

DEAR GREG;

8/10/09

SENDING COPY OF ATTACHED FOR YOUR INFO AND TO MAKE CLEAR HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THE PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN GOVT. TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WHAT WE POW'S WENT THROUGH IN EUROPE DURING WWII.

I ALONG WITH A FEW EX-POWS FILED A CLAIM AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF GERMANY FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RETRIBUTION FOR INHUMAN TREATMENT.

BECAUSE, OUR POW CAMPS ARE NOT LISTED AS SUB-CAMPS OR CONCENTRATION CAMPS, WE ARE NOT ENTITLED TO MAKE A CLAIM. SEE DECISION MADE BY THE COMMISSION.

THE KEY MEMBERS ON THE COMMISSION EVEN CALLED ME TO SAY THEY WERE SORRY AND DID NOT KNOW WHAT WE WENT THROUGH AS POW'S, AS STATED IN THE MATERIAL I & OTHERS HAD SENT.

I WROTE TO MY GOVT REP. (SEE COPY) WHEN I LIVED IN FLORIDA AT THE TIME AND NOTHING MORE WAS DONE OR ANY ANSWER RECEIVED.

I HAVE A LOT OF MATERIAL ON HAND THAT I RECEIVED FROM THE COMMISSION.

LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING YOU AGAIN.
HOPE I CAN OFFER SOMETHING AT YOUR MEETING.

(OVER)

GOD BLESS
Don Kemper

DID YOU KNOW, WHEN I ENTERED THE AAF I WAS
RAISED & LIVED IN KINGSTON, N.Y. & PATTY MY WIFE
LIVED IN PoughKEEPSIE.

SO WE ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE AREA YOU PURCHASED
A WHILE BACK.

I WORKED FOR IBM IN PoughKEEPSIE & IN NEW YORK
CITY FOR A TIME, I THEN TRANSFERRED TO LEXINGTON, NY,
WITH IBM & RETIRED FROM HERE TO FLORIDA - FOR
23 YEARS, THEN BACK TO BE CLOSER TO OUR CHILDREN.

TAKE CARE - STAY IN TOUCH -
Don

P.S. OUR GOV'T, I BELIEVE, WOULD RATHER
WE PUSH ALL THIS UNDER THE RUG AND DON'T
STIR THE POT.

I HOPE & PRAY OUR GOV'T. REALLY LOOKS AFTER
OUR RETURNING VETERANS WHO ARE PHYSICAL &
MENTALLY IN NEED, AND LISTENS TO THEIR NEEDS.

DEAR GREG;

8/11/09

DUE TO PHYSICAL PROBLEMS BROUGHT ON BY THE TWO OPERATIONS PERFORMED BY THE VAMC HERE IN LEXINGTON, I'M SORRY TO SAY I WILL HAVE TO CANCEL MY ATTENDING YOUR POW ROUNDTABLE. THINGS ARE NOT GOING AS WELL AS I HAD HOPED BY NOW. I HAVE BEEN GIVEN APPOINTMENTS FOR CONTINUED THERAPY BY THE VA, STARTING THIS COMING THURS.

I AM REAL SORRY FOR LETTING YOU DOWN. I KNOW I COULD HANDLE ANY Q&A ON LUFT VI OR LUFT IV & THE "MARCH".

YOU HAD ASKED WHAT LAGER I WAS IN, ETC. IN LUFT IV — DO YOU STILL HAVE COPIES OF MY WRITE-UPS & DRAWINGS OF BOTH CAMPS? (SEE ENCLOSED)

I HAVE DRAWN MORE COPIES OF BOTH CAMPS & UPDATED MY WRITE-UPS, TO COVER I BELIEVE, DETAILS OF BOTH & MORE THEN THE ARCHIVES HAVE ON HAND.

EXAMPLE: NO RECORD EXISTS THAT TELL ABOUT THE MANY WHITE TENTS ERECTED IN LUFT VI TO RECEIVE MORE INCOMING AIR CREWS. MORE POW'S NEVER CAME - (10,000 SHOWN IN ARCHIVES BY ARMY INTELL. IS FALSE) TENTS WERE USED BY THE "SHOW BAND", TO PRATICE IN. I PLAYED DRUMS IN BAND. TENTS CAME DOWN SHORTLY BEFORE OUR DEPARTURE TO LUFT IV.

GREG, YOU WOULD BE MOST WELCOME TO COME & VISIT WITH US & STAY AT MY HOME FOR AS LONG AS YOU WISH.

YOU MAY LOOK THROUGH MY UP-TO-DATE MATERIAL AND ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT CAMPS I WAS IN & THE "MARCH".

(2)

OF COURSE YOUR WIFE WOULD ALSO BE WELCOME. NO CHARGE
FOR B & B. . . .

WE WOULD BE GLAD TO HAVE YOU.

(I AM SENDING ALONG WITH THIS LETTER ONE ITEM I WOULD
APPRECIATE IF YOU WOULD READ TO THE ROUNDTABLE.
IT IS TITLED "MY STORY" AND COVERS WHAT SHOULD BE KNOWN
(TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS.)

Also, A COPY OF LAGER C, MY LAGER PRIOR TO EVACUATION
ON FEB. 6, 1945. (NOTE - HAND WATER PUMP) NEVER HOT WATER.

LAGER "C" - REP. - FRANCIS TROY

INTERPRETER - JOHN KOHL

DOCTOR - CAPT. LESLIE CAPLAN (GREAT PERSON)

AFTER THOSE UNABLE TO GO ON "MARCH" & OTHERS TRANSFERRED
TO OTHER AREAS, THOSE LEFT BEHIND WERE BROUGHT INTO
LAGER "C" AND BECAME THE LARGE GROUP ORDERED TO MARCH
OUT ON FEB. 6, 1945 AND WAS THE GROUP WRITTEN ABOUT
THAT "MARCHED" FOR 87 DAYS & COVERED 600 MILES.

DR. CAPLAN KEPT THIS GROUP UP TO THE MARCH.

Also, STALAG LUFT VI:

MAN OF CONFIDENCE: T/SGT. FRANCIS S. PAULUS

SECRETARY —: T/SGT. JOS. H. HARRISON

CAMP COMMANDANT—: OBERST HOERMAN VON HOERBACH

(3)

Luft VI - The English (RAF) ARRIVED IN JUNE 1943 AND SET UP THE CAMP UNDER "DIXIE" DEAN, WHO WAS SHOT DOWN ON SEPT. 12, 1942.

PAULES WAS ELECTED JUST PRIOR TO MY ARRIVAL ON FEB. 21, 1944 WHICH WAS THE 2ND GROUP TO COME TO LUFT VI.

HE & DEANS DID A GREAT JOB OF ORGANIZATION & LEADERSHIP. WE NEVER HAD MORE THAN 2400 POWS IN LUFT VI, UNTIL EVACUATION ON JULY 15, 1944. RUSSIANS HAD THEIR OWN SMALL LAGER - DID WORK DETAILS - & SHIPPED OUT WITH US.

SOME ARE SHOWN IN DRAWING OF THE "RUN UP THE ROAD" TO LUFT IV.

I STILL STAY IN TOUCH WITH A FEW OF MY FELLOW POW'S THAT WERE IN MY BARRACKS AT LUFT VI & LUFT IV. NAMES & ADDRESSES I OBTAINED & KEPT ALL THESE YEARS. MANY HAVE PASSED ON OVER THE YEARS, SOME EARLY ON & OTHERS IN LATER YEARS, MOSTLY DUE TO PHYSICAL PROBLEMS BROUGHT ON BY THE "MARCH" & PRIOR WOUNDS FROM COMBAT - BAIL OUT & CAPTURE.

GREG - IT HAS MY PLEASURE TO HAVE KNOWN YOU & WILL ONLY BE AS HELPFUL AS I CAN TO ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS YOU MAY SEEK.

GOD BLESS -

Don Kumpen

STALAG LUFT VI - HEYDEKRUG - E. PRUSSIA

- ARRIVED 2-21-44, UNLOADED FROM CRAMPED BOX CARS AND ESCORTED TO VORLAGER OF CAMP, WHERE WE HAD TO STAND OUTSIDE IN THE COLD IN THE SNOW & WAIT OUR TURN TO BE CALLED INSIDE, TWO AT A TIME.
Each POW had to UNDERGO A STRIP SEARCH, HAVE HIS PICTURE TAKEN, FINGER PRINTED AND ISSUED A POW DOG TAG (#1394) PRIOR TO ASSIGNMENT TO A LAGER.
- I WAS ASSIGNED TO LAGER E, BARRACK ROW F, ROOM F6 AND A TOP BUNK.
- IN DUE TIME 60 MEN CALLED ROOM F6 HOME.
- BARRACKS WERE BUILT OF BRICK ON A CONCRETE SLAB.
- EACH ROOM ASSIGNED A "FOOD COORDINATOR" TO GO TO THE KITCHEN TWICE EACH DAY AND DRAW RATIONS FOR HIS ROOM.
EXAMPLE: BREAKFAST - ERSATZ COFFEE MADE FROM BARLEY KERNELS^{OR ACORNS}, OR A WEAK TEA MADE FROM ?, BLACK BREAD, WHICH USED SAWDUST FOR A FILLER, SOME "PRIMO" OLIO OR JAM.
THE BREAD HAD TO BE SLICED EVENLY FOR 60 MEN WHICH WAS VERY NERVE RACKING FOR OUR COORDINATOR.

ROUTINE: —

- AVERAGE DAILY ROUTINE FOR A "KRIEGIE" IN LUFT VI, E LAGER: —
- EARLY A.M. DOORS & WINDOWS UNLOCKED BY GUARDS.
- WHISTLE BLOWING BY GUARDS TO FALL OUT FOR HEAD COUNT. THIS WAS PERFORMED TWICE PER DAY, REGARDLESS OF WEATHER.

SOMETIMES, WE HAD TO STAY OUT IN THE BITTER COLD FOR HOURS, WHILE THE "FERRETS", AS WE CALLED THEM, SEARCHED OUR BARRACKS FOR HIDDEN RADIOS, TUNNELS AND WHATEVER ELSE THEY FELT A NEED TO SEARCH.

