Walsh of Massachusetts. He and Dick Thill were the last ones from our room that I would see during the forced march.

May 8, 2009

Hi Laura,

Today is the date that the war in Europe ended. I was in Brussels Belgium and were they happy. Esther and I enjoyed the visit and the program honoring seniors. We got home just as it was getting dark.

I told you that I couldn't find the information about Stalag 357 that I got from Germany, well it was in my file cabinet right where it was supposed to be. I was looking for it in a different envelope. The information that I have, came from Hinrich Baumann, the mayor of Oerbke, Germany in answer to a request he placed in the Ex-POW journal for information from POWs that were there.

When I told you that when we departed the railway boxcars, we walked on a cobblestone platform, in the letter that I wrote to Mr. Baumann at Fallingbostel, I told him it was a paved walkway. The mind does funny things. I know that in many places in Europe they use a lot of cobble stone, so it could be either. While standing on the platform getting ready to move, an air raid took place with B-17s flying over. We were not concerned and stood and watched the show. After we got moving, we passed a huge dugout place and wondered what it was about. Of course it turned out to be for the autobahn extension. Shortly after, on our right we saw huge buildings and treetops and I figured they were apartment houses on a hill. Mr. Baumann sent me pictures of those buildings and they were part of a warehouse area with railway sidings and huge six story buildings on level ground.

Shortly, we passed German barracks and Stalag 11B, about a kilometer later, we turned left and a fraction of a kilometer later stopped in front of what look likes an administration building. We were led to a huge tent, like a circus tent, behind that building. From there groups of us were taken into the basement of that building for showers and delousing. We spent the night sleeping in the tent. The next day we were taken through a gate and into Lager 357 and quartered in the long five room stone buildings. 72 men to a room.

In my letter to Mr. Baumann, I drew a map of the layout of the lager. The lager had a fence across it with a gate that was closed at night. I could not correlate what I remembered with what was on the map that he provided. After much thought, north of that dividing fence was Lager 11A and seeing that the map Mr. Baumann provided was of 357, the draftsman didn't bother providing the layout of Stalag 11A that butted up to 357. The area north of the dividing fence is Stalag 11A and during the daytime we were free to wander into that lager. This is not a fact but, an explanation of why I cannot correlate my map with what Mr. Baumann provided.

I cannot find a building that was the building were we got our showers and delousing. Seeing that your father Larry was there longer than I, perhaps he can provide more details. Another thing Stalag 11 had an A,B,C, and D lagers and it was spread out all over.

We were incarcerated under the German Army and our treatment was much better than at Luft 4. If I had cigarettes to trade, I could go right up to the fence and make the trade. At Luft 4, there was no way you could get near the fence without machine gun bullets flying. I don't really remember seeing many German guards. I believe, that if a Kriegie wanted to escape, It could easily be done, but why bother, the war would be over in a few weeks. What I remember about the place was that with all the Americans around, I didn't have a friend , we were constantly hungry, and never got any Red Cross parcels.

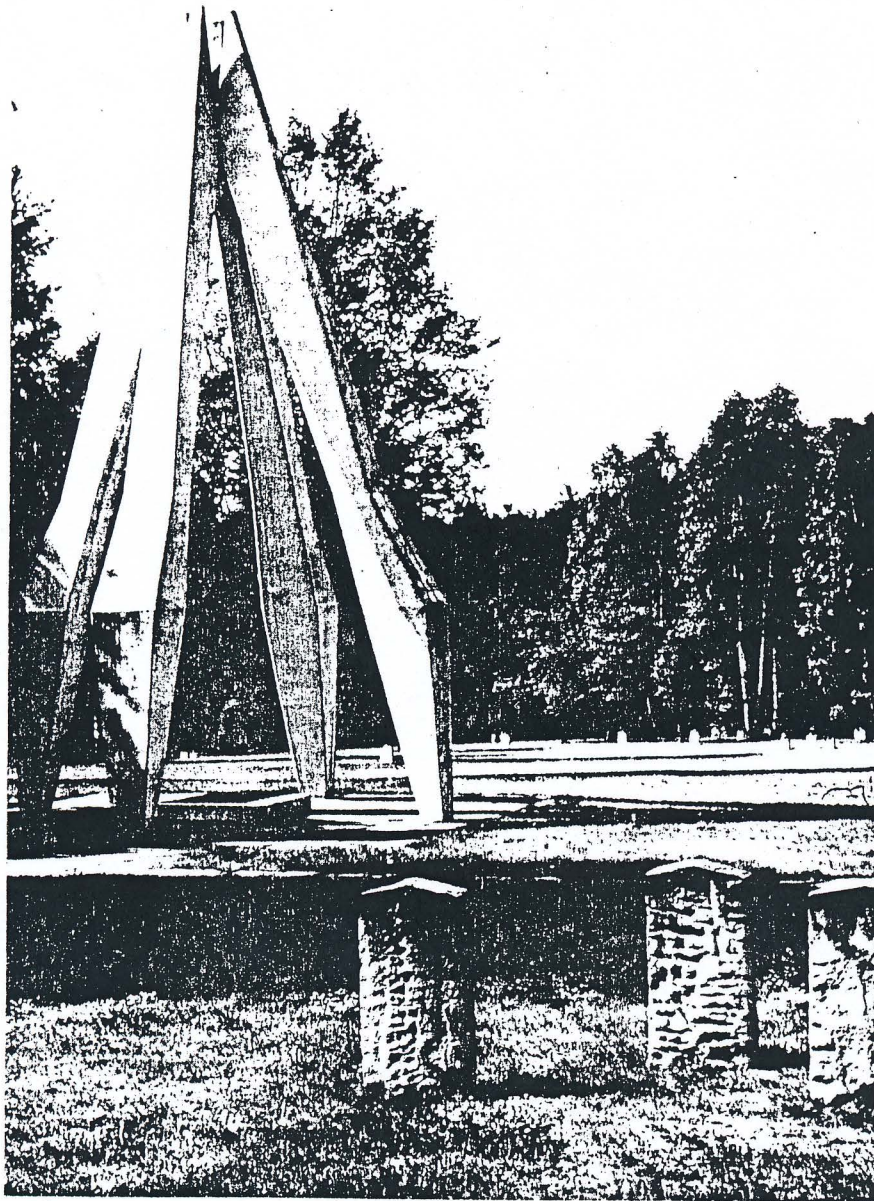
You know the people that lived in the area had a legacy to live down. This was an international camp and with all the prisoners kept there and thousands of Russians dying, it was a miserable place. The world would at think of this place as being very unpleasant. I am thankful that some Germans, have provided memorials for their former enemies. Do you know that when the Russians were informed of a dedication of a monument to the Russians that starved to death, the Russian Government refused to pay for a Russian delegation to come. The Germans, themselves paid the expenses for the Russians that did come.

Good luck with the story. From what I have read, you sure have done your homework. I have enclosed copies of everything that I received from Hinrich Baumann. If I can help in any way, please let me know.

Best wishes,



INFORMATION



über die

Kriegsgräberstätte

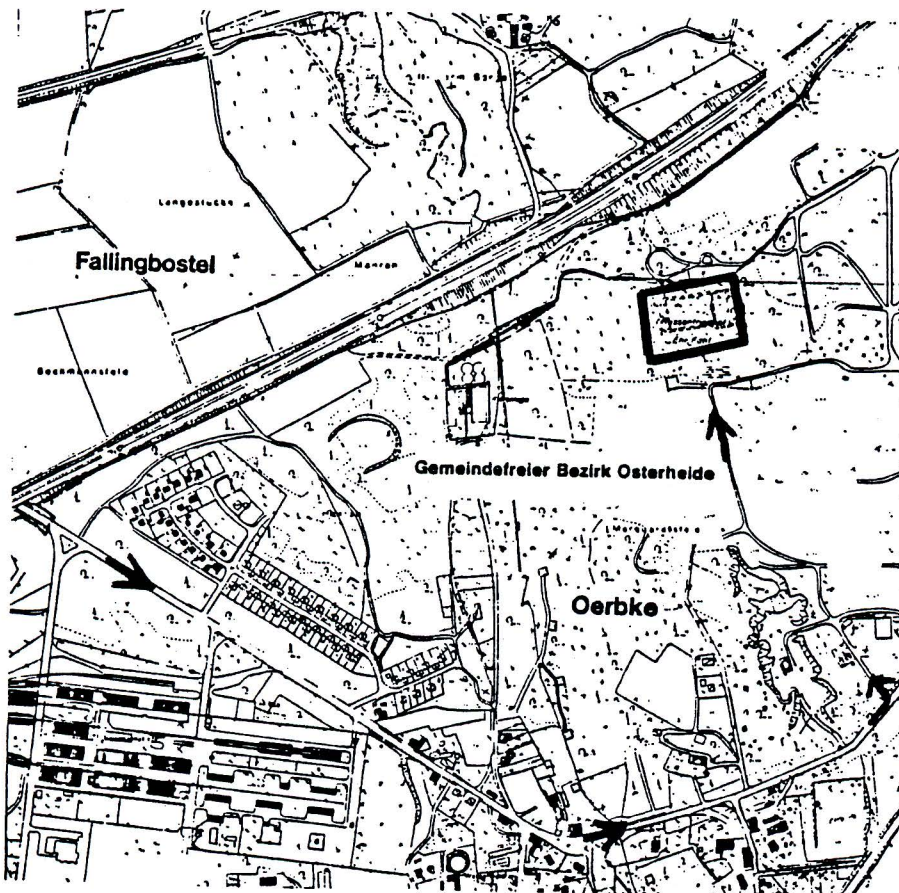
Oerbke

Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide

THE CEMETERY OF THE NAMELESS

Russian War Cemetery at Oerbke

In our county Soltau-Fallingb. there is a war cemetery with about 30 000 graves of Russian prisoners of war. Who really knows this war cemetery, the so-called "cemetery of the Nameless" close to the little town of Oerbke near the Motorway from Hamburg to Hanover?



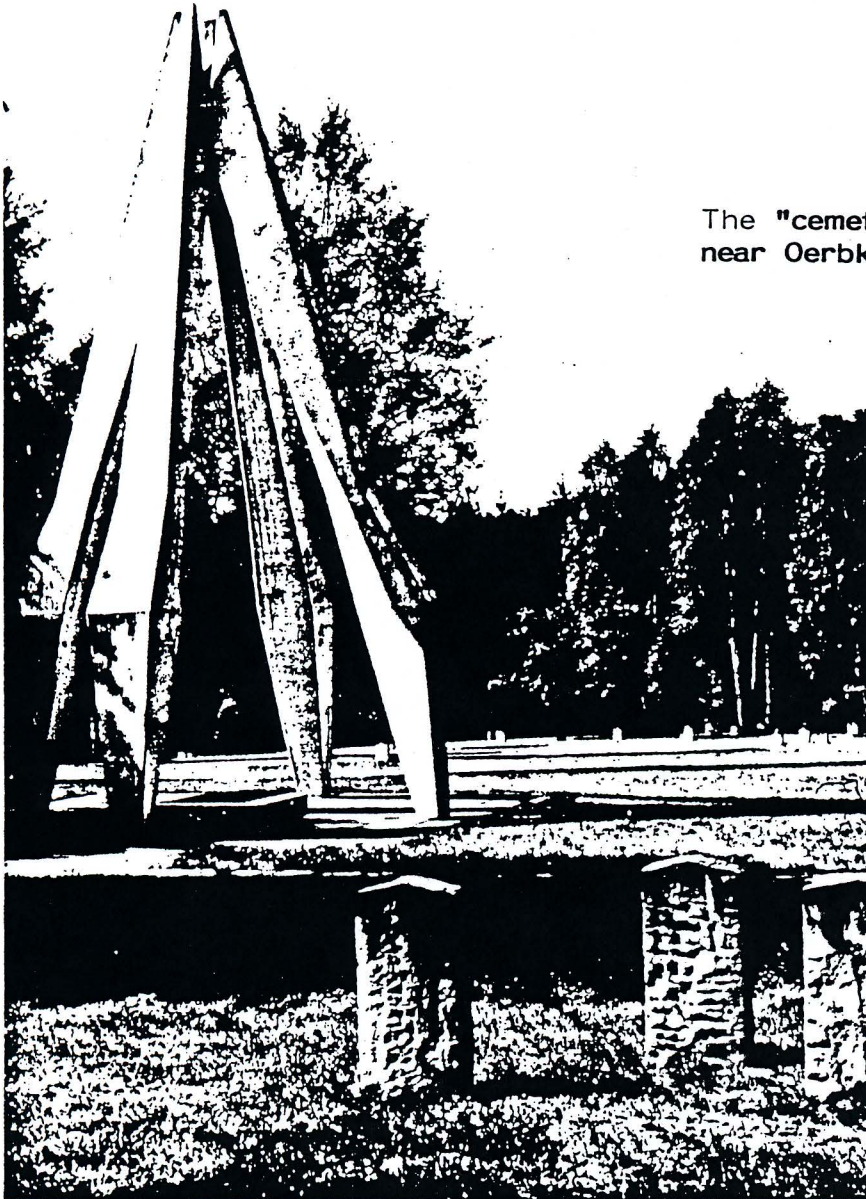
Map of Oerbke and surrounding
(indicating the way to the cemetery)

There are also signposts for this Russian war cemetery at Fallingb. (Centre) as well as at Oerbke.

There is an epigraph on the stone slab under the monument which says:

" IN MEMORY OF THOSE MANY THOUSAND RUSSIAN SOLDIERS -
LYING HERE IN PEACE - WHO DIED AS PRISONERS OF WAR "

.....



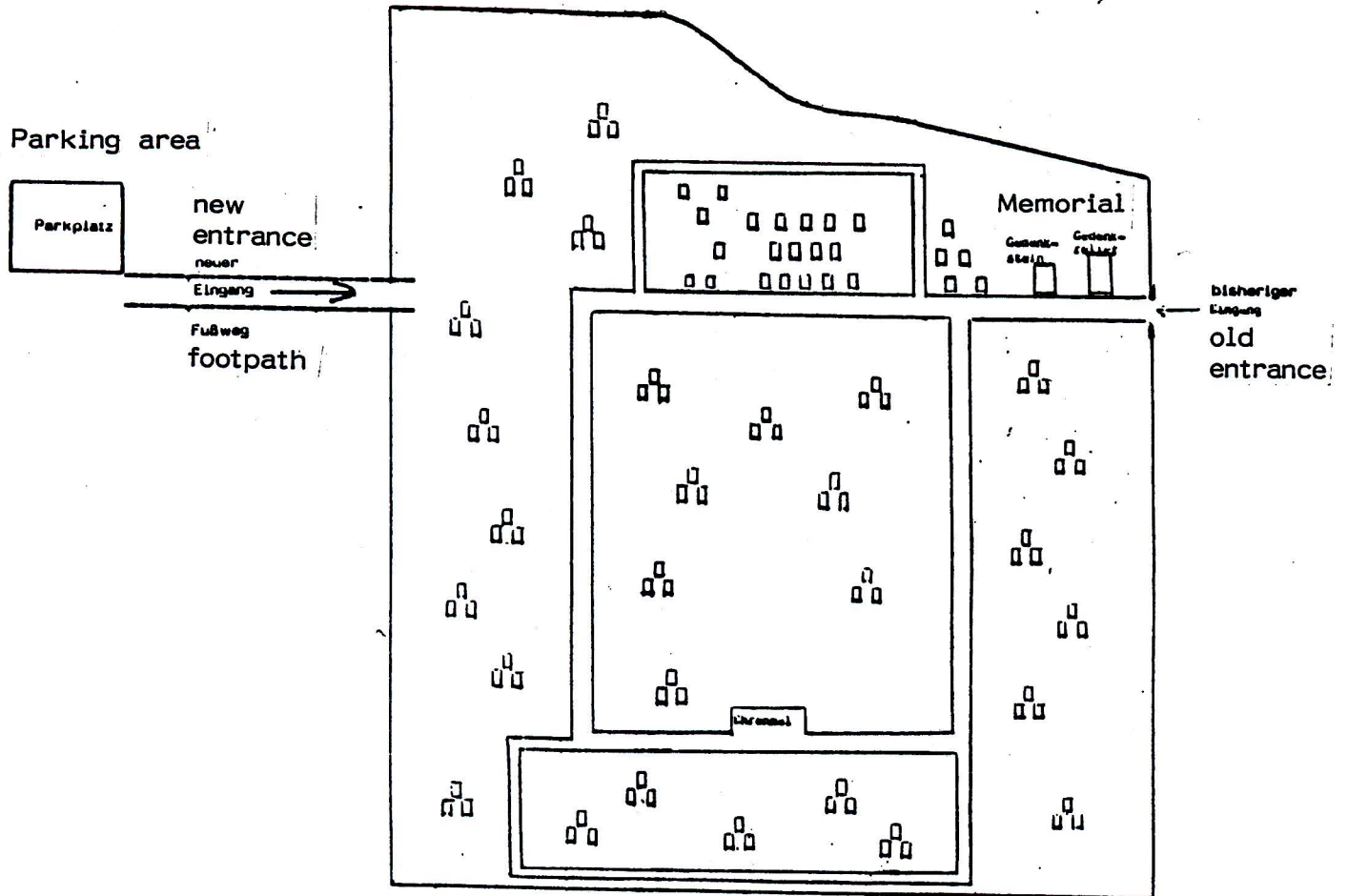
The "cemetery of the Nameless"
near Oerbke

The monument on the cemetery of Oerbke was designed by the artist and sculptor Klaus Seelenmeyer in 1964. It was built up by a firm named Dykerhoff. The monument is designed as a combination of plastic art (sculpture) and architecture. The four columns - combining at the top - symbolize an interior space in the middle of which lies the memorial stone. The four columns could also be understood as a big hand giving shelter.

The area of the cemetery amounts up to about 14 888 qm (square meters).

On the cemetery there are

- a monument
- a Russian memorial relief without any inscription
- a Polish memorial stone
- 109 gravestones with a total of 920 individual names



drawing of the Russian war cemetery at Oerbke
(not true to scale)

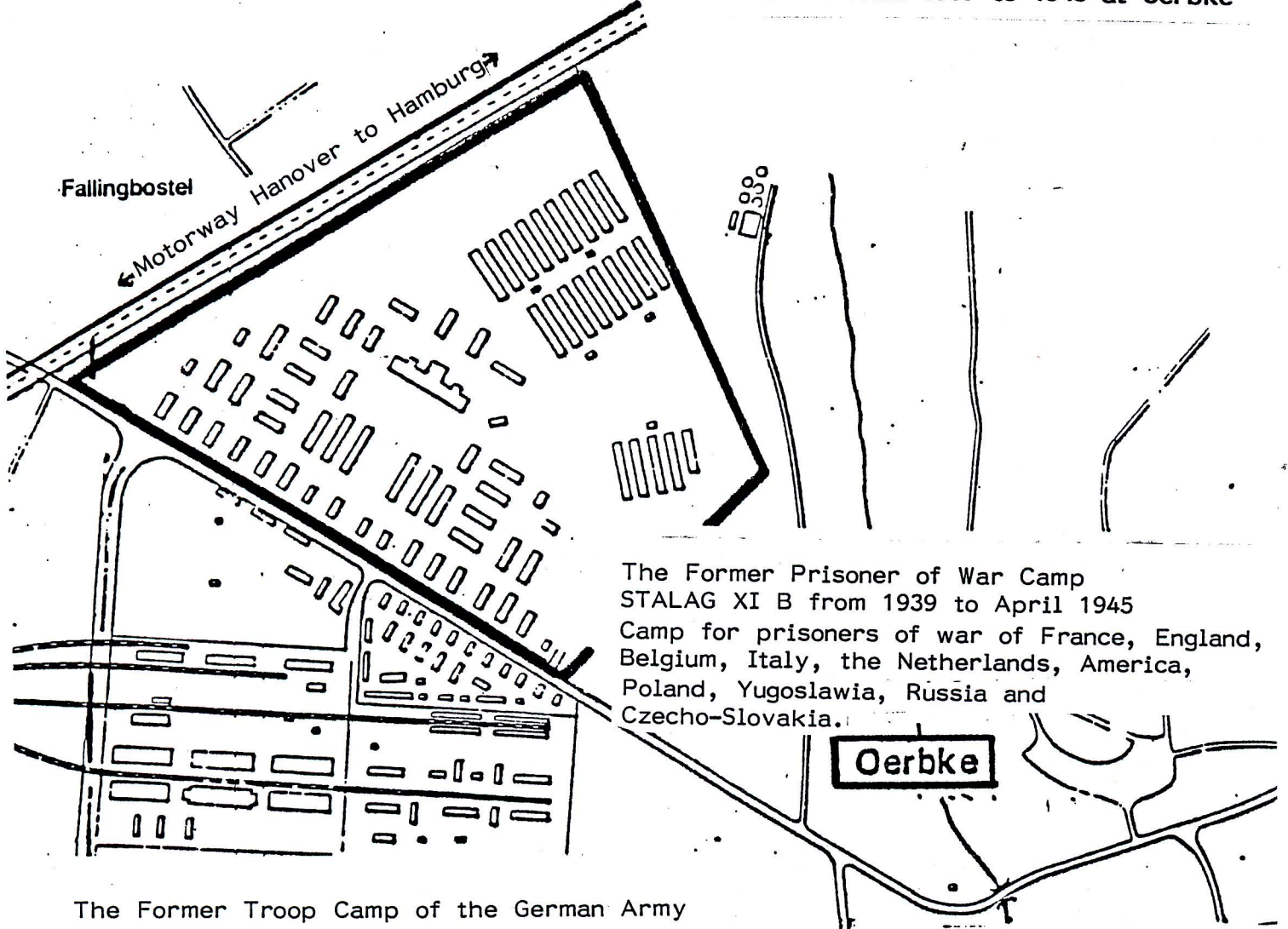
On the wall at the entrance there is an inscription which reads:

Kriegsgräberstätte Oerbke
1941 - 1945

(WAR CEMETERY OERBKE 1941 - 1945)

Between 1939 and 1945 there were 3 camps of prisoners of war (P.O.W.) at Oerbke: The so-called "STALAG XI B" (main camp) was built in 1939. It kept prisoners of war from France, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, the United States of America, the U.S. S.R., Poland, Yugoslavia and Czecho-Slovakia. Most of the prisoners of this camp, which existed till the end of the Second World War, were divided into abt. 1 170 fatigue parties (details) which had to work mostly out of Oerbke, for example in factories at Salzgitter, Wolfsburg and Brunswick (Braunschweig).

Reconstruction of the former camp of
"STALAG XI B" from 1939 to 1945 at Oerbke

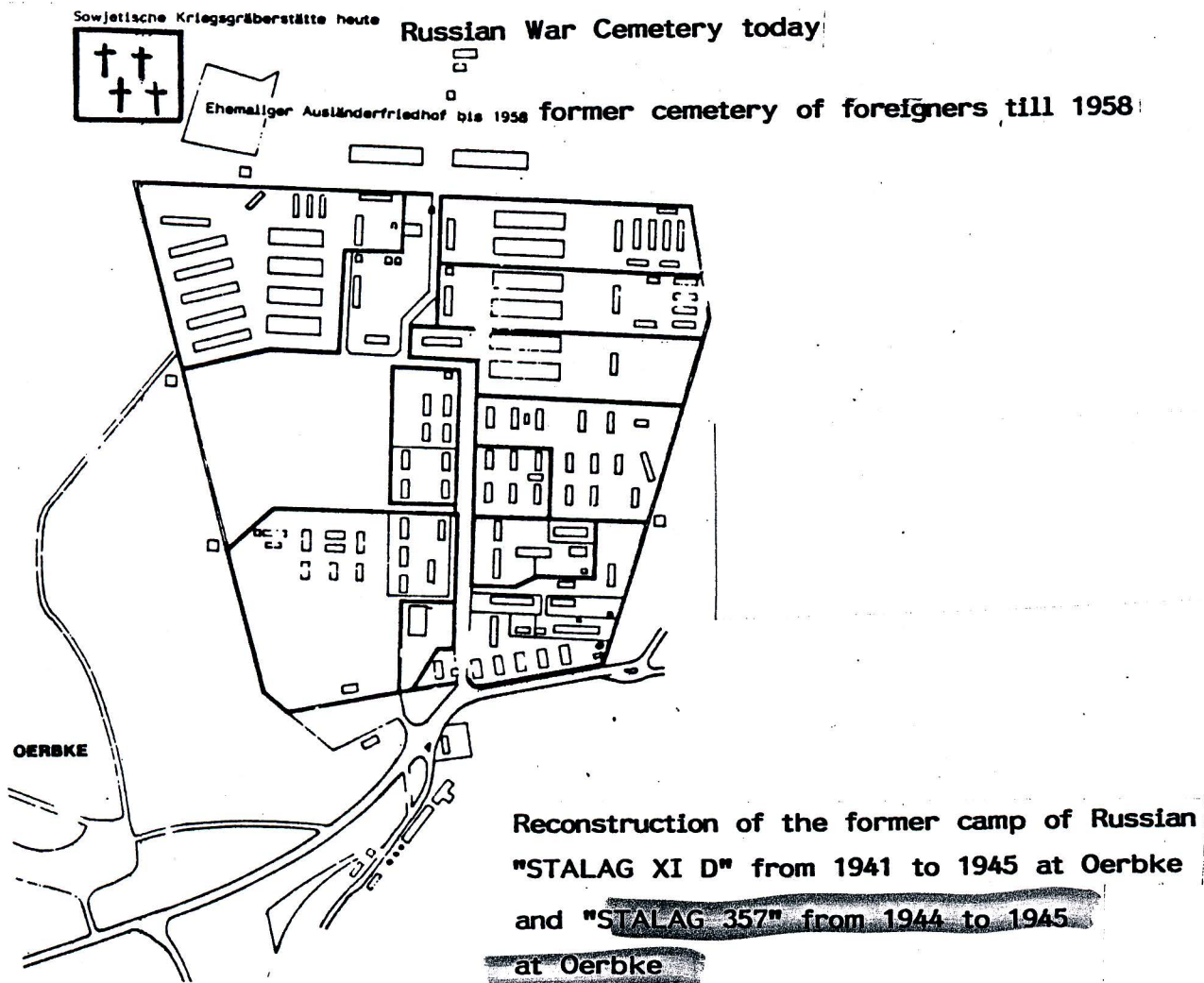


The Former Prisoner of War Camp
STALAG XI B from 1939 to April 1945
Camp for prisoners of war of France, England,
Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, America,
Poland, Yugoslavia, Russia and
Czecho-Slovakia.

The Former Troop Camp of the German Army

In August 1941 a second camp was built for Russian P.O.W.'s (prisoners of war), which was at first named "STALAG 321" but soon changed into "STALAG XI D" till its break-up. In both camps ten thousands of Russians were kept as P.O.W.'s, most of them died of hunger and disease. The hastily built-up barracks of the Oerbkean camp were only a poor and needy accommodation for the prisoners-of-war, who were totally exhausted and starved when they arrived at the camp after long transports in closed goods waggons. In the course of a typhoid fever (epidemic) hundreds of P.O.W.'s died sometimes on one day. The total number of dead prisoners is estimated to be about 30 000.

In camp "STALAG 357", which was transferred in August 1944 from Thorn in Poland to Oerbke, English, Americans, Canadians, South Africans and Australians were kept prisoners-of-war. This camp existed till the end of the Second World War.



The about 30 000 unknown Russian P.O.W.'s were buried in collective graves. Only a few could be buried in individual tombs. The 109 gravestones with individual names have - in most cases - found a symbolic place.

Therefore only few names of the buried Russian P.O.W.'s are known to us. During the early months of the German-Russian War 817 dead Russians had been registered at the registry office at Fallingbostel up to November 1941.



Polish memorial stone with an inscription translated into German:

1939 - 1945

"MAY YOUR MORTAL REMAINS BECOME THE SEED OF FREEDOM FOR ALL NATIONS"

In the grave register of the district of Oerbke the following entries are to be found:

<u>Nationality:</u>	<u>Total numbers:</u>
Yugoslaves	75
Polish	25
French	5
unknown nationality	12
unknown dead P.O.W.'s	18
Belgians	1
Slovakians	2
Russians: unknown - individual graves	94
unknown dead P.O.W.'s - collective graves	30 000 (about)
(9 711 qm)	
<u>Total number:</u>	<u>30 232</u>

Apart from the "Cemetery of the Nameless" there was also a cemetery of foreigners where dead prisoners of war from camp "STALAG XI B" had been buried. This cemetery was given up in 1958. 607 dead prisoners (Americans, Belgians, English, French, Italian) were put into other graves on other central cemeteries, whereas 127 dead P.O.W.s of different nations found their last rest-place on the "Cemetery of the Nameless" at Oerbke.



Russian memorial relief
(without inscription)

In 1965/1966 the memorial relief was put to its present place in the course of a reorganization of the cemetery. The memorial relief is made of stone.

In 1962 and 1963 about 120 young foreigners helped to extend and complete the "Cemetery of the Nameless". They took part in international youth camps at Oerbke, which were organized by the German War Graves Commission, the "Volksbund". The leitmotiv of these camps was "RECONCILIATION OVER THE GRAVES WORK FOR PEACE". Also in July 1987 36 young persons of Algeria, Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark, France, Norway, Hungaria and the Federal Republic of Germany worked for maintainance of the war cemetery. They took part in international youth camps at Oerbke, which were organized by the German War Graves Commission, the "Volksbund".

Responsible for the cultivation, maintenance and administration of this war cemetery is the government of Lower-Saxony, represented by the administration of the district of Lüneburg. The administration of Oerbke also gives information about the cemetery if requested.

A documentation about each camp at Oerbke is being made and will be published within the scope of a chronicle about the history of the district of Osterheide called "The Heidmark from 1938 to 1988".

Arranged by:

Hinrich Baumann

District Commissioner
of Osterheide

**Der Bezirksvorsteher
des
Gemeindefreien Bezirks Osterheide**

Landkreis Soltau-Fallingb.ostel

- Archives -

D - 3032 OERBKE, 26.07.1990
Post Fallingb.ostel 1
Gillweg 7
Fernruf (051 62) 3052/3053
West Germany

Mr. Alexander Gorashko
5224 Hardy Road
Vassar, Michigan 48768
U.S.A.

Reference

History of the former prisoner of war camps Stalag XI B Fallingb.ostel
from 1939 - 1945 and Stalag 357 Oerbke/Fallingb.ostel from 1944/1945

Subject

Your letter dated 14th June 1990

Encls.

- 1 publication of the Walsroder Zeitung dated 9./10.06.1990
- 1 leaflet about the War-Cemetery at Oerbke
- 1 Circular Letter
- 1 Heraldic Figure

Dear Mr. Gorashko,

I am very pleased being in contact with you by the Ex-POW-Bulletin, and I am very much obliged that you are prepared to be of assistance to my historical researches of the former prisoner of war camps at Oerbke/Fallingb.ostel from 1939 to 1945 with prisoners of war of 12 nations.

Please learn details about my investigations from the circular letter as attached.

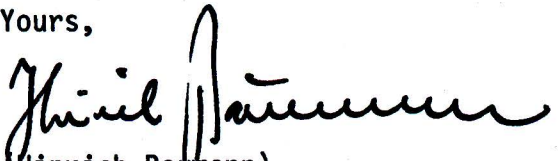
I am really interested in getting further documentation about the Stalag 357. Besides of this I will order your book directly at Mr. Rose in Indianapolis hoping for your agreement with the quotation of your statement about the Stalag 357 at Oerbke/Fallingb.ostel for my documentation.

Thanking you for your efforts, indeed, I herewith enclose a leaflet about the War-Cemetery at Oerbke as well as the heraldic figure of the Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide for your personal use.

I am looking forward to hear from you, and I remain,

With kind regards,

Yours,


(Heinrich Baumann)

**Der Bezirksvorsteher
des
Gemeindefreien Bezirks Osterheide**

Landkreis Soltau-Fallingb., Gillweg 7 - 3032 Oerbke

3032 OERBKE, 13.05.1992
Post Fallingb. 1
Gillweg 7
Fernruf (0 51 62) 30 52 / 30 53
Telefax (0 51 62) 32 01

Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide - Gillweg 7 - 3032 Oerbke


Mr. Alexander Gorashko
5224 Hardy Road
Vassar, Michigan 48768
U.S.A.

Sehr geehrter Herr Gorashko!

Ich danke Ihnen für Ihr Schreiben vom 17. April 1992.

Nach Rückkehr aus dem Urlaub Ende Juni werde ich Ihnen im einzelnen darauf antworten. Ich bitte Sie, sich bis dahin zu gedulden.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen
Ihr



(Hinrich Baumann)

(1305-10)

Konten der Bezirkskasse:

Volksbank Walsrode eG Nr. 220 900 400
(BLZ 251 923 50)

Kreissparkasse Fallingb. Nr. 2 040 533
(BLZ 251 523 75)

Postgirokonto Hannover Nr. 1519 99-302
(BLZ 250 100 30)

Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide

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Osterheide
Gillweg 7

3032 Oerbke

Tel. 05162/3052

Archiv

Gemeindefreier Bezirk
Osterheide

Lageplan
ehem. Kriegsgefangenen-
stammlager Stalag 357
Oerbke/Fallingbostel
(von August 1944 bis April 1945)

(Russentriedhof)

Ehr. Fdhf.

Ehr. Fdhf.

59.4

59.

58

58

58

Bensböhren

II A

II A

Marquardt's feld

Kiesgr.

Sandgr.

Oerbke

Auszug aus der Deutschen Grundkarte
Maßstab 1 : 5000 - Oerbke-Nord -
gefertigt 1955 vom Katasteramt Fallingbostel

zusammengestellt: Oerbke, 10.2.1986

(Baumann)

Regierungsamtsrat

June 14, 1990

Alexander Gorashko
5224 Hardy Road
Vassar, Michigan 48768

Mr. Hinrich Baumann
3032 Oerbke
Post Fallingbostal 1
Gillweg 7, West Germany

This letter is in response to your request to hear from former prisoner's of war from Fallingbostal, in the December 1989 issue of the EX-POW Bulletin. Yes, I was a guest at the Fallingbostal prison camp from about the beginning of March of 1945 until the beginning of April of 1945, when orders were given to evacuate the camp because of the advancing American and British Armies. I'm not really sure of the number of the camp that I was in. My small group of about 400 British and American airmen were put in a compound consisting of British Army POWs who were captured in Africa and Italy early in the war. My short stay at Fallingbostal was not a very happy one, as I was separated from the POWs that I knew and for me it was a lonely time.

I was a tail-gunner on a B-24 bomber flying out of Italy. On August 22 of 1944, our plane was returning from a raid at Blechhammer, Germany. We were attacked by FW-190s over Hungary and our plane was set on fire. The plane went out of control, rolled over on it's back and plunged toward the ground. When this happened, I was in the bombbay. Someone immediately opened the bombbay doors. As the plane rolled I fell off the catwalk I was standing on and got caught on something behind me. I hung there helpless, with thoughts racing through my mind of being in the plane when it hit the ground and exploded.

The plane made another roll and by some miracle I came free, floated out and immediately opened my parachute. The sudden stop of the chute opening caused me to black-out. Seconds later, I came to and saw the plane on the ground burning. I landed in a tree and was immediately captured by Hungarian soldiers and civilians led by a German Army sergeant. Only two from my plane survived. Other planes had been attacked and their crews forced to parachute. Most were soon captured. The captured Americans were shipped to Budapest for interrogation in the Budapest Prison. The enlisted men were shipped to Stalag-Luft IV in the Province of Pomerania.

Stalag-Luft IV held between 8,000 and 10,000 enlisted airmen, mostly Americans, in four compounds. In the winter of 1945 the Russian Armies began a drive into Silesia, getting there they divided with a drive going west and another going north. In early February, orders were given to evacuate the camp on foot walking west. Our compound left on February the 5th. After weeks of walking and sleeping in barns, I developed a case of diarrhea from sitting on the ground waiting for a train that never arrived. After several days of the diarrhea, I was getting weaker and weaker. I requested medical attention. Myself and two other men were taken to a nearby state farm that was being used as a hospital. It was operated by a British POW doctor and British enlisted men. This farm was about 16 km from Neu Brandenburg. After most of us recovered, we were put in railway boxcars, 50 men to a car with no water or toilet facilities. The train traveled west past Lubeck and into Hamburg. The next day we arrived at Fallingbostal.

I recall walking on an asphalt paved road paralleling the railroad tracks. An air raid took place and we watched the bombers from England pass over at a high altitude. I'm not sure if the tracks curved away from us or we turned left on a side road. As we walked, in a hilly area on our right we saw what looked like huge multi-story apartment buildings on a high hill. We passed a German military camp, then, we passed a prison camp on our right, I think it was 11B. Continuing on, probably a few kilometers later we came to a prison camp on our left. There was some kind of administration building in the front separate from the camp itself. We were put in a large white tent behind the administration building and next to the prison camp. We were taken into the administration building and given hot showers while our clothes were being deloused by heat in huge walk-in ovens.

We were moved into the camp and put in long one story stone buildings with 5 rooms, that each held 72 men. The prisoners already in the camp were captured in North Africa and Italy. They were allowed to keep all of their possessions and equipment and they really had the camp organized. It was interesting to walk about the camp and see tables set up with things

to sell for cigarettes or to trade for other things. There was some stealing going on, which we didn't have back at Stalag-Luft IV. The penalty for getting caught stealing was to spend a day standing in the excrement at the latrine while men came in and urinated on that person. No Red Cross parcels were given out at this time. The food was a piece of bread and two kohlrabi stews each day. It was not enough and we were constantly hungry.

Someone came around and read us the war news every couple of days. Somewhere around the beginning of April, the news was that American tanks were heading in our direction. Shortly later, orders were given to evacuate the camp. The English came around and told us to stall for time and perhaps we could get liberated. It didn't work, as troops with fixed bayonets came into the barracks and we decided to stop playing games.

We left the camp by a gate other than the one that we came in on. Once outside the camp we sat down and waited. After quite a delay, we moved off on a narrow dirt road going through a heavy wooded area, traveling in a northeast direction. An air battle was taking place in the sky above us and a FW-190 skimmed the treetops at a right angle to us and crashed nearby. Shortly later the road went upward to the top of a high hill. We could see smoke from where the plane had crashed. We went back down the road and took a different road still heading in the northeast direction. It turned dark and we still kept moving. We crossed over an autobahn and shortly later were put in a barn for the night.

As the weather was now warm, walking and sleeping in barns wasn't too bad. There were plenty of potatoes to cook up at most farms where we stayed, sometimes we got peas or barley. We received two Red Cross parcels at different times. We didn't stay at any farm too long, as, not to put a burden on any one farmer. After about one month of walking, sometimes in circles and sleeping in barns we were liberated at a small crossroads village near the town of Zarentin by a British officer and an American sergeant who drove into the village.

In a few days it was all over, we didn't hate anyone, we just wanted the war to end.

I'm enclosing a drawing of how I think everything was laid out.

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask.