AFTER THIS ANNOYING ROUTINE, THE COUNT NEVER WAS CORRECT THE FIRST TIME, WE WENT TO THE WASH HOUSE & LATRINE & GOT READY FOR BREAKFAST. —

- AFTER BREAKFAST, TWO MEN EMPTIED THE "HONEY BUCKET" FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE. THIS WAS DONE ON A ROTATION BASIS.
- MADE BED — SMOOTHED OUT THE LUMPS & STRAIGHTENED OUT THE TWO BLANKETS.
- WALKED AROUND PERIMETER OF LAGER FOR EXERCISE. WE TRIED TO DO THIS DAILY, REGARDLESS OF WEATHER.
- CHECKED OUT A BOOK FROM OUR LIBRARY.
- PLAYED CARDS
- VISITED, TOLD COMBAT STORIES. FELT SORRY FOR THE ONE ON HIS LAST MISSION — #25.
- WORKED ON BUILDING OUR THEATER.

(3)

ROUTINE CONT. - ~~Post - Spring 1944~~

- I PLAYED DRUMS, SO WAS ABLE TO BECOME A MEMBER OF OUR LITTLE BAND AND WENT TO PRACTICE ALMOST DAILY. OUR INSTRUMENTS WERE FURNISHED BY THE YMCA. SHEET MUSIC & ARRANGEMENTS WAS A PROBLEM, HOWEVER, TALENT ABOUNDED AND WE MANAGED.
- ROLL CALL AGAIN.
- SUPPER - THE KITCHEN FURNISHED HOT WATER FOR US TO MAKE OUR NESCAFE POWDERED COFFEE FROM OUR RED CROSS FOOD PARCEL, WATERED DOWN SOUP, WITH STRANGE THINGS FLOATING AROUND, OR BARLEY CEREAL OR ONE TO TWO BOILED POTATOES, WHICH WE SUPPLEMENTED WITH ITEMS FROM OUR R.C. PARCEL, WHEN WE HAD ONE AND WE ALWAYS HAD TO SHARE WITH ONE TO FOUR OTHER "KRIEBIES".
- SOMEONE CAME IN TO REPEAT THE NEWS BROADCAST RECEIVED FROM THE BBC ON OUR "SECRET" RECEIVER. AFTER THE BROADCAST, THE RADIO WAS DIS-ASSEMBLED & HIDDEN.
- CLEAN UP READY FOR LOCK UP.
- GUARDS LOCKED DOORS & BOARDED UP THE WINDOWS.
- LIGHTS OUT - SACK TIME!
- BOXING RING
INSTALLED AS WEATHER WARMED UP. RING WAS POSITIONED SO THOSE IN NEXT LAGER COULD WATCH. (SEE SKETCH)
MATCHES WERE VERY GOOD & DREW LARGE CROWDS.
THREE ROUNDS PER MATCH.

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- TOUCH FOOTBALL & VOLLEY BALL BECAME DAILY SPORTING EVENTS. GAMES WERE OF A SHORT DURATION BECAUSE OUR DIET LIMITED ONES ENERGY.
- THEATER WAS COMPLETED INSIDE & OUT WITH SEATS MADE FROM FOOD PARCEL BOXES AND VERY COMFORTABLE. SOMEONE PAINTED PETTY GIRL POSTERS FOR THE WALLS, WHICH REALLY GAVE IT SOME CLASS. A TALENT SEARCH WAS MADE THROUGHOUT THE LAGER FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN PERFORMING IN A MUSICAL REVIEW. COSTUMES WERE MADE FROM THE LININGS OF RAF JACKETS (WHITE WOOL) AND OTHER G I CLOTHES. THE CLOTH WAS DYED WHERE POSSIBLE. THOSE IN THE BAND WERE ISSUED NEW G I SHIRTS, PANTS & SHOES FROM THE VORLAGER WAREHOUSE. THE SHOW WAS A SUCCESS, THANKS TO THE EXPERTISE OF ONE - TOM EDWARDS, WITH MANY DIFFERENT ACTS OF SINGING & DANCING. OPENING ~~WAS~~ ^{DAY} WE INVITED THE GERMAN LUFTWAFFE CAMP COMMANDANT & HIS STAFF. WE HAD A FULL HOUSE EACH ~~WAS~~ ^{DAY} UNTIL THE WHOLE CAMP HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE SHOW. WHILE REHEARSING FOR ANOTHER SHOW IN EARLY JULY, ORDERS CAME DOWN TO PREPARE FOR CAMP EVACUATION.
- CAMP NEWSPAPER "BARBED WIRE NEWS" WAS PRINTED WHENEVER MATERIAL WAS AVAILABLE, ON ONE SHEET, ONE COPY.

10-87

STALAG LUFT VI - HEYDEKRUG, E. PRUSSIA

ATTACHED SKETCH IS CLOSE TO WHAT I REMEMBER, BUT NOT ACCURATE TO SHOW ALL THE BUILDINGS.

MAIN BARRACKS WERE BRICK CONSTRUCTION & MOST OTHER BUILDINGS WERE WOOD.

NOT TOO LONG BEFORE WE LEFT, THE GERMANS ERECTED A FEW WHITE TENTS, WHICH WERE NEVER OCCUPIED.

I'VE ALWAYS FELT THAT THIS CAMP WAS TOO FAR NORTH EAST AND GERMAN TRANSPORTATION WAS A GREAT PROBLEM AT THE TIME, WHICH IS WHY OUR CAMP POPULATION NEVER BECAME VERY LARGE, SUCH AS LUFT IV DID IN A VERY SHORT TIME.

• STALAG LUFT VI - LAGER E - BARACK ROW F

Room F6 - 60 MEN - DOUBLE BUNKS - ISSUED 2 BLANKETS PER MAN, VERY COARSE MATERIAL & NOT VERY WARM.

STRAW FILLED MATTRESS SACKS & LAID ON NARROW SLATS. (GREAT SPRING ACTION!)

"Room heated by oven type affair using brickettes AND RATIONED OUT TO EACH ROOM. CAUTION WAS USED TO MAKE THEM LAST THROUGH A 24 HOUR PERIOD.

WINTER HERE WAS VERY COLD AND WE SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF OUR TIME INDOORS DURING THE COLD MONTHS.

WE PLAYED CARDS, READ, PLANNED MEALS WITH OUR RED CROSS PARCELS, TALKED ALOT & GOT TO KNOW EACH OTHER. MORALE NOT BAD, CONSIDERING THE CONDITIONS.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF NAMES OF THE 60 MEN IN MY BARRACK, FROM FEB. 21, 1944, UNTIL EVACUATION OF CAMP ON JULY 15, 1944 TO THE PORT OF MEMEL & OUR BOAT RIDE ON THE BAHTIC TO STALAG LUFT IV.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1- HENRY Michman
Cambridge, MA. | { REPATRIATED JUNE 1944 - CONTACTED
OUR NEXT OF KIN UPON ARRIVAL IN USA. |
| 2- CARL G. GLASMIER
Hamilton, Ohio | |
| 3- GEORGE E. TOOMEY
Detroit, Mich. | |
| 4- DUNCAN Mc Cormick
Birmingham, Ala. | |

(CON'T.)

STALAG LUFT IV - JULY 18, 1944 TO FEB. 6, 1945

- o JULY 19, 1944, THE GERMANS MOVED ALL OF US FROM STALAG LUFT VI OUT OF THE OPEN FIELD AND INTO LAGER A. LAGER A WAS THE ONLY LAGER COMPLETED AT THIS TIME. GERMAN CONSTRUCTION CREWS WERE BUSY WORKING ON THREE OTHER LAGERS WHICH IN TIME WOULD ACCOMMODATE A FEW THOUSAND BOMBER CREWS.

MOST OF US WERE ASSIGNED TO TENTS LOCATED BETWEEN BARRACKS. I WAS IN A TENT BETWEEN BARRACKS 9 & 10.

THEY GAVE US STRAW TO PLACE ON THE GROUND AND ONE BLANKET. THANK GOD IT WAS SUMMER TIME!

DURING THIS TIME, A GERMAN MILITARY WORKER WAS ELECTROCUTED WHILE WORKING ON A POLE STRINGING POWER LINES CLOSE BY OUR TENT AREA.

SOMEONE IN OUR TENT AREA LET OUT A CHEER, JOINED BY OTHERS, WHICH GENERATED INSTANT WRATH ON THE GERMAN GUARDS PART, CAUSING THEM TO OPEN FIRE INTO THE TENTS.

I DON'T REMEMBER ANYONE BEING SHOT, BUT IMMEDIATE EVACUATION OF THE AREA BY THE POWS TOOK PLACE!

ONE EARLY EVENING A FLIGHT OF THREE GERMAN ME-109 FIGHTERS BUZZED OUR CAMP. ON THE LAST PASS ONE OF THE FIGHTERS FLYING UPSIDE DOWN NOSE DIVED INTO THE GROUND, CAUSING A TERRIFIC EXPLOSION. WE WERE LUCKY HE DID NOT CRASH INTO THE COMPOUND.

(2)

WAITING TIME UNTIL OUR LAGER WAS COMPLETED BECAME ONE LONG BORE TO ALL OF US.

WE WALKED THE PERIMETER FOR EXERCISE, PLAYED SOME TOUCH FOOTBALL AND SOFT BALL.

THOSE THAT BROUGHT CARDS FROM OUR OTHER CAMP, HAD GAMES ^{that} WENT ON DAILY. ALL OF THIS OF COURSE HELPED TO PASS THE TIME.

- ROLL CALL TOOK PLACE TWICE A DAY OR MORE OFTEN IF THE GERMANS FELT A NEED TO CHECK.

THE COUNT NEVER CAME OUT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME, BECAUSE SOME IN THE BACK ROW WOULD DUCK DOWN OR MOVE TO ANOTHER GROUP. ANYTHING TO KEEP THE GUARDS OFF BALANCE WAS DONE BY THE POW'S.

- FOOD SUPPLIES WERE CRITICAL FOR MOST OF OUR STAY AT LUFT IV AND MEDICAL ASSISTANCE WAS MINIMAL BECAUSE THE DOCTORS (TWO AT THIS TIME) HAD LITTLE OR NONE OF THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO SERVICE THOSE IN NEED.

- WE FINALLY MOVED INTO OUR ASSIGNED LAGER (C) END OF AUGUST '44.

I WAS ASSIGNED TO BARRACK #5 - ROOM 11 WITH 22 OTHERS AND LIVED HERE UNTIL OUR EVACUATION ON FEB. 6, 1945.

WE WERE ISSUED SACKS WHICH WE FILLED WITH WOOD CHIPS AND SLEPT ON THE FLOOR, UNTIL WOODEN 3 TIER BUNKS WERE INSTALLED IN NOV. '44.

(3)

ROOMS BECAME OVER CROWDED IN A SHORT TIME DUE TO ALL OUT EFFORT OF OUR ALLIED AIR FORCES TO KNOCK GERMANY OUT OF THE WAR.

- FOUR LAGERS - A - B - C & D WERE FINALLY CONSTRUCTED, BUT NEVER COMPLETED FULLY AND UP TO EVACUATION TIME 10,000 ALLIED AIRMEN CALLED LUFT IV HOME.

EACH LARGER ELECTED ONE OF THEIR OWN TO REPRESENT THEM WITH THE GERMAN CAMP COMMAND.

LAGER "C" REP. WAS FRANCIS TROY

" " INTERPRETER - JOHN KOHL

" " DOCTOR - CAP'T. LESLIE CAPLAN

- THE GERMANS WERE ALWAYS ENFORCING NEW RULES AND THESE HAD TO BE INTERPRETERED AND PASSED ON TO US THROUGH OUR "REPS."

- LUFT IV WAS ALWAYS IN A FLUID STATE. RATIONS BECAME MEAGER AS TIME WENT ON AND OUR POPULATION INCREASED DAILY.

WE FORMED A SMALL BAND USING INSTRUMENTS SENT BY THE YMCA, AND WITH SOME TALENT THAT ALWAYS SEEM AVAILABLE, WE PUT ON A SMALL MUSICAL REVIEW HELD IN OUR COMMUNITY ROOM.

CHAIRS WERE NOT AVAILABLE, SO ALL THOSE THAT CAME TO OUR SHOW HAD TO SIT ON THE FLOOR.

(4)

IN TIME, 3 CHAPLAINS, ALL CAPTURED ENGLISH ARMY PERSONNEL, WERE BROUGHT TO OUR CAMP & PERFORMED RELIGIOUS SERVICES IN EACH LABERS COMMUNITY ROOM.

THE REV. T.T. LYNCH, FROM SOUTHAMPTON, ENGLAND IS THE ONE I'M MOST FAMILIAR WITH.

XMAS TIME, 1944, THE GERMAN CAMP COMMAND ALLOWED US TO GO FROM BARRACK TO BARRACK ON XMAS EVE. A SMALL MUSICAL COMBO PLAYED & XMAS CAROLS WERE SUNG. 10 P.M. LOCK-UP TOOK PLACE, INSTEAD OF THE USUAL 9 P.M. WITH LIGHTS OUT AND ALL WINDOWS SHUTTERED. VENTILATION AT NIGHT WAS A PROBLEM WITH SO MANY POW'S JAMMED INTO EACH ROOM.

- LATE JAN. '45, RUMORS ABOUNDED ABOUT A POSSIBLE LIBERATION BY THE RUSSIAN ARMY WHICH WAS ON THE OFFENSIVE AND HEADED OUR WAY OR EVACUATION TO ANOTHER CAMP FURTHER WEST.

ACTIVITY BEGAN WITH TRANSFER OF PHYSICALLY HANDICAP POW PERSONNEL TO STALAG LUFT I AT BARTH, GERMANY, ON THE BALTIC COAST AND OTHER CAMPS FURTHER WEST.

MOST OF THESE POW'S MOVED BY TRAIN & A FEW MARCHED. MORE POW'S WERE MOVED INTO "C" LABER WHEREBY THEY INFORMED US WE WOULD BE MOVED AS A GROUP, WHICH WAS AROUND 3000 MEN, AND WE HAD TO MARCH TO OUR NEXT CAMP.

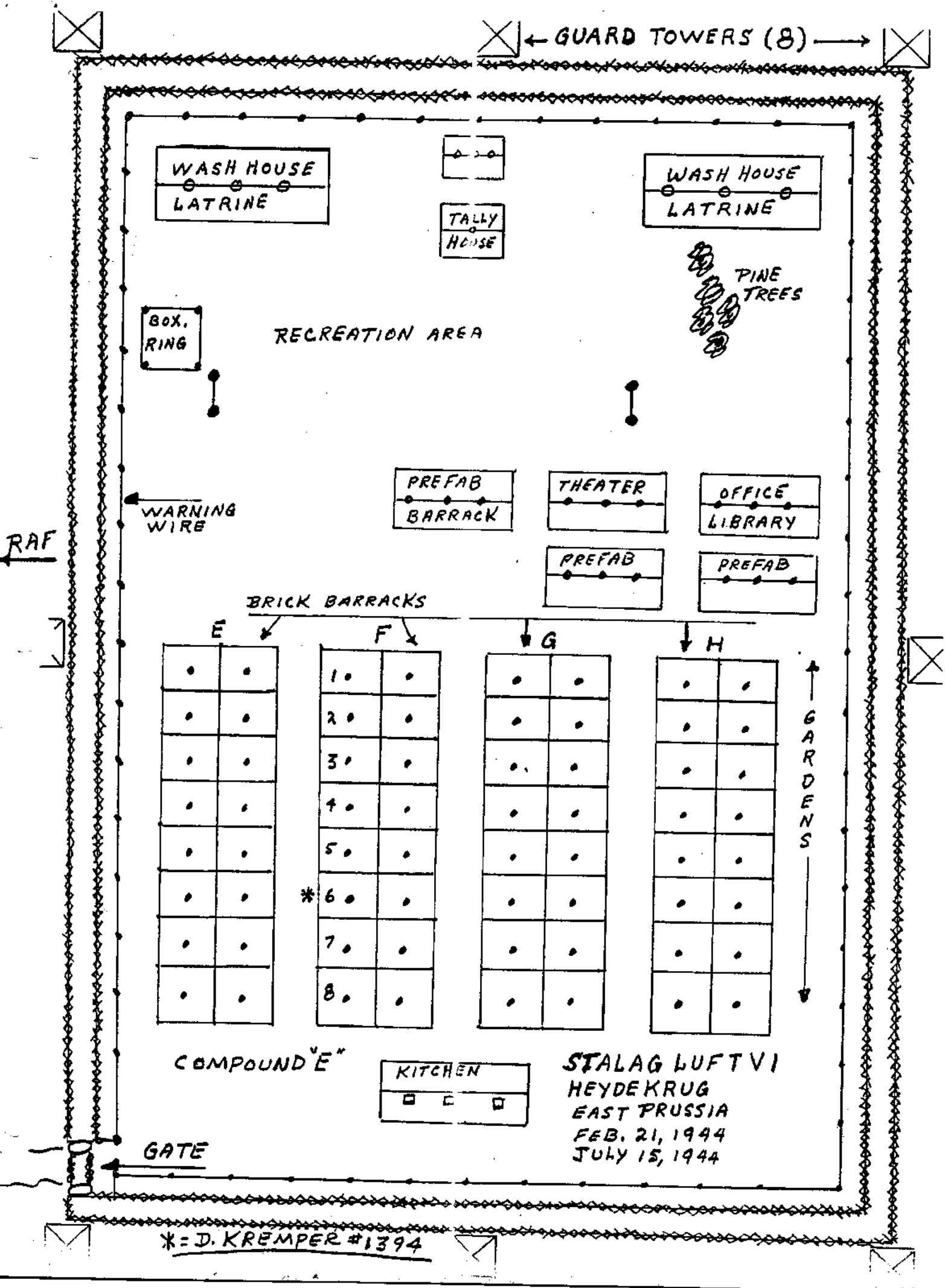
AMERICAN RED CROSS POW FOOD PACKAGE No. 10