I have written a small 131 page book about my experiences called "SURVIVAL". I only have five pages written about Fallingbommel, but, perhaps you might be interested in the whole story. I have not added things that are untrue just to make the book more interesting. I have told things as they actually were, but, please remember, your country was our enemy at the time. I do not sell the book myself and I think it's a trifle expensive. If you want to buy it just write and send \$10.00 dollars to:

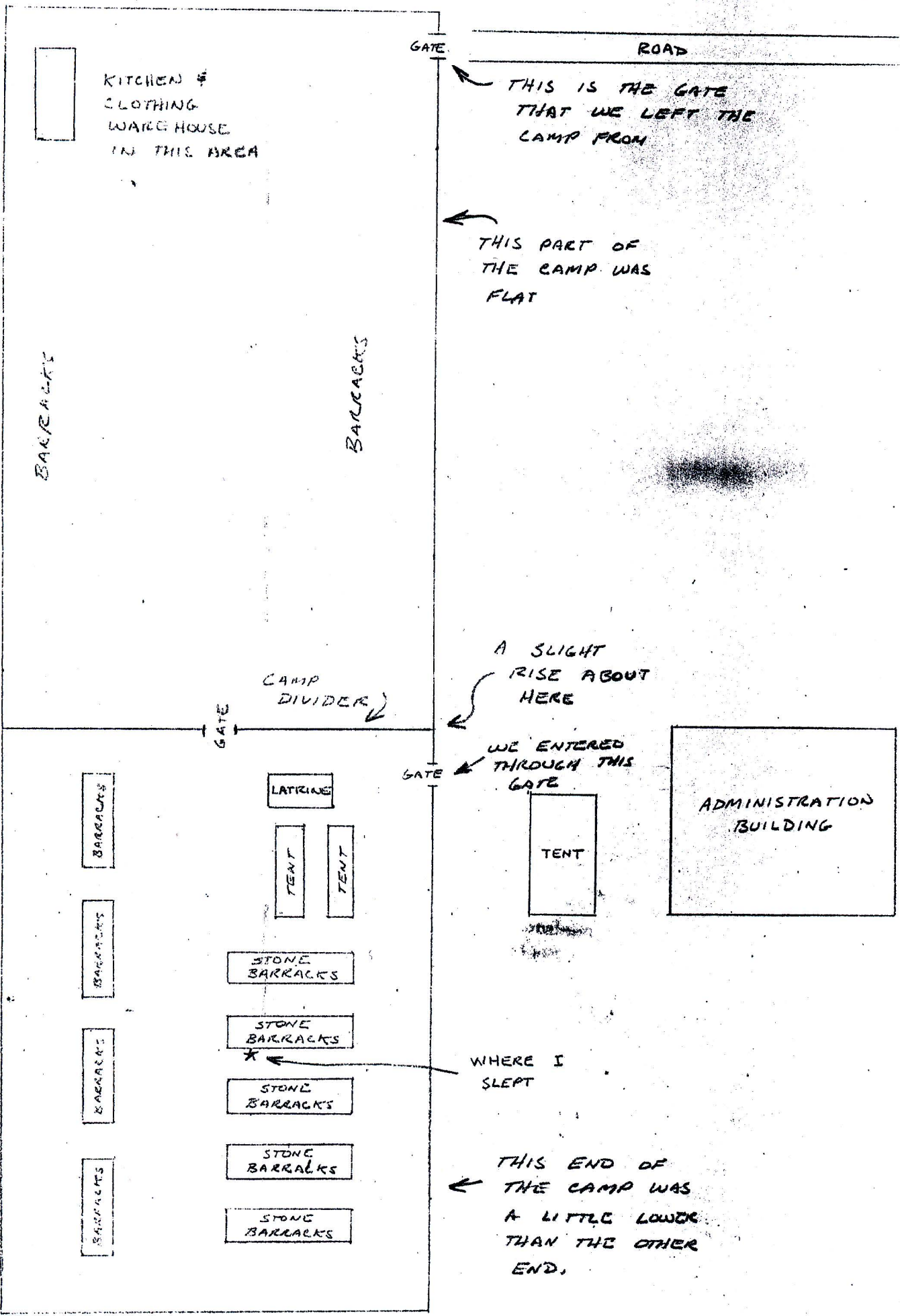
Stalag Luft IV, Leonard Rose
8103 E. 50th Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46226
U.S.A.

The profits from the book all go to maintaining the Stalag Luft IV organization.

I hope I have provided enough information to help you in your cause.

Sincerely Yours,

Alexander Gorsatke



★
THE FW-190
CRASHED HERE

HIGH
HILL

THE BARN
WHERE WE
SLEPT THE
FIRST NIGHT

AUTO BARN

THICK
WOODS



ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING

STALAG
357?

TENT

STALAG
11/B

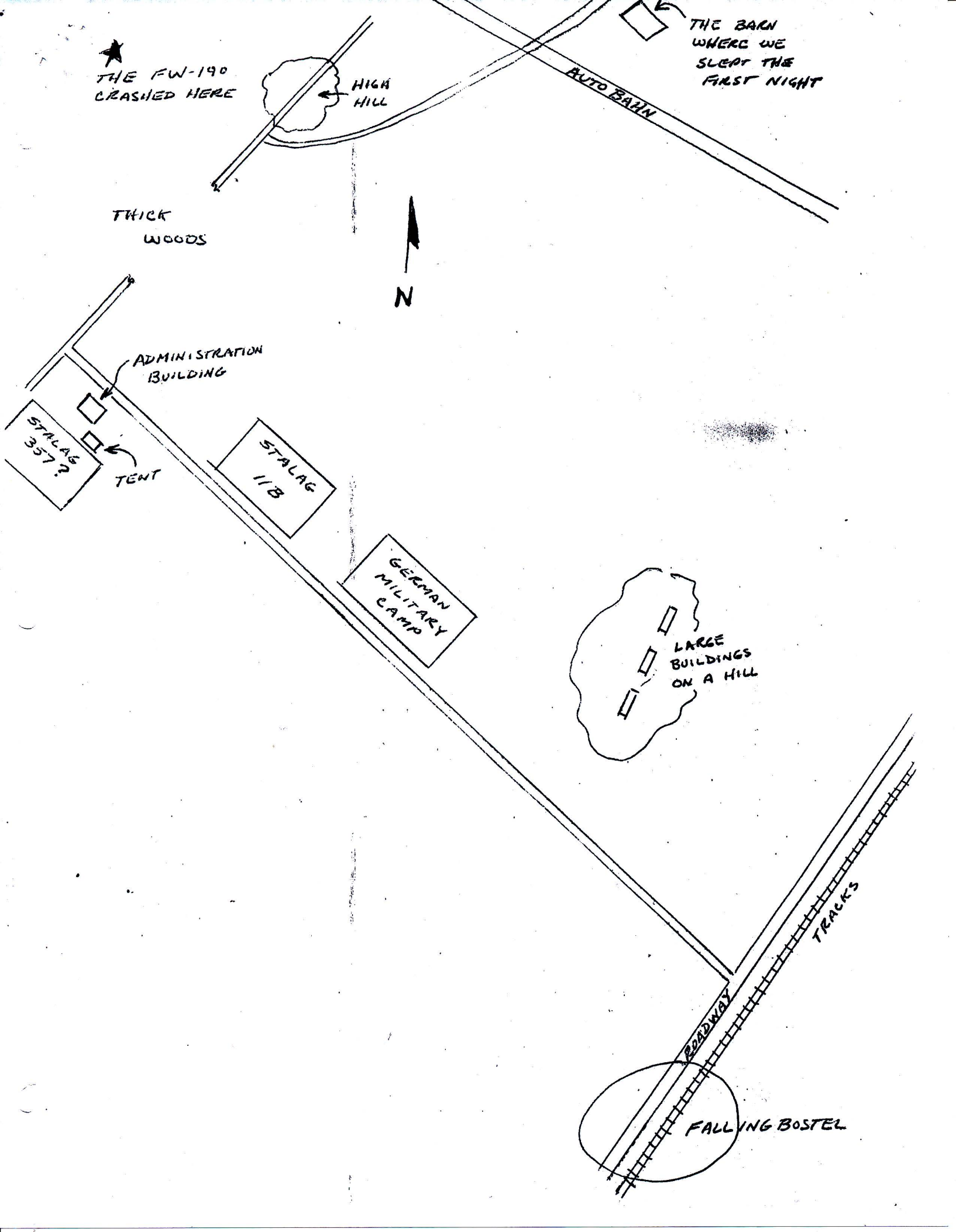
GERMAN
MILITARY
CAMP

LARGE
BUILDINGS
ON A HILL

ROADWAY

TRACKS

FALLING BOSTEL



**Der Bezirksvorsteher
des
Gemeindefreien Bezirks Osterheide**

Landkreis Soltau-Fallingbostel

3032 OERBKE,
Post Fallingbostel 1
Giltweg 7
Fernruf (05162) 3052/3053

2nd August 1989

C i r c u l a r L e t t e r

Reference

History of the former prisoner of war camps STALAG XI B Fallingbostel from 1939 - 1945 and STALAG 357 Oerbke/Fallingbostel from 1944/1945

Encl.

1 Publication of the Walsroder Zeitung dated 7th May 1987

The administration authority in the Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide - as part of the nowadays NATO-Training Area Bergen - has had its 50th anniversary on the 1st August 1988. Therefore since more than 4 years I am collecting all details available of these 50 years in the Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide for a comprehensive documentary chronicle titled

"Die Heidmark 1938 - 1988"

supported by the County of Soltau-Fallingbostel and the regional Ministry of Finance from Hanover. The chronicle will be issued as a book at a later date. Three big prisoner of war camps have been existing in the village of Oerbke, part of Osterheide, of the nowadays Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide, until 1945. My documentation will also include in a special section the former prisoner of war camps officially named by the German Army

STALAG XI B Fallingbostel 1939 - 1945

and

STALAG 357 Oerbke/Fallingbostel 1944 - 1945

In the prisoner of war camps have also been arrested many American prisoners of war until 1945.

For completion of my documentations I need the following documents:

1. Adventure reports re. the captivity and the liberation in April 1945 with photos at that time of STALAG XI B and STALAG 357 as well as personal photos as soldier in 1944/1945 and of today,
2. Photos (reproductions), newspapers, written depositions and personal documents (photostatic copies) re the captivity as well as a statement of the numbers of prisoners of war (photostatic copies by return mail),
3. POW-correspondence and envelopes marked by the STALAG XI B or STALAG 357 on receipt and for despatch (originals) (photostatic copies by return mail),
4. Addresses of American publishers and persons who have reported on the captivity,
5. Addresses of American prisoners of war who have been arrested in STALAG XI B or STALAG 357.


In the meantime I am in contact with former prisoners of war, archives and historians of England, France, Belgium, Poland, Italy, Soviet-Union, Canada America and the Netherlands.

All documents will be used only for the preparation of the chronicle and saved in the Archives of the Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide.

If you are in a position to be of assistance to my difficult historical work I would be pleased to hear from you soon.

With kind regards,

Yours,


(Hinrich Baumann)

Die Geschichte der Heidmark läßt sich nur durch Augenzeugen vollenden

Hinrich Baumann beginnt neues Kapitel über die Geschichte des Gemeindefreien Bezirks – Hilfe erbeten

Oerbke. Archäologen haben es oft schwer, der Vergangenheit auf die Spur zu kommen. Das ist allerdings auch kein Wunder, da sie oft jahrhundert- oder jahrtausendealte Spuren suchen. Auch Hinrich Baumann kennt diese Probleme bei der Geschichtsfindung. Die Geschichte, die er fortschreiben und damit für die Nachwelt erhalten möchte, liegt allerdings nur 50 Jahre zurück. Doch die Veränderungen und Entwicklungen, die der Gemeindefreie Bezirk Osterheide in dieser Zeit erlebt hat, dauern in anderen Kommunen und Ländern manchmal Jahrhunderte oder bleiben ihnen ganz erspart. Jetzt sucht Hinrich Baumann erneut Zeitzeugen, um seine 1984 begonnene Arbeit fortsetzen zu können.

„Die Heidmark von 1938 bis 1988“ soll einmal der Titel der Chronik lauten, in der die 50jährige Kommunalgeschichte des Gemeindefreien Bezirks festgehalten wird. „Ich bin jetzt bei den schwierigen Jahren“, sagt der Bezirksvorsteher des Gemeindefreien Bezirks über seine augenblickliche Arbeit.

Für die Zeit von 1938 bis 1945 gibt es keine Unterlagen mehr. „Alle kommunalen Unterlagen der damaligen Zeit sind bei Kriegsende vernichtet worden“, weiß Hinrich Baumann. Doch das kann den „Forscher auf den Spuren der Heimatgeschichte“ nicht entmutigen. Dazu besteht wohl auch kein Anlaß. Die Resonanz auf den ersten Teil seiner Arbeit, die „Erinnerungen an die Gemeinden der Heidmark“ war so überwältigend, daß Hinrich Baumann auch bei der Fortführung seiner Tätigkeit auf aktive Hilfe aus der Bevölkerung hofft.

Anläßlich der 50. Wiederkehr der Vertreibung der Familien aus den Dörfern der Heidmark wegen des Truppenübungsplatzbaues war Hinrich Baumann im Rahmen seiner Chronikarbeit mit einer Ausstellung an die Öffentlichkeit getreten. Von 557 betroffenen Familien kannte er die Namen. Mit 496 Familien trat er direkt in Kontakt. „Die Resonanz war erstaunlich gut. Alle waren bereit, mir für die historische Aufarbeitung Material zur Verfügung zu stellen“, berichtet Baumann. Ganz entscheidend seien auch die Gespräche mit den Augenzeugen gewesen. So konnten auch ganz persönliche Eindrücke der Betroffenen in die Arbeit einfließen.

Bis Ende 1987 hofft Hinrich Baumann die erste Phase seiner Arbeit abschließen zu können. Sie beinhaltet die Umsiedlung bis 1938. „Der erste schwierige Zeitabschnitt ist damit so gut wie erledigt. Nach der Chronologie steht mir jetzt die zweite schwierige Ermittlungsphase bevor“, berichtet Hinrich Baumann.

Alle Unterlagen verschwunden

Fingerspitzengefühl ist gerade bei geschichtlichen Forschungen im „Nahbereich“ sehr wichtig. „Ich möchte in meiner Arbeit niemanden an den Pranger stellen. Mein Ziel ist es, mit dokumentarischen Mitteln die Geschichte dieses Raumes für spätere Generationen festzuhalten. Wenn unsere Generation dies jetzt nicht tut, ist die Chance für immer vertan“, betont Baumann. Immer mehr Augenzeugen der damaligen Zeit würden sterben. Stück für Stück der Geschichte geht so verloren.

Auf die Berichte von Augenzeugen ist Hinrich Baumann gerade für den Zeitabschnitt, den er sich jetzt vorgenommen hat, angewiesen. Von der Bildung des Gutsbezirks Platz Bergen ab August 1938 bis zu dem Strafgefangenenlager bis 1945 soll der Abschnitt der Chronik reichen. „Sämtliche Unterlagen aus der kommunalen Verwaltung von damals sind verschwunden. Sie sind offenbar vernichtet worden“, erzählt der Oerbker Verwaltungschef. „Ich suche jetzt einen neuen Personenkreis, der eventuell im

Altkreis Fallingb. geblieben ist oder Personen kennt, die mir aus der damaligen Zeit Informationen geben können.“ Nachdem beim ersten Abschnitt der Chronik die Bereitschaft zur Mitarbeit so groß gewesen sei, hoffe er, daß auch für diesen Abschnitt das Interesse vorhanden sei, sagt Baumann.

Das Truppenübungsplatzgebiet wurde zwar 1938 geräumt, doch wurde es 1938 mit Beschäftigten der Kommandantur, der Heeresforstverwaltung und der Heeresstandortverwaltung besiedelt. Auch eine Außenstelle der Gutsbezirksverwaltung Bergen war im Truppenlager untergebracht. Im einzelnen muß es sich um die bewohnten Teile des Gutsbezirks Wense, Achterberg, Oerbke, Pröbsten, Böstlingen, Fahrenholz, Ettenbostel, Mengedorf, Ostenholz, Oberhode und Umgebung gehandelt haben. Besonders wichtig wären auch Auskünfte über ein mögliches Vereinsleben und das Schulwesen der damaligen Zeit. Bilddokumente aus der damaligen Zeit liegen überhaupt nicht vor. Sie wären für die historische Abrundung der Chronik sehr wichtig.

Truppenlager Oerbke

Die zweite Informationslücke besteht für das Truppenlager in Oerbke. Hier haben sich nach den bisherigen Erkenntnissen Baumanns zwischen 1936 und 1938 in der Bauphase des Lagers bis zu 4000 Bauarbeiter aufgehalten, die das Truppenlager der Deutschen Wehrmacht erstellten. Sie bauten damals auch das Klär- und das Wasserwerk mit. Besonders Bilder und Augenzeugenberichte vom Lagerbau würden Hinrich Baumann interessieren.

Er sucht den Kontakt mit Personen, die beim Heeresneubauamt Bergen, der Außenstelle in Oerbke oder später im Lager beschäftigt waren. Sehr viele Truppeneinheiten der Deutschen Wehrmacht waren jeweils kurzfristig im Oerbker Truppenlager stationiert. Von 1943 bis 1945 diente es als „Wehrrückbildungslager“ für ein Panzerlehrregiment. Gespräche mit damaligen Soldaten sollen viele offene Fragen beantworten helfen. „Jede Information über das Lager ist wichtig, weil beim Einmarsch der Briten sämtliche Unterlagen verbrannt worden sind“, sagt Hinrich Baumann.



Der Bezirksvorsteher
des
Gemeindefreien Bezirks Osterheide
Gillweg 7, 3032 Oerbke

Die Kriegsgefangenenlager

Die schwierigste Arbeit bereitet der wohl schwärzeste Abschnitt in der Geschichte des Gemeindefreien Bezirks, die Kriegsgefangenenlager in Oerbke. Alle Unterlagen der deutschen Lagerverwaltung sind vernichtet worden. „In den Archiven, die mir zur Verfügung stehen, habe ich noch keine Zahlen gefunden, die abschließend sagen, wieviel Kriegsgefangene sich wirklich in den Lagern befunden haben“, erzählt Hinrich Baumann.

Ein bißchen Licht ins Dunkel brachten mittlerweile viele Gespräche mit ehemaligen Kriegsgefangenen aus Belgien, den Niederlanden, Italien und den USA. Kontakte mit Kriegsgefangenen aus Frankreich und Polen bahnen sich nach Aussage von Hinrich Baumann an. Parallel zu der Befragung dieses Personenkreises sucht Baumann aber Personen aus dem hiesigen Bereich, die dort in der Verwaltung tätig waren. Wichtig wären Zeugen, die etwas über die Behandlung und die Lebensbedingungen der Gefangenen aussagen könnten.

„Die Leute müssen mir einfach helfen. Die Arbeit dient dazu, einen wichtigen Abschnitt der Zeitgeschichte unseres Raumes zu dokumentieren“, hebt Hinrich Baumann noch einmal hervor. Gesucht werden von ihm auch Personen aus der Bevölkerung, die Kontakte zu Kriegsgefangenen hatten. Bei vielen Handwerksbetrieben, Firmen und in der Landwirtschaft waren nämlich Kriegsgefangene aus dem Lager „Stalag XI B“ beschäftigt. Viele Kriegsgefangan-



Hinrich Baumann ist für jeden Augenzeugenbericht und Dokumente aus der damaligen Zeit dankbar. Er ist in der Verwaltung des Gemeindefreien Bezirks Osterheide in Oerbke, Telefon 051 62/3052, zu erreichen.

gene hätten auch bei Familien außerhalb des Lagers gewohnt.

Die Bereitschaft zur Mithilfe in den betroffenen Ländern sei sehr groß. Er habe schon sehr detaillierte Auskünfte über die Arbeitseinsätze erhalten. „Es ist zwar noch Zukunftsmusik, aber vielleicht werde ich das Thema der Lager in Oerbke als abgeschlossene Dokumentation in einem Buch einzeln abhandeln“, sagt Hinrich Baumann.

Bestärkt durch die Resonanz auf die erste Arbeit hoffte er auch diesmal auf

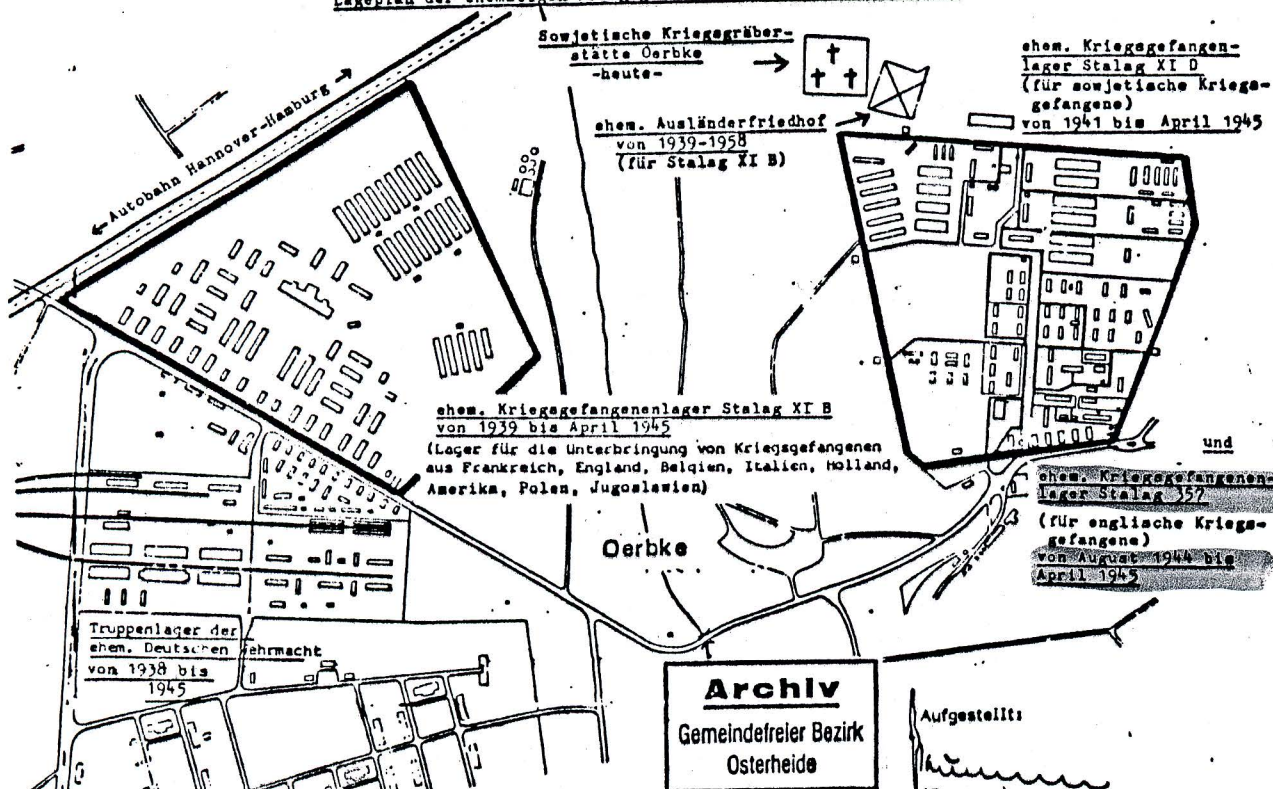
eine sehr intensive Hilfe aus der Bevölkerung „bei der Aufarbeitung der sehr wechselvollen Geschichte unseres Raumes“. Alles, was er an Unterlagen bekommt, wird im Archiv des Gemeindefreien Bezirks gesammelt. Das Archiv wird parallel zur Chronik aufgebaut.

„Was wir hier machen, ist nicht für uns, sondern für die nächsten Generationen, damit alle die Geschichte verstehen und daraus lernen“, beschreibt Hinrich Baumann das Motiv für seine Arbeit.

Eckard Schulz

Gemeindefreier Bezirk Osterheide

Lageplan der ehemaligen Kriegsgefangenenlager im Ortsteil Oerbke



Nach den bisherigen Erkenntnissen sollen dies die Standorte der Strafgefangenenlager in Oerbke gewesen sein.



Al Gorashko 1943

November 15, 2010

Hi Laura,

I got your card of appreciation. Thank you very much. I envy your beautiful handwriting. I hope you don't mind me typing this letter. I never was a good writer and its even worse now. Back in Army Air Corps radio school, we had to print when copying code, and the end working for phone company, we also had to print our trouble tickets, so over the years I lost what writing skills I had.

Back at the end of W.W. II, people were so sick of the war that they soon forgot about what many soldiers went through. A new generation is showing their appreciation. Being treated as a hero is great, but I never forgot that I was a survivor and not a hero. I still think about our ball gunner who never had a chance. Normally, it took a minute or so, with help, to get out of the ball turret, and with the plane catching fire and rolling over, he probably didn't know what was happening. All ball turret gunners should get a special medal for just being in the thing.

I don't remember if I told you, but last year I was at a meeting of a historical restoration society in Saginaw. One of the ladies had read my book and thought it was great. She made arrangements through the Byron Center Historical Society in cooperation with the Grand Valley University to have me interviewed in a TV studio by a college professor. This was for a Veteran's oral history project. It was in December and she drove me down. I talked for over two hours until my voice was giving out. Afterward, I wasn't satisfied as I was questioned too long about my Air Corps experience and not enough about combat and the POW experience. This information will go into some kind of archives in Washington.

About my book, many people have read it and commented about, how I wrote like I was talking to them. The word got around by word of mouth and they would buy a book for a brother or father as a gift. I was selling books, but not very fast. A couple of months ago, a fellow who has a computer repair shop in the village of Reese, got a copy of my book. He loaned it to a fellow, Mark who has the local hardware store a block away. Mark was so taken by the book that he had to meet me. When he did, he asked me if I could wholesale my books to him to sell in his store. I cut my profit to give him a price and we agreed to try selling ten books. By the way, I was selling my books for \$17.00 and he was selling them for \$20.00. With the price I gave him he was making \$5.00 per book profit.

A few days later, A friend asked me to attend a local EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) meeting and say a few words. This is all I planned to say and didn't even bring any of my books. Well, during the meeting it was announced that I was the speaker of the meeting. I didn't know what to say. I started out by saying, "I'm not a pilot, but I have always been interested in aviation." "As a kid, I used to hang around Barry Field and watch airplanes take off and land." Then, I said, "I was drafted into the Army and asked to be a radio operator on a bomber." That did it, I talked for about an hour, about combat and being a POW.

Sometimes, I had them laughing. When I finished, they stood up and applauded. They wanted to buy a book and I didn't bring any. I told them to go to the hardware store and they could buy one, also I said to hurry as they only had ten books for sale.

The next afternoon, I get a phone call from a wife of one of the pilots at the meeting. The hardware store was out of books and her husband wanted one real bad. I told her that I was bringing more books and to go back to the store and they will have them. So far, I have sold 50 books and I am running out. It's interesting that if you have the right market, the books sell like hot cakes.

Two days later, I got a letter from the leader of the EAA group thanking me for speaking and telling me that was the best meeting they ever had. Perhaps, it was exaggerating a bit, but it sure made me feel good. One of the reasons I feel good is, I have had a couple of school teachers read my book and have asked me if I had it edited by anyone. I did have one gal who writes poetry help me and she wanted to make so many changes that it really wasn't me any longer. It may have been correct English, but it wasn't me, so I stopped and finished it myself.


It has come to my attention that a rare book store was selling a booklet that I put together using the Xerox machine. It was put together in 1992. Leonard Rose of Stalag Luft IV had a few hundred printed up and was selling them. The book store is selling a copy for \$55.00. I have enclosed information taken off the internet.

On the subject of Stalag Luft IV, the new national commander of the American ex-POWs, Morris Barker was one of my roommates at the camp.

I remember reading some of the stuff you wrote regarding the book about your father and it was great. If there is any way that I can help you, do not hesitate to ask. I have had problems with printing companies. You pick out what paper you want and they steer you to standard stock paper that they make more money on. Doing this by mail or phone can be very frustrating.

I have thought about your father. He was a real nice guy. To lose a wife and marry her friend, he must have been a jewel. I hope someday, we can have another get-together and discuss your book. We can even drive down. Enjoy the holidays.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'AL' with a flourish underneath.

You Searched Used & Out Of Print for: Survival, Alexander Gorashko

1. Survival

by Gorashko, Alexander, w/drawings (Illustrator)

Pub. Date: 1992

Publisher: Self-published

Condition: **Very Good**

Price: **\$55.00**

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Seller Comments

w/drawings USA 1992 Softcover Revised edition 131pp 5.5 x 8.5", Yellow Cardstock Covers. Saddle stapled. 2nd revision of 1988 edition published under the title "Kriegle" Real Stalag stuff, by a downed American airman, who was 20 years old when the war ended! Scarce first hand history. Condition: Minor edge wear. Partial price sticker on back top left cover else VG. SKU 25923 ** We ship our books in sturdy corrugated cartons, paper items in stiff "Stay Flat" envelopes. (We do not use padded envelopes.) Free tracking (Delivery confirmation) on all USA orders.
Condition: Very Good

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Al Gorashko 1994



Esther Gorashko
holding a meeting

November 5, 2011

Hi Laura,

Thank you for the Veteran's Day card.

I hope everyone is well. I was nice to hear from you. I sure wish I could write as well as you do! I was hoping that you would continue your father's story even though he is no longer with us. Yes, you can use parts of my story as long as they are used as I have written them.

You know, I can't remember what I did last week, so I don't know if I told you the latest about my book sales. I deal with a guy, Jeff, in Reese, a nearby village, who has a computer repair shop. I can't remember if I gave him one of my books or sold it to him. One day I came into his shop and he said, "I loaned your book to my buddy Mark who has the hardware store down the street and he wants to meet you." With that he got on the phone and called Mark. A few minutes later, Mark comes in and gives me all kinds of praise for writing such an interesting book. During our conversation, he asked if I could wholesale some books, so he could sell them in his hardware store. We agreed on a price and I gave him 10 books that he was going to sell for \$20 apiece. I had been selling them for \$17 and \$20 if I mailed them.

A few days later my neighbor who is interested in flying and has an ultralite airplane, asked me if I wanted to attend an EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) meeting, guys who build their own airplanes. My neighbor said that they might ask you a few questions and I answered, "ok."

When the meeting got going the chairman said, "the speaker of the evening is Al Gorashko who is going to speak about his combat experience in the Air Corps and as a POW during W.W. II."

That took me by surprise, and I wasn't ready, so I started "I'm not a pilot, but I have always been interested in aviation." Once I got composed, I got into my story. I guess I talked for about 40 minutes. When I finished they all stood up and applauded. Now they asked, "do you have any books for sale" and I didn't bring any. I told them that they could buy a book at the Dunn Hardware in Reese.

Late the next morning, I get a telephone call from the wife of one of the pilots. She said, that the hardware store is out of books. I told her to go back in the afternoon and they will have more. The next day I got a note from the president of the EAA meeting telling me that, that was the best meeting they ever had. The hardware store sold about 30 books in a week or so and I was sold out. People were still asking about buying one. After some thought, I have decided to print 100 more books. They are now being printed and should be ready in about two weeks.

About 12 years ago, I put together a booklet using Xerox copies that was being sold by Leonard Rose who was running the Stalag Luft IV outfit. It was written in a different format. Recently, a friend found one of the books advertised for sale on the internet at an Antique book store in N.H. It had a good write up "Real Kriegie Stuff" they said, and it was selling for \$55. It did get sold.

When we got back from the war back in 1945, people were happy that we survived, but they were sick of hearing about the war, and soon forgot about us. Now we have a generation that knows little about W.W. II and they are interested, especially when some of us are still alive. It makes me feel good when they call me a hero, but I really was just a lowly gunner. Back in 1944, flying combat, when the flak was exploding sometimes just feet away, I was about as scared as one could get and there was no place to hide, I certainly never considered myself as a hero.

Enclosed is a copy of the same picture that you sent me, if I recall I touched up something in the background and I think its great.

I'm looking forward to reading your book. From the bits that you sent me a while back I sure was impressed with your writing and talent for getting information.

If you have a book signing, let me know and Esther and I can drive down and help celebrate.

We hope you enjoy the holidays.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Al' with a flourish underneath.



Lawrence Witt

Alexander Gorashko

November 18, 2011

Hi Laura,

I was cleaning out my file cabinet and I came across a newspaper article and thought about you being a woman and writing a war story. I remember reading some of your stuff and it was good. Years ago when I was still putting my story together, I figured that I was not much good at English and I had better get some help. Esther worked in Saginaw and had female riders. One of them was good at English, so I enlisted her to correct my writing. In the military we speak in brief sentences like "I flew as a tail-gunner, in a ten man, four engine bomber." Well, she changed that to several sentences. Continuing, I realized that she was changing my story from masculine to feminine and quit using her. Then, years later I tried another girl who was a poet. In my story I mentioned a water tower sitting on a hill that was a point of orientation anywhere in the camp. She added legs to that water tower. It sat on the ground with no legs. I did accept some of her changes, but not all of them. When you dress up a story its seems ok if you stay with the facts

The writer of the enclosed article was an idiot trying to impress the editor of the Caro newspaper so she could get a job. She was living with next door neighbor and found out about my book. And I loaned her a book to read. She decided, that to write about the whole book was too much, and was only going to write about the day I got shot-down. Weeks later she came over with her write up. I pointed out many mistakes and even wrote out the corrections. She must have had a deadline for she turned it in with all the mistakes.

When read it in the paper I just about had a hemorrhage. She added so many things that were not in my story and got everything wrong. She wrote that I was shot down at Blechhammer, (spelled wrong) Germany and under my picture I was shot down over Hungary; I'm looking at the Danube River when we were attacked. We were about ninety miles away; I was unconscious, coming down in my parachute. I was unconscious for only a few seconds at the time the parachute opened and knew everything that happened, coming down; It was our longest mission and there was no shortcut.

I would say she screwed up about 98% of my story. I went and had a talk with the editor and he offered a retraction, but it was too late for the deed was done. Needless to say, no longer would I let a woman help me work on my war story (unless they were older and educated, like you). Deb Heatley never did get a job with the newspaper.

I just took delivery of one-hundred books and they are pretty well put together. It cost me about \$900 which is good, as I have had quotes of over \$2,000. This is because there are some color pages and this requires more labor. I never realized that there could be so many versions of the color of sky, for the printed book version is not quite the same as sky color that I submitted. They will be sold at the Dunn Hardware store in Reese, Mich. for \$20. I'm making a "Local Author" sign for the store right now.

Don't let anyone get hold of the enclosed newspaper article, as I am ashamed of such a thing. I worked for the telephone company for 41 years and the newspaper has me working at the channel 5 TV station.

If I can help you with your story please do not hesitate to ask.

Best wishes for a nice holiday.



He'll never forget...

World War II bomber remembers the destruction

VASSAR - Ernest Hemingway once defined courage as grace under pressure; and if that definition is the criteria, there were many who fought and lived through World War II who can be said to be walking examples of that grace. Alexander Gorashko of Vassar is one of these.

To look at him now, one can almost see the tall blue-eyed tailgunner whose plane was shot down over Bleckhammer Germany 45 years ago.

He was a man whose old-school attitude compelled him to do his duty with no complaints and no whining, an attitude as trim and clean as his features.

It all began for him on August 22, 1944.

He was 18 years old when taken from his family in the relative comfort of a home in Saginaw to a much less amenable environment over the sea.

He was trained first in Texas and Illinois and then sent to Southern Italy to join the 454th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force.

He said he will never forget the destruction that existed in Naples at the time.

The ruins of a once great and sophisticated metropolis, the remnants of a recent bombing, and a warning of his future.

It was becoming clear to this young man that his immediate adulthood or his death would be the only two options open to him.

Gorashko flew altogether 13 bombing missions, becoming accustomed to all the hardships and inconveniences of war in the air: the electrically heated 'bunny' suits that made him sweat in the relentless cold of high altitudes, his inability to eat any breakfast on flight days because of the movements of the plane and the delicacy of the human stomach.

He said he can still see the empty shell cases that became his lavatory in flight, and he still can see the flak exploding around him with nerve-wracking suddenness.

And he still remembers how tempting was the thought to just get up and run away.

All of this occurred during his last mission as well.

After accomplishing their end of the mission to destroy synthetic fuel stockpiles over Bleckhammer, the Liberator began a shortcut flight over Hungary.

Fuel was low, and this was the quickest way back to base.

Gorashko remembers looking out over the Danube one instant, feeling the jar of the explosion the next; and then the plane on fire, the plane losing altitude and flipping over so that it was headed upside-down toward earth.

From his compartment at the back of the plane, he looked out. The plane was on fire.

He grabbed a chute and tried to bail out.

But he got caught on something in the bomb bay as the plane had rolled over.

Keeping his wits about him, he realized that he was fairly close to being underneath the plane's fuel tanks when another roll of the plane freed him. In an instant, he was out of the plane and into a free fall.

His parachute's handle did not work at first and he began to float head down.

In a few seconds, when the chute finally opened, he was a man who was experiencing the ecstasy of Heaven and what he describes pure silence punctuated only by the eventual sounds of a crackling on the ground.

And then he lost consciousness.

He awoke feeling nothing but the single dimension of fear.

He was hanging by his parachute from the top of a tree. Below him was a glimpse of Hell - a German soldier with his rifle pointed at a young American whose shaking made the branch vibrate.

He was strip-searched in front of a whole village of Hungarians, but never found out the name of the village.

As a prisoner of war, he was taken back through Germany, and finally, after much walking and some miserable train rides, ended up near Hamburg at the end of the war.

In forced marches alone, he traveled over 500 kilometers.

The deprivations he suffered along the way were legion.

His meals consisted for the most part of a cup of potatoes early in the day, and then later often a cup of weak soup made from vegetable peelings.

Sanitation was very poor and he had little water during the forced marches.

It was always cold being a Northern climate and he often slept in the straw of the barns of German farmers.