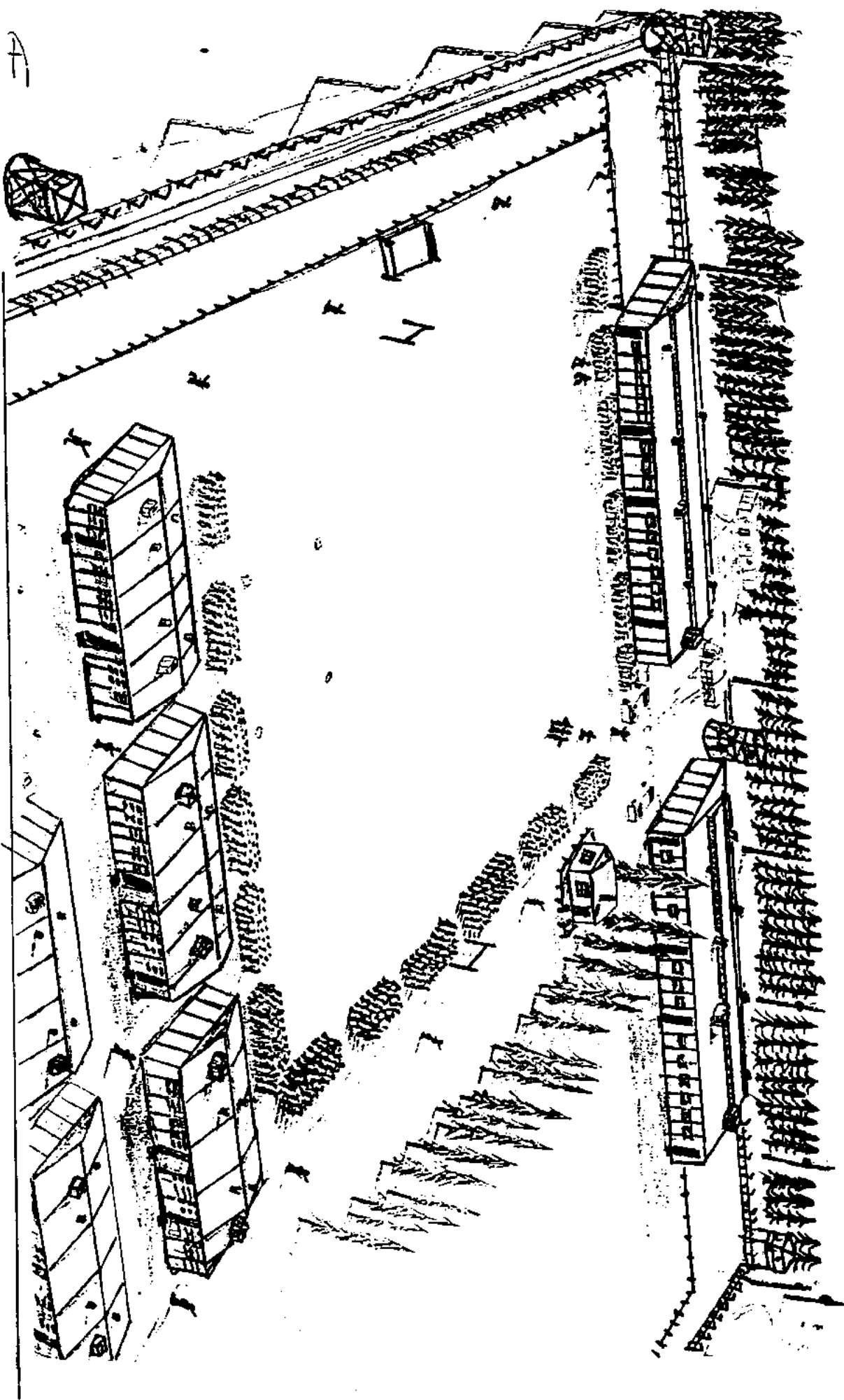
1 Lb. MARGARINE
6 oz. JAM
8 oz. CHEESE
7 oz. CRACKERS *
5 PKs. CIGARETTES
8 oz. CHOCOLATE
1 Lb. POWERED MILK
6 oz. PATE (LIVER OR CHICKEN)
12 oz. SPAM
12 oz. CORNED BEEF
2 BARS SOAP
2 OR 4 oz. COFFEE
8 oz. SUGAR (CUBES)
1 Lb. RAISINS OR PRUNES
7 ³/₄ oz. SALMON
7 VITAMIN TABLETS

NOTE: Most of the time, this package had to be
shared with two to four men.

* CRACKERS WAS A VERY HARD ITEM TO DIVIDE AMONG
YOUR PARTNERS. SOMETIMES WE GRATED THEM AND ADDED
SOME CHOCOLATE, POWERED MILK, RAISINS & WATER & BAKED,
THEN SHARED.

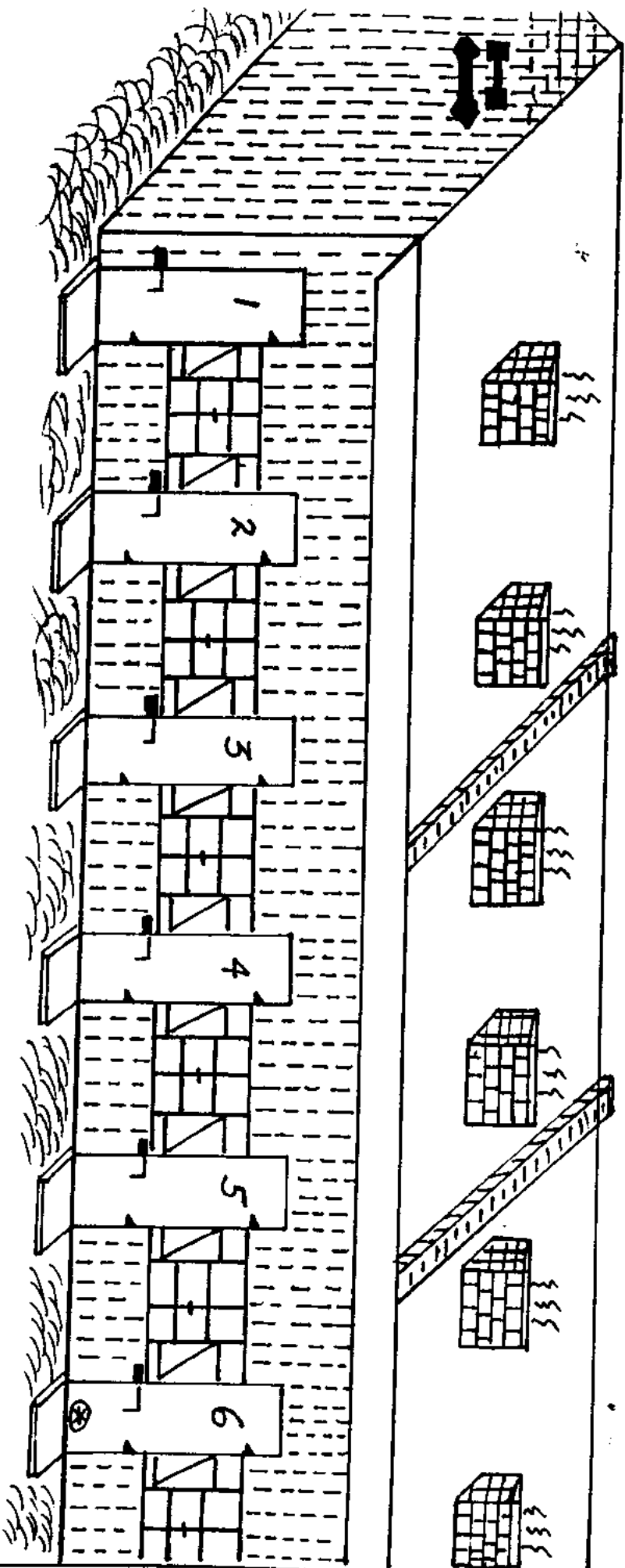
D.K.





Sketch of Stalag Luft VI, Heydekrug

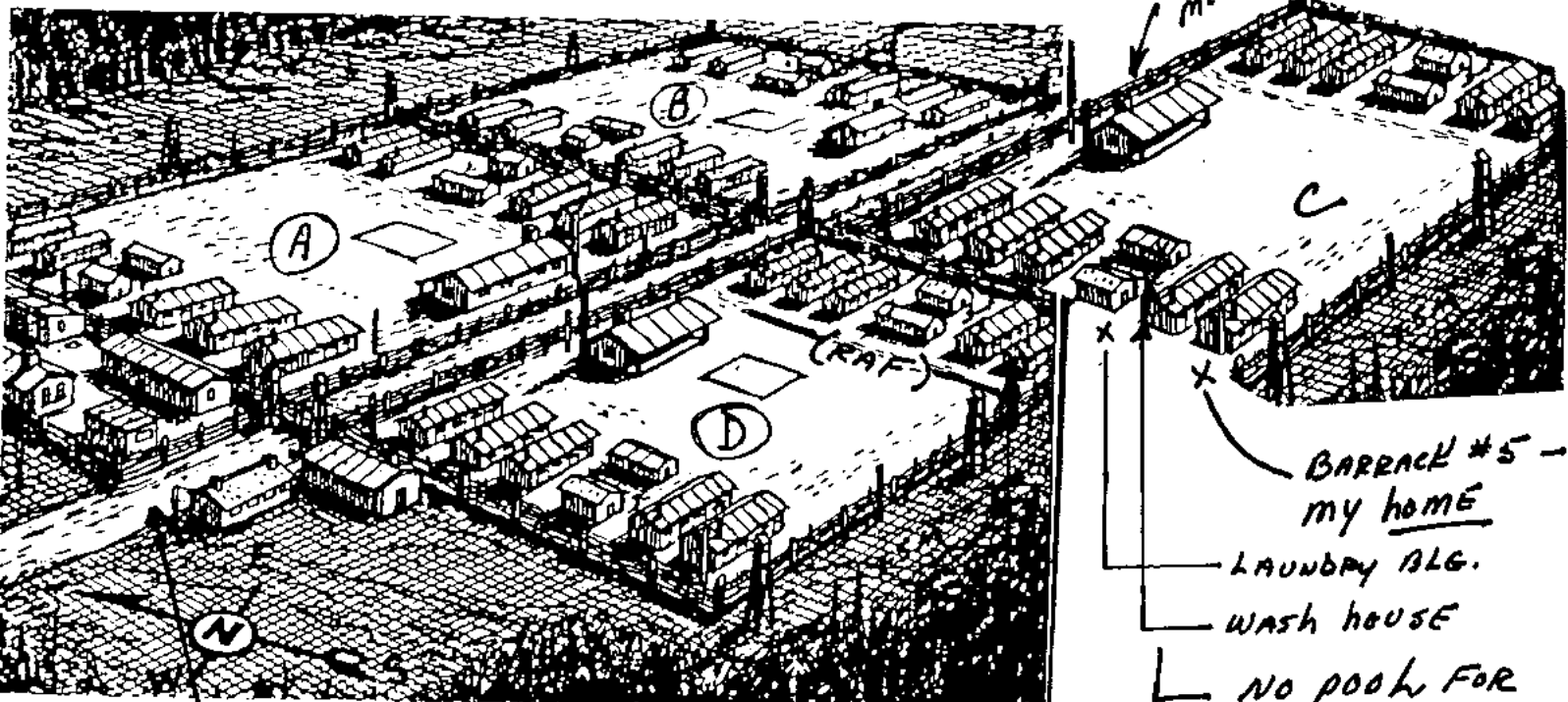
STALAG LUFT VI



BRICK CONSTRUCTION ON SLAB
9 UNITS PER BARRACK - 60 POWS / ROOM
LAGER "E" - ROOM F6 - FEB. 21, 1944

⊗ = Don KREMPER
POW #1394

STALAG LUFT IV



VORLAGER AREA:

GUARD BARRACKS

WAREHOUSE FOR SUPPLIES

"COOLER"

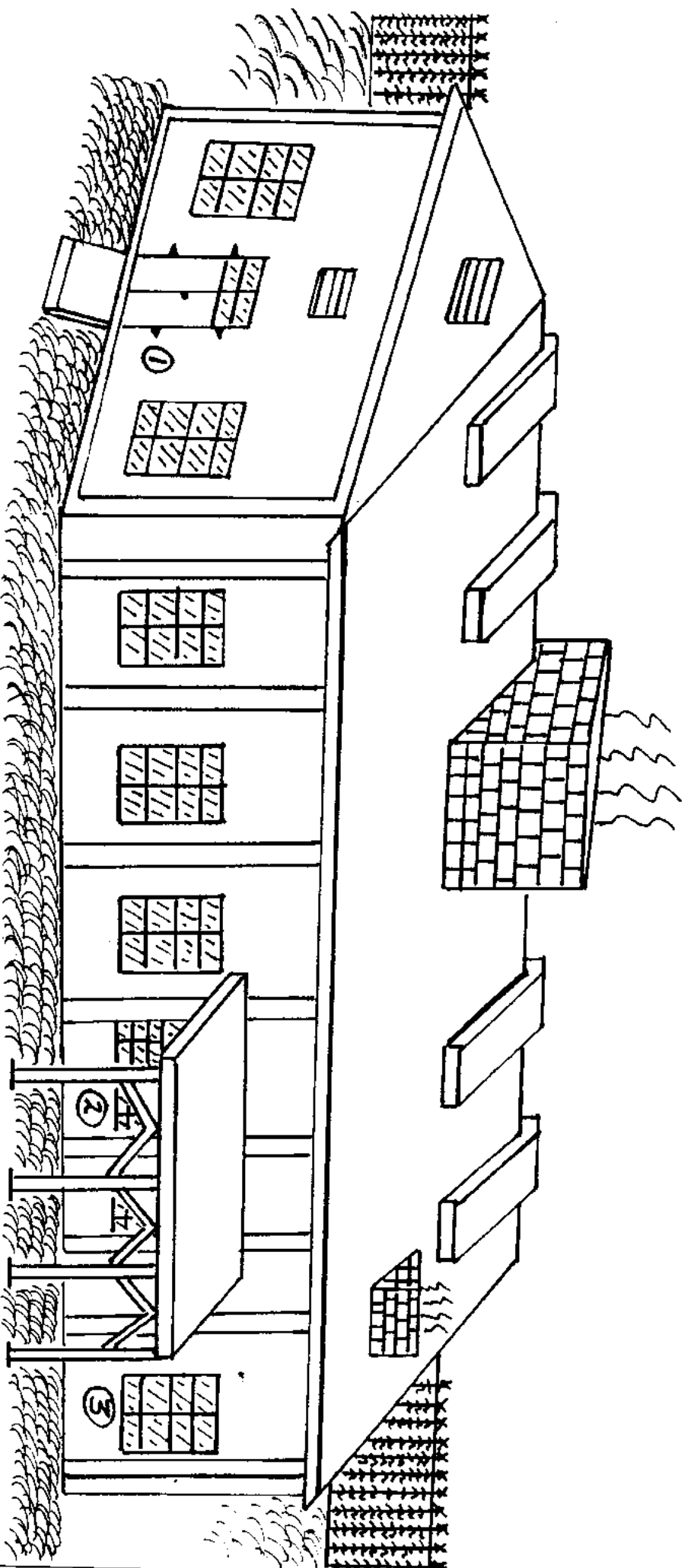
INFIRMARY

GERMAN CAMP ADMIN.

ALLIED - RAF
IN THIS ROW OF
LAGER D

Don Krempel
10/87

STALAG LUFT IV



① LARGE ROOM WITH SMALL STAGE.
USED FOR RELIGIOUS SERVICES &
ENTERTAINMENT. NO SEATS - HAD
TO SET ON FLOOR.

② ISSUE WINDOWS FOR
DAILY RATIONS FOR
EACH BARRACK (10)

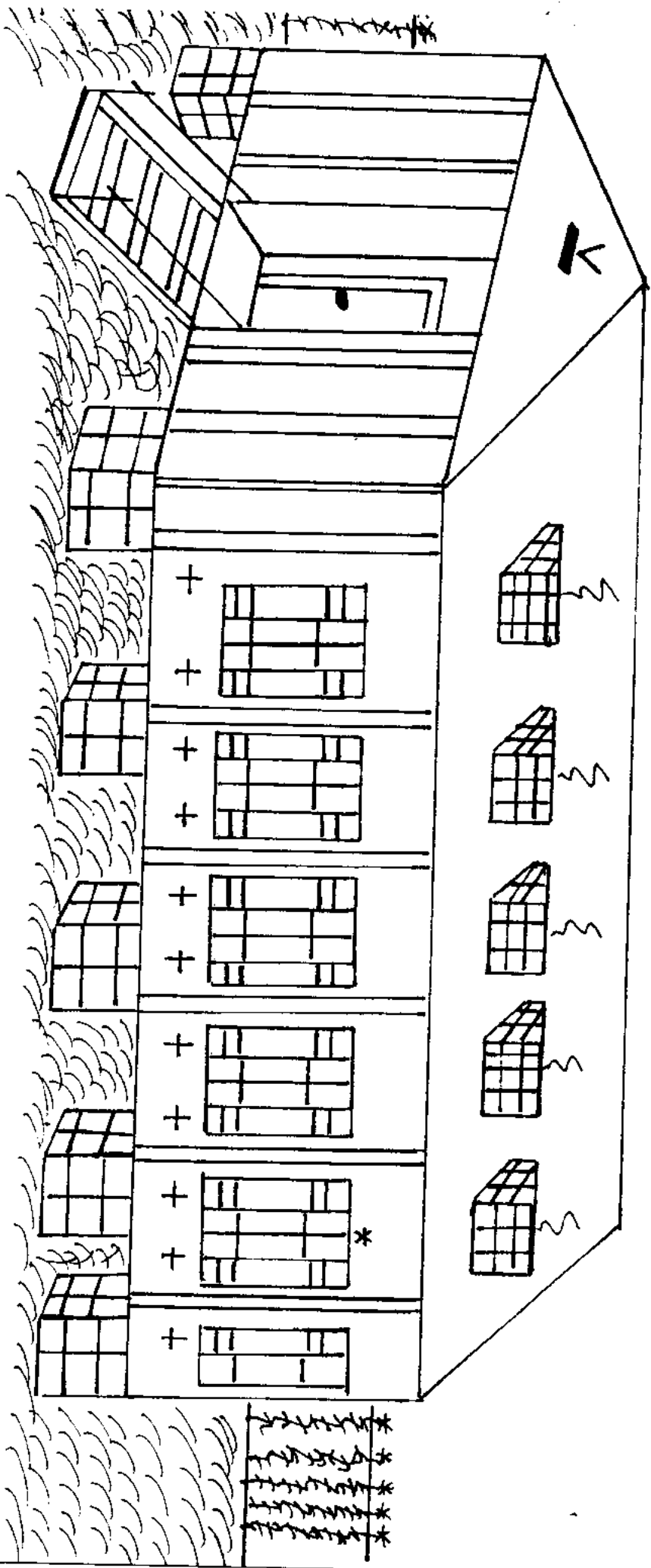
③ LIVING QTRS.
FOR LAGER REP.
& HIS STAFF.

LAGER "C" MESS HALL

AUG. 1944

DON KREMPER #1704

STALAG LUFT IV



10 WOOD PRE-FAB BARRACKS / LAGER

12 ROOMS / BARRACK

16 POW'S / ROOM

* = ROOM 11 - BARRACK #5

C LAGER AUG. 1944

DON KREMPER #1394

A few incidents I remember at Stalag Luft VI:

° Early one morning in March, 1944, our German camp Commandant had all Pows fall out for a special announcement. He informed us about a mass escape from Stalag Luft 111 at Sagan, Germany by RAF POWs.

76 men made it to temporary freedom. 50 had been caught and executed by the Gestapo. The rest captured and returned to Luft 111.

He read a Directive from Hitler that stated briefly-
"Any more POWs who tried to escape and were recaptured would not be returned to their camp, but turned over to the Gestapo for execution"

This was received in silence and increased internal hatred for the Nazi Regime.

(See summary of this mass escape in misc.section.)

° INVASION---June 6, 1944 was a big day for us. Morale hit an all time high. However, as time went by the daily broadcasts from the BBC, our ground forces were moving very slow against tough opposition. The German propaganda was rampant at this time. The newspapers they gave us showed maps distorted, a whole different picture than the BBC. I had visions of a long war with plenty of "Kriege" time to look forward to.

° A POW could become involved in various activities during this time, such as sports, library, theater, attending classes in subjects such as math, taught by those most knowledgeable. Working a garden patch with seeds supplied by the Red Cross, which we never saw the fruits of our labor, because we had to leave. However, with all the activity available, boredom still became the number one culprit for any POW, who always went to bed hungry.

° MAIL:

Letters from home were long in arriving and some POWs never received a letter.

All mail for POWs was routed to Stalag Luft 111 where it was opened, read and items objectionable to the Germans, were censored out, resealed and forwarded to the POWs camp.

Many of us shared our letters and packages with others less fortunate.

My first Post Card mailed to my folks took three months from Dulag Luft at Frankfurt. My first letter received from home took five months.

° EVACUTION:

Rumors persisted in early July '44, that we would be liberated by the Russian Army.

However, the Germans had other plans and on July 15, 1944 we were marched out to the train station and loaded into box cars for a short trip to the Port of Memel (now called Klaipeda) on the Baltic Coast.

We remembered those who had died in camp, especially Sgt. Walker, shot by a trigger happy guard and left to die inside our compound and buried with others in our camp cemetery. I thought about my friend Carl Glasmeier from my barrack, who was repatriated, due to severe wounds, not long before we were evacuated. Carl wrote down many names and addresses of our next of kin that he promised to write to when he arrived back in the States.

(After the war, I found out Carl was sent home on a POW exchange out of Sweden-3 Germans for 1 Allied prisoner. Carl traveled home on the liner Gripsholm to New York harbor and kept his promise by writing to all on his list. That letter he wrote sure improved the morale of our next of kin (After all these years I still have Carl's letter.)