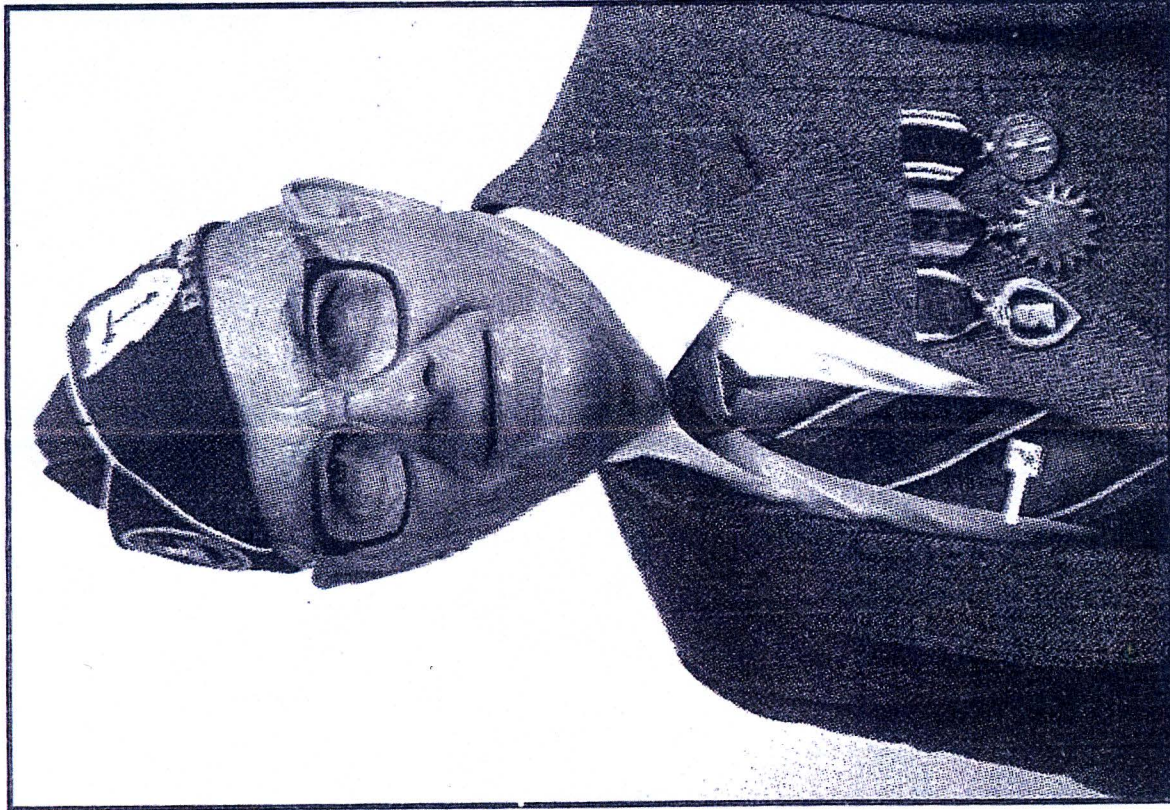
See VETERAN E-2

THIS WHOLE STORY IS A LOT OF BULL. THE FACTS ARE

J WAS
NOT
HAPPY

day night at the home of Eugene

HE WILL BACK TO THE UUCK AT 11



ALEXANDER GORASHKO of Vassar (shc:wn then and now) had to bail from a burning plane in World War II over Hungary. His parachute saved his life, but he was unconscious when he landed -- and awoke to enemy rifles pointed at him. This is but one exciting tale told inside this edition. Join the Advertiser's newest correspondent, Deborah Heatley, as she unfolds the story on page E-1.

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I H L V I S C V L P L S E F I L Y S Y I

August 27, 2012

Hi Laura,

What a pleasant surprise to get a copy of your book, Ignoring my other mail, I immediately began thumbing through it, engrossed in what you have put together. Thank you for thinking of me. The next day I began reading it from cover to cover. You have written a classic, for it reads very easily and is very accurate in every detail. I learned many things that I didn't know. You have done a lot of research! With the hard cover and perfect binding it is made to last. It's too bad that your father didn't live to see your finished book. From my experience, you must have self-published as trying to get a publisher interested is like pulling hen's teeth. If I recall, I think there was a publishing company in Saline. In my case, in order to put together an affordable book, I had to resort to soft cover with perfect binding that wouldn't last very long. I donated a copy to Saginaw's Hoyt Library and they asked me, "do you want it in general circulation or in the reference room" and I told them "it wouldn't last a year in general circulation."

Getting information from Joe O'Donnell and John Anderson is about as good as you could get, for they were there at Stalag-Luft IV participating in POW activities. Probably most of the others are dead by now. I met Joe at the Niagara Falls Convention and have all of his books.

I wish I had known your father longer. It's too bad that we didn't meet back at Stalag 357. That was a cold, unfriendly place and I didn't know a soul, I sure could have used a friend. The Limeys kept to themselves, except to try and share American unclaimed parcels and one who became friendly in hopes of getting my 38 cigarettes that were going to be rationed out.

My only surviving crew mate, Charlie and myself were not very close. In the holding pen of the Budapest prison a bunch of us became friends and Charlie and I always stayed with these guys as much as we could. When we moved from Lager B to Lager C, we were lucky in the fact that most of us were able to get in the same room together. When we evacuated the camp on February 6, 1945, I guess we figured that somehow we would be together in the same marching group of Kriegies. It wasn't until several days later that we realized that several guys had to form a combine to take care of each other and by then many of us had been disbursed. We stayed at the same farm together a few times and got separated and never saw each other again. Several years after the war, I called Charlie at Oxford, NC on the phone and he invited me to come down and we would go fishing together. I couldn't make it. Another year Charlie and his wife were visiting a tobacco area in Canada where he once worked and they came through Michigan and stopped for a visit. He developed a lung problem probably from working with tobacco and was on oxygen. He passed away in 2001.

Larry and I, we were both at Brussels, Camp Lucky Strike, Le Havre, Camp Kilmer, Fort Sheridan and staying at the President Madison hotel at Miami Beach. I was there when V.J. Day was declared in August of 1945.

I remember the food we had at Camp Kilmer, it was AAA steaks served by German POWs. We didn't come back to the U.S. on the same ship, but I think we were on the same train traveling from Camp Kilmer to Ft. Sheridan, Illinois.

As long as I knew that everyone at home was ok, I really was not in a hurry to go home. I stayed around Chicago at the YMCA Hotel for a few days before hitchhiking home. I remember carrying my duffle bag with a German sword sticking out the top and people were looking. Meeting two girls in Chicago. I was supposed to get a soldier for one of them and we had to toss a coin for which one was to be my date. Also, Hitchhiking, and getting picked up by two girls in a convertible near Benton Harbor. The driver's dad owned the Awrey Bakeries in Detroit and she told me to come around and her dad would give me a job. Those were the good old days, I survived the war, was looking forward to collecting all that back pay and living a good life, with not a care in the world.

I was a little surprised that Larry was a waist gunner and flight engineer on a B-17. In case he is needed up front for engineering duties, he has to go through the bomb bay to get there? On B-24s which is what we flew in, the flight engineer is the top-turret gunner and valves and sight gauges that he used for transferring fuel were only a few feet away.

At Stalag-Luft IV hardly anybody talked about getting shot down, and crew members being killed. In my case, we didn't know if anyone, or who was killed, until after the war was over., but because of the circumstances the chances were at least several were killed, but you didn't know who. I always felt bad thinking about our ball gunner getting killed. He was cooped up in the ball when the ship went out of control. With no way to get out and no parachute, he probably had about 20 seconds of horror. He was a good Catholic and read his bible before each mission, while waiting for the rest of the crew. His favorite song at the time was, "I'll be seeing you" and every time I heard it on the radio, tears would come to my eyes thinking about that poor guy. I hated the bell turret and thank God they didn't put me in one.

Quite a few years after the war I decided to make up a personality profile of the guys in our room at Luft IV. With all of our nights of talking, I knew something about everyone of our Budapest gang and where they were from, and made up a list. We had 23 guys. Year after year they kept dying off and now we are less than half.

One of our roommates, Morris (Tex) Barker from Texas was a quiet guy never saying much. After the war He became a successful mining safety engineer and married a school teacher. During that time he got involved with the Ex-POW organization and last year became the National Commander. The Ex-POW convention was at Dayton, Ohio and I just had to drive down and visit him. I hadn't seen him in 67 years and we enjoyed the visit. His wife had passed away, but his two daughters were there and they are darlings, one is a doctor and the other is a teacher

I think I told you, I had a third printing of my book and its being sold at a hardware store in Reese, MI for \$20.00

I am in contact with a Hungarian fellow who goes to bomber crash sites digging up things that were missed during the war. He wanted a picture of me wearing my flying coveralls, which I kept as a remembrance. He wanted to buy them for a display that he had. They are full tears and worn out spots, and of course I wouldn't part with them, for they show what I went through in those times. A short time ago, I was going thorough some old clothes and I came across a pair of identical Air Force issue coveralls that I bought war surplus and forgot that I still had them. They had tar and grease spots on them and really no longer usable. I sent them to the cleaners which didn't take the tar off, then washed them with gasoline to get rid of the tar. There were some missing buttons. I found some the exact size buttons but not the right color, so I mixed up some model airplane paint and painted them the right color. I sent the coveralls to my friend and he was overjoyed. He calls us airmen, "American Hero's." He has invited me to visit many times and would take me to our crash site. If I were younger, I would take him up on it. He once sent me a piston that came from our crashed bomber. He has only daughters, and every Christmas I send money to buy candy for his kids.

I am curious as to when you went to Germany. Was it after your father passed away or before? If you have a short write-up of the trip I would like to read it. At one time I was planning to got to Hungary to visit the spot where our plane went down, but it never materialized.

If you want to send a quick E-Mail message to me our address is alesthergor@yahoo.com
Don't forget to use the H in Esther's name. Some people spell the name "Ester" and don't realize why message didn't go through. I have slow dial-up and don't use it much.

Your book about your Dad is great and you are an angel for holding your father in such honorable esteem. I will keep your book in a place of honor in my library and remember Larry's family. May the Good Lord watch over all of you.



called 7/2/03

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INBOX: Continuing information (1 of 9)

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Date: Sun, 29 Jun 2003 22:53:28 -0500
From: "John H. Anderson" <elja22@gtcom.net>
To: lawe@umich.edu
Subject: Continuing information

E-Mail from John H. Anderson

2 unnamed text/html 5.19 KB

As I read through your e-mail message many thoughts come to mind. Let me see if I can get them down so that they make sense to you and your father. Somewhere I have a map of the journey we took. I believe I got it when I was at the campsite in 1994. Someone had traced the route with a colored pencil and I remember thinking it was not exactly the same towns that I went through. Since then I have found out that as we divided up into smaller groups many different paths were taken. John L. Lenburg was in my room, Room 3 of Barracks 1, and he wrote up his experiences in a book he called Kriegsgefangenen #6410. He and I arranged to meet at the national convention in Louisville in 2000. I had tried to invite all the men in my room to a convention in Birmingham a few years earlier but had no luck. I met John at the reunion we always have of Stalag Luft IV and spent about an hour with him afterwards. On the march he ended up on Easter, April 1, at Stalag XI A at Altengrabo and left there on April 11 to be liberated on April 26 at Bittefeld. John and I agreed to correspond and compare notes when we got home. Unfortunately, he died about a month later before we quit having fun. I do have his book which is quite impressive. The best book I have read lately is The Last Escape by John Nichol. This John was the first British airman shot down during the Gulf War and was a prisoner of the Iraqi for about 45 days. He wrote of his experiences in Tornado Down. He has a website which you might check out. He and I had corresponded in 2001-2 so I was glad to be able to meet him on my recent trip to my base in England. His book was printed in England and does contain a lot of information about British prisoners, but he also includes a lot about American airmen as well. A new edition of his book printed in this country just came out at the first of this month. My children had bought me a copy while we were in England and I just finished reading it last night. It does contain a few items that I gave him. I think he has the best grasp of the entire POW situation that I have read. The best description of Luft IV I have read is A Domain of Heroes by Carrol F. Dillon whose brother was kept in Luft IV but sent by train to Barth, Luft I, at the end of January. In my case I was sent in the first contingent of men sent to Stalag Luft VI at St. Wendel. This camp was not recognized until Roland Geiger wrote to our organization and his letter was read at the convention in Tacoma in 1997. The Luft VI camp at Heydekrug near Lithuania was evacuated starting July 13. The Americans were sent to Luft IV and had the bayonet run from Kiefheide, the railroad station, to the campsite. Your father may remember when they arrived. I was at Luft VI at St. Wendel only 20 days before we had to evacuate and take a 5-day train ride to IV. I would like very much to be able to talk with your father. I still have copies of The Holy City and other numbers we sang in camp. He is the first one to admit that he sang in the choir. We did have a lot of fun and he probably attended morning devotion every morning after roll call like I did. I have a list of all the men on the church council and Fred Anderson is one of them. At the convention in Tucson in 2001 I got to lead a group of singers, mostly women with a few men (none from the choir), as we sang about six songs we had sung in camp. I think it sounded better in camp! My phone number is (850) 648-8533. Ask your father if he remembers Padre Jackson. I still have notes from some of his talks. I would love to talk with him about our life in camp. I am also looking forward to more information on Dr. Caplan which is my present project. I have received over nineteen replies to my request which I hope to turn over to his daughter Laura. We are also working on trying to get Dr. Caplan honored in some way. He was a true hero and saved many lives. Thanks for your interest. John H. Anderson

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PEOPLE TO BE MOVED BY TRAIN - TRAIN DID NOT SHOW UP AT NEW BRANDONBERG I CHOOSE TO WALK. REMEMBER WALKING THAT DAY THEN NOTHING UNTILL HAMBURG @ NIGHT THEN BY TRAIN TO FALLEN BUSH EL AAR DAYLIGHT AM OPERATING HEAVY EQUIPMENT SAID TO BE BURING PRISONER PE LOUSED + SHOWER. CONCERNED ABOUT GAS

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INBOX: You made my day! (1 of 13)

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Date: Mon, 21 Jul 2003 15:59:30 -0500
From: "John H. Anderson" <elja22@gtcom.net>
To: lawe@umich.edu

Subject: You made my day!

2 unnamed text/html 2.68 KB



Thank you for writing out your father's recollections. I had a telephone conversation with Dr. Caplan's daughter Laura last week and will try and get all my material to her by the end of this month. I do not believe she has made up her mind yet as to how she will get the Journal published. The AXPOW organization has a Foundation which might be able to help with the expenses. I counted 364 different names mentioned in the Journal. He does not always list the hometown of the soldier but often lists the home state. I count 133 examples of places including German towns. Laura said that she will plan on being at the reunion of Stalag Luft IV which will be held Friday, October 3, 2003 at the convention at the Hyatt Regency in Greenville, SC. Is there a chance that your father could attend that reunion? Does he ever get to a meeting of a local chapter of AXPOW?

He looks hale and hearty and healthy in his picture.

What really made my day was the reading of the letter your father wrote his Mother on Nov. 9, 1944. That is the first affirmation that I have seen that we really did have a choir. I looked in my diary and on Nov. 5 the choir sang at church service at which Padre Morgan spoke and in the afternoon the choir sang again at the singspiration. The musical results were better after a pump organ came into our lager on Nov. 22. I played the organ on Nov. 26 but I believe some one else did that on most Sundays. On Dec. 3 we sang *The Bells of St. Mary* which I had written out for the Catholic choir and then decided to use it myself with a string trio. The organ part was written first on the back of a Chesterfield wrapper and then transposed to a large piece of paper. I still have the music for 4 1st tenors, 2 2nd tenors, 2 1st basses and 3 2nd basses.



Ask him if he remembers that day. Thank you for thinking of me and sending me that information.

John H. Anderson

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Handwritten note: 4 o'clock with arrows pointing up, down, left, and right.

John Anderson – interview July 10, 2004

John Anderson is a former Luft IV POW. He now lives in Mexico City, Florida. He was in 388th Bomb Group. John was in St. Wendel first (Sept. 1944) transferred to Luft IV September 1st.

Took the 40 minute walk from the railroad station to the camp. Processed in Searched got potatoes for dinner slept in tent cold

On Sept 9th he writes in his journal “Morale very high”

On the 12th John writes Red Cross parcels are here

On the 14th he writes Out of Bread cold walked, catholic mass in the morning Sunday went to church evening church services

18th Bible Study feels good nice weather walks around compound

On 29th moved to new compound (Check dates)

John was in Lagar A Sept 9-16 lived in a tent because of overcrowding. Went to church once there

Then moved to C Lagar

John’s philosophy during captivity was to keep busy-no time to think about problems

Lagar C

Red Cross Room was a fairly large room. Probably would seat 400 men. In the same building was the kitchen. Anderson believes the men who worked in the kitchen also lived there. There was a library in one corner of the Red Cross room. The library was very popular. The men would line up to get in – as much as an hour wait. In December of 1944 the Germans built a stage – 18” high. They had lighting but no curtain.

Goon Baiting

In November a pump organ arrived and placed in the Red Cross room. John Anderson was practicing Christmas Carols. A couple of the German guards came in. John was playing Silent Night. One of the guards played Silent Night. Then, John played Hark, the Herald Angels Sing. Then, the guard played Hark, The Herald Angels Sing. John played, Glorious Things of you are spoken. Then the guard again repeated the tune. John then played The Star Spangled Banner. The guard again repeated the tune. Of course he didn’t realize what he was playing. The other men in the room turned and

looked on with shock and astonishment as the German guard played the National Anthem of the United States of America.

John was choir director. The number of men in the choir varied from about 15 to 24 men. They rehearsed in the red cross room in the evenings. M-W-F was choir rehearsal, T-Th was Glee Club rehearsal. The barracks closed at sundown and that's when the men were locked in for the night. Men doing rehearsal were able to stay and rehearse. Got to go back to their barrack when rehearsal was over.

Choir Sung: Jubilate-Now on land and sea descending

Guards:

Big Stoop head many stores about what happened to him. Head was found in bucket someplace. Picked on everyone.

Scar face: Lloyd knew him. dad and Anderson do not remember him

Hauptmann (captain) Wienert tall-stood very erect had been wounded Kaplan had a hard time getting to see him. When he did Wienert insisted he speak German even though he could speak English

Incident two or three planes doing acrobatics over camp one plunged to the ground people cheered all were sent inside (Sept 1944??)

Two medics lived in Anderson's barrack. Shot down in September of 1939. Good voices. Sang solos.

Minstrel Show:

Tom Edwards produced the show

Black faced singers

The show was given 3 times and was filled to capacity each time "captive audience" (Ha!) As there were about 2000 men in the compound the show had to be given that many times so everyone who wanted to see it would be given a chance.

Jazz Band

played and put on a program

Glee Club

Sang fight songs from various universities. At first misunderstanding with guards almost put an end to it "Who gave you permission to sing fight song?"

bad memories John was given plaque "May all your bad memories be replaced with good memories" says he does remember the good ones more.

Concerned about the 11,000 former POW's who have no benefits

Bible:

the camp had three English padres. Jackson, Davis, Morgan replaced Jackson.

Anthony Jackson was a favorite. A very good speaker. When ever he gave a sermon a German interpreter had to be present. This didn't seem to faze Jackson. He continues to speak his mind. Once was speaking on the Book Of Daniel. Unfavorable compared Germans to

Morning devotions were held every morning after roll call. Met in the washroom of Barracks 10 (*maybe 9) Sang a song or two. Someone would read from the Bible. Lasted only about 15 minutes.

Bible study met once a week. led by a Padre.

The church council (of which John was a member) met once a month. They planned the services that would be coming up.

Substitute preachers were assigned to preach in case the Padre didn't make it to the service on time. He had responsibilities in four Lagars and was always concerned he may not make it in time. Different people were assigned dates to have a lesson prepared-just in case. John Anderson was scheduled to be substitute preacher on February 4th, 1945. There was a big crowd that day. Everyone knew the camp would be vacated soon. The uncertainty causing many to turn to their God in worship.

Anderson started the service with the hymns. When Padre Morgan didn't arrive he added some more hymns. He then had the men scheduled to read the Bible passages go ahead. Finally Padre arrived. Asked Anderson to play a few more hymns while he got ready. There was a lot of singing that morning! Anderson did not have to give the sermon that day. However, he kept it. What is salt after it loses it's flavor?. What does God owe us? What do we owe God? 49years later John was asked to give the message at the 1st Methodist church in Mexico City Fl.

In January a Sunday school class began. About 20 people came and then they got more and more each time.

Vespers were held in Anderson's barrack each night. The tail gunner on his crew led the Vespers. Vespers were held about 6 pm. Lights out were @ nine. Started reading the book of Proverbs.

One of Padre Jackson's sermons – both dad and Anderson took notes on this one

The seven dual calls in the Bible – When God calls people twice:

1. Abraham Abraham faith Genesis 22:11
2. Jacob, Jacob Sacrifice Genesis 46:2
3. Moses, Moses Holiness Exodus 3:4
4. Martha, martha, knowledge Luke 10:4 and Matthew 26:7
5. Samuel, Samuel, service I Samuel 3:11
6. Simon, Simon Suffering Luke 22:31
7. Saul, Saul glory Acts 9:4

Jackson was taken out of the camp after a run in with the Germans he was replaced
In the winter lock up was at about 4 pm. To pass the time- had round table discussions
on different topics. Held debates one night a week. Each man took turns. Topics: How
to ride a horse. Spelling Bees.

cards: Pinochle-Anderson's crewmates decided they would play pinochle until the war
was over. They did so. When they stopped playing the score was 30,000 points to
25,000 points.

Ken one of the medics began a lecture series on January 1st. Topics regarding health.
The best things to eat in the red cross parcels (milk, cheese) Diet. Diptheria. Once John
asked Ken if he would give a lecture regarding sex. John wrote on the Blackboard "Sex
Lecture Tonight Barracks 1. Ken was embarrassed so John had to change it. Never got
their sex lecture.

Food:

Hunger: Red Cross parcels. Only times they got full parcel all to themselves was at
Thanksgiving and Christmas. Usually half rations. Split your portion with someone else.

Usually get

- can of salmon

-jelly

Only time he remembers the men talking about women was after they got those full
parcels. "Typical men, stomach first, then women." (laughter)

The room leader would go get the bread ration. German's would come around with a big
cart stacked high with loaves of bread. Divide it up as fairly as possible: after cutting it
up as equally as possible. deck of cards – put cards down beside each slice. Then men
would draw card and get the bread that matched their card.

Never full always thinking about food.

Anderson filled one page in his notebook with a lists of his favorite breakfasts he had at home– waffles still a favorite

Lights Out was at 9 o'clock. Everyone was still awake. Would often talk about food
One night one of his roommates described in minute detail how he would eat a Snicker's Bar after the war was over. He would place it on aluminum foil and put it in the oven until it started to melt. Everyone listened intently, imagining the whole process. They all thought it was a pretty wonderful idea!

Initial interrogation: Knew everything about the plane he was in. Where it was in formation
names of everyone

Anderson taught music:

The camp had a phonograph and some records. Three or four of the records were classical music. Anderson used these when he taught a music appreciation course.

Also gave a series of lectures on music theory. drew staff lines on cigarette paper. to be part of the class you had to come to each session with two cigarette papers.

instruments came in November

Many camps had courses for credit. Luft IV did not. John wanted to start classes. felt he was qualified as he already had a degree in music. He had permission to start classes in March. Of course this never happened as the camp was vacated by then.

Chris Christenson was the YMCA representative to the camp. He wrote the book, "Seven years among the prisoners" He was from Denmark. At Christmas John Anderson had an opportunity to meet with him. He said Luft IV had less supplies and equipment than any camp he visited. Said he would try to get hymnals.

In 1994 John saw Chris Christenson. Told him you still owe me some books.
Christmas Eve night – held a meeting in the center of the compound sang carols brass band provided the music. At the end they sang God bless America

In 2000 John visited Chris in Denmark. Chris had it rough at the end of the war. He was captured by the Russians in Berlin. Was held as a prisoner for a year after the war was over.

How Belief in God affected prisoners:

In John's barrack – one crewmate went into the seminary after the war. Founded KJNP (King Jesus North Pole) radio in Anchorage, Alaska. Don Nelson. After his experience he preached for a living. Gave Bibles away. Flew over Russia and dropped Bibles near the shore.

Another fellow John knew during training. he didn't have any morals at all. He was a very hard person to live with. After training in was assigned to the 100th Bomb Group in England as a waist gunner. Disaster stuck on his first mission. For some reason there was only one parachute available to the two waist gunners. this man wrestled the other gunner, got the chute, and bailed out, leaving the other gunner to his death. When he landed he broke his leg and was in the same hospital as John's pilot. When they met up with this fellow at Luft IV that is how they found out their pilot was alive. Addison became a changed person. He studied the Bible and became an authority on the life of Paul. He was a member of the church council.

The engineer on John's plane became a missionary in India after the war.

Nelson – ball turret gunner liberated on May 2nd. Went to a warehouse and got some guns. Stole watches from people that lived in the area. Got religion and changed his life. Once, many years later, he took a trip to the Dead Sea. While on a boat ride on the Sea he met some German tourists. He confessed what he had done after the war and told them he was sorry for stealing. The German tourist also admitted fault. Some they were confessing their sins to each other and finding forgiveness on the Dead Sea.

Many lives were changed as a result of their experience as POW.

Jews: Anderson said Dr, Kaplan was a Jew but was not punished for that. Dr. Kaplan came in November. According to Laura Kaplan, the German's were surprised that a Jew could be a doctor.

When Anderson first arrived at Luft IV and was in the Vorlager being processed in. They were standing naked in alphabetical order. big Stoop was reading off names. The man standing next to John had a Jewish sounding name. Big Stoop walked over, picked the man up, and threw him against the wall. John was scared!

Economy

No canteen. Economy based on cigarettes.

5 packs of cigarettes were in a Red Cross parcel. If you shared a parcel with another you got 2 ½ packs a week.

John made special dessert Spear Goo ¼ can of milk, sugar, prunes, etc.

Note: I took my dad, Lawrence Witt, to visit with John Anderson at the Crown Plaza Hotel, Dayton, Ohio, on September 13, 2004

Anderson and Witt were friends at Stalag Luft IV, Lager C. They had not seen each other since the day they were marched out of Luft IV in February of 1945.

John conducted the choir at Stalag Luft IV. Lawrence was a member.

Laura

E-mail: October 29, 2007

Laura,

You may use whatever I have done if it is of help to you. I did not get interested in recording the events that happened while I was in the military until my pilot decided to have a crew reunion at the 388th Bomb Group Reunion in Valley Forge, PA in 1991. I did not even know about the Bomb Group Association until after I moved to Florida in 1983. My engineer sent me information about it and I became a life member. They have an informative newsletter which comes out four times a year. I wrote up my experiences of my crew training and combat experience so I could give a copy to each of my crew members at the meeting. I relied primarily on the entries I had in my diary. I entitled the paper "Radio to Crew". Two of my crew were deceased, two were still to be discovered and only four showed up for the reunion. Each one that attended got a copy. Eventually, all the crew got a copy. It took quite awhile to locate the two missing members. McIntyre, the waist gunner, lived in Columbus, GA where I had lived for 13 years before I moved to Florida. Now, he has moved and I have lost him again. Only the engineer and I are still alive now. I saw Maurer for the first time since the war at the AXPOW convention in Denver in 2005. He had lost his wife and was living with his daughter. It was good to see him, but he has lost much of his memories and it was difficult to communicate with him.

Another organization made up of members of Stalag Luft IV started up about that time (1991) with Leonard Rose as the guiding force. When I heard about a trip back to the campsite in 1993 I thought of going but a serious car accident prevented me from going. I did go back with a group that I met in New York in 1994. Among the group was Joe O'Donnell who was responsible for the arrangements, and I still keep in contact with him. He has published a number of books about Luft IV. I got to meet Chris Christiansen on that trip which made it worthwhile. You may have his book Seven Years among Prisoners of War. I got him to sign a copy for me when I met him again at his home in Viborg, Denmark in 2000. In 1994 our crew had their 50th-year reunion at the 388th meeting in Richmond, VA. To prepare for this I wrote up my memories of being a prisoner of war and entitled it Life as a P.O.W. A copy went to each member and each of my six children. Now I only have the two books left but I refer to them many times for events that happened over 60 years ago. If I can help you in getting information about the camp on any particular day just ask. Two others of my roommates have written books that I have and I can consult them also.

You may use whatever you think is of interest. It seems that my recollections of Luft IV are better than they were at the time. I did a lot of teaching music in addition to leading the choir and the glee club. We put on a minstrel show in January three times but I was not too impressed with the performances. I recall being hungry most of the time, but if I kept busy it did not bother me much. Only the march was really a bad time. The box car ride at the end of the march was the most traumatic event of my life. That was inhumane treatment. However, I lived through it. Surviving was the important thing, and while I always thought the government would want an accounting some day it has never happened. I guess we shall never know the complete story of the events of the march. I think it is good that you and others are at least trying to relate the occurrences so that others can read about them.

If you have any questions just ask.

John H. Anderson

e-mail from John H. Andersons to Laura Edge dated 29 October 2007

elja22@gtcom.net

September 1, 2010

Laura,

When I was at the national convention in Greenville, SC in 2003 or maybe it was at Arlington, TX in 2004 a fellow named David Dorfmeier addressed our group of alumni of Luft IV and said he was writing the story of his father who was the Barracks chief of Barracks 3 in C Lager. His father had made a tape of some of his experiences but never finished the story. I was interested in his problems and tried to help him in covering some of the incidents that happened in camp. David finally retired from the service and now lives in Paso Nobles, CA. He has finished the story and is now editing it for publication. He has sent me a copy of each chapter as he wrote it for my comments and suggestions. He and I differed on the experiences at Fallingbostel. In reading your story I think that a lot of fellows were in 357 and I had never heard of 357. I was certain I was in Stalag XI B and stayed in a white tent. After a couple of days I was moved to the tent next door which was the convalescent tent. I am uncertain as to whether my three crew members visited me there or not. I did not mention it in my diary and I think I would have if they had come. My engineer is still alive but when I saw him again in Denver in 2005 he would not talk about the war so I did not press him.

I left the main column when Dr. Caplan put Steve, the British medic who lived in my barracks in C lager, in charge of a group of 20 prisoners and we left by train. The idea was to not have to walk but to rest and this would be of value to the men who were having trouble marching. March 2nd was the last day I marched with the group. The doctor allowed me to ride in the wagon where I really froze since I did not exercise. Our group got split up when we had to change trains at Uelzen and seven of us missed the second train. This was on the 23rd. An air raid siren went off and we were asked to go to a shelter but we decided not to which our one guard did not like. We later caught up with the rest of the group. On the 28th my group which was now a large group went to a railway station which according to the doctor's Journal was called Ebbsdorf. We were placed in boxcars. My car only had 55 men because we were part of the hospital. Other cars had 60. The train did not move until after midnight of the 29th. We were like a bunch of animals in that car. We arrived at Fallingbostel and had to walk up a hill to get into camp. I heard about the Air Corps men having to march on so I went to the French compound to avoid the exit. The Germans did not like it when they found out that many were still in camp. We were offered two choices: if you are sick you go to the hospital, if not you march. Funerals were held every day and sometimes more than once a day. Nobody wanted to go to the hospital. We were told to fall out at noon for an inspection and before they got to look at us an air raid occurred so we had to take cover. It was postponed for one day. The next day the bulk of the Germans were gone but they left enough guards to still patrol the grounds. I sold a good GI shirt to a French soldier for 17 crackers. It was at 8:37 in the morning of April 16th that a British tank drove up to the gate amid much shouting and cheering. A number of British and American commandos left the camp and wandered around camp. I did talk to one fellow who visited the concentration camp nearby. The British gave every one in camp a loaf of white bread the next day. I immediately ate it. I was part of the second shipment to leave a couple of days later.

Your story is a good one and it shows you did a lot of work on it. I forwarded it to Walter Lawrence in Kansas because he evidently knew your father. I would like to send it to David Dorfmeier because he does not include any incident unless he can verify it. He is starting a new job and will not be able to complete his book for awhile.

Thanks for thinking of me and letting me in on a different perspective from what I experienced. Somebody ought to write the whole story. I thought John Nichol did a pretty good job of summarizing the marches all over Germany.

If you want any stories from me maybe you can ask the questions and I can respond.

John H. Anderson

E-mail: September 6, 2010

Dear Laura,

Your father may have been among the first to arrive at Fallingbostel from Luft IV. I remember him telling me that he did not remember how he got to Hamburg. I never wrote the name of Ebbsdorf in my diary either but I expect that is where I caught the train. I do know I was in Uelzen earlier and missed a train and had to wait on the platform, lying on a baggage cart, until the next train came.

You mention delousing and I remember going through that also. When I consulted my diary I wrote that I was sprayed for lice on April 19th, after liberation. I did get a typhus shot on the 6th and again on the 15th. I was somewhat surprised to know that I took a shower on April 11th. I had forgot about that. Back in Luft IV I went to take a shower in the Vorlager on January 17th. This time after getting wet they turned off the water and said to lather up. Then we only got cold water to rinse off with which didn't seem right. Our barracks got to take another shower on February 5th and this time we did not have to rinse in cold water. It did feel good and prepared us for leaving the next day. My thoughts at the time were that things were gradually improving. The Germans had built a stage in the Red Cross room and even provided some extra lights for a show we had on December 14th. The newly formed Glee Club sang a medley of college football songs accompanied by a trumpet which also provided the modulations between the numbers. A jazz band was also on that first program. I had nothing to do with the jazz program but I did recognize the work that had gone into making sound as good as it did. The Glee Club sang another program on Christmas Day after singing with a brass group in the middle of the compound on Christmas eve. Our choir sang *The Holy City* at church on the 24th and a group of numbers and carols in the afternoon. Later, I rounded up a group of fellows and we went caroling in each of the barracks. I thought it was a nice Christmas.

I expect it would be easy to forget a shower. One of the fellows in my room wrote a book and he did not mention it. I thought the whole lager took a shower on Feb. 5th but I could be wrong.

Back in Fallingbostel I did not see the market going on. That may have been only in 357. I did get a quarter of a RC parcel on April 6th and Dorfmeier mentions that also. I just wrote Joe O'Donnell about it.

Your story about your Dad avoiding the going-away party is an excellent story. I hope you can get it published.

Are there any specific questions you may have that I could help you with?

John

Date: Mon, 13 Sep 2010 12:32:42 -0400 [09/13/2010 12:32:42 PM EDT]

From: [JOHN H. ANDERSON <JANDERSON118@triad.rr.com>](mailto:JOHN.H.ANDERSON<JANDERSON118@triad.rr.com>)

To: [Laura Edge <lawe@umich.edu>](mailto:Laura.Edge@umich.edu)

Subject: Brussels

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Dear Laura,

You caused me to go through the large filing box I have of material pertaining to my time in the service. I know I have not looked at it since 1991 and I had forgotten most of the things I have in the box. One thing I think would interest you is a map of Brussels which I got while I was there. It is 18" X 15" and I thought I would make a copy and send it to you. The place where I stayed is indicated on the map by a rectangle and an X at the top of the map. The other side of the map has Places of Interest and Entertainments. I saw the Tomb of Unknown Warrior, the Cathedral, the Conservatoire of Music, and the Mannikin Fountain. I attended a symphony concert but I do not remember where that was. Also attended a News Theater which were quite popular in London.

Thanks for sending me all the information. I have read it all and will make some comments but I doubt if I can get them to you before I leave on Wednesday. I'll try but it looks doubtful right now. I should be back by next Sunday.

John

Date: Mon, 13 Sep 2010 12:53:33 -0400 [09/13/2010 12:53:33 PM EDT]

From: [JOHN H. ANDERSON <JANDERSON118@triad.rr.com>](mailto:JOHN.H.ANDERSON<JANDERSON118@triad.rr.com>)

To: [Laura Edge <lawe@umich.edu>](mailto:Laura.Edge@umich.edu)

Subject: One other point

[Show this HTML in a new window?](#)

Your Dad said that a fellow named Wetzel sang in a duet on the Christmas program. The name seemed familiar so I checked and on Sunday, January 28, 1945 I wrote in my diary: *Taught Sunday School again. Cleworth and Wetzer (handled the church service)*. The names are about the same. I tried to check on my original but it is so blurred now that I cannot make out what it is exactly. That night we had 10 attend the vesper service in our barracks which started at 6:00. Played some ping pong that night also, although we did not have a regulation table. I wrote that it was a joy to be able to play ping pong.

I made a copy of the article about **Ike and Monty Meet on Seized Luftwaffe Field** from **The Stars and Stripes**, the newspaper put out on Saturday, April 21st. It does not mention Dieholtz but I believe that is where I saw Ike's plane. It does mention that liberated POWs were present. I did not get that close to Ike. All I saw was the plane.

John

134 Harmon Mill Court
Kernersville, NC 27284
October 3, 2010

Ms. Laura Edge
5528 Briar Glen Dr.
Saline, MI 48176-9537

Dear Laura,

The two envelopes you sent have arrived. Let me comment first on the second one which contained the list of names of men from Stalag Luft IV who arrived at Stalag 357 on March 20, 1945. All the names have been checked by RMC who is evidently not on the list. None of the eleven names I had in my notebook as members of the Church Council were listed on the roster. The O'Donnell I know and the one who published a number of books on pows is J.P. O'Donnell and the one on the list is J. T. O'Donnell. [I do remember contacting Joe about the name on the Stalag 357 list and he told me it was not him. I need to delete the footnote regarding this.](#)(Did you see the recipe for black bread that Joe put in the latest issue of the [EX-POW BULLETIN](#) on page 22?) [I did have a copy of the bread recipe. It was also in the June 2003 ExPOW Bulletin. It may be interesting to try and make this just to get an understanding of what you fellows had to eat. Where would I get edible sawdust?](#) I did With the exception of your father I did not see a name that I recognized. Sewell W. K(?) may be the Bill Sewell that I knew in gunnery school at Las Vegas and met when I arrived in A Lager on September 9, 1944. I never saw or heard from him after I moved to C Lager on September 26th but I did mention him on Sept. 9, 10, 17, 20, 23, and mentioned his name in a letter I wrote home on the 11th. I had brought him home with me when we finished gunnery school but I have no recollection of that. This list must include men from all the lagers in Luft IV. [I do believe you are right in saying that the men on the list were from all the lagers. I believe the fellows admitted on March 20th were from the barn hospitals, at least I know my father and Al Gorashko were.](#) It amazes me that that large a group arrived at Fallingbostel on the 20th of March. When I took a boxcar ride from the town of Ebbsdorf (I am not sure of the spelling. It may have only one B) to Fallingbostel I thought that we were the first to arrive. When I worked on Dr. Caplan's Journal I figured that the number of men that left camp on February 6, 1944 must have been close to 2600 men. D Lager had about 500 British soldiers and Leonard Rose was in D Lager. I originally thought that D Lager went out first but Leonard told me later that he left, I think, on February 7th. About a thousand men were shipped out on January 30th and sent to Barth, the location of Stalag Luft I, (mainly for officers). [One of my dad's crewmates was sent by train to Luft I.](#) Carrol Dillon has written a book about prisoners of war since his brother was a prisoner in B Lager. It was the best book that I had read about the camp. My copy is still in a box out in the garage but I do recall that a group left Luft IV for Nuremburg sometime in January and it included his brother. You might want to contact him. His e-mail address is Carrol F. Dillon, cdilloncldlaw@msn.com. His home address is 263 Island Circle, Sarasota, FL 34242 and his phone is 941-349-8475. I have talked with him on the phone and he can be very helpful in some details. I got the book at a Luft reunion in the

late nineties. It contains a lot of information about the campsite. He wrote the book before I got interested in knowing more about the camp. [I do have Carrol Dillon's book and I agree that it is one of the best. I read it before I wrote my chapter on Stalag Luft IV 5 years ago. It was very helpful.](#)

Of interest to me was the name of R. F. Arrowood whose KGF # was 4004 ([Robert F. Arrowood from Sunnyvale, California. Shot down on 5-8-44.](#)) and mine was 4005. Sgt. H. G. Hembres has the # 4006. ([Couldn't find anything on him](#)) I must have been close to them at one time. I think I was issued my number at Luft VI at St. Wendel. ([My father was POW #1167](#)) It is possible that I was issued my number at Wetzlar, known as Dulag Luft. I could find no information about these two fellows on the internet. All the men on the list were placed in a barracks. All the barracks in my area were occupied by infantry soldiers. I was placed in a white tent and on April 5th I was moved to the same kind of tent next door. The latrines we used were in the area of the barracks. They were not as good as the ones we had in Luft IV. I believe that the wash room was inside a building, not outside as your picture indicates. Your pictures look authentic. I wonder how you got them. I don't think I knew that 357 existed. The map is a bit confusing also. I lived in the American sector and could walk to other sectors. It was a big camp, even larger than I thought at the time. ([My father remembered a wash room was inside each barrack.](#))

It seems to me that someone should have made a survey of the consequences of the men on the list. These men are documented to have been there at that time. It does seem to be a larger group than one should suspect. Of course, Luft IV is said to have had 10,000 prisoners according to the monument on the camp site. I would guess that most of the men on the list are not from C Lager. Leonard Rose had a list of all the men in C Lager. After his death we are not sure what happened to the list. Joe O'Donnell should know more about that than I do. Let me continue by taking up the draft of your Fallingbostal/Oerbke.