Upon arrival at the Port we were marched on board an old

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coal freighter, "liberated" by the Germans from the Russians and ordered down a ladder into a dark coal dust covered hole. We had to set back to back for support on the steel hull. 1800 men were packed into that hole, for what many thought could be their coffin. (See Boat Ride)

BOAT TRIP FROM PORT OF MEMEL TO STETTIN, E. PRUSSIA.

- LEFT LUFT VI ON 7-15-44, LAGER E TO PORT OF MEMEL by TRAIN.

BOARDED A COAL COLLIER S.S. INSTERBURG & ORDERED DOWN A LONG LADDER INTO A PITCH BLACK HOLE.

THE CONDITIONS WERE SO CROWDED NO ONE COULD LAY DOWN. ALL HAD TO SET WITH KNEES PULLED UP WHICH ALLOWED YOUR FELLOW POW TO USE YOUR LEGS AS A BACK SUPPORT, POW TO POW.

- FIRST DAY OUT, THE GUARDS ALLOWED US UP ON DECK A FEW AT A TIME TO RELIEVE OURSELVES.

A WATER HOSE WAS USED TO WASH EVERYTHING OVERBOARD.

THAT DAY, A POW WHILE ON DECK, DECIDED TO JUMP OVERBOARD AND TAKE HIS CHANCES. HE NEVER MADE IT. THE GUARDS SHOT HIM IN THE WATER.

THE NEXT TWO DAYS NO ONE WAS ALLOWED ON DECK.

A BUCKET WAS PASSED DOWN & AROUND FOR ALL TO USE.

THE SAME SYSTEM WAS USED FOR DRINKING WATER AND WE HOPED NOT THE SAME BUCKET.

I HAD SAVED MY NESCAFE COFFEE CANS WHICH HAD A RUBBER BASKET IN THE LID FROM MY RED CROSS FOOD PARCELS AT LUFT VI. I HAD FILLED THESE CANS WITH WATER AND KEPT THEM INSIDE MY SHIRT. DRINKING WATER WAS NOT MY PROBLEM ON THIS TRIP.

Boat Trip & "Jaunt" —

A GREAT DEAL OF SILENT PRAYER TOOK PLACE DURING THAT TRIP, ESPECIALLY WHEN MINE CABLES SCRAPED THE HULL.

OUR PORT WAS STETTIN AND UPON LEAVING THE SHIP, YOUNG GERMAN MARINES WERE ASSIGNED AS OUR GUARDS FOR THE TRAIN TRIP BY BOX CAR.

I NOTICED OTHER SHIPS IN THE HARBOUR, SOME FLYING SWEDISH FLAGS AND THOUGHT ABOUT TRYING FOR ONE.

WHEN THE GUARDS LOADED US ON BOX CARS, THEY TOOK AWAY OUR BELTS AND SHOES AND HANDCUFFED EVERY TWO POW'S WITH A SHORT CHAIN WHICH DID NOT ALLOW A GREAT DEAL OF MOVEMENT, WITHOUT COOPERATION FROM BOTH PARTIES.

IN A MATTER OF HOURS WE ARRIVED AT A SMALL RAILROAD STATION CALLED KEIFHEIDE, E. PRUSSIA OR POLAND.

THE GUARDS GAVE US BACK OUR SHOES AND BELTS AS WE UNLOADED, BUT KEPT US CHAINED TOGETHER.

SOON AFTER UNLOADING, A TROOP TRAIN FLASHED BY AND THE SOLDIERS LOOKED LIKE TARTERS WITH THEIR SHAVED HEADS AND PIG-TAIL IN THE BACK, VERY MEAN LOOKING BUNCH. I HAD HEARD THE GERMANS WERE USING CAPTURED RUSSIAN SOLDIERS & USING THEM ON THEIR SIDE.

WE WERE LINED UP ON THE ROAD LEADING AWAY FROM THE STATION, FOUR ABREAST, CHAINED IN TWO'S WITH OUR "BAGGAGE" AND OUT OF NOWHERE APPEARED A RED-HEADED LUFTWAFFE CAPTAIN SCREAMING HIS HEAD OFF, INCITING OUR MARINE GUARDS TO MOVE US UP THE ROAD AT A RUN.

(3)

WE WERE PRODDED WITH BAYONETS, RIFLE BUTTS TO THE BACK AND A FEW SNARKING DOGS TO RUN UP THE ROAD.

I NOTICED GUARDS SPOTTED ALONG THE ROAD WITH MACHINE GUNS AND WONDERED IF THIS WAS TO BE MY LAST RUN.

ANYONE WHO FELL DOWN WAS BAYONETED, BEATEN WITH RIFLE BUTTS AND ALSO BITTEN BY GUARD DOGS.

WHEN SOMEONE FELL, HIS CHAINED PARTNER WHO COULDN'T MOVE, RECEIVED THE SAME TREATMENT.

I RECEIVED A FEW RIFLE BUTTS TO MY BACK WHICH I HAD INJURED WHEN WE HAD CRASHED LANDED SOME MONTHS AGO AND THIS DIDN'T HELP MY SITUATION.

HOWEVER, MY CHAINED PARTNER (LARRY MOSES) AND I MADE THE RUN, ABOUT TWO TO THREE MILES TO OUR NEW CAMP WITHOUT FALLING DOWN.

WE WERE HERDED BY OUR GUARDS INTO A BARBED WIRE ENCLOSURE LIKE CATTLE AND FELL DOWN EXHAUSTED.

THE DATE WAS JULY 18, 1944.

WE SPENT THE NIGHT AND A DAY HERE IN THE OPEN, NURSED OUR WOUNDS AND BRUISES AND CURSED THAT RED HEADED CAPTAIN.

LATER ON, I FOUND OUT HIS NAME WAS CAP'T. PICKHARDT AND THEY SAY HE LOST HIS FAMILY IN AN ALLIED BOMBING RAID. THIS WAS HIS WAY TO EXTRACT VENGEANCE ON ALLIED AIRMAN POWS?

Welcome to STALAG LUFT IV, GROSSTYCHOW - POLAND.
D.K.

U.S. Indicts Nazi Neglect, Cruelty To War Captives

Stimson and Stettinius
Issue Joint Statement
on Reich Prison
Atrocities

Washington, April 12 (AP)—The U. S. government today charged Germany with "deliberate neglect, indifference and cruelty" in the treatment of American prisoners.

The War and State Departments declared in a joint statement that actions are being uncovered daily which "have shocked the entire civilized world."

The statement was issued by Secretary of War Stimson and Secretary of State Stettinius and read by Stimson at his weekly news conference. Stimson called it a "balanced statement" on the condition of American prisoners in the Reich.

The statement declared that atrocities against American prisoners "are documented by the pitiable condition of liberated American soldiers."

In general, the statement said, conditions under which American prisoners are held in Germany are "deplorable." Some 70,000 American men are captives in the interior of Germany, it added, and the conditions under which many are living "are due to a large extent to Germany's fanatical determination to continue a hopeless war, with a resultant disintegration under disastrous military defeat."

"Since the beginning of this year," the statement said, "there has been a steadily increasing failure on the part of the German government to provide, according to the standards established by the Geneva convention, for American prisoners of war in German custody."

1945

Nazis Herd U. S. Captives Out of Russians' Path

Red Cross Reports Most Transfers Being Made on Foot

WASHINGTON, Feb. 15 (AP).—Great numbers of American and Allied prisoners of war, whom the Germans are transferring out of the path of Russian armies, are making the trip on foot. Reporting this tonight, the American Red Cross said the Geneva Convention permits prisoners to make maximum daily marches of up to twelve and a half miles unless longer ones are necessary to reach food and shelter.

Basil O'Connor, chairman of the Red Cross, said he had received a cable from Geneva, designating five military districts from which prisoners are being transferred.

As of Jan. 1, Red Cross maps show that approximately 29,000 Americans were held in camps in those districts. Six major American camps—Stalags H. B. III B, IV C, Stalag Luft III and IV A, Oflag 64—were known to be in those areas, along with many other prisoner-of-war camps containing few Americans, and hospitals for prisoners.

Mr. O'Connor said that Stalags VIII B and 344, farther east, were previously reported moved. Those camps had contained fifty-eight Americans as of last November.

Until new addresses are received families are advised by the War Department to address mail to previously reported addresses.

"These movements of prisoners of war away from active military zones, in accordance with the Geneva Convention, are estimated to affect about 75 per cent of the American prisoners of war officially listed as held by Germany at the beginning of the year," O'Connor said in a statement.

1945

Captive Airmen Ran Gantlet of Nazi Bayonets

1,000 Americans and 800
Canadians Slashed and
Clubbed in 2-Mile Run

A ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE FIGHTER FIELD IN GERMANY, April 20 (AP).—Grim details of how American, British and Canadian war prisoners were made to run a gantlet of slashing German bayonets were told today by liberated Canadian airmen who survived the torture.

What the prisoners referred to as the "Stettin jaunt" occurred last July, said Warrant Officer Joseph Pamburn, Canadian navigator from St. Boniface, Manitoba, when 800 Canadian and British and 1,000 American prisoners were made to run two miles from a train to a new camp.

Their route was lined with German marines who cut and jabbed at them with bayonets and pounded them with rifle butts, all the while yelling to them to escape—while other Germans waited to shoot them down with tommyguns if they tried.

"As we started running, or stumbling because of our packs, the marines closed in on us," Pamburn said. "They slashed at our backs, shoulders and groins. If a man stumbled or fell, he would get bayoneted or be clubbed by rifles. The marines had German police dogs with them and the dogs would rush in at a fallen man, biting his arms and legs."

"Everything began to swim before my eyes. I stumbled, and a marine clubbed me with his rifle butt. I passed out. When I came to, a marine was standing over me with a bayonet. I asked him why they were doing this. He said, 'Your flyers bombed our wives and children.'"