I just wrote to Joe O'Donnell and asked him about the shower he took. I had a shower on April 11th but I believe he had left camp by then. He states that the story of having just ten men in the shower at a time is true.

You mention James Davis in the same paragraph having the same anxieties that O'Donnell had. He was arriving at Moosburg and you say from Luft IV. There were a few enlisted men at Luft III at Sagan but most were officers. Are you sure he was from Luft IV? ([Two of dad's crewmates went out of Luft IV by rail, sent first to Nuremburg, Stalag 13B. Later they were marched out of Nuremburg and were liberated at Stalag 7A, Moosburg by Patton.](#)) My copilot walked from Sagen to Moosburg in very cold weather.

Check the spelling of the word "merchandise". ([Thanks for catching this](#))

On March 30th I got a quarter of a Red Cross parcel. I ate most of it right away. Some one stole my bread ration during the night as well as a D-bar. I believe it was the only time that had happened to me. I probably left it out beside me when I went to sleep.

The story of Larry walking away from the formation is of deep interest to me. It was much more difficult for him than it was for me. We were both fortunate to have other people help us in time of need. Most pows are decent people.

After footnote #18 you mention April 29th as Easter Sunday. ([You are correct!](#)) In 1945 Easter was on April 1st. It came soon after I arrived in Fallingbostal.

Joe O'Donnell sent me an e-mail on September 7th and said that he had a 600 page book called Die Heidemark by Heinrich Baumann which is all about Fallingbostal and the surrounding area. I do not see much that I recognize in the map you have of the camps at Fallingbostal. One year the Luft IV organization decided to go back to the town but I decided not to go that year. Of course, nothing would be recognized this many years later. I think I just like to go. I've been twice – 1994 and 2000.

On October 5th of this year he answered another e-mail from me and confirmed that he arrived with the big group and left when they did on the 6th of April. Three of my crew left also and it was years before I saw them again.

In your e-mail today (10-7) you mention Clyde Tinker who was quoted in the article I had from the Stars and Stripes. His name was Clyde T. Tinker in the article and on your list of 550 names is C. P. Tinker. That is close enough to be the same person. I do recall that some of the fellows I was with in my tent took off after we were liberated and visited a concentration camp which was not far away. I sort of regretted that I did not go with them but I guess it was a good thing not to see what happened there. (I do know that you can visit Bergen-Belsen today. I don't know if I could handle seeing this.)

Before liberation I had walked around the camp and wrote that some fellows are worse off than I. After liberation I saw a pair of GIs setting a table with silver candlesticks and silverware and having a real feast. (I can just picture this! Great! I would like to add this to my chapter.)

Let me move on to your next section entitled **Liberated!** Your dad had more gumption than I did. I stayed in camp and did not try to leave. I wrote a letter home on April 18th: *Am still in Germany but at least I'm free. Should be leaving soon. I will write a longer letter as soon as I get some time and get a bit more settled. We are eating white bread again now. The other boys are not with me but by the sound of the news they should be liberated soon if not already now. This camp is near Fallingbostal. I have certainly had a lot of experiences lately but that can wait for now. The main thing is that I'm free now. The British arrived 2 days ago. Hope I am home before long. Am well and on my way to full recovery.*

I have an Identity Card for ExPrisoners of War issued at Stalag XI B signed by W. P. Lightfoot, Maj A C.

The map of Brussels will be sent to you. (Thank you so much. I do look forward to seeing this. Perhaps Ed in Brussels can give us more information after he sees the area you have marked on the map.) I went to Staples to get it copied but they did not have a machine that could accommodate that size (15" x 18"). In Panama City I could have done it at Office Depot so I went to the one in Winston-Salem and they could not do it. I called the local newspaper but had no luck. The only way I think I can get it to you is just mail it. I was going to enclose it with this letter but I think I can e-mail this letter and mail the map to you. The place where I stayed is at the top of the map outlined in ink. I believe that the street car lines are in red. Soldiers in uniform could ride free. On the opposite side are listed places of interest. I have given my diary and other artifacts to the museum at Andersonville. You can keep the map. The chances of my returning to Brussels are doubtful. While I was in Brussels I bought some lace handkerchiefs for my mother and sister and sent them to them. On Sunday, April 22nd, I wrote another letter home on YMCA stationery: *It is Sunday morning and I'm still in Brussels. I have the*

opportunity to stay here as long as I want or leave by plane for either England or France any day. This seems like a wonderful chance to see things so I may delay my coming home for awhile and look the city over. Yesterday I went into town and saw a number of interesting places. Today I want to go to the Conservatory here and see what it is like. Perhaps I'll go to an opera tonight.

I am still in British hands. I don't mind it at all because they treat us fine. As soon as I leave here I go to the American authorities. At present, I'm sitting in the canteen here now where everything is free. Yesterday in town I had ice cream again. I'm looking forward to a lot of good things to eat when I get home.

Guess I'll quit now. Will write more later. Save the last few days' papers for me. (It seems you made it to Brussels before my father. He writes home on April 27th saying he just arrived in Brussels. He only stayed there one night.)

Last month I sent you a summary of most of my experiences In Brussels and Namur so I won't repeat them. I have decided that your father got to the states earlier than any other person that I knew in Germany. I can sympathize with him being in the hold during a submarine scare. On the Arowa, a British ship that took me to England, my bunk was the bottom of a stack of four bunks in a room that had been converted from a meat packing room. It was cold and on the ocean it is best to be up on deck to avoid seasickness. I believe I did finally conquer the nauseous feeling that comes when I get on the open seas. The men who were at Stalag Luft VI at Heydekrug, the camp that was located near Lithuania and evacuated by boat where the men were placed in the hold until they reached Swinemunde, and then had the bayonet run to the camp from the train station Kiefheide (now called Podbursco) to the gates of Luft IV had it worse than most of the stories I've heard. A fellow named Claude Watkins gave a report on Luft VI at the convention in Birmingham, AL in 1995 that I heard. It was the first national convention I had attended. He told about burying some men who died in camp and when he went back years later to find the graves the Russians had buried hundreds so they could not find the Americans. I believe that one of the reasons the Germans held on to the men of the Air Corps was as bargaining chips to exchange for Russian soldiers after the war. I have heard that the US did return many of the Russians who had been taken prisoners during the war and wanted to avoid going back to Russia. I remember feeling sorry for some of the German guards who had it as bad as we did and had less to go back to than we did.

The pictures of the Barracks Ellerbeek you sent do not register any familiarity to me. It looks like a big place and I do not remember any place quite that size. The pictures of the Repatriation Center could be closer to what I recall. Speaking of pictures there were a few pictures taken in Stalag 357 which are interesting. The ones on the internet of Stalag Luft IV are of A Lager, before they built the barracks a yard off the ground. It is a shame that no pictures are available of C Lager. There is a group of pictures taken at one camp by a photographer and it shows a lot of activities going on. I got a book early on entitled "Barbed Wire" which tells about the problems at camp. It was an officer's camp and not much similar to what we experienced.

Finally, after a train ride on April 30th I arrived at Camp Lucky Strike at 2:00 in the afternoon. (It seems my father would have arrived at Camp Lucky Strike on April 28th he was flown in from Brussels.) I saw part of a USO show and was placed into a tent. On May 1st it snowed and rained. (Good grief! So much for spring.) I got

examined by a doctor and got French money for my Belgium money. Got issued more clothes. Got PX rations. Moved to a new area. My letter home was dated May 1st and marked Air Mail:

It may be the first day of May but it is still cold here. I'll be glad to get to a warm climate again.

Finally we left our last station and have moved again. Going through some more processing and then awaiting the boat home. I should be on the ocean again before long and undoubtedly I will be sea sick as I was before.

I'm sending this air mail as I am able to buy these envelopes here. I wonder if you have been receiving any of the other letters I've been writing. Was going to send a cable but they only have form messages and they say it isn't any quicker.

The other boys aren't with me so I guess I ought to write somebody's mother when I get back at least. I was luckier than they I think. We'll have to have a reunion sometime.

There isn't much to write now and besides I'm cold. Will write more soon.

A telegram, date stamped May 3, PM 6 27, reached my mother: THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO INFROM [sic] YOU THAT YOUR SON T/SGT ANDERSON JOHN H RETURNED TO MILITARY CONTROL 20 APR. 45= J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL. (My grandma received the exact same telegram only it stated that T/Sgt Witt Lawrence L returned to military control on 16 Apr 45)

Letter dated May 5, 1945 postmarked May 9 in Air Mail envelope:

Again I'm just waiting for something to happen. We have been processed and arranged in the final grouping for the shipment home. Now all we have to do is to wait until the time comes to leave. Army life is half waiting anyway.

I had my choice of being sent to either Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis or to Ft. Leavenworth as my reception center. My furlough will start from there. I decided that Ft. Leavenworth was best so I will be sent there. We shouldn't stay there longer than 48 hours. What I've been thinking is that the train will have to go to KC first so I may have a lay over there. I'll try and inform you about the situation when I reach the states.

There aren't many fellows with me that I know. One fellow that I met back in camp that knows Gene Christy is with me. He lives near where Gene had his choir. A new bunch of officers came in recently and I'm going to try and look them over. Maybe some of my crew are among them.

Just read in the paper where our furlough has been extended from 21 days to 60 days. That seems like quite awhile. I'm hoping I get home in May sometime so I can go over to school before it's out. 60 days ought to be a real vacation and in the summer time too

Here it has been raining every day since I've been here. Weather here in France is similar to that in England. I hope it is warm at home.

Saw a couple of movies yesterday to pass away the time. Don't know what I'll do today. The meals are just regular army meals again. I'm looking forward to eating a lot when I get home.

That's all for now. Hope to see you soon.

I did go to the Air Force tent and located Lt. Sanborn and Lt. Collins and talked with them for awhile. Sanborn was my navigator and Collins was my bombardier. It was the last time I saw Sanborn.

You wrote that “while waiting for that homeward boat, many RAMPs find enjoyment in the beautiful spring weather along the coast of France.” It rained on May 3 and 4 and most of the time I was there. (I’ll have to note this.)

I have not read Norm Bussel’s book but his story is on the internet and is a good story. It seems that most of the stories I read are much better than mine. {Check spelling of footnote.} (Thanks again. I appreciate that you read so carefully and catch these things. I’ve met Norm twice at 8th Air Force gatherings. I appreciate his honesty about PTSD. I know my father suffered from this.) Norm was in charge of the Foundation for awhile. He attended the reunion we had in Nashville in 2006.

Lawrence shares my distrust of sailors but he would probably admit that the Navy eats better than the Army. I left Le Havre on May 6th; he must have left earlier. His encounter with a submarine was on May 4th; we had submarine excitement on the 10th. I heard Churchill speak on the radio while outside the port of Southampton. I wondered if I would see action in the South Pacific. (This gets confusing. My father always told the story this way - submarine attack the day before VE Day.

In order that I could eat what I wanted I volunteered for KP duty on board ship. I still have the early chow ticket which enabled us to eat first. We only worked every other day. I would serve a serving of say pineapple and then take a spoonful myself. I think I ate too much that day. When I went to a movie I would take a box of Ritz crackers and a box of Baby Ruth candy bars and finish both of them. I realized I was eating too much candy. I had waited until I was aboard ship before I mentioned I still had diarrhea. The medic gave me medicine but it didn’t work. He finally said he would give me something that would work and it did.

My mother received a telegram on May 13 PM 12 51: SAFE AND WELL
HAPPY MOTHERS DAY LOVE.

On May 17th a telegram reached my mother: THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ARMY DIRECTS ME TO INFORM YOU YOUR SON T/SGT ANDERSON JOHN H IS BEING RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE NEAR FUTURE AND WILL BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH YOU UPON ARRIVAL= J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL (My grandmother received the same telegram.)

Like the movies or the newsreels we all kept looking for the Statue of Liberty. When it came in sight I must admit that I was moved. Liberty – that’s what it is all about.

You do not mention New York but Lawrence must have been among the first to arrive after the war. Walter mentions the gala reception when he arrived. I don’t think anybody noticed my group when they arrived. We went right to the trains to Camp Kilmer. The first meal we had on American soil was outstanding. I remember especially the steak and ice cream. (Were you in the same convey with my father? Dad arrived in NY on May 19th and had to spend the night in the ship. They disembarked on May 20th and went by train to Camp Kilmer. On May 24th he arrived at Camp Sheridan, Chicago. I have the New York Times article describing the homecoming. Picture caption: “A transport of four ships that made up the first convoy to arrive in New York Harbor since V-E Day, putting into the pier on Saturday.” “Vessels carried 4,381 of our fighting

men.”) That was on May 20th. On the 21st I was on a troop train headed west. I arrived in KC at 5:00 PM on May 23rd. If you have John Nichol’s book “The Last Escape” he has a passage about my meeting my mother at the Union Station. (I went back and read this part of the book again. These emotional homecomings bring me to tears. I can’t begin to imagine how that felt.) I had to go on to Ft. Leavenworth for one more night before I could return to KC this time by bus. Mr. Lantz, the father of an ex-pow from Stalag Luft IV was at the station to pick up his son and he brought me home. I visited Winsteds in the Plaza with my family and had a hamburger which I had dreamed of often while I was gone.

On June 21st another of my dreams came true. I went downtown and marched in a parade from 9th and Locust to the Liberty Memorial across from Union Station. I marched with a group of former POWs and many veterans. Mayor Gage, the governors of Kansas and Missouri and General Eisenhower spoke to the assembled crowd. As a boy I had seen veterans of World War I, the Spanish-American War, and even some Civil War veterans marching. Now it was my turn. (Amazing! I fitting tribute.)

You have written an interesting book and it has taken a lot of work on your part to do it. I’ll mail you the map of Brussels, the article about Tinker, and maybe some other things you might not have. Do you have a map of Luft IV? (Yes!) It was done by George Guderley and he was one of the men who helped with the first meeting in Poland in 1993 when they erected the memorial. Joe O’Donnell was another. I believe he was responsible for the map of the march across Germany. (I do have this as well.) I could make copies of both items and send them to you. Joe tells me that he is working on a brick road around the memorial now. I have enjoyed reading what you have written. Thanks for the picture of liberation at Stalag XI B. I do not see anyone that I recognize. Not many of my friends were at the camp at that time.

Leonard Rose sent me a list of the names and addresses of the men in my room 3 of Barracks 1 at Luft IV. I tried to get them to come to a reunion at a national convention but had very little success. I sent them reviews of our meetings but no one seemed to be able to attend. Finally, John Lenburg met me, I believe, at the meeting in Louisville and he later sent me a copy of his book. (Yes, I do have his book.) You must have a copy also as he is on your list of sources. Unfortunately, he died not long after our meeting so I never got to question him like I wanted. I did see my engineer in Denver in 2005 but he does not talk about the war. We shared a lot of RC parcels together and he was my partner in a card game of pinochle with our tail gunner and ball turret gunner as our opponents. The four of us became good friends or more during our stay at Luft IV. John Lenburg was one of 24 men in our room.

If I can help you in any way feel free to ask. I like to help whenever I can.

John

Email from John Anderson October 27, 2010

Hey, Laura,

My first assignment was to Stalag Luft VI at St. Wendel. We never actually got into the camp because it was unfinished when we arrived on August 16, 1944. You can read about this camp on the internet. Roland Geiger, a resident of the town, wrote to Leonard Rose requesting information about the camp. He lives in St. Wendel and had heard that a POW camp was there but could not find any record of it. I was at the convention in Tacoma, WA when his letter was read. Since I was in the first contingent of men to arrive I wrote him and gave him my impressions of the camp. He collected other testimonies and released the information about the camp. After I got his review I conducted a survey and wrote up the results which I sent to the editor of the **Bulletin** as three short articles. She responded and said she sent them to Andersonville but I could not locate them when I was there. I want to try and see if I can resurrect them. There were no instruments at Luft VI at St. Wendel. We left on September 5th and rode in boxcars to Stalag Luft IV arriving on September 9th. I was placed in a tent in Lager A until we moved to Lager C on September 26th. I do not remember any instruments being used in A Lager.

On October 12th we had a victrola brought into our room in Barracks 1. Ernest King in my room became the person responsible for the repair and coordination of the record players in C Lager. This meant that we usually had one in our room most of the time.

Hymnals arrived on October 19th. It was a big help to have the music for the church services. A stove was placed in each room on November 1st.

On November 3rd I went to entertainment in the Red Cross room. I wrote that it may have been the first public performance of the jazz band. On the 4th I got the accordion which had arrived and practiced awhile. While I was at the Conservatory a fellow student gave me ten lessons on the accordion. My sister played the accordion but I never got to be proficient on the instrument and was unable to use it in the church service. We had two accordions in our lager and some fellow left the camp in February and carried one of them. I saw him some where on the march and he still had it. I hope he got to keep it.

A new set of hymnals came in on and we used them in the church services. On November 20th I copied some music for a trumpet. One of the records we had was Harry James' version of "The Carnival of Venice". Our trumpet player, whose name is now forgotten, wanted to see this on paper so I tried to transcribe it for him. He gave me a cornet lesson on November 22nd. I had taken trumpet lessons at the Conservatory and it was a fun activity. The pump organ came in on November 22nd. B Lager got the only piano. I would have enjoyed having the piano but I got it about two days before we left on the march. However, the organ was a big improvement on our music program.

I wrote in my diary that we had a jam session in our barracks on November 21st and 25th. I really have no memory of these but it indicates that we had a few instruments. On November 26th I helped Manny Baier on the clarinet. In a letter home I wrote: "More instruments are coming in all the time".

On December 1st I wrote out music for organ, violin, and cello and rehearsed with them on the 2nd. We had another jam session in the barracks. We performed "The Bells of St. Mary" on Sunday, December 3rd. It used the three instruments. The cellist was Charles E. Becker from Sheridan, Wyoming. I don't have the name of the violinist.

I had trumpet lessons on December 5th and 6th. On Sunday, December 10th, the choir sang "Send Out Thy Light" by Gounod with the same instruments.

Early in December the Germans built a stage in the Red Cross room with extra lights. The first program on the stage was the glee club rendition of a collection of football songs. I had the trumpet player play the melodies and the bridges between the numbers. We were first on the program and the jazz band also played for the first time and there may have been other acts.

Some time either in the late nineties or the first few years of this decade I got a copy of a paper that was produced in camp that listed all the members of the jazz band. I remember thinking that it would be fun to try and get them together again for another jam session. I might be able to locate my copy of it but maybe not. It may have been for the Convention in Tucson in 2001 when I had some men and a few women to sing what the choir sang in camp. I used a string quartet for

the accompaniment but I did refer to the group as an orchestra in camp but it was really just two strings and an organ. We definitely did have instruments in C Lager. I think the other lagers would have as much as we had but I do not know about them. I remember I was impressed with the jazz band which must have had four saxophones, a guitar, drums, and trumpets and trombones. I doubt that they used the pump organ but they may have. I hope this answers your question.

Thanks for asking,
John

E-Mail to Laura Edge from John Anderson
February 20, 2011

Hey, Laura,

It was good to hear from you again. Today I attended a meeting of the Greater Greensboro Chapter of AXPOW. We meet once a month at the Masonic home in Greensboro and today we had 13 present which is about all we have at our meetings. The chapter I was a part of in Florida has decided to stop meeting soon as many of the members have died. I noticed in the Bulletin that the National Convention will be held in Akron, Ohio in September. I attended quite a few conventions but have not been going since the one in Nashville in 2006. I remember you and your father visiting me at the 388th B.G. reunion in Akron. If I find that I can go this year I'll let you know. I don't go as often as I used to when I was younger.

I shall try and locate a copy of the book you recommended. I think I spend too much time reading the daily paper. A lot of things seem to be happening in the world now and it is interesting to see new events happening every day.

Yes, I would like to read what you have written. Let me tell you some of what I remember of Dulag Luft.--

After a night in jail in Berlin I got to go into a courtyard and talk with three other of my crew members. That afternoon the four of us, two other American fliers, and two German soldiers went by truck to the Berlin depot. As we walked toward the train the place was crowded, almost everyone was wearing a uniform and they were all saluting each other. If they had a gun they could turn their head sharply or they could salute with their hand to their forehead or, in some cases, give the Hitler salute. The depot was partly destroyed and I remember thinking that the situation reminded me of the Charlie Chaplin film *The Great Dictator*.

We rode the train all night and it was a regular passenger train. One of the soldiers gave us each a German equivalent of a Lifesaver which I thought was nice of him. I sat next to a blond fellow that worried me a bit because I was not sure he was American. (Sometime around the year 2000 I found out that he was Winfred Riemer from Brillion, Wisconsin.) We arrived in Frankfurt just after dawn. We had to walk quite a ways to catch a street car and people were aware of us and made comments about us. I had to carry a suitcase belonging to one of the Germans. The town was a busy place and much damage was observed. No wonder the people were upset at us. The street car took us to Oberursel, the interrogation center. I was placed in the basement room which just had a bench. Even though it was August 8th the room was damp and I was barefooted. My flying boots and socks came off during my parachute jump. About an hour later, after I was thoroughly chilled, a fellow came and apologized for placing me in the basement. He said they were busy and they finally were getting to me. He took me to a nice room with the window open and a nice bed and said that would be my room. He would come back later and take me for interrogation. I understood their problem and thought this was the treatment I expected. I was taken to an office awhile later and given a Red Cross form to fill out. It asked all sorts of questions, but I knew I was to tell only my name, rank, and serial number. My interrogator spoke excellent English and sounded like he had been schooled in England. He said to me "What would happen if I died in Germany? Would I want a Catholic or Protestant funeral?" That made sense to me so I said I was a Protestant. When I refused to answer any more questions he told me if I did not cooperate they would put me back in the basement. Then he told me that three bodies had been found in the wreckage of the plane. The families had to be notified. He knew my bomb group and even mentioned the name of our Commander who had been shot down the day I arrived at the base but he thought he was still working. They did not know everything. I finally revealed the names of the crew members that I thought might have been in the crash. I did not know what happened in front of the bomb bay. He finally took me to a third room with opaque windows and bars and a simple cot with a straw-filled mattress made with gunny sack material. The window would not open and this was my room where I was in solitary confinement. I had a bowl of soup for lunch and bread and butter for supper. On the 10th I was returned to another office for another interrogation, this time by someone who knew more about radio. They asked me about a long-nosed B-17. I figured they were asking about the B-29. The Air Corps had left one out for them to see. I knew nothing about it. they asked about

radar. I was truthful when I answered I knew nothing. I talked first to a civilian and then a sergeant. I was sent to a barracks close by and met part of a crew that trained with me in Ardmore, OK. The group left the next morning at 8:30 and it took a long time to go a short distance. We arrived at Wetzlar in the afternoon. This is what I called Dulag Luft although Oberursel also was called that at times. My first meal in the mess hall was salmon from the Red Cross packages. I had a shower and was issued shoes and clothes from the government. I received a British uniform which was being issued that day. My shoes were black with hob nails. I got a package like a suitcase containing everything I needed, mostly from the Red Cross. We were asked if we had an aged, sick parent. If we did we could send a notice home that we were a prisoner. I decided not to do so. I wrote a card home which was dated August 11, 1944 and it arrived on October 27th.

On the 12th I was on a detail digging for awhile. I went to the library after dinner. Meals were pretty good. On Sunday, the 13th, a week after being shot down, three more of my crew arrived. They had seen the navigator who had gone to a hospital but no word was available about our copilot. On the 14th the two officers, substitute pilot and the bombardier, left for Stalag Luft I at Barth. I have a book entitled *The Yankee Kriegies* by Colonel C. Ross Greening and Sergeant Angelo N. Spinelli which shows pictures of baseball games in uniform, basketball and volley ball games, sixteen men jammed in not a typical officers' room, typewriters, vegetable gardens, a library at Stalag Luft I containing 15,000 volumes, and many other examples of hardships. "Every prisoner dreamed of making a successful break for freedom, but although many tried, only a few succeeded."

Later that day my ball turret gunner and I were on shipment. It is late so maybe I had better quit for now and write more, if you are interested, later.

Thanks for writing.

John

Hi, Laura,

In checking with my diary I arrived at the 388th Bomb Group on May 25, 1944. It was the next day that I had to go to all the different places on base and get checked in. I and another radio operator named O'Sullivan were assigned to the 561st Bomb Squadron and I learned that the Squadron commander had just been shot down. I did not write down the name but I recognized his name when I was asked at Oberursel if he was doing well. I wrote in the name of Chamberlin about ten years ago when I was checking out my Bomb Group. Incidentally, O'Sullivan was on Sarten's crew and the plane they were flying on August 16, 1944 was hit by a plane from above on the bomb run at Zeitz and the entire crew was killed. They had six more missions than my crew. If you check the mission to St. Lo on July 24th you will see a picture of the plane -- Q297289, dropping anti-personnel bombs on the front lines. Someone in Sarten's crew took the picture of us as they were flying next to us on the mission. I think it is a great picture. My pilot gave me a copy of the picture many years ago. It was the only time we flew in that plane.

I think you did a good job with my experience at Oberursel. I do not see the need for the question marks.

The world news is always changing. Japan's earthquake and tsunami are unbelievable. Have you heard that something will happen on December 21, 2012? The History Channel has had several programs about it lately. I hope I can last that long.

Daylight savings time starts tonight. I'll probably just sleep an hour longer.

John

Laura added later: John Jones was on the church council at Luft IV. Dad hung out with him in Miami.

Died October 15, 2008

John K. Jones Sr., 83, died Oct. 15. He was an Army Air Corps veteran of World War II, recipient of the Prisoner of War Medal and Purple Heart, and was a life member of Disabled American Veterans and American Ex-Prisoners of War, and a member of Clovernook Christian Church

Jones, John K., Sr.; Beloved husband of Betty Jane (nee Beaty) Jones; Devoted father of Kathleen, Jane, J.K. Jr., Ashley S., and Mark

Published in the Cincinnati Enquirer on October 17, 2008.

E-mail: 8 April 2011

Here are my comments on your latest chapter. I look forward to reading some more. Keep up the good work.

John

COMMENTS ON CHAPTER 7

First paragraph: “shepherds” does not need to be capitalized.

The second paragraph is excellent. Your explanation of Dulag Luft is more than adequate. I have always thought that Wetzlar was a place somewhat like Kearney, NE – a staging area before going overseas. I thought that everyone went through Wetzlar (Dulag Luft) before being assigned to a luft camp. I was barefooted until I reached Wetzlar. I was given a uniform and the day I arrived (August 11) they were giving out British air uniforms so I received a blue shirt and pants and black hob-nailed boots. I had been wearing my fatigues and I believe I had to turn them in. The other members of my crew did get GI clothes. Two arrived at Wetzlar ahead of me and two two days later. The Red Cross also issued me a plastic (?) suitcase with items needed to live comfortably. I should have listed the items but I only wrote, “Got package of everything you need from Red Cross. Good for them.” I think it contained a washcloth, towel, toothbrush, tooth powder, pajamas, razor, handkerchief, and sweater. The sweater was dark blue which went well with my uniform. It had a note attached saying that it had been contributed by the Conway American Red Cross. About three years ago I wrote to the AMC in Conway, AR and thanked them for the gift. I wore it all winter including the march across Germany. It may have included toilet paper, a comb, and even a pencil. I did have a pencil rather early in my pow career which was fortunate for me. If your father missed Wetzlar he missed a lot of good things. **Laura’s note: Red Cross Capture Kit: Contains extra clothes, underwear, soap, toothpaste, razor** **Life Magazine January 22, 1945 mentions capture kits contain soap, clothing, etc. for new prisoners.**

We were asked if we had an aged, sick parent. If we did we could send a notice that we were a prisoner. Although I had lost my father on the day after Easter in 1943 I decided not to take advantage of the opportunity. I did write a card home on August 11 which my mother received on October 27.

Page 4: hyphen needed between “sawdust” and “litter”.

Page 5: no comma needed between “components” and “litter”.

Page 6: “it’s” only stands for “it is”. The possessive “its” does not have an apostrophe.

Page 7: I admit that I do not know what it means to be a “lance corporal”, but I would not think it is a “rung below the first and second lieutenants”. I would place the rank of Warrant Officer is just below lieutenants.

Page 8: comma needed after “Lastly”. I have seen the Red Cross form on the internet. You could probably find it also if you want to include it.

Page 9: Mentioning that I was interrogated on August 8th would help illustrate your point.

Page 11: spelling of “breathe”.

Page 13: next-to-last paragraph ends with a phrase instead of a sentence. It is OK if that is what you want to say.

Page 16: hyphen needed between “twenty” and “minute”.

Page 17: You are writing about Jim Davis being at Hohemark Hospital. When you mention Walter Lawrence being drive there on July 7 you should precede it by mentioning when he arrives at Oberursal. It was a bit confusing. Maybe it would help by having one paragraph instead of two.

The telegram my mother received was worded exactly the same except for the name and date. I was shot down on August 6 and the telegram came on August 22. I wondered if your mother received a letter from General Ulio explaining what “mission in action” meant. She got the letter on August 25:

This letter is to confirm my recent telegram in which you were regretfully informed that you son, Technical Sergeant John H. Anderson, 37,502,787. Air

Corps, has been reported missing in action over Germany since 6 August 1944.

I know that added distress is caused by failure to receive more information or details. Therefore, I wish to assure you that at any time additional information is received it will be transmitted to you without delay, and, if I the meantime no additional information is received, I will again communicate with you at the expiration of three months. Also, it is the policy of the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces upon receipt of the "Missing Air Crew Report" to convey to you any details that might be contained in that report.

The term "missing in action" is used only to indicate that the whereabouts or status of an individual is not immediately known. It is not intended to convey the impression that the case is closed. I wish to emphasize that every effort is exerted continuously to clear up the status of our personnel. Under war conditions this is a difficult task as you must readily realize. Experience has shown that many persons reported missing in action are subsequently reported as prisoners of war, but as this information is furnished by countries with which we are at war, the War Department is helpless to expedite such reports. However, in order to relieve financial worry, Congress has enacted legislation which continues in force the pay, allowances and allotments to dependents of personnel being carried in a mission status.

Permit me to extend to you by heartfelt sympathy during this period of uncertainty.

Sincerely yours, J. A. Ulio major General The Adjutant General

My mother wrote a letter to Ardmore OK where our crew training had taken place after she received the telegram and requested the names and addresses of the crew members on my crew. Captain Kenneth D. King, Adjutant, responded and sent what she wanted. In the yearbook or whatever it should be called that we received from Ardmore when we finished I found the picture of First Lieutenant Kenneth D. King, Assistant Base Adjutant. He evidently went up in rank and position. My mother then proceeded to write all the mothers or wives and carried on a lively correspondence until I was liberated. I included all the letters they wrote to my mother in my notebook.

Mother received another telegram dated September 7, 1944 6:50 PM which read:

REPORT JUST RECEIVED THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS STATES THAT YOUR SON TECHNICAL SERGEANT JOHN H. ANDERSON IS A PRISONER OF WAR OF THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT LETTER OF INFORMATION FOLLOW FROM PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL= J A ULIO THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

This arrived 31 days after I was shot down..

After my name in the Oral History Interviews I think it should be Luft IV and Stalag XI B. I never knew about Stalag 357 until the 21st century.

A date near the beginning of the chapter would help the reader. You mention May 12th on page 5 which is good.

I think you have some good material here. Keep at it. I enjoy being a reader of such an interesting story. I haven't got to read **The Interrogator** yet but I shall get to it before long.

6-10-2011: John Anderson to Laura Edge

Comments on Chapter 8,--Behind Barbed Wire

Page 2 – The warning wire is what everybody called it but it was a misnomer. It was not a wire at all. It was a simple piece of wood supported by vertical stakes that were around the perimeter of the inside of the compound. The rule was that you could not touch the “wire”, nor go beyond it to fetch a ball. We were told that guards in the tower with a machine gun would fire on any transgression. They would fire without warning if provoked. Of course, some men would try and see if they could provoke the guard but it was not a wise action to be near the transgressor. It was easier to stay completely away from the structure which was about 18 inches high. We always wondered if the barbed wire at the top of the fence was electrified. It certainly looked like it could be. It made climbing the fence a less possible escape route.

My computer says that the first page is page 0. Thus I may place the wrong number on the page. I hope you can figure it all out.

The first sentence on page 2 is where you give the Kriegsgefangenen number of your father. How did you get that information? Surely the Germans would not try to fool the Red Cross. [?] I wish someone would do a study on the numbers. The earlier pows were sent to Luft VI at Heydekrug, a city in East Prussia, near Lithuania. I heard that it opened in June 1943 and was evacuated when the Russians approached in middle July 1944.

Lawrence could have been sent there and been on the bayonet run near the end of July. I corresponded with a fellow named Jack Paget in November, 1999. He wrote that there were two more runs other than the one with the fellows from VI. He arrived on or about July 28th, 29th or 30th. He is not sure of the exact date. He ends by writing “As I recall the Red Cross out of Switzerland got ‘wind’ of it and applied pressure on the German’s to put a stop to it.” He has written a book entitled **Destiny’s Child**. I ordered it and read it and reported to him on July 22, 2000 that “Today I finally finished your book that you sent me.” I told him that a fellow in my room in Barracks 1 did his story and entitled it **Kriegsgefangenen #6410**. [You have that book also.] He wrote back that his number was 6411. It’s a small world after all. I expect his book is in my garage and I should try and locate it. I guess it did not make a big impression on me. He sent me his phone number in Grass Valley, CA. It is getting to be more difficult to contact people my age. I called about five times but the line was always busy. I tried to find the deposition of Capt. Wynsen but could not locate it. I have no memory of this doctor at all. He must have gone out with A Lager. C Lager was probably the last group to leave camp.

You mention the dogs snare and snap. Should it be snarl and snap?

The story of the birth of Greenwood’s son is quite moving.

Footnote # 8 should indicate where the prisoners were stationed first. Actually, there were two camps called Stalag Luft VI, one at Heydekrug and the other at St. Wendel. I was in the first contingent of soldiers sent to St. Wendel and we were only there for 20 days. The postcards at Luft IV indicated that it was a sub-division of Luft III. I don’t believe I ever heard that Luft IV was actually at Luft III for awhile.

Page 4: I have heard of the dog huts but I think they were only found in Lager B. Two barracks in D Lager were filled with British fliers. When I was in A Lager I stayed in a tent. I was glad when I got to go to C Lager on September 26 and be housed inside. The

stoves were placed in the rooms on November 1st. When I first went into C Lager I was in Barracks 5 and was in a double room. Some of the other barracks may have had the same situation. I was able to exchange my place in 5 for a place in 1 so I could be with three of my crew members. I am so glad it worked out that way.

Page 6: I remember the Green Hornet. He spoke good English. When you mention Big Stoop I don't think you need hyphens in "fifty years old".

Page 9: The name "goon" was a character in Popeye. It became quite popular for awhile and appeared in the comic strip a number of times. A goon had a long nose and was an ugly creature but it did not have much sense as I recall. I never heard that it came from a British comic strip. Maybe I'll check it out.

Page 11: You have the story essentially correct but let me go over it again. I thought I had a copy of the story I sent to Readers Digest some time after the war but have not been able to put my hands on it. It was sent in response of the request for stories of Humor in Uniform in the early fifties. I got no response. Let me give it to you as I wrote it in my notebook. The pump organ had come into the compound on November 22nd. After lunch on the 25th I went to the Red Cross room, where we had placed the organ, in order to practice. The Red Cross room was our main meeting place. The library was located in one corner of this room. A couple of Germans came into the room while I was playing Silent Night. One of the guards remarked, "Ach! Stille Nacht". He motioned that he would like to try and play it. I got up and the German played the carol quite well.

Turning the pages of the hymnal I asked the guard to play other tunes: Hark! the Herald Angels Sing, Away in the Manger, and Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken, all of which the German immediately recognized and played. The talking of the other American prisoners in the same room abruptly stopped when they turned in amazement to see the German playing the one forbidden piece, The Star-Spangled Banner.

On Sunday the 26th we had church service in the wash room. Padre Jackson spoke and I played the organ. The organ was portable so it was easy to move around. I believe that I was able to get another soldier to play the organ at most of the church services after that.

Page 14: In the first sentence use a comma rather of a semicolon. Before the last paragraph you do no need the word "the".

Page 15: In our pinochle game we decided to play until the war was over. It probably was every day at first, but when I started to be busy teaching we seldom got to play. The engineer and I played against the tail gunner and ball turret gunner. When they were ahead 5,000 to 3,000 they wanted to know if we wanted to quit. We told them we were just getting started. When we got to be 5,000 ahead we did decide to quit. There was no way they could catch up with our big lead. On September 30 we played a game of Monopoly. I think we did it mostly by memory.

On October 14th the cooks had conducted a survey and we were served a hamburger for supper. They saved the meat ration for a week and were able to fix a hamburger for everyone. It was a big help to our morale. When I attended a national convention in Birmingham in 1996 I met Nicholas A. Mahalik who was one of the cooks. I believe he had a room in the Red Cross room close to the kitchen. He was proud of that accomplishment.

On October 19th I watched a hypnotist put on a good show. It was Morton Warnow, the son of Mark Warnow who was a well-known orchestra leader. He put one fellow under and had him regress to the age of five. He had trouble tying his shoes and

was bashful when asked about girls. He even talked with a youthful voice. When told he had wet his pants he started to cry. One or two fellows could not be hypnotized. It was a good show. I contacted Morton about a decade ago. He lived in Danbury, CT. He had a website on teaching deaf people.

Page 17: Our first glee club performance was on December 14th. I had an early rehearsal and they sang at 1:00. Early in December the Germans built a stage in the Red Cross room with extra lights. This may have been because the Germans had renewed vigor, the Battle of the Bulge began two days later, or maybe they just decided to be helpful. Tom Edwards was from New York and was a promoter of sorts. He had arranged for the program to be performed, and we had a full house. The glee club sang a group of football songs which included Minnesota, Hats Off to You; Indiana, my Indiana; On Wisconsin; and a few more. I had gone around camp and found fellows who knew the words and the melody of a football song and wrote out the melodies for trumpet with an interlude between numbers to allow the music to modulate and get ready for the next song. I am not sure if I included Hail to the Victors Valiant from Michigan or the Notre Dame fight song which I only knew with words that were about drinking. The words were committed to memory and we sang the numbers with the trumpet accompaniment. The medley ended with On Wisconsin with the words “fight, fight, fight, we’ll win this game”. The audience responded vigorously. I was taking a bow in front of the group when the interpreter said to me, “It is forbidden to sing fight song.” I told him it was football song, very common in the U.S. He said, “Who gave you permission to sing fight song?” I pointed out Tom Edwards and then led my group off stage. The jazz band also played on the program and there must have been some other acts as well.

After the program I brought the organ into my barracks. Steve, one of the English medics, lived in room 2 and he had a nice voice, so I wanted to rehearse for the upcoming program in our hallway just before Christmas. William Stevens was from Leeds, England and had been shot down in September 1939 do had been a prisoner for five years. He had been all over Germany and had finally ended up here. He had learned about pharmacy and thus became a medic. He sang a number of songs from the hymn book called Best-loved Hymns containing 177 pieces. He roomed with Kenneth Warren from Plymouth, England. The two conducted Sick Call everyday after the morning roll call. If they could not help the patient they took him to the Vorlager to see a medical doctor. A small hospital was available also.

Page 18: Somehow I ended up with the Minstrel Show program on two sheets of paper written by Tom Edwards. I believe we did all the numbers listed. Letters following the titles are in my handwriting and refer to the beginning note. I also wrote in Sleepy Time Down South and Shortnin’ Bread. My main job was to train the singers.

At the time Minstrel Shows had been popular in the United States for about a hundred years since the first minstrel show on record took place in 1843. Mr. Interlocutor was center stage with the soloists and end men on either side. The chorus, composed of members of the glee club and the choir, were in the back rows in black face. The entrance used the song Weep No More. The opening chorus was Waiting for the Robert E. Lee. The Parade of Men had the end men each doing a solo: Moonlight & Roses by Sommers, Beautiful Dreamer by McDonald, Alex Ragtime by McGonigle, Darktown Strutters by O. Leary, Shine on Harvest Moon by Phillips, and finally Swanee and Sleepy Time Down South by all. A quartet sang O Susanna and Camptown. Next

came a soft shoe number and a Whistler. The Haymakers Band did St. Louis Blues. Under comic routine is Shortnin' Bread and K.G.F. Jones. This last number needs some explanation. On a flimsy piece of paper I have the words of a popular number during the thirties:

There's a big holiday everywhere
For the Jones family has a brand new heir.
He's a joy H[eaven] sent
As we proudly present
Mr. F[ranklin] D. R[oosevelt] J[ones].

When he grows up he never will stray
With the name like the one he's got today.
How can he be a dud or a stick in the mud
When he's F D R J?

For the program F D R Jones was changed to K G F Jones which stood for Kriegsgefangenen Jones. I think that is a nice touch.

Spoons is listed at the bottom of the program.

The show was scheduled to be done in early January but it was not ready.

The program was presented on January 25, 26, and 27, 1945. We had worked hard on the minstrel show and the opening number went well but the applause was light. As Interlocutor I then said, "Gentlemen, be seated." Next, I greeted the audience. I remember the feeling I had as the show began and I was really savoring the experience. Tom cued me to continue but it took me about five seconds to get under way. He didn't like that so the next day I joined the chorus. I learned a lesson I never forgot. You must keep the tempo of the show moving.

You might be interested in what I have in my notebook.. Since it is almost at the end of our stay in Luft IV I'll write out the final few days as I wrote them and the comments I made when I put it all together in 1994.

In my diary on January 25th I wrote: *Went to morning devotion. Washed clothes. Had [performance of minstrel show]. Had a dead audience. Took a hot shower. It really felt good.* This was the second shower I had in camp, the first being on January 17th. At the first shower we were marched to a building near the front of the camp and the shower was delightful. The only trouble was that after getting wet they turned the water off and we were told to lather up. Then we only got cold water to rinse with. Still it was a big improvement over trying to bathe in the wash room with a pan of water. We had more hot water this time. The last shower I had was on February 5th, the day before we went on the march. Life was getting to be quite nice in camp. *Walked around camp. Led [Bible study] and then round table discussion on the movies. We have good times here.*

On the 26th I had to blacken my face and it was hard to get off. I believe the audience's response was better than the day before. I cannot remember if Tom took the role of Mr. Interlocutor or not. I wrote a letter home but it never arrived.

On the 27th after the performance I attended Bible study in barracks and then had a discussion on college education.

On Sunday, January 28th, I taught Sunday School again. Brian Cleworth and Wetzler handled the church service. I wrote a letter to my sister which did not get home. I played some ping pong in our barrack's wash room. It was a joy to be able to play ping pong even if we did not have a regulation table. We must have had a net, paddles and a ball, all probably from the Red Cross. The YMCA also contributed a lot of materials.

29th: *Big blizzard. Snowed all day. Went to morning devotion. Peeled spuds. Went to choir practice. Had 20 in choir. Had church council meeting. Had vesper service. Played records for fellows. They asked for more classical records. Wish we had a lot more.* One of the records we had was the Overture to William Tell which everyone knew and enjoyed. I gave some background on Rossini and played the record. I do not remember the other record I played.

30th: *Been in army two years. First shipment of fellows left. Cleworth went with them. Went to morning devotion. No Bible study. Washed clothes. Something about to happen soon. Played some chess. Had vesper service and then debate—Post-war Immigration. Affirmative won.*

All the prisoners who had been wounded or were sickly were taken out and shipped by railroad somewhere. Recently I heard that they went to the camp at Barth. Then B compound was evacuated and the men in that compound were divided into the other three compounds. Soon after that happened, in fact I think it was that evening, a group of prisoners of other nationalities came into B compound from the north, stayed a night, and then marched on. The marchers were in sad shape and we began to worry about having to march also, but the Germans assured us that the Americans would stay. Only the other nationalities were marching. Camp seemed to be the best of the alternatives.

31st: *Went to morning devotion. Played more chess. Getting almost no bread or rations for quite awhile. Had choir practice and church council meeting. Inducted 3 new members. Played cards. Had vesper service. Frenchy gave lecture on The Lugar.*

February 1st: *A new month. Quite slippery out. Went to morning devotion. Played chess. Rations finally began to come in again. Had vesper service. Crawford led. Had round table discussion on Swing vs. Classics. Couldn't sleep.*

2nd: *Getting warmer. Soup for lunch. Equipment from B lager to our lager. Piano came too. Moved to upper bunk. Steve gave lecture on aircraft combustion.*

I believe two more men came into our room, this time from B lager. I had forgotten that we got the piano from B lager. I remember going with a group into B compound to remove some items, and it was obvious that the prisoners who had stayed there had been hungry. I recall some one saying that they had even cooked and eaten some grass. I doubt that now. I remember they had emptied some powder they had found.

By having a piano available my joy must have been complete. By teaching music to a number of fellows in camp I had learned a number of techniques that worked as well as a few that didn't. This was also a help to me when I started teaching theory at the University of Georgia in 1947. The only trouble was that the war ended too soon. Despite the deprivations—not enough food, really cold weather, barbed wire, practically no materials with which to work—I really was having a good time and learning a lot. We all felt that something was going to happen, but we did not know what. We had been assured that we would remain in camp until the war was over. We began to hear what

sounded like guns in the distance. Life went on with a bit more pressure from events beyond our control.

3rd: *Wet out. Went to morning devotion. Had barley for breakfast. Had choir practice. Worked some more on sermon. I'm not sure _____?__. Andy came over. Met church council of lager B. Had vesper service in barracks. 14 there.*

As a member of the church council it was my turn to preach at the Sunday service if the Padre did not show up. I was not a preacher but I did write out a sermon in my notebook which I hoped I would not have to give. Leading the singing and the choir was not difficult. I knew I could do that. Preaching was more demanding. I thought up another prayer I could give during the service. I tried to be prepared.

One of the boys who came into our room had the most unbelievable story of all. He was a tail gunner who turned around during the mission and found that the tail had been cut off from the plane and that his chute was not there. It reminds me of a scene in the movie **Memphis Belle**. The tail section floated (?) down and evidently hit the earth on an upswing. He was unconscious for awhile but lived through the experience. Often at night he relived the experience, and we had to wake him up to stop his screaming.

On this day the Allies dropped 3,000 tons of bombs on Berlin.

Sunday, the 4th: *Taught Sunday School class. Led song service waiting for Padre Davis but he came. Good crowd at church. Took a nap. Lights went dim for awhile. Maurer led vesper service. Had 20 there. Getting more each week. Talked awhile.*

The church service started with singing some hymns. When the Padre failed to come I had them sing some more. Finally, it seemed obvious that he wouldn't make it. I had one of the assistants read my text and the Padre arrived. He wanted us to sing one more hymn while he got settled. I was saved at the last moment although I thought my sermon had more meaning than the one the Padre gave. Maybe, some day, I'll have the opportunity to preach.

My notes remained in my notebook for almost 49 years before I really looked at them again. My pastor at the First United Methodist Church in Mexico Beach, Florida, where I was choir director, had to be out of town and asked me to pinch-hit for him. I gave my sermon (?) and it was not as bad as I had anticipated. I covered the material quickly and filled up the rest of the time talking about my experiences in Germany.

Joe O'Donnell has published some books about prisoners of war and I met him on my first trip back to the camp site in 1994. He was doing another book and asked for some recollections or stories to be sent to him. I sent him a copy of the sermon and the program of the Minstrel show. He included both in his next book. I thin he has published at least four books.

5th: *Cold. Went to morning devotion. Our barracks went to have showers again. It sure felt good. Had choir practice. Started "Men and Music". Had hymn service. Played organ. Had round table discussion on Cha_____?__.*

Unfortunately, the last line is unreadable, but I can recall what happened. Word reached us that evening that the camp would leave in the morning. Lights would be on an extra length of time in order to get ready. It did not take long to pack up. I ate some of the food I had stashed away which would be hard to carry. I got all my choir music, my hymnals, my knife, fork and spoon, a powdered milk can to use for drinking, the library book I was reading, and probably the other few things I had accumulated. We were told we would march three days, rest one, march two more days and arrive at a new

camp. At least, it seemed as if we were nearing the end. What we didn't know was that the instructions were wrong.

Page 18: For awhile the library was a popular place. Sometimes you had to wait in line as long as a half hour in order to get in. I expect I averaged about a book a week while I was in camp. I even read some Shakespeare.

Ernest King, who was in my room, was in charge of the Victrolas. I forget how many were in camp, but he was always fixing one so our room had the benefits of music almost whenever we wanted it. Ernest had been in the underground for awhile after being shot down and tried to get into Switzerland. When that proved to be impossible he went south and was captured crossing into the Pyrenees. He kept a diary also and had a book published which he sent to me. He mentions the weather conditions almost every day and he attended the Minstrel Show on the first day. His comments were not too flattering. I recall that he mentioned someone trying to reach a soldier named King and he found it was a call for a fellow in the next room. Julius King and I became good friends while we were members together in the Panama City Chapter of AXPOW. After a couple of years in NC I think that we are about ready to unpack the books in the garage. You might be interested in King's book if I can find it.

Paper was hard to come by at first. For my work in music theory I needed staff paper with the lines on it. Since that was not available we had to draw the staff lines and that is what the student had to do before he came to his lesson. My engineer, August Maurer, who is still alive at age 93 in Denver, studied with me for a few weeks before we had an organ available and never heard any of the music he wrote. That may have been somewhat of a first.

Our Christmas parcel was given to us on December 24th. I did not open mine until Christmas Day. We had received a full parcel on Thanksgiving week and this was the second time we got a full parcel. According to a newspaper article my mother saved I read: **American Red Cross Christmas packages for prisoners of war arrived in Europe for distribution to captive Yanks in German prison camps, in time for Christmas, according to Basil O'Connor, chairman of the American Red Cross.**

The packages were shipped from Philadelphia in order to arrive in time for Christmas despite delays in transportation through war areas, O'Connor said. A large reserve was included to allow for men who might be captured during the months between August and December.

The packages contain turkey, plum pudding, sausages, strawberry jam, nuts, fruit bars, dates, canned cherries, chewing gum, deviled ham, cheddar cheese, butter, bouillon cubes, tea, honey, cigarettes, smoking tobacco, a pipe, a washcloth, playing cards, a game, and two pictures of American scenes.

The American Red Cross instructed the international committee in Geneva to distribute the regular weekly food parcel to American prisoners of war in addition to the Christmas package, the national chairman stated.

At our camp we got the Christmas parcel in place of the regular parcel. I believe the food items were allowed to remain unopened for a change. One of the most hilarious and yet tragic events happened that evening or the next day. One of the boys was heating his can of turkey on the stove when it blew up. He was soon scrapping turkey off the ceiling, the walls, and everything else. What a tragedy! Yet, it was funny.

Page 22: Insert the word "are" in the second paragraph after "regularly".

One event I should mention that happened while I was in A Lager (during the month of September) that most fellows who were there remember is that three planes of German origin came flying over the camp. They began to do acrobatics and we were all watching them when one of the planes did not pull out but plunged into the ground a short ways off from the camp. Instantly, a cheer went up and the guards in the towers got visibly more nervous. I decided not to cheer. We were all told to go inside. I did not indicate the day it occurred.

I was glad when we moved from the tents in A Lager to the barracks in C Lager. It was already getting cold at night and I was glad to get inside.

In a letter written by my mother on Christmas Day, which I did not read until it was returned to Kansas City in late June, she wrote, "We hope you will soon be getting our letters, also the boxes." Boxes is plural, but nothing more ever arrived. She did make a list of what was sent in one box: 2 pr. socks; 1 Kraft dinner; Grape Nuts; 1 lb. prunes; 4 Life Savers; 15 tea bags; 3 Mars bars; 1 box spaghetti; 2 condensed vegetable soup; 1 6oz. chocolate bar, Nestles; 1 8oz. cocoa; 5 Powerhouse bars; 1 coin trick, block puzzle; 1 Christmas card; 3 pkgs chicken noodle soup; 1 Betty Crocker vegetable noodle soup; 2 pkgs. Dried puddings; 1 book, Lost Horizon; 1 pkg. red hots; 1 4oz. Baker chocolate bar; 1 lip pomade; Kleenex papers; 1 box cough drops; 5 picture post cards; 1 bag peppermint candy; Baking Powder; Soda; Malted Milk Tablets; Salt; and 1 rag. Cloves, cinnamon and 1 shorts have been scratched out. Everything is listed with its price. The total was \$5.17. If I had received that box I believe I would have been in seventh heaven.

One of the duties we had every day was to peel a bucket of potatoes in the morning for the dinner meal. Each room solved the problem in different ways. In some rooms everyone would peel two or three potatoes and be finished in about five to ten minutes, or two or more people could be assigned the task in a rotating manner. The job wasn't too bad at first, but when the weather got bad it was a cold, disagreeable task. It was possible to do the peeling in the wash house, but it was unheated there and nobody liked doing it in the cold. Some fellows in our room had other duties such as sweeping up, or caring for the stove, or collecting the coal briquettes, bringing the food to the room, closing the shutters at sundown, etc. Peeling the potatoes was one of my chores which I did almost daily for quite awhile. Then we found that if you went to pick up the potatoes late enough the supply had run out. It became the norm for our room to just skip the task altogether. Our transgression of the rule was found out and was brought to the attention of our governing council. They decided to omit us from one day's food rationing and eliminate our coal ration for some period of time (I forget exactly). We had it coming. Our sins had been found out, and we took our punishment. We stayed out of our cold room until bedtime.

Two roll calls were held each day. Other than that we were pretty much on our own. One of the best activities was to meet some one new and walk around the compound getting acquainted. Each person had experienced an unusual series of events which led him to this place. I had it easy compared to a lot of the stories I heard. I remember one fellow parachuted into the Zeider Zee. That was a place I had read about in grammar school. Each story I heard seemed to be more exciting than mine. At roll call we all stood in front of the barracks in rows of five. The guard would count each side of the compound, barracks 1 to 5 and 10 to 6. then they would total up the count as

they walked back to Der Hauptmann (the German captain). If the tally was not correct they counted again. Some days roll call lasted over an hour. A search of the barracks came when it was decided some one was missing. I remember one poor fellow had fallen asleep and no one had awakened him. I expect he spent some time in solitary confinement. Only a couple of times can I remember when the weather was so bad we had roll call inside.

We were locked in the barracks at sundown and lights were out about nine o'clock. Shutters were placed over the windows. We often had conversations going in the room after lights out. The barracks were built about 3-4 feet off the ground so it was impossible to dig a tunnel. Dogs roamed in the compound at night. We were a short distance from the Baltic Sea, but if we had got that far it would be hard to cross that sea.

Except for Thanksgiving week and Christmas week we were on half-rations of Red Cross food all the time we were in the camp. Each item distributed was shared with another person. A standard food package issued by the Red Cross to POWs included the following: 1 7oz. carton of Type K 2 biscuit; 1 8oz carton of processed cheese; 2 4oz. bars of ration D chocolate; 5 packages containing 100 cigarettes; 1 4oz. tin of soluble coffee; 1 12oz. tin of corned beef; 1 15oz. carton of dried fruit (prunes or raisins); 1 6oz. tin of liver paste; 1 16oz. tin of whole milk powder; 1 16 oz. tin of oleomargarine; 1 4oz. tin of orange concentrate; 1 12 oz. tin of pork luncheon meat (Spam); 1 8 oz. tin of salmon; 2 2oz. bars of odorless soap; and 1 8oz. carton of white lump sugar.

In camp a lot of trading went on every time we got some Red Cross food. Cigarettes were our medium of exchange. A box of prunes cost one pack; a can of powdered milk cost four packs; a chocolate bar cost a pack; Spam went for a pack; some parcels had raisins instead of prunes, they cost a pack and a half. Sometimes prices would fluctuate but normally you could make a deal for what you wanted.

In October we had tournament between the ten barracks in football. Since I was not a football player I helped make up some yells for Barracks 1. We never won a game. A game always had a good crowd.

For every meeting such as morning devotion a German interpreter had to be present. On October 14th we must have started without him, so he broke it up when he arrived.

My ball turret gunner, Donald Nelson, got the most mail of anyone I knew. His first card arrived on November 4th. On the 6th he got seven cards. On the 23rd he got 5 more cards. On December 2nd he got 2 more. On the 19th he got 4 cards and a letter. On the 21st he got another letter and more cards. Finally, on December 27th I received a letter from home. It was a real morale booster. After I got home I got to read 8 letters sent to me at the 388th Bomb Group marked missing by Capt. J. R. Gross and returned to sender. 18 letters sent to me in Germany were also returned.

On January 14th I went walking with Andy and Nelson. When we got to Barracks 7 (it may have been 8) we found that some of the fellows had poured water outside and it had frozen which made a great slide. It was the longest man-made ice slide I had ever seen. With a running start you could slide almost the length of the barracks which was an exciting experience. I heard that one fellow broke his leg, and I believe the slide was closed down. It was fun while it lasted.

The trumpet player wanted to see the music for "The Carnival of Venice" which was played by Harry James on one of the records we had. I wrote out the transcription

for him on November 20th and then on January 14th I wrote out some arpeggios for warm-up exercises because he needed the practice.

On January 23rd I got a new pair of GI shoes. At Wetzlar I had been issued a pair of English shoes with hob nails and it was good that I had the new shoes for the march, although it may have been hard to break in a new pair of shoes on such a march. On the same day a GI shirt was issued to my room and we had a drawing and I won it. It was a size 16 and too large for me but I wore it all the time. Earlier, I had been given a GI blanket so I had two to go with me on the march. At Fallingbostal I sold the shirt to a French soldier for 17 crackers. I think I have been lucky or fortunate all of my life.

Other than making a copy of my whole notebook I think I have given you some of the highlights of my life at Luft IV. Use any, all, or none of it you want. I always meant to rewrite the whole thing but it seems to be too big a task now. I'm just glad to help when I can.

E-Mail to Laura Edge from John H. Anderson: September 14, 2011

A DAY OF INFAMY

Here are my comments on this chapter:

Page 1, second sentence—One of the things that gunners had to do before each mission was to put their gun(s) into position. As I recall at each waist, tail, and turret a box of .50 caliber bullets was placed and they were filled before we got on to the plane. The gunner placed the first round into the chamber. The bullets were all linked together and every so often (somewhere between 4 and 10) came a tracer bullet which allowed the gunner to see where his bullets were going. In the radio room was a single gun sticking out the top which was ineffective and I never fired it in training or in combat except on our ninth mission when we flew to Russia. We had to test fire our guns and I pointed it out over the ocean and pulled the trigger. The gun whipped toward the tail and I let go just in time to avoid hitting the tail. There may have been a safety device to avoid such an event, but that is the only time I fired a gun in combat. How's that for contributing to the war effort?

I believe it was in late July that it was decided to fly with only a crew of 9 instead of 10. In case of an attack I was to man one of the waist guns. My two waist gunners and the tail gunner took turns staying at the base. I'm sure that must have saved many lives. 9 did the job of 10.

At our base the barracks (huts) were quite a distance from the flight line. I'm sure we could hear the engines being tested, but inside the hut it was not noticeable. At least, I don't remember that keeping me awake. Paragraph 2—I do not think we had heated socks. On my first mission I forgot to attach (by snaps) my heated trousers to my heated jacket. A cord came out of my left sleeve which I plugged into the outlet. Just before we reached the target (coast of France on June 4th) we were told to put on our flak jacket. This protected your front and back against any fragments which might come into the plane. My feet began to get cold so I turned up the rheostat. Soon I started sweating on my face while my feet kept getting colder. I realized what I had done wrong, but since I was inexperienced I decided not to take off my flak suit, my parachute harness and attach the trousers and then put it all back together again. I decided to just sweat it out. I did get sick to my stomach and had to go into the bomb bay to throw up. I

learned a lesson that day. I don't think we had any heated socks. I'm not sure about heated gloves either.

Attached to the trousers were two felt shoes which were heated to keep your feet warm. I wore fur-lined flying boots over them so my feet never got cold.

Page 2—This is good writing. I may have worn OD's on the shuttle mission to Russia because I thought I would need them. When we flew to Italy it was hot and, luckily, I met a good friend from gunnery school there and he let me borrow a set of khakis so I could go to town. I believe I wore my fatigues on most of my missions. I did not have enough sense to bring along my GI shoes so when I landed outside Berlin I was barefooted.

Page 3—You go about introducing the characters very well. I figured out that Witt was left waist gunner but it might help to mention it.

Page 5—Pancakes were often served at our breakfast. I decided I felt better if I did not eat a big breakfast. I did enjoy the hot chocolate and cookies we got at our briefing after the mission. We often received a candy bar before a mission. The meals were unusually pretty good. I remember one Sunday afternoon and we were too late for lunch so they served us cold cuts and potato salad. I was unhappy. I never did like potato salad.

After breakfast the entire crew attended the main briefing at which the target was indicated. You made me smile just reading your account of it. The gunners then went to the plane while the pilots, navigators, and radio operators attended their own briefings.

Page 6—near last full sentence: should use a semi-colon instead of a colon.

Page 7—I used to not know what the pathfinder airplane did. It might help to give an explanation. Do you know the position of Tucker's plane in the formation?

Page 8—My heated suit, I think, was sort of reddish brown but you call it blue. I guess I could be wrong, but at any rate, it was a great invention. Since I had to use my hands to write I don't think I wore gloves all the time. I never heard of a flax jacket.

Page 10—last paragraph: In my dictionary grippe is another name for influenza. You must mean gripes. I have not heard of the odds of surviving all the missions. You have set the reader up for the final mission in an interesting way. Another colon needs to be "semi-d".

Page 12—second paragraph: They call out on the intercom.

Page 13—Perhaps "regroup" might be a better word to use than "reform". Maybe footnote #26 would be a good place to explain the pathfinder.

Wow! Over 50% casualties in the A Group.

Page 14—Do you know the phrase “Tail-end Charlie”? That is what we called the back position in a formation. John Nichol, the English author who wrote about the evacuations of prisoners-of-war camps near the end of the war, has written a book entitled “Tail-end Charlies”. I have the book, but like the others, it is still out in the garage.

You mention the pilot crawling through the bomb bay toward the radio room. What happened to him? Did he go out the back door? Almost everybody did. I can imagine Witt’s thought when he sees the pilot away from the cockpit. Do you need to detail his exiting also?

You mention the longitude numbers twice. Should they be in reverse order?

What a great story! It contains a lot of drama and suspense. You can be proud of your achievement.

Date: Tue, 18 Sep 2012 00:30:12 -0400 [09/18/2012 12:30:12 AM EST]

From: [JOHN H. ANDERSON <JANDERSON118@triad.rr.com>](mailto:JOHN.H.ANDERSON<JANDERSON118@triad.rr.com>)

To: [Laura Edge <lawe@umich.edu>](mailto:Laura.Edge<lawe@umich.edu>)

Subject: Review of your book

[Show this HTML in a new window?](#)

Hey, Laura,

When I got home from my visit to the 388th Bomb Group reunion in Savannah I had a number of newspapers waiting to be read. I knew that I was going to enjoy your book so I put it off for awhile. Then I had to read the e-mails and that is a chore. Once in a while I find something of interest but it usually is not often. Then I read the Introduction to your book and it touched me deeply. I thought it had some of your best writing. You have a way with words that is appealing and you keep the interest going. The next night I started to read the rest of the book and I could not put it down until I finished it. Bravo!

I took it to my ex-pow meeting in Greensboro last Saturday and showed them the book. We only had eight people present but the son-in-law of one of our members (a widow) is a pilot and he sends me e-mails about B-17s that he thinks will interest me. It was his turn to furnish the dessert and he bought three apple pies which was more than we could eat so he gave me one to take home. It has been a long time since I had a pie that tasted this good. Now that I have about caught up with my reading I can start sending some interesting material to you. I want to contact Walter Lawrence again and see how he is getting along. The last time he wrote he said he was falling behind with the housework. He did get to attend the last national convention of AXPOW in Arlington, TX and gave me a report of events. I doubt that the national organization will last much longer.

I think you have written a real gem. Thank you for allowing me to read some of your material before it appeared in print. Now that I have read your book in its entirety I want to convey to you that you really did a fantastic job. Your description of the march was so much better than what I wrote. You ought to submit the book to whomever reads new books and gives awards to the best of the year. I don't know who that would be but I would like to write in support of the idea. Thank you for sending me a copy. It even has my picture in it. I am more than pleased with the final result.

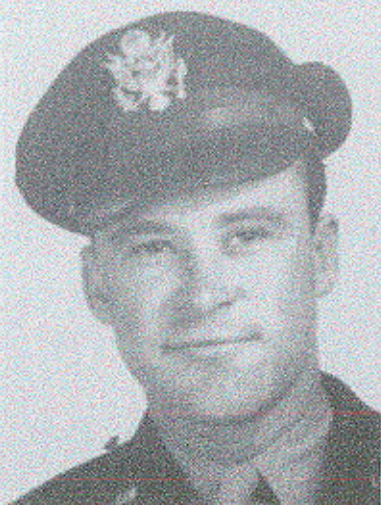
Next time I write I shall tell you of some developments with my two books.

John

Robert M. Rowe
Second Lieutenant—P



Robert S. Stewart
Second Lieutenant—CP



W. G. Collins
Lieutenant—B
Navigator



August W. Maurer
Sergeant—AEG



John H. Anderson
Sergeant—ROG



George T. Crowder
Corporal—AAEG



Ernest Crawford
Corporal—GUN



Robert J. McIntyre
Sergeant—AG



Paul H. Nelson
07726/2009

September 12, 2010

Dear John,

A thousand thanks for your very interesting and informative emails. I have been reading them over and over again for the past couple of days and making notes all over them. I have also been looking back over my dad's story to learn where your story is similar and where it is different.

Christmas 1944: My dad had vivid memories of the church services and the hymns that were sung. I have read Christiansen's book. It is an amazing story. I have always been touched by his description of Christmas Eve and referred to it during my presentation at a senior event and during presentations for high school and middle school classes. I am excited to hear your music may become part of the AXPOW traveling exhibit. I wonder if it will travel to my area of the country. I do believe that the church in Lager C and the opportunity to be part of your choir played a big part in helping my father get through captivity. Those were his most positive memories of Luft IV.

Your liberation at Fallingbommel: It was interesting to learn how you evaded the march out. Thank God for the air raids that kept you from having to go on the road again. You mention that Stalag XIB was liberated at 8:37. Stalag 357 was liberated around 9am. I wonder if XIB was a little more organized than 357 after liberation. There were not many Americans at 357 and it was a much smaller camp. Dad recalls coming and going at will. I will attach my chapter on his liberation to this email. You can read my dad's account of how the German's surrendered there. I would like to add your story of liberation to that chapter.

Flying out of Germany to Belgium: My dad believes he left 357 on April 24th. This date is based on letters he wrote home. If this is correct, he left 5 days after you did. I was touched to tears by your memory of singing "Off we go into the wild blue yonder" as you left the camp. Dad was also taken to an airfield (grass strip) and flown out on a C-47. I don't know if it was Dieholtz but it makes sense that it may have been the same field.

Please read about my dad's memories of the place he stayed in Brussels. Edouard Reniere of Brussels tried to help dad and I figure out where he stayed when there. Do you know the name of the facility? Edouard suggested either Barracks Etterbeck or College St. Michel may have been used for transit camps but he was not able to find out. From looking at pictures, dad thought College St. Michel looked more like a possibility because of the surrounding boulevards. However, he was not sure. I'll send pictures when I get home. Dad was also given some francs. I now have the change he received after making his purchases in Brussels. He saved it all these years.

Dad only stayed in Brussels less than 24 hours. Then he was flown to Camp Lucy Strike. He did not make a stop at Namur as you did.

Southampton: Dad went home on the USMM Sea Tiger. They also stopped in Southampton to join a convoy home. It is interesting to learn that you were in England on VE Day. Dad was a few days out of Southampton. The day before VE Day his convoy was attacked by submarine. This was a very vivid and scary memory for my dad. Now, it is very curious that you and my dad arrived in New York Harbor on the very same day. So, it seems you must have been part of the same convoy across the Atlantic even though you left on different days. Is this possible? What do you think? I have the story from the New York Times about the day you arrived in New York. You were in the first convoy to enter the harbor after VE Day. I'll send you a copy although it is a rather poor copy made from microfilm at U of M library. Dad also left for Camp Kilmer on May 20th and from there was sent to Fort Sheridan in Chicago.

President Madison: Dad also reported there after his 60-day furlough. He only stayed there three days (Aug 1st-Aug 3rd). Then he was sent to the Pancoast Hospital at Collins Ave. and 29th street, Miami Beach, FL. (Aug 3rd - Aug 16th). Finally he was sent to the Towers Hospital at Collins Ave. and 42nd Street, Miami Beach, FL. (Aug 16th – Sept 27th).

San Antonio: Dad left for San Antonio on Sept 27th. In many of his letters he laments his lack of points for discharge. In one letter home dated October 8th he mentions meeting up with a fellow he knew from the camp. Name is Wetzel (if I am reading his handwriting correctly). "He sang a duet with another fellow for our Christmas program last year." Does this jog your memory? Dad was discharged on October 31st.

I will be interested to hear your comments on my chapter on liberation. I will work on adding your story of liberation from XIB to this. I am so glad to have more information. Because dad was separated from all the Luft IV men and did not remember names of those two American airmen he met at 357, I did not have enough stories to enrich this chapter.

Thank you again for sharing your time and stories.
Laura

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He was shot down on August 6, 1944.

He was held at Stalag Luft IV, was a participant on the forced march, and taken to Stalag XIB, Fallingbostel.

John H. Anderson
Professor Emeritus Columbus State University
BM Conservatory of Music Kansas City MO
MM University of Michigan
PhD Catholic University

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For me camp life presented a great opportunity to develop teaching skills as I tried to teach music theory to individuals who wanted to learn about music. My engineer went through the course of study without hearing what he wrote. When a pump organ came into the compound on November 22 it was a big advantage to my music program. I was also able to arrange music for the church choir which rehearsed MWF at 1:00. Upon hearing some good voices in the Catholic choir I started a Men's Glee Club which met TTS at 1:00. The choir sang every Sunday at the church service; the glee club sang programs of school fight songs, Christmas service in the middle of the compound on Christmas eve attended by the visiting YMCA representative, and three performances of a minstrel show in January. I gained a lot of good experiences.

As choir director I was a member of the church committee which provided a substitute preacher every Sunday in case the English padre did not show up. Hymnals from the YMCA were used and were the source of material for my music program. Morning devotion was held each morning following roll call. In December my barracks began to have vesper services at 6:00. The barracks were closed up at sundown but lights were not out until 9:00. In January I started a program in my barracks at 7:00 that offered round table discussions, debates, music appreciation, spelling bees, lectures and whatever else could be done. A library in the Red Cross building in the lager was always full and I did more reading than before. A Red Cross parcel containing food was to be given to each prisoner every week, but except for Thanksgiving and Christmas week we were on half rations all the time I was in camp. Food was always a topic of conversation. The bread ration disappeared just before we left camp. A football contest between the ten barracks was started in October. Barracks 1 never won a game but we had some good cheers which I helped write. Some instruments came into the compound and the Germans built a stage for our use about the time of the Battle of the Bulge. It all came to an end when the Germans told us on February 5 that we would leave camp by foot in 12 hours. My great experiences were to come to an end.

My room, Room 3 in Barracks 1, won the honor of being the first in the formation to leave camp. We were told we were to walk three days, rest one, walk two more and arrive at the new camp. Those instructions were wrong. We were on the road for 53 days. As we went through the Vorlager in front of the camp piles of canned food were lying on the ground. We were told to take what we wanted but to be considerate of others. I took a chocolate bar. Each of us was given a full Red Cross parcel which weighed about 11 pounds. All my belongings including three hymnals, a library book, my small stash of food, my arrangements of music for the choir, everything was wrapped

in my two blankets with the ends tied together by a string and slung over my shoulder. I started out on the right in the second row. The formation was all of C Lager which by that time was about 2600 soldiers. It was probably about a mile long and we started marching but it soon turned into just walking. We went at least 14 kilometers with just three stops. Sometime in the afternoon I began to get a cramp in my right foot. I decided to fall to the back of the formation and find Steve, the British medic, who lived in my barracks and was a good friend. I thought he could tape it up and give it support. When I found Steve he was talking to an older soldier who just wanted to stop and sit down which was not possible. Steve was keeping him going. Steve told me he had no tape. He said the tempo of walking was too fast. If I was going back to the front I could tell them to slow down. I made my way back to the front but could not slow them down. We arrived at a farm where the barn surrounded a big compound. We were placed in the barn and locked up. Women at the farm were the first we had seen in months.

On the third day I left two hymnals and the library book in the barn before we left. Despite that I had trouble carrying my pack and constantly walking. The men in my room took turns carrying it for a ways which gave me relief. I finally took it back just as we reached the bottom of a hill and turned left to go up another hill. On the right side of the road a group of refugees were fleeing with everything they had. Some were walking and some had horse-drawn wagons. I knew I could not climb that hill. I crossed the road and found a wagon with the back open, threw my pack on the back and sat on the edge. A guard saw me and made me get off, but I did get to ride up the hill which I consider somewhat a miracle.

On the 13th we walked in the snow. On the 14th we traveled 40 kilometers (about 25 miles). By this time I had adjusted to the exercise and felt much better. The entire formation had to sleep outside in a field near Swindemunde and it started to rain. It was a miserable night with little sleep. The next day we took a ferry across Stettin Bay. I caught up with my crew members again. On the 16th I had another unforgettable experience. After walking 30 kilos we saw our destination barn ahead with the road making a ninety degree turn to the right to reach it. We decided to save some steps and take the hypotenuse to reach it. After we got started we discovered we were in deep mud. It was laborious to pick up each foot and then sink in the mud. If we ran we could stay on top of the ground and if we stopped we would sink in. We arrived at the barn exhausted. It was a terrible barn, wet and no hay. We were all thirsty and Nelson, the ball turret gunner, decided to try and go to the well with a guard and get some water. He came back with a full Klim can of water for us and said he thought he could get more but to save a fourth of it for him. We each drank a fourth and left Nelson's share for him. After about an hour he did not return and we figured he was probably stocking up on the water so we split the water three ways. Nelson returned with no water, knowing he had some waiting for him, but we had drunk it. It was a heart-rending experience. The next day we went through Anklem, a fairly large town. I remember having to go to the bathroom because of my diarrhea. A woman driving a wagon went by and did not look at me. On the 20th we had another day of rest. I talked with a Russian woman named Rosie who was from Poltava. Because I had been to Poltava she gave me part of a head of cabbage which I cooked and ate the next day. Usually we got two boiled potatoes and

a cup of hot water each day. One time I went 24 hours without eating to see if that would help my diarrhea but it did not help much. Some Red Cross food arrived which helped morale. On March 2nd it snowed and the wind blew so hard you could almost lean into it and it would hold you up. I just did make the 28 kilometers that day.

Captain Leslie Caplan, an American doctor, had come to camp in November and was on the march with us. He had requested that the Germans allow a wagon to carry the soldiers who could not march. It also carried the guards' baggage. On March 3rd he said that I could ride on the wagon which traveled slower at the back of the formation. While marching or trudging through the snow your blood circulated better than it did sitting in the wagon. I practically froze on the wagon and became unable to walk with frozen feet. The doctor would get too many to transport so he would leave a group of them in a barn with a medic and hope for the best. I almost got left twice but continued to ride the wagon. On March 12th I was able to walk without my pack except for the last 3 kilos. On March 20th a truck took my group for 16 kilometers to a nice barn where we had lots of hot water and potatoes. On the next day Dr. Caplan assigned me to a group under my friend Steve, the British medic who lived in my barracks and was a good friend. We rode in an open railcar and did not arrive until after dark. The next day 20 of us were put in a passenger car with 2 guards. We did not go far but were on the train all night. We each got a full Red Cross parcel plus another one to split between two soldiers. We transferred to another train at Uelzen but seven of us and one guard missed the new train. We stayed on the platform on a baggage cart from 5:30 until 11:00. The air raid sirens started to sound and we were asked if we wanted to go to the shelter. We discussed it and decided that if the bombers were headed for this town it would be better to sweat it out on top rather than to be among a bunch of civilians. Luckily, the planes flew over without an incident.