1945

Nazis Forced U.S. Flyers to Run A Gantlet of Bayonets and Dogs

Freed Prisoners at Kilmer Say German Civilians Laughed as Guards Slashed at Captives to Make Them Drop Their Red Cross Packages

Special to The Herald-Examiner

CAMP KILMER, N. J., May 16.—An aerial gunner from Wichita Falls, Tex., his face grim and eyes burning, held up a U. S. undershirt with sixty-four bayonet holes in it today and told how Nazi prison guards with dogs had hounded

captives American and British airmen over a three-mile run, clubbing and jabbing the weak while watching German civilians laughed.

The narrator was Technical Sergeant John M. Turner, of Route 1, Box 250, Wichita Falls. He had it documented. It was all set down in a worn notebook he carried in his trousers pocket. The names, the dates, the circumstances. While he talked he fingered the rents in the undershirt. "You can count them," he said. "There are sixty-four, and I know just how they were made. This undershirt was worn by Staff Sergeant Alex S. Blondex, Army serial number 42011095, a New Jersey boy."

His story was corroborated by Technical Sergeant Oscar S. Cox, 3121 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Tex., and Staff Sergeant Frank Bongiorno, of 546 Fifteenth Avenue, Newark, N. J. Shot down in air combat, the three were among 98 American soldiers just returned, the largest batch of liberated captives brought back so

"I don't know," said Turner, "if anybody died as a result of this. The Army won't allow us to express opinions. We can only tell what we saw. But you should have seen that boy's head and back—the others. They had clubbed in the head also. He went to

continued on page 6, column 4

Nazis Forced

(Continued from page one)

the hospital later. That's how I got the undershirt. He was a buddy of mine, and he said I would need it to keep warm."

What had happened to Blondex he did not know. He also did not know where Blondex lived in New Jersey. But he had the rest of his story in vivid detail. Sergeant Cox sat on a bunk across from him and nodded from time to time.

They agreed that the Nazis began treating them roughly after the prisoners were moved on Feb. 6 from a camp near Memel at a time when the Russians were starting a drive in that sector.

"We were loaded in a coal barge," Turner said. "They moved along the coast, and we unloaded at Swinemunde, a Baltic port, north of Stettin."

Cox broke in, "What a trip that was. There were 2,500 of us packed in one barge. We were practically stacked on top of each other."

Turner picked up the thread of the story again, telling how the prisoners were loaded into filthy box cars and transported to Kleschleda, a town in eastern Pomerania.

"We were met at the station by

these young Nazi naval guards," he said. "We were told to hit the road running. We carried everything we had with us, on our backs or in our hands. They started cutting this stuff off us with bayonets."

Dogs Also Used

"It was our Red Cross stuff. Without it I don't think we could have lived. It seemed they wanted to make us drop it. If a man held on they kept after him, prodding him with a bayonet every chance they had. They also set the dogs on us. If you fell behind a big dog lit into you."

He said that the civilians and the guards both grabbed whatever Red Cross packages were dropped by weakened men. When the prisoners finally reached their camp, Stalag Luft IV, a special one for airmen, the camp officers issued an official statement attributing the brutality of the guards to a captain's desire for revenge on the British and Americans.

"This captain was a red-headed guy by the name of Pickard," Turner said. "The explanation said that his family had been destroyed in an air raid, and he was

out to get revenge on all Allied Air Corps personnel."

Cox said that Turner's story was absolutely right.

"They kept us separate," he said, "and always told the people we were air corps when we marched through a town. The people would jeer. Sometimes they would spit on us."

Sergeant Turner, waist runner in a Flying Fortress, was shot down last Aug. 12 over the Ruhr. Sergeant Cox went down over Italy after an 8th Air Force attack on Munich last July 12. With the other repatriated prisoners they will go home after being processed at Kilmer and will receive a furlough of sixty days instead of the usual twenty-one.

Other soldiers wounded in action in the European theater were taken yesterday from the New York Port of Embarkation to Camp Shanks, N. Y., in ambulances. Among them were 806 stretcher cases. One of their biggest thrills was being able to make free telephone calls to their homes. Telephones were brought to the beds of those too badly wounded to walk.

WA 2

WASHINGTON, FEB. 23.--(UP)--MORE THAN 1,000 AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR HAVE BEEN MOVED FROM TWO GERMAN CAMPS IN EASTERN GERMANY TO STALAG 3-A AT LUCKENWALDE, THE STATE AND WAR DEPARTMENT DISCLOSED TODAY.

THE DISCLOSURE SUPPLEMENTED AN EARLIER ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE HAD FORCED THE NAZIS TO EVACUATE AMERICAN PRISONERS FROM EASTERN GERMANY. THE 1,000 PRISONERS WERE MOVED FROM OFLAG 64 AND STALAG 3-B, THE DEPARTMENTS SAID.

OTHER AMERICANS FROM OFLAG 64 AND 'A LARGE NUMBER' OF AMERICAN POW'S FROM STALAG LUFT 4 HAVE BEEN MOVED TO THE VICINITY OF SWINEMUNDE. APPROXIMATELY HALF THE AMERICANS FORMERLY HELD AT STALAG LUFT 3 ARE IN ROUTE TO MOOSBURG AND THE DESTINATION OF THE OTHER HALF REPORTEDLY IS NUREMBERG, THE ANNOUNCEMENT SAID.

IT ADDED THAT A SMALL NUMBER OF AMERICAN OFFICERS FROM STALAG LUFT 3 WERE TRANSFERRED TO STALAG 3-A AT LUCKENWALDE.

THE GOVERNMENT ADVISED RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF PRISONERS KNOWN TO BE IN EASTERN GERMANY TO ADDRESS MAIL TO THE MEN'S LAST KNOWN ADDRESS PENDING NOTIFICATION TO THE CONTRARY.

TP 109P

D. Krempfer

military communication
Feb. 1945

STALAG LUFT IV--LAGER C BARRACK #5 ROOM 11--

Known status as of June 3, 1992:

Barnett, H.H.--
Bentley, R.H.--5601 S.Kings Highway, Texarkana, Tx. 75501
Chirico, P. --36812 Hibiscus Ct., Zephyrhills, Fl. 33541
Fineman, D. --PO Box 360106, Melbourne, Fl. 32936-0106
Forrester, C.A.-
Guenther, L.C.--
Hansen, R.O.--1904 Wisconsin Ave., New Holstein, Wi. 53061
Kremper, D.F.-- *9020 E S.W. 93 LANE, OCALA, FL. 34481*
Michman, H.--
Miller, J.F.--27 Zeeland Dr., Toms River, N.J. 08757
Moeller, W.G.--RR 2 Box 85, Garretson, S.D. 57030
Moses, L.S.--36 Linden Dr., Newburgh, N.Y. 12550
Pifer, L.I.--RD 1 Box 349G, Interlachen, FL. 32148
Porter, G.G.--
Rabinowitz, L.--Deceased
Romano, V.P.--Box 373 Beach Rd., Poughquag, N.Y. 12570
Ross, A.J.---33 E Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, Ky. 41076
Shaw, J.H.---Deceased
Shewey, R.--
Smith, J.H.--
Jones, W.H.--Box 2322 Cheyenne, Wy., 82003
Blum, A.----3122 S George Dr., Tempe, Az. 85282
Martin, W.E.---

STALAG LUFT 1V JULY 18,1944 TO FEB.6,1945

July 19,1944, the Germans moved all of us from Stalag Luft VI out of the open field and into Compound "A", which was the only compound completed at this time.

German construction crews were busy working on three other compounds, which in time would accomodate 10,000 Allied P O Ws, all NCOs.

Inside the new camp conditions were overcrowded and morale was very bad.

Most of the prisoners had been down only a few months and knew nothing of the Geneva Convention.

They were underfed and bewildered except a few fat, sleek men in the cookhouse who seemed to be doing ok.

Because the "Goons" had singled out our camp leader, Frank Paules and our interpreter, Bill Krebs for special slugging and terror treatment and threatened to turn them over to the Gestapo if they tried to change conditions, we were temporarily deprived of their services. Thus we started at Grosstychow way below scratch and had to work our way out.

Some of our group were assigned to crowded barracks and had to sleep in hallways and on tables.

The majority of us were assigned to tents located between barracks and leaked when it rained.

I was in a tent between barracks 9 and 10.

They gave straw to place on the ground and one blanket. Thank God it was summer time!

During this time, a German military worker was electrocuted while working on a pole stringing power lines close by our tent area. Someone in our tent area let out a cheer, joined by others, which generated instant wrath on the German guards part, causing them to open fire into the tents.

I don't remember anyone being shot, but immediate evacuation of the area by the POWs took place!

One early evening, a flight of three German ME 109 fighters buzzed our camp. On the last pass one of the fighters flying upside down with the other two flying along side, nose-dived into the ground causing a terrific explosion. We were lucky he did not crash into the compound.

Waiting time until our compound was completed became one long boredom to all of us.

We walked the perimeter for exercise, played some touch football and softball.

Those that brought cards from our other camp played different games on a daily all day basis. All of this of course helped to pass the time and maintain one's sanity.

2.

Roll call (Appel) took place twice a day or more if the Germans felt a need to check.

The count never came out right the first time, because someone in the back row would squat down or move to another group. Anything to keep the guards off balance was done by the POWs.

Food supplies were critical for most of our stay at Luft 1V and medical assistance was minimal because the Doctors (two at the beginning) had little or none of the medical supplies to service those in need.

Later on a small shipment of typhus vaccine was received from the Red Cross. The vaccine was given on a first come, first served because we received only enough for 300 shots. I made sure I received mine.

We finally moved into our assigned compound (lager) (C) end of Aug. 44. I was assigned to barrack # 5--room 11 with 22 others. All buildings were pre-fab wood with rooms off a hall way that ran the full length of the building. The issued sacks which we filled with wood chips and slept on the floor. Wood three tier bunks were installed in Nov. '44.

Rooms became over crowded as time went on due to a steady influx of Allied bomber crews being shot down.

The Air Offensive against Germany was increased to 1000--1200 plane bombing formations. This effort was necessary to defeat Germany's manufacturing base, but costly to Allied Air Forces. However, no bomber formation ever turned back because of enemy action.

Four compounds A-B-C and D were finally constructed, but never fully completed like Stalag Luft VI.

These compounds would hold 10,000 Allied airman by Feb. 1945.