After catching up with the group that had left us we had about four days of rest without having to travel. On the 28th we were taken by wagon to a railway station at Ebsdorf. I did not know the name of that town until I started to transcribe the Journal of Dr. Caplan in 2002. We were placed in a box car with no food or drink or toilet facilities for 40 hours. It was one of the most traumatic experiences in my life. The train moved about 60 kilometers and arrived at Fallingbommel which held Stalag XI B holding thousands of prisoners of all nationalities. I was placed in a white tent filled with soldiers who were in bad shape. Easter Sunday was April 1st. About ten funerals were held each day. On April 5th I moved to a convalescent tent next door. On April 9th German orders woke us up. The men in the Air Corps were to continue marching. I knew I could not go any further. I was barely able to walk. In order to avoid the formation I went to the French section. The prisoners there had been prisoners for years and were receiving personal parcels from home. I remember one fellow baking bread. The aroma was mouth-watering. When I returned to my tent the Germans didn't like it that some of the Americans had stayed. They threatened to cut off the food supply. We were to fall out for inspection the next day at noon. The choices were to march or go to the hospital. The next day we had an air raid that lasted all afternoon. We were told to report tomorrow. The next morning most of the Germans were gone. The few Germans still carried the guns, but a British soldier was allowed to walk with each guard. Food became more of a

problem. I sold my GI shirt which I had won in a lottery back in camp to a French soldier for 17 crackers. I had wanted 20 but settled for 17. He opened his drawer which was full of crackers and counted out 17 for me. At 8:37 the morning of April 16th a tank and a command car drove up to the gate of the camp. The British 2nd army had arrived. The second day everyone got a loaf of white bread. I ate mine immediately. On the 19th I evacuated the camp singing "Off we go into the wild, blue yonder". The line about "down in flames" had a special meaning to all of us. At the British transient camp we were given a good stew, but it was difficult to eat very much. We spent our last night in Germany and went to the airport at Dieholtz on the 20th. We saw Eisenhower's plane there so he was there for a meeting. Our plane was to take us to England but due to a late start decided to stop in Brussels for the night. The next morning I was wondering about the camp and found a shower. How long had it been since my last shower? I missed the group going to England, but the officer told me to go to the quartermaster and I received a complete British uniform. He gave me 2,000 Belgium francs and told me to go to town and have a good time. I bought some ice cream, some lace handkerchieves for my mother and sister, and visited a news theater. It was so much fun that I decided to do it again. The officer said it was the last he could give me. I attended a symphony concert.

Before I left Brussels I visited the Conservatoire de Musique and G.I. Joe's, (PX). I was refused entrance because of my British uniform, but after showing my one dog tag the officer in charge instructed the clerks to sell me anything I wanted. I had a coke, candy, and peanuts. A train took me to Namur and I was back in American hands.

Back in an American uniform the food was excellent but the weather was rain and snow. Planes were grounded so after a week we took a train to Camp Lucky Strike at Le Harve arriving April 30th. The hospital was a tent so I decided to keep my problems to myself until I got on a boat. This happened on May 6th and the ship was S.S. Marine Fox. On the 7th we stopped at Southampton and the next morning I heard Churchill on the radio say that the war in Europe was officially over. We saw the Statue of Liberty on the 19th and disembarked on the 20th. The first meal upon returning was outstanding. I arrived back in Kansas City on the 23rd but had to go on to Ft. Leavenworth. Mother came to the station to see me, but a day later I returned by bus and started a 60-day furlough. On June 21st another of my dreams came true. I went downtown and marched in a parade to the Union Station in a parade with General Eisenhower at the head. As a child I had seen Civil War veterans in a parade along with other veterans. Now I am as old as they were then.

My discharge from the Army came on October 11th at Lincoln, Nebraska. Ten days later I was on the train to the University of Michigan where I received the Master of Music in Music Literature in June of 1947 and got my first job that fall at the University of Georgia as Assistant Band Director and Instructor of Music. I stayed until 1964, had 5 years at Bethel College in McKenzie, Tennessee as Head of the Music Department, and then I became Chairman of Fine Arts at Columbus College until I retired in 1982.

It has been a great life and after living 26 years in Florida I now live in North Carolina where I am near my daughter, hospitals and great places to eat.



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Took seven trains and a bus to arrive at a jail. Four of my crew and two other Americans rode to Frankfurt by train the next evening. Was interrogated at Oberursel and sent to Dulag Luft at Wetzlar. I was issued a British uniform and was in first contingent to go to

Stalag Luft VI at St. Wendel near Luxembourg. American planes bombed Frankfurt as we sat in a train car on our way to St. Wendel. Luft VI was not completed and we lived in a garage-like building for 20 days. The Allies rushed across Germany and we could see tanks and trucks returning to Germany so the war must almost be over. Left St. Wendel on September 5th by boxcar and arrived at Luft IV on September 9th. I was placed in a tent in A Lager until September 26th when I went to the opening of C Lager and built my bunk in Barracks I. Three of my crew members were with me until we evacuated camp on February 6, 1945.

For me camp life presented a great opportunity to develop teaching skills as I tried to teach music theory to individuals who wanted to learn about music. My engineer went through the course of study without hearing what he wrote. When a pump organ came into the compound on November 22 it was a big advantage to my music program. I was also able to arrange music for the church choir which rehearsed MWF at 1:00. Upon hearing some good voices in the Catholic choir I started a Men's Glee Club which met TTS at 1:00. The choir sang every Sunday at the church service; the glee club sang programs of school fight songs, Christmas service in the middle of the compound on Christmas eve attended by the visiting YMCA representative, and three performances of a minstrel show in January. I gained a lot of good experiences.

As choir director I was a member of the church committee which provided a substitute preacher every Sunday in case the English padre did not show up. Hymnals from the YMCA were used and were the source of material for my music program. Morning devotion was held each morning following roll call. In December my barracks began to have vesper services at 6:00. The barracks were closed up at sundown but lights were not out until 9:00. In January I started a program in my barracks at 7:00 that offered round table discussions, debates, music appreciation, spelling bees, lectures and whatever else could be done. A library in the Red Cross building in the lager was always full and I did more reading than before. A Red Cross parcel containing food was to be given to each prisoner every week, but except for Thanksgiving and Christmas week we were on half rations all the time I was in camp. Food was always a topic of conversation. The bread ration disappeared just before we left camp. A football contest between the ten barracks was started in October. Barracks 1 never won a game but we had some good cheers which I helped write. Some instruments came into the compound and the Germans built a stage for our use about the time of the Battle of the Bulge. It all came to an end when the Germans told us on February 5 that we would leave camp by foot in 12 hours. My great experiences were to come to an end.

My room, Room 3 in Barracks 1, won the honor of being the first in the formation to leave camp. We were told we were to walk three days, rest one, walk two more and arrive at the new camp. Those instructions were wrong. We were on the road for 53 days. As we went through the Vorlager in front of the camp piles of canned food were lying on the ground. We were told to take what we wanted but to be considerate of others. I took a chocolate bar. Each of us was given a full Red Cross parcel which weighed about 11 pounds. All my belongings including three hymnals, a library book, my small stash of food, my arrangements of music for the choir, everything was wrapped

in my two blankets with the ends tied together by a string and slung over my shoulder. I started out on the right in the second row. The formation was all of C Lager which by that time was about 2600 soldiers. It was probably about a mile long and we started marching but it soon turned into just walking. We went at least 14 kilometers with just three stops. Sometime in the afternoon I began to get a cramp in my right foot. I decided to fall to the back of the formation and find Steve, the British medic, who lived in my barracks and was a good friend. I thought he could tape it up and give it support. When I found Steve he was talking to an older soldier who just wanted to stop and sit down which was not possible. Steve was keeping him going. Steve told me he had no tape. He said the tempo of walking was too fast. If I was going back to the front I could tell them to slow down. I made my way back to the front but could not slow them down. We arrived at a farm where the barn surrounded a big compound. We were placed in the barn and locked up. Women at the farm were the first we had seen in months.

On the third day I left two hymnals and the library book in the barn before we left. Despite that I had trouble carrying my pack and constantly walking. The men in my room took turns carrying it for a ways which gave me relief. I finally took it back just as we reached the bottom of a hill and turned left to go up another hill. On the right side of the road a group of refugees were fleeing with everything they had. Some were walking and some had horse-drawn wagons. I knew I could not climb that hill. I crossed the road and found a wagon with the back open, threw my pack on the back and sat on the edge. A guard saw me and made me get off, but I did get to ride up the hill which I consider somewhat a miracle.

On the 13th we walked in the snow. On the 14th we traveled 40 kilometers (about 25 miles). By this time I had adjusted to the exercise and felt much better. The entire formation had to sleep outside in a field near Swindemunde and it started to rain. It was a miserable night with little sleep. The next day we took a ferry across Stettin Bay. I caught up with my crew members again. On the 16th I had another unforgettable experience. After walking 30 kilos we saw our destination barn ahead with the road making a ninety degree turn to the right to reach it. We decided to save some steps and take the hypotenuse to reach it. After we got started we discovered we were in deep mud. It was laborious to pick up each foot and then sink in the mud. If we ran we could stay on top of the ground and if we stopped we would sink in. We arrived at the barn exhausted. It was a terrible barn, wet and no hay. We were all thirsty and Nelson, the ball turret gunner, decided to try and go to the well with a guard and get some water. He came back with a full Klim can of water for us and said he thought he could get more but to save a fourth of it for him. We each drank a fourth and left Nelson's share for him. After about an hour he did not return and we figured he was probably stocking up on the water so we split the water three ways. Nelson returned with no water, knowing he had some waiting for him, but we had drunk it. It was a heart-rending experience. The next day we went through Anklem, a fairly large town. I remember having to go to the bathroom because of my diarrhea. A woman driving a wagon went by and did not look at me. On the 20th we had another day of rest. I talked with a Russian woman named Rosie who was from Poltava. Because I had been to Poltava she gave me part of a head of cabbage which I cooked and ate the next day. Usually we got two boiled potatoes and

a cup of hot water each day. One time I went 24 hours without eating to see if that would help my diarrhea but it did not help much. Some Red Cross food arrived which helped morale. On March 2nd it snowed and the wind blew so hard you could almost lean into it and it would hold you up. I just did make the 28 kilometers that day.

Captain Leslie Caplan, an American doctor, had come to camp in November and was on the march with us. He had requested that the Germans allow a wagon to carry the soldiers who could not march. It also carried the guards' baggage. On March 3rd he said that I could ride on the wagon which traveled slower at the back of the formation. While marching or trudging through the snow your blood circulated better than it did sitting in the wagon. I practically froze on the wagon and became unable to walk with frozen feet. The doctor would get too many to transport so he would leave a group of them in a barn with a medic and hope for the best. I almost got left twice but continued to ride the wagon. On March 12th I was able to walk without my pack except for the last 3 kilos. On March 20th a truck took my group for 16 kilometers to a nice barn where we had lots of hot water and potatoes. On the next day Dr. Caplan assigned me to a group under my friend Steve, the British medic who lived in my barracks and was a good friend. We rode in an open railcar and did not arrive until after dark. The next day 20 of us were put in a passenger car with 2 guards. We did not go far but were on the train all night. We each got a full Red Cross parcel plus another one to split between two soldiers. We transferred to another train at Uelzen but seven of us and one guard missed the new train. We stayed on the platform on a baggage cart from 5:30 until 11:00. The air raid sirens started to sound and we were asked if we wanted to go to the shelter. We discussed it and decided that if the bombers were headed for this town it would be better to sweat it out on top rather than to be among a bunch of civilians. Luckily, the planes flew over without an incident.

After catching up with the group that had left us we had about four days of rest without having to travel. On the 28th we were taken by wagon to a railway station at Ebsdorf. I did not know the name of that town until I started to transcribe the Journal of Dr. Caplan in 2002. We were placed in a box car with no food or drink or toilet facilities for 40 hours. It was one of the most traumatic experiences in my life. The train moved about 60 kilometers and arrived at Fallingbommel which held Stalag XI B holding thousands of prisoners of all nationalities. I was placed in a white tent filled with soldiers who were in bad shape. Easter Sunday was April 1st. About ten funerals were held each day. On April 5th I moved to a convalescent tent next door. On April 9th German orders woke us up. The men in the Air Corps were to continue marching. I knew I could not go any further. I was barely able to walk. In order to avoid the formation I went to the French section. The prisoners there had been prisoners for years and were receiving personal parcels from home. I remember one fellow baking bread. The aroma was mouth-watering. When I returned to my tent the Germans didn't like it that some of the Americans had stayed. They threatened to cut off the food supply. We were to fall out for inspection the next day at noon. The choices were to march or go to the hospital. The next day we had an air raid that lasted all afternoon. We were told to report tomorrow. The next morning most of the Germans were gone. The few Germans still carried the guns, but a British soldier was allowed to walk with each guard. Food became more of a

problem. I sold my GI shirt which I had won in a lottery back in camp to a French soldier for 17 crackers. I had wanted 20 but settled for 17. He opened his drawer which was full of crackers and counted out 17 for me. At 8:37 the morning of April 16th a tank and a command car drove up to the gate of the camp. The British 2nd army had arrived. The second day everyone got a loaf of white bread. I ate mine immediately. On the 19th I evacuated the camp singing "Off we go into the wild, blue yonder". The line about "down in flames" had a special meaning to all of us. At the British transient camp we were given a good stew, but it was difficult to eat very much. We spent our last night in Germany and went to the airport at Dieholtz on the 20th. We saw Eisenhower's plane there so he was there for a meeting. Our plane was to take us to England but due to a late start decided to stop in Brussels for the night. The next morning I was wondering about the camp and found a shower. How long had it been since my last shower? I missed the group going to England, but the officer told me to go to the quartermaster and I received a complete British uniform. He gave me 2,000 Belgium francs and told me to go to town and have a good time. I bought some ice cream, some lace handkerchieves for my mother and sister, and visited a news theater. It was so much fun that I decided to do it again. The officer said it was the last he could give me. I attended a symphony concert.

Before I left Brussels I visited the Conservatoire de Musique and G.I. Joe's, (PX). I was refused entrance because of my British uniform, but after showing my one dog tag the officer in charge instructed the clerks to sell me anything I wanted. I had a coke, candy, and peanuts. A train took me to Namur and I was back in American hands.

Back in an American uniform the food was excellent but the weather was rain and snow. Planes were grounded so after a week we took a train to Camp Lucky Strike at Le Harve arriving April 30th. The hospital was a tent so I decided to keep my problems to myself until I got on a boat. This happened on May 6th and the ship was S.S. Marine Fox. On the 7th we stopped at Southampton and the next morning I heard Churchill on the radio say that the war in Europe was officially over. We saw the Statue of Liberty on the 19th and disembarked on the 20th. The first meal upon returning was outstanding. I arrived back in Kansas City on the 23rd but had to go on to Ft. Leavenworth. Mother came to the station to see me, but a day later I returned by bus and started a 60-day furlough. On June 21st another of my dreams came true. I went downtown and marched in a parade to the Union Station in a parade with General Eisenhower at the head. As a child I had seen Civil War veterans in a parade along with other veterans. Now I am as old as they were then.

My discharge from the Army came on October 11th at Lincoln, Nebraska. Ten days later I was on the train to the University of Michigan where I received the Master of Music in Music Literature in June of 1947 and got my first job that fall at the University of Georgia as Assistant Band Director and Instructor of Music. I stayed until 1964, had 5 years at Bethel College in McKenzie, Tennessee as Head of the Music Department, and then I became Chairman of Fine Arts at Columbus College until I retired in 1982.

It has been a great life and after living 26 years in Florida I now live in North Carolina where I am near my daughter, hospitals and great places to eat.

From Sara Jouette
Harold Tucker's sister

August 16, 2006

Dear Laura,

Thank you again for sharing your information. All this information helps complete a story which my children and grandchildren can know about a close family relative that was in World War II.

I was going through the family album and found these pictures. I have made copies for you and thought you could share with your father.

I thank you again for sharing all your information and I wish you well in what ever you write to preserve this history. If I can be of more help, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Sara

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sara".

Sara is sister
of
Pilot Harold
Tucker



Bobby Jr.

Easter 1948

Age 3 yrs - 4 Mo.

Bob Greenwood's son



Mrs. Greenwood -
Bob's mother
and Bob's wife

1945

Haydenville N. 4 -
In their driveway -



W. ANDREW
BORN 1871
DIED 1911
MAY 12 1911
MAY 12 1911

This is picture of tombstone
and burial plot - for the crew -
Taken by my brother on his
visit - Probably in 1945

Written on stone:

"Here lie six American
Flyers who died in
service of their
country -
May they rest in
peace."



(on left)

Mr. & Mrs. Greenwood -

Bob Greenwood parents

Mr. & Mrs. Tucker - (on right)

Hall's parents

This was taken in Washington D.C.

When Hall & Bob were buried at Arlington
fall of 1945



Our Baby

073

This picture was sent home,
showing me and the crew —

2 Feb 2005
From
John Herwig

Sorry about the delay.

Parachuted into tall trees where I left the chute. Went about a hundred yards to be caught by an old man with a rifle and a young soldier with a pistol. Crossed a brook to a narrow road where the soldier only marched me by one village to another larger one.

Was left to civilians - was given soup & offered beer - one man wanted to hang me but a girl (who talked English) saved me. The village was full of soldiers & Italian soldiers who were in rehab.

Two soldiers marched me back to the first village where my ball turret gunner was
(Harry Jones Jr)

We were in a barn or room below - Gave our escap kits to some kids.

The soldiers marched us several miles around the end of an airfield - Made us carry a parachute (opened) Was united with some of our crew a truck - Went to another village, in which our bombiches was picked up.

Cared to Dulag - spent three days in solitary

Was put on train in a box car to Luft 4. Was on first train to arrive there No Barrack was finished

Don't remember Barrack or Room members
Lt. Otto (Radio per) Edmond Woods
(Tail gunner) Malcolm Sherrill
(Waist gunner) and a man

from Wheeling, W. Va. & Paul
Valahos) were in the room
My dog tag number was #1280
German tag

Departed in first group to
leave on march in early Feb.

Was liberated April 26-1945
close to Elbe river.

Went to Halle Ger. then
to Camp Wings

Enclosed is a picture of
three of our crew

John D Herwig D. Turet 2nd
from left HARRY Jones Jr.
3rd from left ^{B.} J. C. Otte
(radio op) 4th from left

I can't remember anything
about the Mae West.

Keep the picture or send to
Germany. John D. Herwig

Left to Right

Rick Carne — Texas

John D. Newing — " — Engineer

Harrie Jones Jr. — Kansas ^{or near} Top Turret Summit

T. A. Otte — Kansas — Radio oper.



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File Unit: World War II Prisoners of War Data File, 12/7/1941 - 11/19/1946

in the Series: Records of World War II Prisoners of War, created 1942 - 1947, documenting the period 12/7/1941 - 11/19/1946. - *Record Group 389*

Field Title	Value	Meaning
SERIAL NUMBER	38367571	38367571
NAME	HERWIG JOHN D	HERWIG JOHN D
GRADE, ALPHA	SGT	Sergeant
GRADE CODE	5	Captain or Asst. superintendent of nurses or Asst. director of nurses or Chief dietitian or Chief physical therapy aides or Sergeant or Technician 4th Grade or Lieutenant or Petty Officer, 3rd Class
SERVICE CODE	1	ARMY
ARM OR SERVICE	AC	Air Corps
ARM OR SERVICE CODE	20	AC: AIR CORPS
DATE REPORT: DAY (DD)	12	12
DATE REPORT: MONTH (MM)	05	05
DATE REPORT: YEAR (Y)	4	1944

<u>RACIAL GROUP CODE</u>	1	WHITE
<u>STATE OF RESIDENCE</u>	85	Texas
<u>TYPE OF ORGANIZATION</u>	S53	Heavy Bomber
<u>PARENT UNIT NUMBER</u>	}452	}452
<u>PARENT UNIT TYPE</u>	06	Group/Regiment/Commands/System
<u>AREA</u>	70	European Theatre
<u>LATEST REPORT DATE: DAY (DD)</u>	24	24
<u>LATEST REPORT DATE: MONTH (MM)</u>	05	05
<u>LATEST REPORT DATE: YEAR (Y)</u>	5	1945
<u>SOURCE OF REPORT</u>	1	Individual has been reported through sources considered official.
<u>STATUS</u>	8	Returned to Military Control, Liberated or Repatriated
<u>DETAINING POWER</u>	1	GERMANY
<u>CAMP</u>	000	Undefined Code

Page URL: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/record-detail.jsp>

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

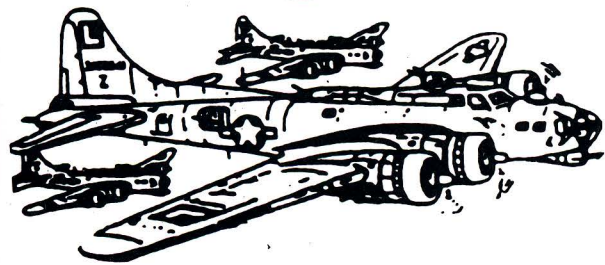
8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, MD 20740-6001 • Telephone: 1-86-NARA-NARA or 1-866-272-6272



ROBERT F. KERR
 6317 W. 73rd TERR.
 OVERLAND PARK, KS 66204-2032



EIGHTH AIRFORCE



452nd BOMB GROUP
728th SQDN

*Laura Edge
 5528 Briar Glen
 Drive
 Sabine - Mo.
 48176*

48176+9537

18 Jan '05

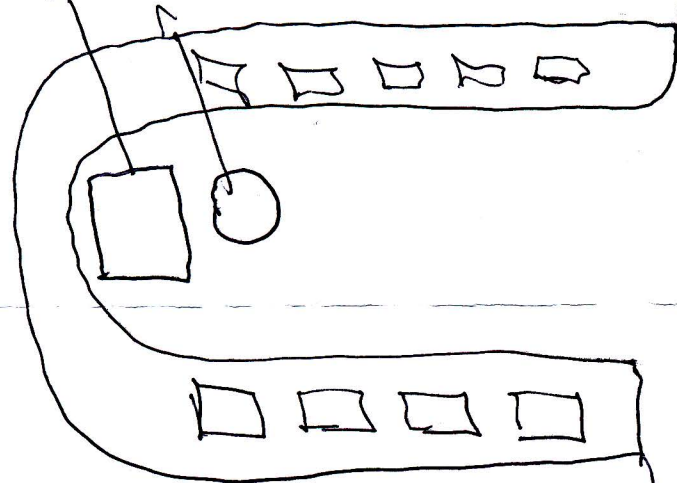
Hi!

See attached diagram -
I was told that I was
in small village of
Mutzhausen ??

Perhaps it was rebuilt
after the war -
who cares ? ?

Bob Ferris

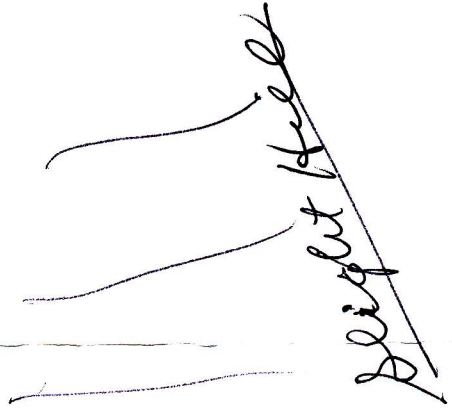
prayer house
foundations



prayer house

Picture of
not shown
is shown
more
to

Dirt Road



Farm house

xx I landed here



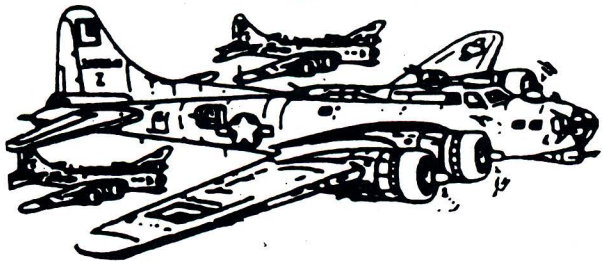
ROBERT F. KERR
6317 W. 73rd TERR.
OVERLAND PARK, KS 66204-2032



EIGHTH



AIRFORCE



452nd BOMB GROUP
728th SQDN

Laura Edge
5548 Briar Glen
Drive
Saline - Mo.
48176

4817645337



10 Feb.

Kit -

Here is a copy of
Camp conditions.
Keep it -

I sent you a
form to fill out
to get info about camps.

Regards -

Kit

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WAR DEPARTMENT 15 July 1944

CAMP CONDITIONS - GENERAL

Germany holds 28,867* American prisoners of war in these categories:

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN	TOTAL
AIR FORCE	8447	8146	16593
GROUND FORCE	704	11570	12274

While Americans are held in 57 scattered permanent camps, transit camps and hospitals, the great majority are confined in 8 main camps. Of these, 4 hold airmen and are operated by the Luftwaffe; 3 hold Ground Forces and are run by the Wehrmacht and the 8th, holding air force NCOs, is operated jointly by Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht. This separate custody reportedly reflects the desire of Goering to provide favored treatment for Allied airmen in order to obtain preferential treatment for Luftwaffe personnel captured by the Allies. Whether Luftwaffe or Wehrmacht, all permanent camps for Americans (and British) are situated in Eastern Germany, apparently as a deterrent to escapes through France.

TREATMENT: An arbitrary answer to the question "How does Germany treat American prisoners of war?" is difficult. Compared with Japan's treatment, Germany's is excellent. Compared with US treatment of German POWs, Germany's treatment of US POWs is poor. Measured against the precise terms of the Geneva Convention, Germany's behavior could most accurately be described as fair. Germany's adherence to the spirit of the convention has been generally correct. Her compliance with the letter of the convention has been limited by some factors which, it must be admitted, are not altogether within her control. These would include food and clothing rations, segregation of prisoners according to nationalities and removal of prisoners from danger zones. Food and clothing are severely rationed in Germany. Proper segregation of Germany's 6 million POWs becomes increasingly difficult with the deterioration of her transportation facilities. Establishment of prison camps in areas immune to Allied bombing becomes difficult with intensification of the war. Nevertheless, after making full allowance for those provisions of the convention that Germany, however willing, is unable to observe, there remain numerous willful violations ranging in degree from technical circumvention to full-scale atrocities. (See individual camp reports, for details on treatment and welfare.)

FOOD: Germany has not supplied POWs with rations equivalent either in quantity or quality to those issued garrison troops. After examining an official camp menu submitted through the Swiss, a US Quartermaster dietitian stated the food was insufficient to maintain life in a normally active person. Heretofore, the POWs have been living on the Red Cross food parcels granted them weekly. Erratic receipt of these parcels, however, has complicated a situation that may grow critical before the end of July. On 5 May Stalag 17B exhausted its stock of Red Cross food. The German Commandant who had halved German-issue rations in January, "as a consequence of the rich supply of Red Cross food," stated that he would again start issuing "normal" rations on 5 June. Thus, for one month the sole food available to Americans may have been half the meager German "normal" ration. Stalag Luft 6 also had used up its supply of Red Cross food by 10 May. At Stalag 3B, where the stocks have been so plentiful that Americans smuggled quantities of food to Russians, Germans have confiscated "surplus" food held by individual POWs and cut the German ration. Lack of food parcels has given rise to a camp rumor that armed German civilians looted Red Cross freight cars en route to camp and made off with the food. Many men complain of hunger. At Stalag Luft 3, POWs have collectively been denied Red Cross food for reason of German discipline.

*Figure is based on official PMG lists, State Dept. & International Red Cross figures and secret reports. It includes an estimated 1,500 airmen captured in June, but not yet reported, and an estimated 3,000 ground force prisoners taken in Normandy.

The shortage at 17B may have been alleviated by this time with the arrival of 42,264 parcels dispatched in May from Geneva. Whether other camps may have been similarly relieved is not known, for Geneva has failed to furnish the American Red Cross with food distribution lists more recent than March. In any event, the picture of the future is forbidding since the shipment of Red Cross food parcels to Marseilles for transshipment by rail to Geneva has been ended by the Wehrmacht with no explanation. Presumably railroad conditions in Southern France are responsible. The International Red Cross is studying alternatives which include use of the Swiss free port of Genoa and shipment direct to a Baltic port in Germany. Meanwhile, shipments to Lisbon and Barcelona are being continued with a view toward establishing reserves for quick shipment when traffic is re-opened.

HEALTH: Health of POWs has been generally good. Except for minor outbreaks of skin infections occasioned by infrequent bathing and unbalanced diet, sickness has been rare.

German medical treatment of wounded POWs is prompt and efficient at capture. In transit, however, many are neglected. They have been arriving in permanent camps with dressings and bandages two weeks old. Once in the camps, POWs receive the best treatment available from either German or American doctors. Serious cases are transferred to well-equipped German hospitals. Less serious cases are treated by American doctors in the camp infirmaries, which are uniformly overcrowded and under equipped. Most camps also lack American dental officers and dental equipment.

Americans in all major permanent camps have been x-rayed for tuberculosis, with which an astonishingly large percentage of longtime British POWs have become afflicted, but few Americans have incurred the disease.

CLOTHING: Germany has equipped American POWs with almost no clothing. In isolated cases, where POWs lacked any uniforms of their own, they were provided with "booty" uniforms of English, French or Italian origin, or with German fatigue suits. In transit camps such as Dulag Luft and Stalag 7A, POWs draw from Red Cross clothing stock, and after their arrival at permanent camps it is the Red Cross alone which furnishes them with all garments from underwear, shoes and uniforms to overcoats.

MORALE: Morale is high but it has frequently dipped as a result of two major causes: failure to receive mail and news of strikes in the United States. The news of strikes in this country reached the POWs in German newspapers and radio broadcasts where, of course, it was featured. Prisoners were enraged by such news and many were doubtful that the spirit of the American people was high enough to win.

In Oflag 64, POWs have complained bitterly over delays in New York Censorship, and Col. Thomas Drake, SAO, has written a letter on this score to the US State Dept. Men in other camps complain of the slowness of German censorship.

Although POWs are extremely grateful to the Red Cross for supplying them with food and clothing, they resent brochures which depict their life as one of ease and indolence, instead of monotony and hardship.

Annoyed by an approved visit of a German camera unit which filmed American POWs in Oflag 64, Col. Drake wrote Norman Davis, President of the American Red Cross, suggesting that in the future the Red Cross send clothing instead of cameramen.

The guilt psychosis which has afflicted other POWs has also manifested itself among Americans. They are concerned about the attitude toward POWs in the United States. Some have written bitterly that they could not avoid capture. A few have raged over rumored receipt of white feathers in camp, and many have ranted against Dorothy Thompson's reported implication that POWs are cowards.

Reports of infidelity among wives and sweethearts also lower morale. However, while POWs have suffered from occasional depression they have never approached despair. In all camps, American discipline and organization has been excellent. Repatriates believe news of the Invasion, long awaited by all POWs, will keep morale on a high level for many months to come.

WORK: Camp commandants have adhered to the Geneva Convention provision which specifies that only privates can be compelled to work. Officers and NCOs are allowed to work in supervisory capacity if they desire.

Working detachments, or "kommandos", vary in size. The largest employs 568 men in construction of a power plant. Usually, however, a kommando consists of 30 POWs doing farm labor. Life on such a kommando is well described by Pvt. Charles W. Ronald, recently repatriated. He was in a group of 29 Americans taken under guard to a huge farm 6 km from Stolp, where 12 French POWs were already working without guards. Americans were billeted in a section of a large brick-floored barn. Adjoining sections were occupied by pigs, cows and grain. POWs slept on double-decker bunks under 2 blankets. The French had a small building of their own. Guards lived in a small room opening onto POWs quarters.

Each weekday the men rose at 0600, and breakfasted on Red Cross food and on milk-soup, bread and hot water (for coffee) which they drew from the farm kitchen. At 0630, they washed their spoons and enameled bowls and cleaned their "barracks". They shaved and washed themselves in 3 large wash pans filled from a single spigot which gave only cold water. The outdoor latrine was a three-seater.

At 0700, they rode out to the potato fields in horse-drawn wagons, driven by coldly hostile German farm hands, who would welcome the opportunity to shoot a "kriegie". Under the eyes of a watchful, armed guard they dug potatoes until 1130, when they rode back to the farm for the noon meal. This consisted of Red Cross food supplemented by German vegetable soup. Boarding the wagons at 1300, POWs worked until 1630. The evening meal at 1700 consisted of Red Cross food and the farmer's issue of milk-soup, potatoes and gravy. After this meal they could sit outdoors in their fenced-in pen (30' x 8') until 1830. Then the guard locked them in their section for the night.

On Sundays the guard permitted POWs to lounge or walk back and forth in the "yard" all day, but they spent a good deal of their time scrubbing their "barracks" and washing their clothing. Sunday dinner from the farmer usually included a meat pudding and cheese.

Once a month each POW received a large Red Cross food box containing 4 regulation Red Cross parcels. These were transmitted to distant kommandos by rail and to nearby units by army trucks. Parcels were stored in the guards' room until issued. Source says no kommando was more than 100 km away from its base camp. Average tour of duty on a farm kommando lasts indefinitely. On other work detachments, it lasts until the specific project has been completed.

PAY: Working POWs receive 70 pfennigs a day in "lagerfeld" - a paper money which is next to useless since camp canteens are so poorly stocked there is almost nothing to buy. Until recently, non-working enlisted men received no pay whatsoever, and to alleviate their plight, officers collected purses which were sent to MOCs for disbursement. Recent reports indicate that Germany has instituted a policy of crediting enlisted men with 7.50 marks monthly. POWs repatriated in May received no actual sum while in camp, but upon their departure got "receipts" for 22.50 reichmarks (3 months' pay) to be collected from Germany by the USA after the war.

Officers are paid on a sliding scale according to rank, with lieutenants at Oflag 64 starting at 60 marks a month. From this, 22 marks are deducted for food and 10 marks for orderly fees. An officer drawing 80 marks monthly at Stalag Luft 3 has to pay 40 marks for similar "living expenses."

Chief complaint of POWs is that upon capture no receipts were issued for money taken from them. A few men have since obtained receipts, but in most instances verification of details is so difficult that receipts will never be provided nor money restored.

MAIL: Generally, German authorities have been "correct" in the issue of writing forms. As a rule, officers have been allowed to send 3 letters and 4 cards; medical personnel and camp seniors double this number. The allotment varies slightly in individual camps.

In February, March and April, issue of forms was irregular, resulting in a total lack in some camps and a shortage in others. Camp authorities attributed the shortage to Allied bombing of government printing presses.

All mail to airmen, regardless of what camp they are in, is censored at Stalag Luft 3 and therefore takes somewhat longer in transit than does mail to ground force camps, which have their own censor staffs. Surface mail takes 2 to 3 months to reach the USA. Airmail takes from 1 to 3 months. Airmail from the USA reaches camp in 5 weeks; surface mail, in 3 months. Parcels from next-of-kin arrive in camp 3 months after mailing. An increasing number are being pilfered.

INTERROGATION: German interrogation of American POWs follows a consistent pattern: All airmen, wherever captured, are taken to Dulag Luft near Frankfurt-on-Main; all Ground Force officers are questioned in Luckenwalde, an interrogation center 50 km southwest of Berlin; and Ground Force enlisted men, except for an occasional tactical interrogation immediately after capture, are not questioned. Treatment during interrogation has frequently been incorrect and is steadily becoming harsher. (See Dulag Luft and Luckenwalde--descriptions for details.)

If not seriously wounded, officer POWs usually leave these interrogation-transit camps within 2 weeks for their permanent camps. Except for those captured in France whose movements are not yet known, Ground Force enlisted men move through a succession of transit camps in Italy and Southern Germany to their permanent camps. Here the German assignment of POWs to permanent camps is consistent and the system well-defined: Air Force officers to Stalag Lufts 1 or 3 and Air Force enlisted men to Stalag Luft 4 and 6, or Stalag 17B. It is not yet known whether Stalag Luft 7, recently opened, holds Air Force officers or enlisted men.

REPATRIATION: One hundred fourteen prisoners of war have returned to this country in 3 exchanges of sick and wounded with Germany. Sites, dates and numbers were: Goteburg, 20 Oct 1943, 14; Lisbon, 15 Feb 1944, 35; Barcelona, 17 May 1944, 65.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY

Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT, 1 November 1945

INTRODUCTION: Conditions in German prisoners of war camps holding American varied to such an extent that only by examination of individual camps can a clear picture be drawn. This report contains summaries of 12 typical German installations, ranging from Stalag Luft 3, a well-organized camp for Air Force officers, through 2B, an average Ground Force enlisted men's camp, to chaotic Stalag 9B, established for enlisted men captured during the Von Runstedt offensive of December, 1944.

Germany held a total of 92,965 (1 Nov 45 records) American prisoners of war in these categories:

Air Force - 32,730 Ground Forces - 60,235.

In contrast to the number of Ground Forces officers who formed only some 10% of the Ground Force POWs, almost 50% of the Air Force personnel falling into hands were officers. Figures for both branches soared during the ten months after 6 June 1944, when totals were:

Air Force - 15,093 Ground Forces - 9,274 Total - 24,367

For army POWs, Germany had 3 principal types of camp: **OFLAG**, a contraction of Offizier Lager (officers' camp), as its title denotes, held officers. **STALAG**, a contraction of Stamm Lager (main camp) held enlisted men. **DULAG**, a contraction of Durchgangs Lager (entrance camp) was a transit camp, but in the minds of airmen became synonymous with interrogation center. **LUFT** (air) appended to a name indicated that the camp held flying personnel. Generally, camps housing airmen were under the jurisdiction of the Luftwaffe, and camps housing ground troops under the jurisdiction of the

Wehmacht.

POWs formed camps within camps and had their own organizations. In officers' camps they were headed by the Senior American Officer (SAO) who was just what his name implied. In enlisted men's stalags, the Man of Confidence (MOC) was usually an NCO elected by his fellow POW, but sometimes he was appointed by the Germans. Source material for this report consisted of interrogations of former prisoners of war made by CPM Branch, Military Intelligence Service, and reports of the Protecting Power and International Red Cross received by the State Department (Special War Problems Division).

Chief complaint of POWs is that upon capture no receipts were issued for money taken from them. A few men have since obtained receipts, but in most instances verification of details is so difficult that receipts will never be provided nor money restored.

Generally, German authorities have been "correct" in the issue of writing forms. As a rule, officers have been allowed to send 3 letters and 4 cards; medical personnel and camp seniors double this number. The allotment varies slightly in individual camps.

Others. Camp authorities attributed the shortage to Allied bombing of government printing presses. All mail to airmen, regardless of what camp they are in, is censored at Stalag Luft 3 and therefore takes somewhat longer in transit than does mail to ground force camps, which have their own censor staffs. Surface mail takes 2 to 3 months to reach the USA. Airmail takes from 1 to 2 months. Airmail from the USA reaches camp in 2 weeks; surface mail, in 3 months. Parcels from next-of-kin arrive in camp 3 months after mailing. An increasing number are being filtered.

INTERROGATION: German interrogation of American POWs follows a consistent pattern: All airmen, wherever captured, are taken to Dulag Luft near Frankfurt-on-Main; all Ground Force officers are questioned in Luckenwalde, an interrogation center 80 km southwest of Berlin; and Ground Force enlisted men, except for an occasional tactical interrogation immediately after capture, are not questioned. Treatment during interrogation has frequently been inhuman and is steadily becoming harsher. (See Dulag Luft and Luckenwalde--descriptions for details.)

If not seriously wounded, officer POWs usually leave these interrogation-transit camps within 2 weeks for their permanent camps. Except for those captured in France whose movements are not yet known, Ground Force enlisted men move through a succession of transit camps in Italy and Southern Germany to their permanent camps. Here the German assignment of POWs to permanent camps is consistent and the system well-defined: Air Force officers to Stalag Luft 1 or 2 and Air Force enlisted men to Stalag Luft 4 and 8, or Stalag 17B. It is not yet known whether Stalag Luft 7, recently opened, holds Air Force officers or enlisted men.

REPARATION: One hundred fourteen prisoners of war have returned to this country in 3 exchanges of sick and wounded with Germany. Sites and numbers were: Goteburg, 20 Oct 1943, 14; Lisbon, 15 Feb 1944, 22; Barcelona, 17 May 1944, 22.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT, 1 November 1945

INTRODUCTION: Conditions in German prisoners of war camps holding American varied to such an extent that only by installations, ranging from Stalag Luft 3, a well-organized camp for Air Force officers, through SB, an average Ground Force enlisted men's camp, to chaotic Stalag 9B, established for enlisted men captured during the Von Runstedt offensive of December, 1944.

Germany held a total of 92,885 (1 Nov 45 records) American prisoners of war in these categories:
Air Force - 32,730 Ground Forces - 60,232

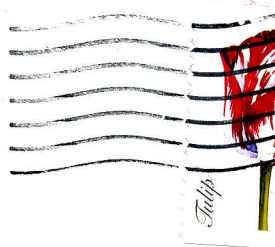
In contrast to the number of Ground Force officers who formed only some 10% of the Ground Force POWs, almost 50% of the Air Force personnel falling into hands were officers. Figures for both branches soared during the ten months after 8 June 1944, when total war prisoners were 15,023 Ground Forces - 9,214 Total - 24,387

For Army POWs, Germany had 3 principal types of camps: (1) a contraction of Stalag (officers' camp), as this denotes, held officers; (2) a contraction of Stalag (enlisted men's camp), as this denotes, held enlisted men; (3) a contraction of Dulag (officers' camp), but in the minds of airmen became synonymous with interrogation center. LUFT (air) appended to a name indicated that the camp held Air Force personnel. Generally, camps housing airmen were under the jurisdiction of the Luftwaffe, and camps housing ground troops under the jurisdiction of the Wehmacht.



Wendell Parrish
PO Box 324
Aliceville, AL 35442

←
Another Left IV
POW.
Dad did not
know him.



Ms. Laura Edge
5528 Brain Glen Drive
Saline, MS. 38176



484 78+3537



4-13-05
Oleworth, Al.
35442

Dear Ms. Edge:

Please forgive me for this late reply to your letter of March 30th.

First, your father and I were not in the same Lager. However, I can certainly relate to the location of the lagers you mentioned your father was in.

I don't think I can add too much to what you have already know. But, I can elaborate on my experience at Stalag IV.

Our plane (B-17) was shot down Aug. 9, 1944 over the city of Aachen, Germany. Six of our crew members were able to parachute from the plane but three members, including the pilot were killed. I was taken to Frankfurt first and then sent to Stalag IV. Yes, I will remember the early morning we were awakened and prepared to leave on the march (Feb. 6th) as you mentioned the march cost many lives. Your father & I were fortunate enough to survive. I was informed that over 1,300 lives were lost in that march. I wish I could add more to this experience, however, I'm sure your father has told you most of the experience. I am not a member of the Stalag Association, but will contact your father in this regard.

I was involved in a person wreck on June 1st (04)
was hospitalized five months Rehab for 5 weeks.
But, I'm recovering slowly.

You will have to excuse my writing as I've had
to learn all over again. My mind is still "sharp"
but I'm just begining to walk again with the
help of a walking stick.

Incidently, my Airbase in England was at a
small village (Kimbolton) 8th Airforce, 379th Bomb Grp:
524th Sqdn -

As my mind clears from my recent accident I may
possibly pass on other "info"

Again, it was so nice hearing from you & I again
apologize for the terrible writing.

Most sincerely,

Wendell

Dear *Mr. Witt,*

A German historian whose uncle was killed in action as a fighter pilot on 12 May, 1944, wants to write a book about the great air battle in the Rhine-Main-Area on May 12, 1944, has contacted the administration of Usingen last year because several members of a crew who did not survive the forced landing of a B 17 bomber, were buried on the cemetery in Usingen until 1946. Furthermore, he asked the town council for eye witnesses of this battle and he was told that I would be the right person.

I reported to the historian my history as follows:

In the morning of May 12, 1944, I was at school (at that time, I was 15 years old). about 10:30 h, alarm was given because American airplanes approached to our town. About 12:00 o'clock I told my friends that I would go home (5 minutes from the school) because my mother had prepared lunch. All the other pupils rested in the cellar of the school.

In the moment, when I was leaving the building, I saw two parachutes in the sky about one mile in the east away from me. My first idea was: I will capture one of them and take him off his chute - with the silk I would be the richest boy in Usingen! The first parachute was too high for me, but I reached the second one when he landed. He lifted up his hands to surrender - he had already thrown away his pistol when he was still in the air. I have learned English at school for three years at that time and I asked him what had happened in the plane. He answered that he had only heard the command "get out" and so he had left the B 17.

Meanwhile, the bomber still made circles in the air, evidently to search a place for landing - not all members of the crew had left the plane.

The German fighter which shot the bomber was still nearby the B 17 to look what will happen.

Suddenly, two American fighters (Mustangs) appeared and one of them shot down the German Messerschmidt Me 109 after a short fight. The pilot got out with his chute and survived.

As to the B 17: The pilot tried a landing, but for inexplicable reasons, the bomber exploded after abt. 600 yards on the ground. We could not watch this because the landing place was behind a little hill.

My captured GI trembled and was worried about his destiny. I calmed him and said to him that the war would be finished for him and that I would accompany him to the police station. On the way, we passed my parents' house. I asked him for souvenirs and he gave me his life vest and his flying helmet. So I accompanied him to the place in front of the city hall in Usingen where abt. 20 crew members had already been waiting for the transport into a POW camp (in Oberursel, 15 miles from Usingen). But before, there was still a little hearing in Usingen by officers from the nearby airport Merzhausen - 3 miles from Usingen.

As regards me, my mission was now finished. After the war, I regretted that I had not requested the home address of "my" captured GI. Unfortunately, the chute had already been stolen when I wanted to fetch it in the evening.

The German historian sent me last year in September under the number :MACR 5359 the dates of the B17 : 42 -107 123 of the 338th Squadron and the names of the crew were also remarked. He got the data from Washington. (please see the inclosed information) The place of the crash was 500 m from Kramsberg (Herrnfeld), a little village, three miles in the east of Usingen, a little town (20 miles in the north of Francfort, see the inclosed map) at that time abt. 3.000 inhabitants, where I lived(now I am living in Bad Nauheim, ten miles from Usingen).

So I had the names of the POW`s, but not their addresses. Now I had the idea to contact in this case my friend Thomas Herrick. We have been friends since abt. 1968, when he was an officer in the army in Francfort/Germany. Upon receipt of the documentation from the German historian, I asked Tom to find out the addresses of the relevant POW`s.

He finally succeeded in the US National file :
WORLD WAR II Prisoners of WAR DATE File.

Unfortunately Mr. Robert Laverne Maisak - the POW, who
I probably "c^Paptured" , died ten years ago.

As to me : I would be happy, if you let me know the experience
you made and the circumstances under which you were
captured.

Looking forward to hearing from yuu

Best regards

Heinz Kumpf

NB = Do you know the address of Mr. Davis ?

June 4, 2004

Dear Mrs. Laura,

Thank you very much for your letter and the picture of the crew. You can be sure that I watched the plane of your father before it was forced by a German Messerschmidt (Me 109) to go down. I am also sure that I captured Mr. Lavern Maisak. We both watched the last minutes of the bomber. I have already written these details to your father. I remember it exactly. Enclosed please find a copy of my letter.

The little village in which your father was taken prisoner is called Kransberg. There was also the bakery. The little air base was near Merzhausen. You will find both places in the map (enclosed).

As you write, you don't know where the other crew members were buried. Till 1946, they were buried in Usingen. Afterwards their bodies were brought by American salvage operation to a US-war cemetery - I suppose in Belgium - because no American soldier should be buried in enemy-earth.

I told you that the little airfield was Merzhausen - abt. 4 miles from the place where your father landed. There was the II, Fighter group "Geschwader 26". But the main-hearing took place in "DULAG Luft" in Oberursel, 15 miles farther, in American time known as "Camp King". (compare the article of Captain Friedheim over "Dulag Luft" "Durchgangslager Luft" in the American Airforce-Newspaper of "September 1945".

I read with interest that you are writing a book about your father's air corps memories. Please keep me informed about your further progress.

I would like to recommend you the book of the writers Doherty + Ward "Snettertons fallons" - the 96th bombergroup in World War II, Dallas / Texas, Ed. 1989 2 volumes

Ed. 1996 the 2 volumes together in one.

But the book is very expensive (abt. 150 Dollars). Perhaps you can read the interesting articles in a library.

The German historian will try to make copies of the book concerning the events of May 12, 1944.

I regret not having written to you earlier, because we are about to move into our new house. The new address is as follows:

Franz-Liszt-Str. 10
D-61250 Usingen /Germany.

I hope to have given you some more information.

Best regards,



Encl.

Butzbacher Geschichts- Blätter

Nr. 188 – 30. Juni 2004



Herausgegeben vom Geschichtsverein für Butzbach und Umgebung • Druck und Verlag Butzbacher Zeitung

Am 12. Mai 1944 stürzte bei Hausen-Oes ein amerikanischer „Liberator-Bomber“ ab.

Bombenverbände waren auf dem Rückflug von Mittelddeutschland

Ein Beitrag von Winfried Schunk

Das Datum 12. Mai 1944 war natürlich in meinem Gedächtnis nicht vorhanden. Als 13-jähriger Bub habe ich mir den Zeitpunkt und das Datum des Absturzes nicht eingepägt. Dieses stammt aus einem Bericht der Amerikaner, der „MACR 5217“ bezeichnet wird (siehe unten).

Ich stand gleich neben unserem Haus in der Kleeberger Straße 28, heute 32, auf einer Wiese, die in einer Entfernung von ca. 6 m von dem Bürgersteig der Kleeberger Straße entfernt einen vielleicht 2 m hohen Absatz aufwies. Amerikanische Bombenverbände waren auf dem Rückflug vom Osten her kommend in Richtung Westen zum Ausgangsflughafen in England unterwegs. Ich vermutete immer, dass der Absturz um die Mittagszeit geschah. Ein Flugzeug aus einem Verband heraus, der gerade über unserem Haus flog, brannte an einem Flügel; wahrscheinlich geriet ein Motor in Brand.

Nach meiner Erinnerung, direkt über meinem Kopf, sah ich nacheinander weiße Punkte am Himmel, die nur Menschen sein konnten, die mit dem Fallschirm aus dem brennenden Flugzeug ausstiegen. Die Flugzeuginsassen müssen relativ schnell ausgestiegen sein. Ich meine, dass es 11 Fallschirme waren, die ich sah. Mir fiel auf, dass ein Fallschirmspringer relativ schnell zur Erde sank. Später sagte man, der Fallschirm hätte durch das brennende Flugzeug ein Loch

am Fallschirm gelandet sein. Angeblich soll der Flugzeugführer beim Absturz ums Leben gekommen sein.

Nun zum Absturz: Das Flugzeug brannte in kurzer Zeit sehr stark und stürzte schön über dem Butzbacher Schrenzer, so sah ich

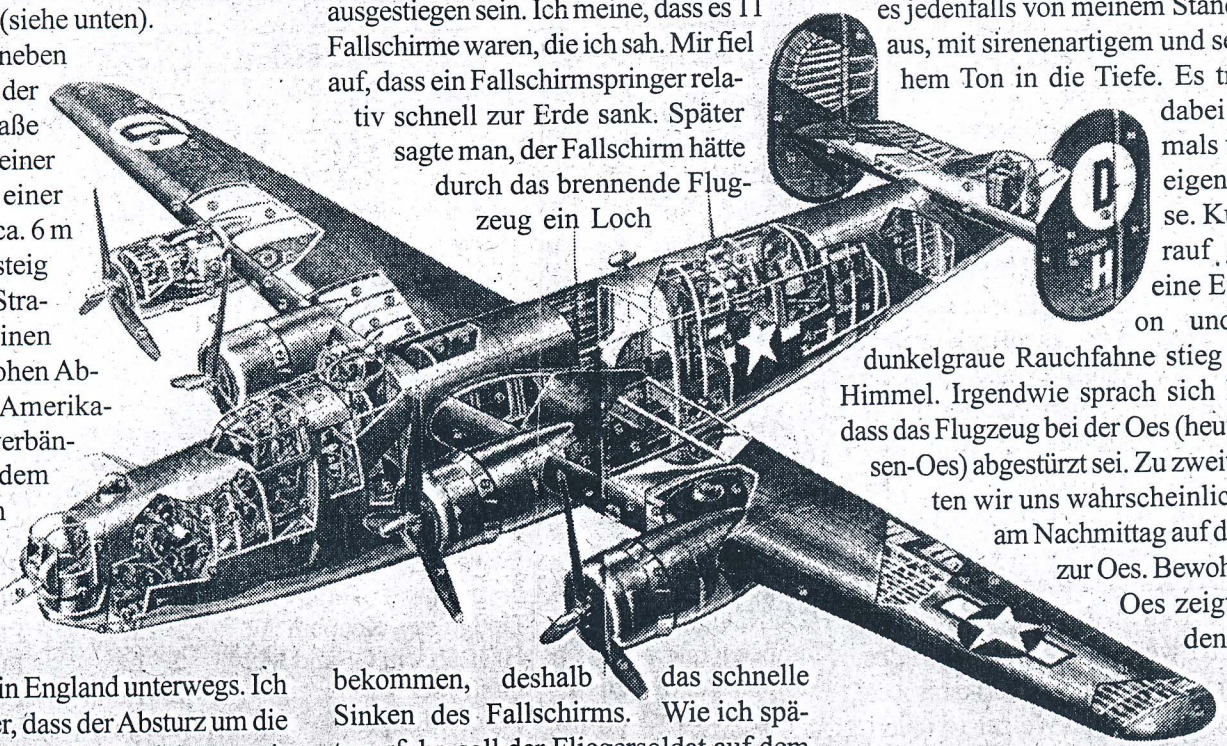
es jedenfalls von meinem Standpunkt aus, mit sirenenartigem und sehr hohem Ton in die Tiefe. Es trudelte dabei mehrmals um die eigene Achse. Kurz darauf gab es eine Explosion und eine

dunkelgraue Rauchfahne stieg in den Himmel. Irgendwie sprach sich herum, dass das Flugzeug bei der Oes (heute Hausen-Oes) abgestürzt sei. Zu zweit machten wir uns wahrscheinlich noch am Nachmittag auf den Weg zur Oes. Bewohner der Oes zeigten uns den Weg

zum

bekommen, deshalb das schnelle Sinken des Fallschirms. Wie ich später erfuhr, soll der Fliegersoldat auf dem Butzbacher Exerzierplatz herunter gekommen sein. Da ein starker Ostwind blies, sollen die anderen 10(?) Soldaten bei Limburg

Der B-24 H Liberator wurde 1941 und 1942 in Fort Worth/USA gebaut, und zwar 738 Stück. Er gehörte zu einer „Massenproduktionsvariante“. Der B-24 G besaß nur geringe Veränderungen.



↑
D. H. Kastwiesend



Eschbach



Merzhausen



Michelbach



Kransberg

**USINGEN im Taunus
mit seinen Stadtteilen**



Wilhelmsdorf



Hattstein-Weiher



Wernborn

USingen 6 Aug 2004

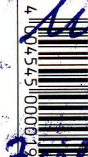
SCHONINGEN im Taunus

Dear Anita,

Thank you for your letter of July 2
I send you some requested
informations.

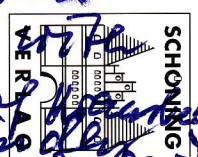
1) A list of the American
crew members, who were
in the ~~Concorde~~ ^{Boeing 747} ~~in the~~
these bodies ^{were} brought in ^(February 1996)
as ~~Crematorium~~ ^{Crematorium}, in France
Belgium or the Netherlands
Podestras + Koby were crew
members of a record breaker,
which crashed also near

Deutschland ist schön - wir zeigen es!



Atmospul compare with
the map)

2) a little picture of ~~the~~
I will make some photos
Kind regards
regards Heinz



List of the in Usinger buried crew members:

Verzeichnis der hier beerdigten
amerikanischen Piloten.

- 1) Kortj, George
 - 2) Soderlund, Robert
 - 3) Zucker, Harold x
 - 4) unbekannt unknown
 - 5) Greenwood x
 - 6) ? unknow
- } Usinger
- } Krausberg

→ I got the info,
by the town hall-
Archiv

PS = The bakery ^{in Krausberg} is now closed in Krausberg
In my next letter, I will report you, how
my family lived in the war!

Excuse = I wrote all in a hurry, because
I will go tomorrow to Stuttgart for
visiting my daughter with her family.

Literatur: KU-Liste 1852 Nr. 9; MACR 4855; W. Girbig, 1980, S. 29 (= Verlustliste); R. Doherty and G. Ward, 1989, p. 130; briefliche Mitteilung von H. Hungerbühler am 15.12.2003; General-Karte Nr. 13.

Loss of airplanes (American) in World War II (MACR 5359)
Flugzeugverluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg (MACR 5359)

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------|
| 01. Datum: | <i>date</i> | 12. Mai 1944 | |
| 02. Nächstgelegene Orte: | <i>next village</i> | Usingen, Ldkrs. Hochtaunuskreis | |
| 03. Air Force: | | 8 th USAAF | |
| 04. US-Bombardment (Air) Division: | | 3 rd BD | |
| 05. US-Wing: | | 13 th CW | |
| 06. US-Group: | | 96 th BG Gruppe „A“ | |
| 07. US-Squadron: | | 338th BS nach G. Ward,
339th nach H.-G. Ploes | |
| 08. Taktisches Zeichen: | <i>tactical sign</i> | QJ | |
| 09. Typ: | | B-17 G | |
| 10. Serien-Nummer: | | 42-107 123 | |
| 11. Ziel/Auftrag: | <i>aim / order</i> | Bombardierung von Brüx (<i>Check</i>) | |
| 12. Startzeit: | <i>time of take off</i> | 09.25 Uhr (?) | |
| 13. Platz: | <i>airport</i> | Snetterton Heath (Station 138) | |
| 14. Absturzzeit: | <i>time of crash</i> | 12.10 Uhr (MACR 5359) | |
| 15. Absturzstelle: | <i>place of crash</i> | sog. Herrnfeld bei Kransberg | |
| 16. Verlustursache: | <i>cause of loss</i> | Feindjäger | <i>enemy-fighter</i> |
| 17. Abschuss zugeschrieben an: | | | |
| 18. Art der Vernichtung: | <i>kind of loss</i> | Explosion bei Notlandung (<i>forced landing</i>) | |
| 19. Besatzung: | <i>Crew:</i> | | |

<i>Asst.</i>	Pilot	Tucker, Harold H.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
<i>Asst.</i>	Kopilot	Greenwood, Robert A.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
	Navigator	Detwiler, Samuel R.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
	Bombenschütze	Sleminsky, Walter	2 nd Lt.	KIA
	o. Kugelturmschütze	Stoller, Lloyd D. ✓ <i>tel.</i>	T/Sgt.	POW
	Funker	Davis, James A. ✓	T/Sgt.	POW
	u. Kugelturmschütze	Boatright, Willis D. ✓	S/Sgt.	POW
	re. Seitenschütze	Witt, Lawrence L. ✓ <i>tel.</i>	S/Sgt.	POW
	li. Seitenschütze	Maisak, Robert Laverne	S/Sgt.	POW
	Heckschütze	Greuter, Jennings C.	S/Sgt.	KIA

20. Einzelheiten: *details:*

KU-Liste 1846 Nr. 6:

Kransberg, county Usingen, 12 km west of Friedberg, PS 4, 12.30 hours, Boeing, 100 per cent destruction, disposition of crew unknow., marking not ascertainable

The aircraft was shot down by fighters during the second attack on the formation. The nose section of the aircraft was on fire. Of the four Officers in the nose section only the copilot Lt. Robert Greenwood was able to get back in to the Radio Room. T/Sgt. Jim Davis reported: „His chute was apparently burned. He came back into the

Dear Laura,

On 6 August I answered your letter of 2 nd July very shortly.

Now I will answer your questions still open :

!) You asked me how often our town Usingen was involved in air raids ?

I can say , we had good luck during the whole war. As we are living only in a distance of 20 miles in the north of Francfort, i watched by binocular the air raids by the British Air-

~~force during the night of 22 March 1944 where the city of Francfort was completely destroyed. In this night, an English Halifax bomber was shot down by a German night fighter and crashed near Kransberg ab. two miles from the place, where the plane of your father crashed later on . The English crew members died all.~~

force during night, especially in the night of 22 March 1944, where the city of Francfort was completely destroyed. In this night, an English Halifax bomber was shot down by a German night fighter and crashed near Kransberg ab. two miles from the place, where the plane of your father crashed later on . The English crew members died all.

Usingen had no losses of people by air raids---only by the conquest of Usingen on 31 March 1945 by American troops.. Three civilians and ab. fourty German Soldiers died. They are buried in Usingen Cemetery. The losses of American soldiers are unknown to me. My family were in safety in a deep cellar.

My father had been soldier in the German Airport Leaux (France) from 1942 until August 1944. Than he was taken prisoner near Orleans (France) and spent the next time until March 1946 as prisoner of war in the Fort Mc. Clellan near Aniston -Alabama. He was nearly 52 years (!) old, when he returned..

My sister's husband fought as soldier from 1941-1944 in Finnland against the Russions, than in 1945 in the Western part of Germany against American troops. He was taken prisoner on 8 May 1945 near Heidelberg and was American prisoner of war in southern France. He was 25 Years old, when he came home in June 1946. You see, our family had really good luck during the war, but in Usingen, there were parents , who lost two or three sons in the war .

Now I will you give some details of the little village Kransberg
where your father spent the first hours since his capture. The
bakery doesn't exist any more. I took a picture of the main road
in the village, ^{where} ~~where~~ it existed (Fotos 1 + 2. Foto 3 : the
church of Kransberg. Foto 4 -the little forest behind the road
was the crash-place of your father's plane. In May 1944 there
did not exist any woods.

Now after I read over all circumstances, how the crew members
of your father's plane were captured, I am not sure, who I
captured, but I am indeed sure, that it was one of them.
I saw the B 17 when it ^{flew} circles in a high ab. 2.000 . yards
and I saw two crew ^{me} ~~members~~ ^{him} with their chute in the air. One of them
landed and I reached only one minute later. I can not imagine,
that they were members of another plane, because in these minutes,
no other American plane was in the near. I will try to find
other witnesses in Usingen.

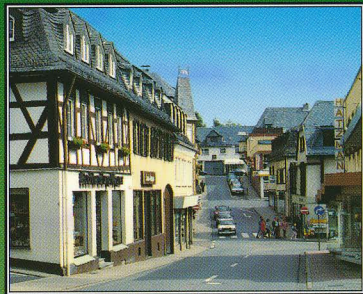
I thank you very much for the pictures of your father and Mr.
Stoller.
~~In~~ ^{for} my next letter I will try to find pictures of the little
airfield Merzhausen, ab. 3 miles from Usingen.
Enclosed I send you a view-card about Usingen.
The map of the air crash-places show you the places of Usingen,
Kransberg and the little airfield Merzhausen.

Finally I hope, you and your father will feel well.

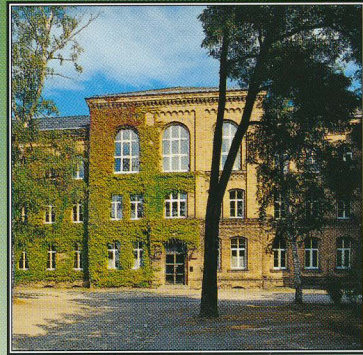
Best regards

Heinz Jungfer

Grüße aus USINGEN



im Taunus



USINGEN im Taunus

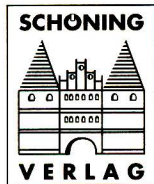
= my town

now ~~to~~ 8000
inhabitants

in 1944 = 3000 "

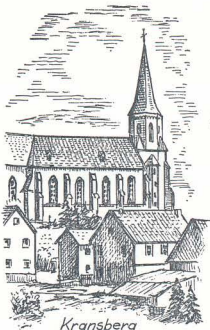
© Herst. u. Verlag Schöning & Co. + Gebr. Schmidt · Usen 122
Tel. (04 51) 310 310 0 · Fax 31 03 130 · Internet: <http://www.schoening-verlag.de>

28 Apr 2009

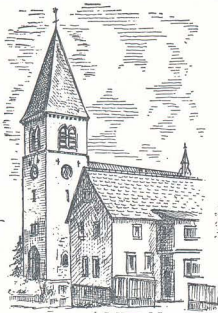




Deutschland ist schön – wir zeigen es!



Kransberg



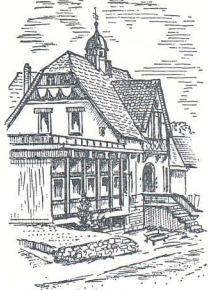
Wernborn



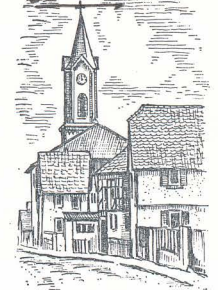
Wilhelmsdorf



Usingen im Taunus



Michelbach



Eschbach



Merzhausen

Dear Laura,

Musing, 19th Dec. 04
phone = 0049-6081-576452

We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year 2005!
For us the last year was eventful due to our move back to
Musing in the old area.

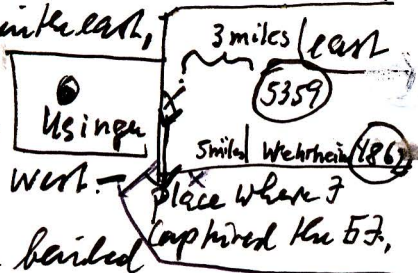
To relax we spent in July three weeks in Southern France
on the Mediterranean beach and in November one week
we discovered the Canary island Tenerife.

On Christmas we will visit our daughter Simone (36) and her
husband Peter in their new house in Stuttgart (150 miles from us),
where our two grand-sons (two and four years old) are waiting
for us. - Meanwhile our daughter Regine (33, not yet married)
moved to Bern (Switzerland), where she is working as a Psychologist.

Now to our common historic research: As regards to your speculation,
that the crew member, who_m I captured, came from another plane:
I reconstructed once more the occurrence just before the crash of
your father's plane. I know exactly - also find another report

enclosed - that on
the 12 May 1944 was a west wind
(Wind speed abt. 5). If you look
on the map of the places of crash,
you will find the place of your
father's crash far ^{NORTH} inland,

Every crew member
was ~~driven~~ driven to West. -
consequently the bailed
out crew-members, who I saw,
could belong 100% to your father's
plane. The most eastern plane
(Wehrlein) was too far - abt. 5 miles
in the south, and his plane landed!
You are right: Someone will re-
member giving his flight vest and
helmet to me and he also must
remember the conversation with me!
The pilot of your father's plane must
have succeeded in returning to the
cockpit,



Mr. Selzer, the eye witness of Koenigsberg, who watched the plane before it tried to land, saw the pilot ~~at~~ in any case in the cockpit. Four weeks ago, we found the crash place in the woods. When you will come to Germany, I can show you this place! x)

Concerning my father's duties on the airpost in Bordeaux-Mérignac (France) from 1942-1944: He worked in the administration. When he was taken prisoner as a Sergeant, he was already 50 years old! In your letter of Sept. 26, 64, you asked about the Messerschmitt-pilot. A friend of mine spoke with him just after he landed. He went by foot ^{to} the airpost Mérignac. His name is not known. It is uncertain, whether he survived the war.

I tried to contact the German Historian
near Munich - but in vain. When ^I have
spoken with him, I will ^{inform} you.

Finally I hope you in good health
and best regards to your father

Heinz

x)

PS. = Once more I thought about the
following:

My captured B.F. must have been
the second, who bailed out of your
father's plane.

The first landed in the western area of
Munich in front of the hospital.
My sister worked nearby and watched the landing.

When you will speak with crew members
and your father, asked please: Who was the second, who
baild out?

March 1, 2005.

Dear Laura,

Thank you so much for your letter of January 23, 2005, and - as a surprise for me - the book concerning the experiences of the American and German POW's. This is very interesting for me because my father - as you know - spent 1 1/2 years in the POW camp Fort Mc. Clellan/Alabama. I still possess the former POW-Camp-Newspaper of that time.

I as a German must be ashamed about the worse treating of the American POW's by the Germans.

On the other side, this book is also a good exercise to brush up my English. I hope that "my book" will give you some informations about the "last Days" of the "3. Reich". I regret that I did not find a book in English language about the American air raids to Germany in summer 1944, but I will try to find one.

Now to your questions:

The eyewitness, Wolfgang Selzer from Kramsberg, told me still last week that he had exactly seen the pilot in the cockpit how he tried a landing on the Herrnfeld, but the plane exploded immediately when it touched the ground. Mr. Selzer and I found again the crashplace because there is to be seen a little dig, abt. two feet deep and 90 feet long. Mr. Selzer visited the crashplace abt. three hours after the accident. He told me that he only saw pieces of the plane; he did not see bodies of the crew. Persons who found the bodies and buried them on the cemetery in Usingen are no more alive. I have the official list of the crew members who were buried in Usingen (list is enclosed). Of your father's plane, there are only named Tucker and Greenwood.

The "unknown" buried in the official list must be greater, whose identification tag was found and sendid to the POW-Camp Oberursel (compare official report). Now he is buried in Arlington (see picture)

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~
Greenwood bailed out with Davis on one parachute. He could not hold Davis and fall down deadly. His body was found and brought to the cemetery in Usingen.

Tucker was seen by Mr, Selzer in the cockpit trying the landing. He was obvious casted so far from his plane by the explosion, that his body also could be found. He was also buried in Usingen. Now remain only Sleminski and Detwiler, who were in the waist of

X) Compare the actual movie!

the B 17. . The sixth (designated with the question mark) must be one of the both, The other one was obviously burnt by the explosion (Gasoline) in such a way, , that nothing remained of his body (compare the report of Mr. Selzer).

Referring to Greuter : He was the tail gunner and was probably also cast away from the plane, that is body also could be find and buried in Usingen. (Nr. 4) in the list).

The only remained question is : what happened with the other dead crew members of MACR 4855, because the plane crashed also in the area of Usingen ?

I have no answer, but I think Nr. 5 and six in the list are Greuter and Sleminsky or Detwiler.

Thank you also for your letter of Feb. 19, 05 . You ask me, how I would find the sketch of Mr. Kerr.: I cannot gather anything from this sketch. Perhaps I can imagine the place of his landing near the farmer's house. Why did he not show the air base 1.000 yards in the North East of Merzhausen? I will make you a other one.

Finally, I will tell you something abt. Fighter claims : I think, you'd want to know, which German fighter forced the B 17 of your father to landing? I watched the Messerschmidt-fighter in the near of the B 17, when the German pilot watched the try of Tucker's landing without to shoot. After the B 17 disappeared behind a forest. Suddenly two American fighters (Mustangs) arrived and one of them shot in the motor of the German. The motor stopped, the German pilot bailed out immediatly and landed abt. 300 yards beside his plane, which layed nearly undestroyed with it's "nose" in a brook. A friend of me crossed in this time and spoke with the pilot. In the afternoon I went by bicycle to this place and took somethings Map) as souvenir.

The name of the piot is unknown , also his unit. I will try to find out this with Dr. Kasxhuba and another historian I suppose his squadron was situated on the Airbase^{of} Merzhausen.

Hoping the situation in your family is now better,

kind regards



Flugzeugverluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg (MACR 4855)HOONTAVUS-
KREIS

01. Datum: 12. Mai 1944
 02. Nächstgelegene Orte: Usingen, Ldkrs. ~~Usingen~~
 03. Air Force: 8th USAAF
 04. US-Bombardment (Air) Division: 3rd BD
 05. US-Wing: 13th CW
 06. US-Group: 96th BG Gruppe B
 07. US-Squadron: 338th BS
 08. Taktisches Zeichen: EX Stern E „ohne Namen“
 09. Typ: B-17 G
 10. Serien-Nummer: 42-31343
 11. Ziel/Auftrag: Bombardierung von Brück/Zwickau
 12. Startzeit: 09.36 Uhr (?)
 13. Platz: Snetterton Heath
 (Station 138)
 14. Absturzzeit: 12.10 Uhr (MACR 4855);
 12.30 Uhr (KU 1852);
 15. Absturzstelle: Usingen Hattstein Weiher,
 im Wald
 dt. Jäger
 16. Verlustursache:
 17. Abschuss zugeschrieben an:
 18. Art der Vernichtung: Explosion i. d. Luft (in the air)

19. Besatzung:

Pilot	Lewis, Robert W.	1 st Lt.	KIA
Kopilot	Soderlund, Gustaf J.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
Navigator	Korty, George L.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
Bombenschütze	Foote, Kenneth W.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
o. Kugelturmschütze	Duff, Carl T.	T/Sgt.	KIA
Funker	Kerrin, Dyton W.	T/Sgt.	POW
u. Kugelturmschütze	Howard, Paul B.	S/Sgt.	POW
re. Seitenschütze	Klecha, Alexander J.	S/Sgt.	POW
li. Seitenschütze	Elliott, Kenneth E.	S/Sgt.	POW
Heckschütze	Corley, Forest C.	S/Sgt.	POW

Cemetery Usingen
" "

20. Einzelheiten:

KU-Liste 1852 Nr. 9:

~~Wehrheim~~, Lake Hartsteiner [= Hattsteiner Weiher; G. K.], county Usingen, 13,5 km southwest Friedberg, PS 7, 12.30 hours, Boeing, 95 per cent destruction, 4 death, factory number 231343 EC, EX decal E.

Zu Position Nr. 14 bei MACR 4855: a/c 343 was seen with a wing off and on fire. There were at least five chutes seen in the same area.

/Literatur: KU-Liste 1852 Nr. 9; MACR 4855; W. Girbig, 1980, S. 29 (= Verlustliste); R. Doherty and G. Ward, 1989, p. 130; briefliche Mitteilung von H. Hungerbühler am 15.12.2003; General-Karte Nr. 13.

Loss of airplanes (American) in World War II (MACR 5359)
Flugzeugverluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg (MACR 5359)

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 01. Datum: | date | 12. Mai 1944 |
| 02. Nächstgelegene Orte: | next village | Usingen, Ldkrs. Hochtaunuskreis |
| 03. Air Force: | | 8 th USAAF |
| 04. US-Bombardment (Air) Division: | | 3 rd BD |
| 05. US-Wing: | | 13 th CW |
| 06. US-Group: | | 96 th BG Gruppe „A“ |
| 07. US-Squadron: | | 338 th BS nach G. Ward,
339 th nach H.-G. Ploes |
| 08. Taktisches Zeichen: | tactical sign | QJ |
| 09. Typ: | | B-17 G |
| 10. Serien-Nummer: | | 42-107 123 |
| 11. Ziel/Auftrag: | aim / order | Bombardierung von Brück (Cherch) |
| 12. Startzeit: | time of take off | 09.25 Uhr (?) |
| 13. Platz: | airport | Snetterton Heath (Station 138) |
| 14. Absturzzeit: | time of crash | 12.10 Uhr (MACR 5359) |
| 15. Absturzstelle: | place of crash | sog. Herrmfeld bei Kransberg |
| 16. Verlustursache: | cause of loss | Feindjäger <u> </u> enemy-fighter |
| 17. Abschuss zugeschrieben an: | | |
| 18. Art der Vernichtung: | kind of loss | Explosion bei Notlandung (forced landing) |
| 19. Besatzung: | crew: | |

Pilot	Tucker, Harold H.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
Kopilot	Greenwood, Robert A.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
Navigator	Detwiler, Samuel R.	2 nd Lt.	KIA
Bombenschütze	Sleminsky, Walter	2 nd Lt.	KIA
o. Kugelturmschütze	Stoller, Lloyd D.	T/Sgt.	POW
Funker	Davis, James A.	T/Sgt.	POW
u. Kugelturmschütze	Boatright, Willis D.	S/Sgt.	POW
re. Seitenschütze	Witt, Lawrence L.	S/Sgt.	POW
li. Seitenschütze	Maisak, Robert Laverne	S/Sgt.	POW
Heckschütze	Greuter, Jennings C.	S/Sgt.	KIA

20. Einzelheiten: details:

KU-Liste 1846 Nr. 6:

Kransberg, county Usingen, 12 km west of Friedberg, PS 4, 12.30 hours, Boeing, 100 per cent destruction, disposition of crew unknow., marking not ascertainable

The aircraft was shot down by fighters during the second attack on the formation. The nose section of the aircraft was on fire. Of the four Officers in the nose section only the copilot Lt. Robert Greenwood was able to get back in to the Radio Room. T/Sgt. Jim Davis reported: „His chute was apparently burned. He came back into the

Official

List of the American pilots buried here (=Usingen)

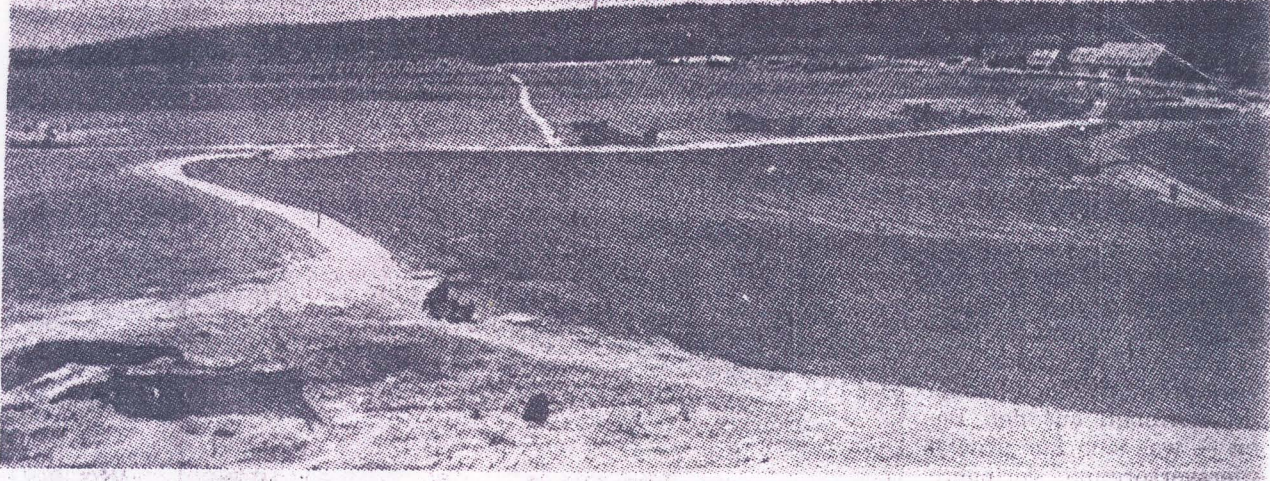
Verzeichnis der hier beerdigten
amerikanischen Piloten.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|--|
| 1) Körsig, George | MACR 4855 | Hattsteiner See
crashed also near Usingen |
| 2) Soderlund, Robert | MACR 4855 | compare the list of the crew
members |
| 3) Fischer, Harold | MACR 5359 | |
| 4) unbekannt == unknown | MACR 5359 | (I suppose Greuter) |
| 5) Greenwood | MACR 5359 | |
| 6) ? | MACR 5359 | (I suppose Sleminsky or Detwiler) |

← 2 miles to USINGEN

1 mile to Merzhausen →

forest



Der Militärflughafen Merzhausen bei Usingen — aufgenommen um das Jahr 1940.

Airport ↑

Der Bürgermeister

Usingen, den 12. Februar 1946

An den
Herrn Leiter der Aufbauschule
Herrn Oberstudienrat Dr. Vater
hier.

Der amerikanische Gräberoffizier wünscht für morgen Mittwoch,
den 13.2.46 vormittags 10 Uhr am Friedhof 9 kräftige Schüler der
Aufbauschule. 3 Schüler (Schmidt, Philipps, Friedrich) sind von ihm
bereits bestellt. Ich bitte um Zuweisung von weiteren 6 Schülern.

M

am Montag, den 25. II. 46 | an Nelson } aus Frazen
Leipzig abgefordert. Rohde } Leipzig aus-
Rück } geben.

Vergrößerung f. 3 Tage
25. II. = 45. II. *schon gemacht*

Because of ^{Feb. 25, 46} ~~exhuming~~ and transport of the bodies from Usingen
to Belgium?
↓

Translation

The Mayor

Usingen, Febr. 12, 1946

To the
Director of the Secondary School
Dr. Vater, Senior Assistant Master
Usingen

The American officer responsible for the tombs is requesting
9 strong pupils for tomorrow, Wednesday, Febr. 13, 46, in the
morning at 10:00 o'clock, at the cemetery. 3 pupils (Schmidt,
Philipps, Friedrich) have already been ordered by him.
Please assemble 6 further pupils. X)

Signature

X) I was one of these six pupils!

Translation

2)

D.S.

Usingen, Oct. 12, 45

To the
Military Government

U s i n g e n

REf.: Crashed American Soldiers

In May 1944, 6 American soldiers were killed by the crash of their airplanes near Usingen. The identification tags of 5 of them and other objects were delivered - via The German Armed Forces, Airport of Merzhausen - to the prison camp of Oberursel.

One of the soldiers was wounded in such a way that the identification tag could no more be found.

The names of 4 soldiers are known. These are:

1. K o r t y , George
2. S o d e r l u n d , Robert
3. T u c k e r , Harold
4. G r e e n w o o d

I.V. Reuter

Usingen

12.Okt. 45

D.S.

↗ An die
Militär-Regierung

U s i n g e n .

Betr.: Abgestürzte amerikanische Soldaten.

Im Mai 1944 sind in der nächsten Umgebung von Usingen, 6 amerikanische Soldaten tödlich abgestürzt. Von 5 sind die Erkennungs-
marken und sonstige Gegenstände in das damalige Gefangenenlager in
Oberursel, über das damalige deutsche Wehrmachtsstelle, Flugplatz
Merzhausen abgeliefert worden. Ein Soldat war derart verletzt, dass
Erkennungszeichen nicht mehr zu finden waren. Von 4 Soldaten sind die
Namen bekannt. Es sind dies:

1. K o r t y , George
2. S o d e r l u n d , Robert
3. T u c k e r , Harold
4. G r e e n w o o d

I.V.

Reuter

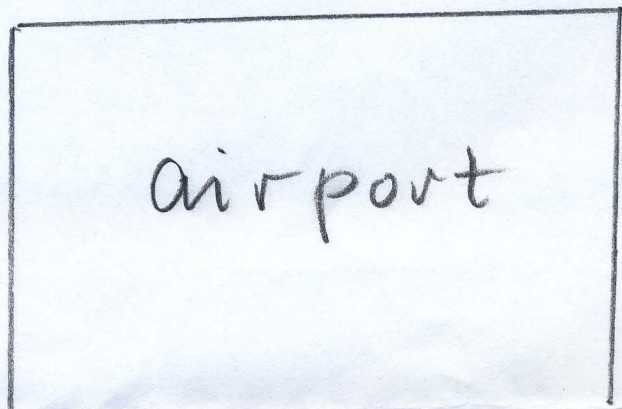
1-2 miles
← crash place
of Kerr!
4779

forest

Merzhansen

Road

} ~500 yards
forest



Road

forest

800 yards

Farmer's house

not true to scale!

3 miles

3 miles

NACR 4855 Halls teimer See (lake)

USINGEN

landing
M4
" " POW.

one mile

landing

one landing (2) in

NACR (5359)

Kransthor

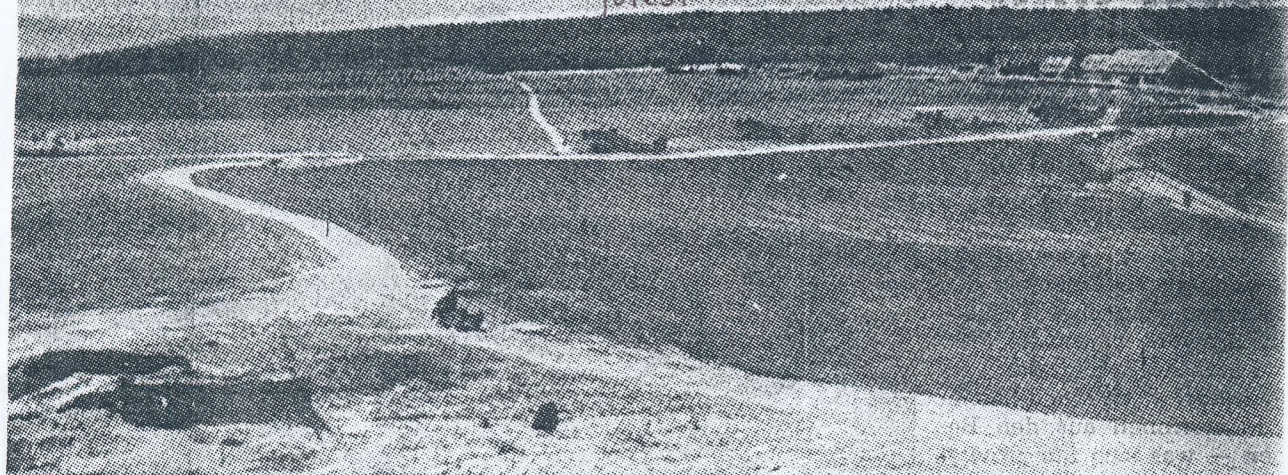
→

← 2 miles to US'INGEN

1 mile to Merzhäusen →

forest

MILITARY



Der Militärflughafen Merzhäusen bei Usingen — aufgenommen um das Jahr 1940.

Airport ↑



Wilhelmsdorf

Kransberg

Michelbach

Merzhausen

Wernborn

Usingen im Taunus

Eschbach

Mriingen, 9th July
2005

Dear Louisa,

After our return from our holidays in Southern France
I had a little success in finding an address of an
ancient German pilot, who shot down in the area
Mriingen - Merzhausen (Hochtaunus) an American
Bomber "B17" which is also named the Fighter Claims
of May 12, 1944, which I enclose one more.

He is also a reader of the paper "Jäger-Blatt" (ancient fighter).

By the editorial office, of which I have got the following
address: Horst Petschler. - He is living in the States: -

411 Elpysco Street - Wichita / Kansas

KS 67218-1525

phone Nr. 316 683 6835

Perhaps you can contact him

Hoping you feel well

Best regards

Heinz



PS. = We are again in holiday
at the Baltic Sea
from 30. July - 10th August

Petzschler
411 Elpyco St.
Wichita, Kansas 316-683-
67218 6835

Luftwaffe Fighter Claims May 12, 1944

12. May 1944
U.S. VIII Bomber Command: MERSEBURG, LÖTZKENDORF, ZWICKAU, BROX,
ZEITZ, BOHLEN

JaFm I. Jagdkorps/Lfl. Reich:

12.05.44	Obst. Walter Krupinski	2./JG 5	F-47	05 Ost/TS-6: 7.000 m.	11.52	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.21
12.05.44	Ltn. Jehn	3./JG 5	F-47	05 Ost S/TS-69: 4.000 m.	11.55	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.21
12.05.44	Oefr. Lieberknecht	1./JG 5	F-47	05 Ost S/TS-1: 4.000 m.	12.07	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.7
12.05.44	Uffz. Milder: 1	5./JG 1	B-24	05 Ost S/PO-PN Raum Eifel: 6.500 m.	12.18	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.92
12.05.44	Obst. Georg Peter Eder: 44	Stab II./JG 1	B-24	05 Ost S/PO-PN Raum Eifel: 6.500 m.	12.18	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.70
12.05.44	Pw. Bindeleil: 1	6./JG 1	B-24 HSS	05 Ost S/PO-QO Raum Eifel: 6.500 m.	12.18	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Uffz. Weber: 3	5./JG 1	B-24 HSS	05 Ost S/PO-QO Raum Eifel: 6.500 m.	12.18	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Uffz. Stuckembrock: 1	Stab II./JG 1	B-24 HSS	PO-PN/QN-QO: 6.500 m.	12.18	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Obst. Bucholz: 4	6./JG 1	F-47	05 Ost N/PR-PO-QN: 300 m. [Raum Eifel]	12.20	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.68
12.05.44	Hptm. Eberhard Bock: 27	5./JG 27	B-17	Fl. Pl. Merzhansen: 6.000 m.	12.25	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.125
12.05.44	Uffz. Semisch: 1	7./JG 11	B-17	PQ-PR-QQ-QR: 6.500 m. [Rhein-Taunus]	12.26	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: folgt
12.05.44	Hptm. Horst Otather von Fassung: 64	7./JG 11	B-17	05 Ost S/QQ-QR Wiesbaden: 6.300 m.	12.26	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.15
12.05.44	Oefr. Friedrich: 1	Stab/JG 11	B-17	15 km. vor Weisbaden: 7.000 m.	12.26	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.7
12.05.44	Uffz. Kahfeld: 1	2./JG 11	B-17	05 Ost S/PR-PS ostl. Limburg: 6.500 m.	12.27	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.42
12.05.44	Uffz. Freytag: 1	2./JG 11	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/PR-PS ostl. Limburg: 6.500 m.	12.27	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Uffz. Loewe: 2 i.Z.Arb.	1./JG 11	B-17	05 Ost S/PR-PS ostl. Limburg: 6.500 m.	12.27	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.26
12.05.44	Pw. Rudolf Philipp: 8	6./JG 27	B-17	Fl. Pl. Merzhansen: 6.000 m.	12.28	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Oefr. Erwin Leskowski: 31	8./JG 11	B-17	05 Ost S/QQ nordl. Wiesbaden: 6.500 m.	12.28	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.10

12.05.44	Ltn. Heinz Schlechter: 3	5./JG 27	B-17	Merzhansen PS: 6.000 m.	12.28	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.127
12.05.44	Hptm. Eberhard Bock: 28	5./JG 27	B-17 HSS	vor Merzhansen: 6.000 m.	12.28	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Pw. Walter Saynisch: 8	5./JG 27	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/PR-9: 6.000 m. [Bad Homburg]	12.28	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: ASM
12.05.44	Ltn. Ostheke: 7	3./JG 11	B-17 a.b.	05 Ost S/PR-PS Raum Limburg: 6.500 m.	12.28	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.42
12.05.44	Uffz. Horst Petrachler: 4	2./JG 3	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/PR: 7.000 m. [Hochtaunus]	12.28	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Ltn. Hans Ruchner: 9	12./JG 3	B-17	05 Ost S/PS-PT: 6.500 m. [Nidda]	12.30	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.8
12.05.44	Ltn. Dr. Peter Werfft: 20	9./JG 27	B-17	30 km. E.N.E. Haas: 6.000 m.	12.30	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.148
12.05.44	Oefr. Fritz Oromotka: 21	9./JG 27	B-17	30 km. E.N.E. Haas: 6.000 m.	12.30	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.167
12.05.44	Uffz. Josef Brandt: 3	10./JG 3	B-17	05 Ost S/PS-PT: 6.000 m. [Nidda]	12.30	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.31
12.05.44	Obst. Hans-Heinrich Koenig: 26	3./JG 11	B-17	05 Ost S/PR-PS ostl. Limburg: 6.500 m.	12.30	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: ASM
12.05.44	Uffz. Karl-Heinz Schmidt: 3	11./JG 3	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/PS-PT: 6.500 m. [Nidda]	12.30	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Pw. Hans Löffler: 8	9./JG 27	B-17 HSS	50 km. N.E. Frankfurt: 6.500 m.	12.30	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Ltn. Hans Weik: 32	10./JG 3	B-17	05 Ost S/PR S.E. Frankfurt: 6.500 m.	12.30	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.30
12.05.44	Uffz. Hans-Joachim Scholz: 1	12./JG 3	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/PS-PT: 6.500 m. [Nidda]	12.30	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Obftr. Erhard Noltig: 6	Stab IV./JG 3	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/PT-PS: 6.500 m. [Nidda]	12.30	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Uffz. Gerhard Vivroux: 6	11./JG 3	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/PS-PT: 6.500 m. [Nidda]	12.31	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Maj. Friedrich-Karl Müller: 139	Stab/JG 3	B-17	05 Ost S/QR: 6.500 m. [Wiesbaden]	12.32	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.141
12.05.44	Ltn. Dieter Zink: 9	Stab/JG 3	B-17	05 Ost S/PR: 6.500 m. [Andernach]	12.32	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr.142
12.05.44	Ltn. Rudolf Metz: 3	11./JG 3	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/PS-PT: 6.500 m. [Nidda]	12.33	Film C. 2027/I VNE: ASM
12.05.44	Maj. Anton Hackl: 146	Stab III./JG 11	B-17	50 km. vor Weisbaden: no height	12.30-35	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: Nr. -
12.05.44	Pw. Franz Busch: 2	5./JG 3	B-17 HSS	05 Ost S/QR-PR: 6.500 m.	12.30-35	Film C. 2027/I Aaserk: ASM

Can you tell which is
the plane of my father?

Auf Semich

Harsh
12²⁶-12³⁰=

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In diesem Heft	Seite
Impressum	1
Nachruf auf Edu Neumann	2 – 4
Bilder von der Festveranstaltung in Prag	5
Die zweite Schlacht von Hohenlinden	6 – 9
Niederländische Einladung an Wolfgang Falck	10 – 13
20. Freundschaftstreffen der Nachtjäger	14 – 17
Airgunner Steve Greene verstorben	18 - 19
Flugzeug-Wrackteile auf der Vorder Mandling	19 - 23
Todesanzeige Alfons Klein	23
Der erste Ramm-Pilot war ein Russe	24 - 25
Nachruf für Brigadegeneral Fraidl	26 - 27
Europäische Luftmacht	28 - 36
Ausweichen vor einem Nuklearschlag	37 - 39
10 Jahre Förderverein Museum Rechlin	40 - 41
„Überleben See“ Training auf Sardinien	42 - 43
Letzter Flug einer BA 152	44
Zieldarstellung für Marine, Heer und Luftwaffe	45 - 46
Besuch des Soldatenfriedhofs Groß Nädlitz	
Fahrt zum Boelcke-Ehrenmal	48
Zwei „Ginas“ daheim gelandet	49
Jägerkreise und Traditionsgemeinschaften	
Berichte, Treffen, Jubiläen und Nachrufe	50 – 57
Ständige Rubriken	
Nachtrag zu den Tigerstaffeln der Luftwaffe	58 - 59
Interessante Bücher aus der Fliegerwelt	60 – 61
Neue Mitglieder	62
Suchanzeigen und Reaktionen	63 – 72
Wir gratulieren zum Geburtstag	73 – 75
Veranstaltungskalender	76 - 77
Wir trauern um unsere Kameraden	78 - 79

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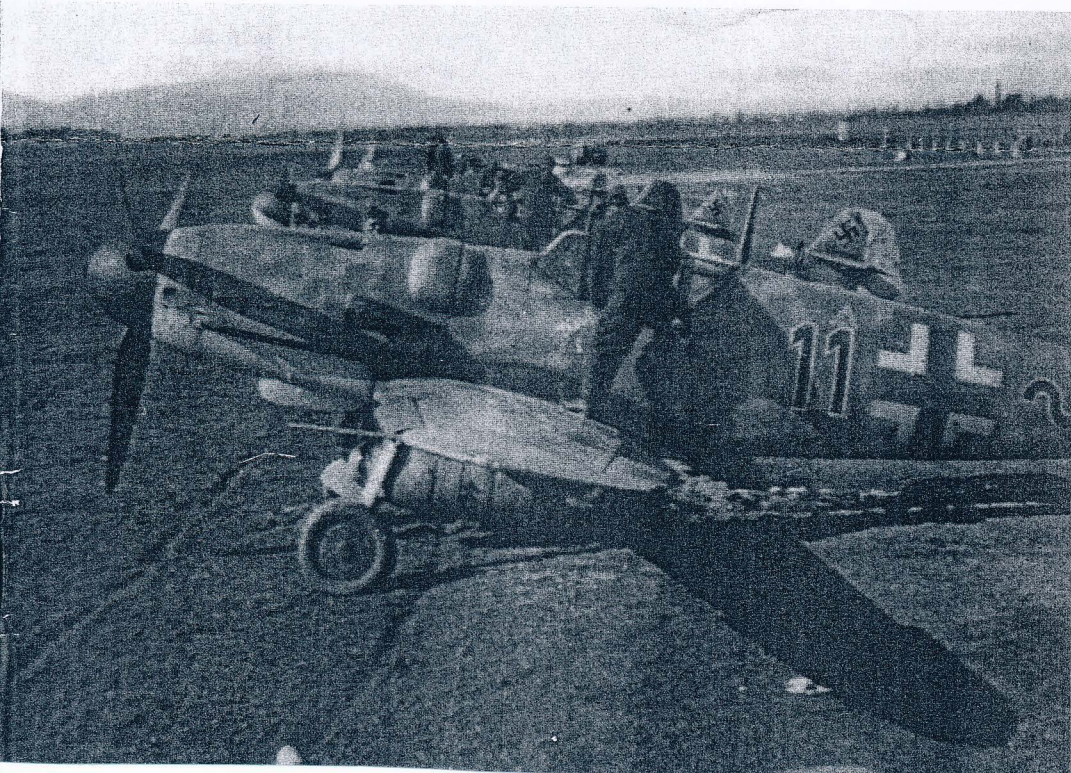


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53. Jahrgang

Köln

Nr. 5/2004





HERINGSDORF

INSEL USEDOM

Seeheilbad HERINGSDORF

August 12, 05



Deutschland

45

Dear Laura
From our holidays at the
Baltic Sea we are sending
you our best regards
Helmut + Brigitte.

PS = I heard from
Mr. Petershler, that you
work him. Although
he is not the pilot, who
shot down your father's B-7
but I suppose, he is an

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001.17424.0100

Mrs.
Laura Edge
5528 Briar Elen Dr.
Saline, Mi. 48176-9537



Deutschland ist schön - wir zeigen es

Foto: Deutsche Luftbild

important witness of the
air-battle over Meringon 12th Aug 44

MSA AIR MAIL

November 14, 2005

Dear Laura,

As the year is going by and our trips and holidays are finished I have now time to write you. I hope you had an eventful summer, too. By the way, we have a wonderful autumn with blue sky and much sun.

Now I would like to refer to May 12, 1944 :

As I wrote you from Munich, Mr. Petschler whom you have contacted was not the correct pilot, too, who shot down your father's plane.

I also contacted Mr. Schlechter^{x)} who was also victorious over a B 17, but he told me that he rammed by accident a Fortress and so he is not the right person.

There remain still three pilots who could be in question :

1. Hptm. (Captain) Eberhard Bock, later killed in action.
2. Fw. (Feldwebel (Fw. = Sgt.) Rudolf Philipp, who survived the war and lived in Vienna, but all efforts to contact him were not successful.
3. Dr. Schlechter^{x)} who is living in Innsbruck, also Austria, had no contact with Mr. Philipp for twenty years. Probably, he died a longer time ago. The address which you gave me was the wrong one.

In your list of "German Fighters Claims Luftwaffe (Air Force) is also marked a pilot Fw. (Sgt.) Walter Saynisch who shot down a B 17 over Bad Homburg - ten miles from Usingen. I hoped he would have known the searched pilot because he was in the same squadron; but he also died a long time ago.

In this matter, I do not see any success.

Now again to the crash of your father's plane : Last week I visited again the place together with Mr. Selzer from Kransberg and you do not believe : we found three little pieces of the plane. One day I will examine this place by means of a farmer's fork.

I regret that it was not possible for you to visit Germany still this year. However, keep in mind, you will not have much time to do so because now I am 76 years old and I want to accompany you to the different places.

Sincerely,

Heinz

Best regards to your
father.

PS. To your question if Mr. Petschler was a Luftwaffe Ace: He was a high decorated pilot, but not wearer of the "Knight Cross", the highest German decoration.

Ursingen, March 6, 2006
phone - 6081-576452

Dear Laura,

I have just read a little book about the history of Oberursel, the town - 15 miles from us - where the Interrogation Camp "Dulag-Luft" existed,

In this camp, your father was obviously also interrogated after his first interrogations perhaps in the little airport Metzhausen near Ursingen.

I think you are also interested in reading something about these affairs.

I give you two titles

- 3) - War Crimes Trials
- 5) the story of Hans Scharff

Perhaps you have the chance to find these titles. I think the last one ⑤ is the most interesting with the former interrogator Hans Scharff.

I hope you received my letter, about four weeks ago.

Sincerely yours

Heinz

③ War Crimes Trials Vol. IX, The Dulag Luft Trial, Edited by Eric Cuddon. Barrister at Law, London/Edinburgh/Glasgow, W. Hodge and Co. Ltd.

④ „Air Ministry Weekly Intelligence“ Summary No. 305, publ. July 7, 1945

⑤ The Interrogator - The Story of Hans Scharff, Luftwaffe's Master Interrogator by Raymond F. Toliver in Collaboration with Hans Scharff, Library of Congress No. 78 10626 (Der Gefangenenvernehmer - Die Geschichte von Hans Scharff - Starvernehmer der Luftwaffe - In Zusammenarbeit mit F. Toliver - Kongressbibliothek Nr. 78-106626)



Dear Laura,

Usingen, July 10, 06

Thank you very much for your two letters with the files. Mean while we spent three weeks' holiday in France, I am also astonished, that the others were buried in the cemetery of Metzhausen, I can only suppose that one of the transports of the bodies began in Krausberg and ended in Metzhausen. These all the victims were buried.

But I have still to interview again eye witnesses in Usingen and Metzhausen. I also will take pictures ^{with} your camera. Later I will report you about my findings. Best regards Heinz

Usingen im Taunus
Haffstein-Weher

Wilhelm Schweighöfer, Inh. Theo Born, Buch- und Schreibwarenhandlung
639 Usingen (Taunus)

Usingen

052-96-14
Eckardt

Heinz Hungerbühler

D61250 Usingen, 3, August
2.006

Franz-Liszt-Str.10

Dear Laura,

Excuse me , that I answer so late, but it was difficult to find new eye witnesses because of the cemetery in Merzhausen. I found two women, who worked on 12, May 1944 in the fields during the air battle, but they could not make exact statements. But they knew the place, where ~~the~~ the American crew members were buried . Today there exists a little chapel, which you find on the photo.-

The owner of the photos^h in Usingen, whom you know, gave me the advice, to develop the pictures here, because he is afraid, that the negatives would be destroyed by the infrot^a check of the letter by the American authority.

I could not make 20 photos only of the cemetery, so I made others of places you know.

One of the women gave me two photos of the airfield Merzhausen (1940). Her husband was also a crew member of a German bomber. He survived the war.

Besides I interviewed two friends, three years younger than I, who saw on the 12 or 13 May on a truck 5-7 bodies , nearly totally burned. I suppose, as I already wrote you on my postcard, that at first the truck went to Kramsberg to fetch there dead American crew members who were cast away of the plane. Then they went to the little lake and at least to Merzhausen to another crash place,

It is possible, that Tucker and Greenwood-the both pilots-were found one day later and were then brought to the cemetery of Usingen.. ---- The president of the Tradition Club of the former fighter group JG 27 had a meeting in July with the veterans-this group was on the 12, May on the airbase Merzhausen, promised me, trying to find pilots, who were on this day in Merzhausen. But I have until today no answer . I tried to contact by phone, but he is not at home.

I try further to find still new details concerning all the former events-especially the cemetery of Merzhausen. Then I will inform you.

Kind regards

Heinz

Flugzeugverluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg (MACR 4855)

HOO-TAV-VS-
KRTI

- 01. Datum: 12. Mai 1944
- 02. Nächstgelegene Orte: Usingen, Ldkrs. ~~Usingen~~
- 03. Air Force: 8th USAAF
- 04. US-Bombardment (Air) Division: 3rd BD
- 05. US-Wing: 13th CW
- 06. US-Group: 96th BG Gruppe B
- 07. US-Squadron: 338th BS
- 08. Taktisches Zeichen: EX Stern E „ohne Namen“
- 09. Typ: B-17 G
- 10. Serien-Nummer: 42-31343
- 11. Ziel/Auftrag: Bombardierung von Brück/Zwickau
- 12. Startzeit: 09.36 Uhr (?)
- 13. Platz: Snetterton Heath
(Station 138)
- 14. Absturzzeit: 12.10 Uhr (MACR 4855);
12.30 Uhr (KU 1852);
- 15. Absturzstelle: Usingen Hattstein Weiher, (= Little Lake)
im Wald
- 16. Verlustursache: dt. Jäger
- 17. Abschuss zugeschrieben an:
- 18. Art der Vernichtung: Explosion i. d. Luft

19. Besatzung:

Pilot	Lewis, Robert W.	1 st Lt.	KIA	<i>Metzhausen</i>
X Kopilot	Soderlund, Gustaf J.	2 nd Lt.	KIA	} <i>Metzhausen</i>
X Navigator	Korty, George L.	2 nd Lt.	KIA	
Bombenschütze	Foote, Kenneth W.	2 nd Lt.	KIA	<i>Metzhausen</i>
o. Kugelturmschütze	Duff, Carl T.	T/Sgt.	KIA	<i>Metzhausen 2</i>
Funker	Kerrin, Dyton W.	T/Sgt.	POW	
u. Kugelturmschütze	Howard, Paul B.	S/Sgt.	POW	
re. Seitenschütze	Klecha, Alexander J.	S/Sgt.	POW	
li. Seitenschütze	Elliott, Kenneth E.	S/Sgt.	POW	
Heckschütze	Corley, Forest C.	S/Sgt.	POW	

20. Einzelheiten:

KU-Liste 1852 Nr. 9:

Usingen
Wehrhelm, Lake Hartsteiner [= Hattsteiner Weiher; G. K.], county Usingen, 13,5 km southwest Friedberg, PS 7, 12.30 hours, Boeing, 95 per cent destruction, 4 death, factory number 231343 EC, EX decal E.

Zu Position Nr. 14 bei MACR 4855: a/c 343 was seen with a wing off and on fire. There were at least five chutes seen in the same area.

Flugzeugverluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg (MACR4823)

- 01. Datum: 12. Mai 1944
- 02. Nächstgelegene Orte: Merzhausen, Ldkrs. Usingen
- 03. Air Force: 8th USAAF
- 04. US-Bombardment (Air) Division: 3rd BD
- 05. US-Wing: 45th CW
- 06. US-Group: 452nd BG
- 07. US-Squadron: 729th BS
- 08. Taktisches Zeichen:
- 09. Typ: B-17 G
- 10. Serien-Nummer: 42-97786
- 11. Ziel/Auftrag: Bombardierung von Brück
- 12. Startzeit:
- 13. Platz: Deopham Green (Station 142)
- 14. Absturzzeit: 12.20 Uhr
- 15. Absturzstelle: Merzhausen, Ldkrs. Usingen
- 16. Verlustursache: Zusammenstoß mit weiterer B-17
- 17. Abschuss zugeschrieben an:
- 18. Art der Vernichtung: Aufschlag

19. Besatzung:

Pilot	Thomas, Joseph C.	1 st Lt.	KIA
Kopilot	Rose, Adrian W.	2 nd Lt.	RTD
Navigator	Holley, Harold K.	2 nd Lt	RTD
Bombenschütze	Millsap, James W.	2 nd Lt	KIA
o. Kugelturmschütze	Strom, William R.	S/Sgt.	RTD
Funker	Wolfe, Maxwell	S/Sgt.	RTD
u. Kugelturmschütze	Hall, William E.	Pvt.	KIA
li. Seitenschütze	Fisher, Arnold L.	S/Sgt.	RTD
re. Seitenschütze	Owens, James E.	S/Sgt.	RTD
Heckschütze	Myers, Robert C.	S/Sgt.	KIA <i>Merzhausen</i>

20. Einzelheiten:

KU-Liste 1854 Nr. 8:

Airdrome Merzhausen, county Usingen, 21 km west of Friedberg, PR 6, 12.30 hours, Boeing, 99 per cent destruction, disposition of crew unknown, blown off in the air, number 3970. (Antiaircraft claims shot down).

Literatur: KU-Liste 1852 Nr. 9; MACR 4855; W. Girbig, 1980, S. 29 (= Verlustliste); R. Doherty and G. Ward, 1989, p. 130; briefliche Mitteilung von H. Hungerbühler am 15.12.2003; General-Karte Nr. 13.

Loss of airplanes (American) in World War II (MACR 5359)
Flugzeugverluste im Zweiten Weltkrieg (MACR 5359)

- 01. Datum: *date* 12. Mai 1944
- 02. Nächstgelegene Orte: *next village* Usingen, Ldkrs. Hochtaunuskreis
- 03. Air Force: 8th USAAF
- 04. US-Bombardment (Air) Division: 3rd BD
- 05. US-Wing: 13th CW
- 06. US-Group: 96th BG Gruppe „A“
- 07. US-Squadron: 338th BS nach G. Ward,
339th nach H.-G. Ploes
- 08. Taktisches Zeichen: *tactical sign* QJ
- 09. Typ: B-17 G
- 10. Serien-Nummer: 42-107 123
- 11. Ziel/Auftrag: *aim / order* Bombardierung von Brüx (Chech)
- 12. Startzeit: *time of take off* 09.25 Uhr (?)
- 13. Platz: *airport* Snetterton Heath (Station 138)
- 14. Absturzzeit: *time of crash* 12.10 Uhr (MACR 5359)
- 15. Absturzstelle: *place of crash* sog. Herrmfeld bei Kransberg
- 16. Verlustursache: *cause of loss* Feindjäger *enemy-figh*
- 17. Abschuss zugeschrieben an:
- 18. Art der Vernichtung: *kind of loss* Explosion bei Notlandung (*forced landing*)
- 19. Besatzung: *crew*

Pilot	Tucker, Harold H.	2 nd Lt.	KIA	} <i>Kransberg Usingen</i>
Kopilot	Greenwood, Robert A.	2 nd Lt.	KIA	
Navigator	Detwiler, Samuel R.	2 nd Lt.	KIA	
Bombenschütze	Sleminsky, Walter	2 nd Lt.	KIA	
o. Kugelturmschütze	Stoller, Lloyd D.	T/Sgt.	POW	} <i>Kransberg Merzhausen</i>
Funker	Davis, James A.	T/Sgt.	POW	
u. Kugelturmschütze	Boatright, Willis D.	S/Sgt.	POW	
re. Seitenschütze	Witt, Lawrence L.	S/Sgt.	POW	
li. Seitenschütze	Maisak, Robert Laverne	S/Sgt.	POW	
Heckschütze	Greuter, Jennings C.	S/Sgt.	KIA	<i>Kransberg Merzhausen</i>

20. Einzelheiten: details

KU-Liste 1846 Nr. 6:

Kransberg, county Usingen, 12 km west of Friedberg, PS 4, 12.30 hours, Boeing, 100 per cent destruction, disposition of crew unknow., marking not ascertainable

The aircraft was shot down by fighters during the second attack on the formation. The nose section of the aircraft was on fire. Of the four Officers in the nose section only the copilot Lt. Robert Greenwood was able to get back in to the Radio Room. T/Sgt. Jim Davis reported: „His chute was apparently burned. He came back into the

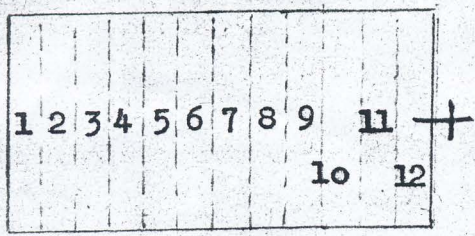
Liegeplan der am 13.5.44 beerdigten feindl. Flieger

Wald

Veg

← = Merzhausen

Merzhausen den 14.5.1944



Alter Friedhof

Die Leichen wurden in folgender Reihenfolge nebeneinander beerdigt. Reihenfolge :

1. Ohne Erkennungszeichen
2. " "
3. Marke o81o9o6 T 43 und Madonnabild an Halskette
4. Ohne Erkennungsmarke
5. Michael m. Veselich O-757932 T-43-43 o
6. Robert Myers 39283218 T-43-43- o
7. Ohne Erkennungszeichen
8. " "
9. " "
10. " "
11. " "
12. " "

compare

In der Umgebung der Aufschlagstelle wurde die Marke Walter V. Naylor o. 753238 T - 41 -2
A P
gefunden

*NB = near Merzhausen where all 3 wash places!
of American B-17*

Neuer Friedhof

That is the only notice of the archives of Merzhausen - Minsien, which I found!

Tuckert

über tote amerikanische Flieger die auf dem Friedhof Usinger beerdigt wurden. Sie liegen in der Reihenfolge I - VI von Süden nach Norden, d.h. I liegt nächst dem Schuppen.

Liste

Usinger
Friedhof Usinger

Row	Name	Erkennungsnummer	Erkennungsnummer	Erkennungsnummer	Erkennungsnummer
I	Tuckert, Harold	: 0-809895	T-42	T 44	0
II	Unbekannt	: ?			
III	Soderlund, Gustav	: 0-818965	T-43	-4 A	0
IV	Foote, Kenneth	: 0-757710	T-43	-44	0
V	Kerby, George	: 0-702933	T-43	-43	0
VI	Greenwood, Robert	: 0-818664	T-43	-44	A







Illustriert von Anju van Wersch



Musingu, 22 Sept. 2, 006

Dear Laura,

Thank you very much for the photo of the grave of Harold Tucker and the other, taken by his brother in 1945. I did not know or forgot it, that the grave was remade well by the new town - authority after the war.

I asked the son of the former gardener, who is of the same age as me. His garden is directly situated besides the cemetery. He told me that he planked the flowers on the grave.

He remembered too that after the erection of the tomb stone a ceremony with American soldiers took place and they shot Salut!

That all is now a surprise for me, but keep in mind, that a young boy as I did not often go to the cemetery.

In friendship

Thank you for the IDPE-files!

Herz

made up by ¹² ~~some~~ ^{author} in May 44!

Verzeichnis der hier beerdigten
amerikanischen Piloten.

1) Krosig, George	MACR 4855	Hattsteiner See crashed also near Usingen compare the list of the crew members
2) Foderlind, Robert	MACR 4855	
3) Fischer, Harold	MACR 5359	Cemetery (Greuter = no Mezhausen) ↳ Detwiler or Det Sleminsky
4) Unknown == unknown	MACR 5359	
5) Greenwood	MACR 5359	
6) ?	MACR 5359	

PS = I refer now to your letter of June 30, 2006 :
You wonder that only Truch and Greenwood were buried in
Usingen and the other in Mezhausen. - As far as I know

this is not correct.
See above official list, on the cemetery Usingen were
buried four crew members of your father's plane
MACR 5359? The unknown were surely Detwiler
and Sleminsky!

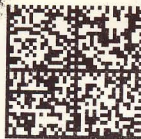
In the case of Greuter I see two possibilities:

- 1) He was cast away of the plane by the crash and was
found later or at first and was taken with ~~the~~
victims of the other crashes to the cemetery Mezhausen,
- 2) Greuter was ^{the} tail gunner and bailed out at first
between Mezhausen and Usingen (the little lake, where the
MACR 4855 crashed), but his chute did not open as
he was too deep? Please call your father again in this case,
perhaps, they did not remember, what Greuter did?

So I am sure that Freites was the only one who
was buried in Nezhauism!

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Merzhausen
Stadt
Usingen

50





A POW's tale of survival

Author to tell of
dad's World War II
experiences

Lawrence Witt lived his entire life within miles of his Detroit birthplace. He was a family man, a faithful Ford employee and an avid gardener. Yet, for many decades, no one knew his story. Family and friends did not know that he served with the Army Air Corps during World War II. They did not know that his plane was shot down over Germany and half his crew killed. They did not know that he was once a prisoner of war. These topics were off-limits. They were



Lawrence Witt, a World War II Army Air Corps member, in his uniform.

never discussed.

But Witt's eldest daughter, Laura Edge, was curious and began digging into her father's past. She interviewed her dad's surviving crew mates, his fellow prisoners of war and his forced



This is the crew Lawrence Witt served with during World War II.

march companions. She sent for military records and pored over the letters her father sent home from war. The result of Edge's research is now published in the book *On the Wings of Dawn: American Airmen as Germany's Prisoners*.

This account of survival follows Witt and five of his crew mates through their narrow escape from a fiery, out-of-control B-17 bomber to their poignant return to freedom after 11½ months of captivity in German stalags and as participants on a brutal

forced march. This book reads like an action-packed novel, but is meticulously researched and documented. Ex-prisoner of war Al Gorashko said, "Laura Edge's account of the POW experience at Stalag Luft IV, the Black March and Stalag 357, is accurate in every detail."

Those interested will be able to meet Edge 1-2:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23, at the Next Chapter Bookstore and Bistro in downtown Northville. She will be available to share her research journey and to sign her book.