Each compound elected one of their own to represent them with the German camp command.

The German camp command of Luft 1V:

Col. Bombeck Commandant

Hauptman Richard Pickhardt Abwehr Officer

Compound "C" Rep.-- Francis Troy

Interpreter--John Kohl

Doctor -- Cap't. Leslie Caplan

3.

Stalag Luft 1V was always in a fluid state. Food allotments became less and less as time went on. Weight loss was very noticeable in all POWs and morale was on a down turn.

Each compound had one hand pump that supplied our water for washing clothes and our person. Hot water was never available for washing. A wash room was constructed but never completed with plumbing. Living conditions in Luft 1V were poor to say the least and continued to deteriorate up to evacuation time.

We formed a small musical group in our compound using instruments sent by the YMCA and with some talent that always seemed available, we put on a small musical review held in our community room. Chairs were not available, so all who came to see our show had to set on the floor. The show was a great boost for morale.

In time, three Chaplains, all POW English Army personnel, were brought to our camp and performed religious services in each compounds community room. The Chaplains were not allowed to preach a sermon. A German guard who spoke English, attended services to make sure rules were followed. The Rev. T. T. Lynch from Southampton, England is the one I'm most familiar with.

Xmas eve 1944, the German camp command (at our request) allowed us to visit each barrack in our compound with our small musical combo where we played Xmas music for all to enjoy. We prayed that next Xmas we would all be home. Lock-up that night was at 10PM instead of the usual 9PM with lights out and windows shuttered. Ventilation at night was a problem with so many POWs jammed into each room.

4.

Late Jan. 1945, rumors abounded about a possible liberation by the Russian Army which was on the offensive and headed our way. Mass evacuation to another camp further west was another possibility. This time we hoped the Russians would arrive in time to prevent the Germans from moving us.

Activity began with evacuation of physically impaired POWs to Stalag Luft 1 at Barth, Germany on the Baltic coast and a few other camps further west.

The worst cases were moved by train and the others marched.

More POWs from other compounds were moved into "C" compound where they informed us we would be moved as a group, which was around 3000 men, and we had to march to our next camp.

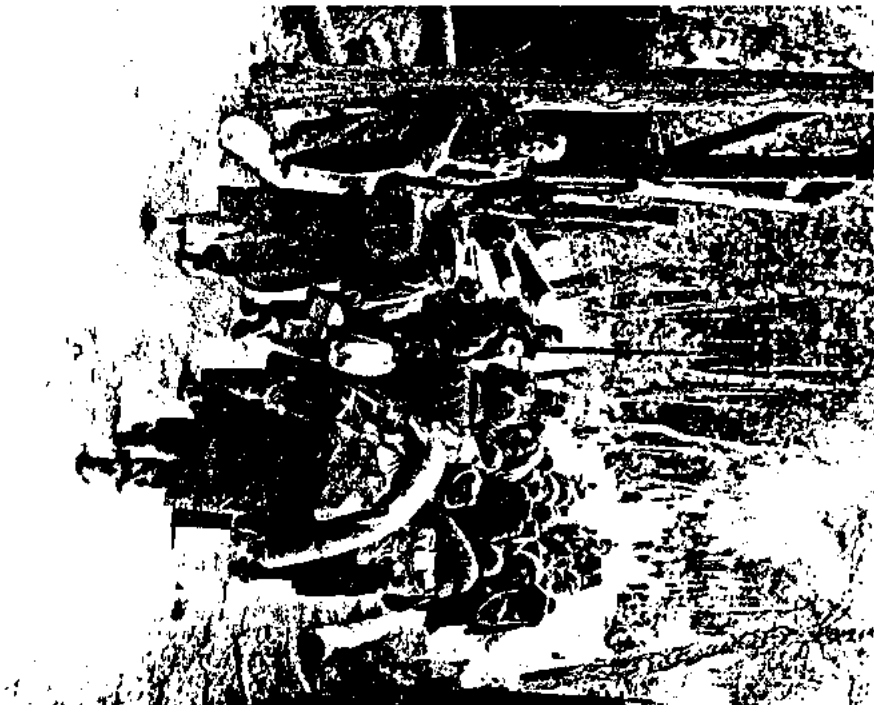
I bartered for a few heavy towels which I sewed into a back pack.

The pack would be used to carry my few belongings and some Red Cross food items which would be issued to us when we marched out.

Very soon I found out how wise my plan had been. We were issued new shoes and some clothing from our Red Cross supplies in the camp warehouse.

Many of us walked the perimeter of our compound every day to break our shoes in.

This activity saved a great deal of anguish in the weeks ahead.



THE BLACK MARCH

EVACUATION OF STALAG LUFT IV, FEB. 6, 1945.
TEMPERATURE BELOW FREEZING AND LIGHT SNOW
FALLING.

EACH POW TEAMED UP WITH A PARTNER IN ORDER
TO LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER.

ALL POWS ISSUED ONE BLANKET AND TWO RED
CROSS FOOD PARCELS. THE MOST FOOD WE HAD
SEEN AT ONE TIME IN A YEAR. ALL ITEMS ISSUED
FROM THE VORLAGER WAREHOUSE.

THE ITEMS WERE PLACED INSIDE OUR HOME MADE
BACK PACKS AND BLANKET ROLLS.

MY GROUP-"C" LAGER- MARCHED FOR 87 DAYS AND
OVER 600 MILES ACROSS NORTHERN GERMANY,
SLEEPING IN FIELDS AND BARNS, NEVER ABLE TO
KEEP WARM OR DRY. LIBERATED MAY 2, 1945 BY
THE BRITISH 2nd ARMY.

D.K.

1. THE BLACK MARCH FROM STALAG LUFT 1V FEB.6,1945---May 7,1945

The following account is a day by day record, as I remember, of our "Black March" across northern Germany, under very harsh winter conditions, surviving on 700 calories or less per day.

Liberation---trip back home and a few reflections of our ordeal of 130 days.

Day 1 Feb.6,1945. The Germans called us out extra early, completed a head count and told us to be prepared to march out in one hour. My partner, Marshal Shaw, and I were ready in half the time. We each had one thin blanket, German issue, which we rolled, tied and carried with our packs.

The guards marched us out of our compound to a warehouse in the Vorlager, where each POW was given two #10 Red Cross food parcels. We opened the parcels and placed the food items in our packs and blanket rolls.

This food issue was the most food I had seen in my year as a POW, and prayed it wasn't the last.

The guards formed us up and we started down the road in a snow storm with the temperature below freezing.

(Distance in Europe is measured in KM's. changed to miles for this account).

On this, our first day, we marched 8.6 miles to Zarne Franz to a farm and slept in barn.

Day 2 Feb.7--Marched 16 miles to Stolzenberg--very cold--stayed in barn.

Day 3 Feb.8--Marched 12.4 miles to Kolberg on the Baltic coast.

Day 4 Feb.9--Rest--confined to barn and barn area. Snowed most of the day.

Day 5 Feb.10--Marched 20 miles to Greifenberg. Another barn. (POW one year today)

Day 6 Feb.11--Marched 13 miles to Cammin. Warm food would be most welcome at this point.

Day 7 Feb.12--Rest--Group is split up and placed on farms in area.

Day 8 Feb.13--Marched 15 miles to Dobberphul.

Day 9 Feb.14--Marched 24 miles to Pritter in sleet storm, near Wollen. Slept outside in snow. No fires allowed. It has become a great effort to keep dry and warm. Changed socks every day (owned two pair)

Day 10 Feb.- Marched 14 miles to Wollen on Stettin Bay. Boarded a ferryboat and crossed bay to Zirchow.

Day 11 Feb.16- Marched 13 miles to farm near Usedom.

2.

Day 12 Feb.17- Marched 13 miles to farm at Murchin.

Day 13 Feb.18- Marched 18 miles to farm at Gutskow.

Day 14 Feb.19- Marched 3 miles to farm outside of Gutzkow.

Day 15 Feb.20- Rest on farm. Allowed to build a fire for cooking of rations. Sometimes the farms issued one or two potatoes per POW. We used empty one lb.cans that had contained powdered milk from our Red Cross food parcels. The product was called Klim. The only eating utensils the Germans gave us was a spoon and knife.

Day 16 Feb.21- Marched 11 miles to Gultz. Another farm, another barn.

Day 17 Feb.22- Rest--Issued 1/3rd #10 Red Cross food parcel.

Day 18 Feb.23- Marched 13 miles out and back to same farm. Many of the men suffering from the cold, blisters on their feet, colds and dysentery. Farm wagon obtained to transport those unable to march on their own. We took turns pulling the wagon. Those too sick to go any further, were left in the towns we passed through. Always wondered about their fate.

Day 19 Feb.24 Rest

Day 20 Feb.25 Rest

Day 21 Feb.26 Rest

Day 22 Feb.27 Rest

Day 23 Feb.28 Rest

Day 24 Mar.1 Rest--During this long rest period I washed clothes and "bathed" in a small stream running through farm. Tried to catch trout bare handed without success. "Found" a potato cellar, and shared the bounty--with my friends. Food supplies were critical, rest was a Godsend.

Day 25 Mar.2--Marched 16 miles to Alten-Treptow.

Day 26 Mar.3--Marched 20 miles to Luplow, Gr.Gievitz and Waren.

Day 27 Mar.4--Marched 19 miles to Karow.

Day 28 Mar.5--Marched 8 miles to Plau area.

Day 29 Mar.6--Marched 9 miles to Lubz.

Day 30 Mar.7--Rest--Issued one # 10 Red Cross food parcel--one/two men. My partner H. Shaw and I prepared a long awaited meal. Morale improved somewhat. Thank God, the Red Cross was able to reach our moving columns.

Day 31 Mar.8--Marched 7.5 miles to Parchim.

3.

Day 32 March 9-Marched 12.5 miles to Neustadt Clewe.

Day 33 March 10-Marched 9.3 miles to Grabow.

Day 34 March 11-Marched 1.2 miles to Eldena area. Hardly worth the effort.

Day 35 March 12-Marched 5 miles to Domitz and crossed the Elbe River and continued to a farm in the Metzlingen area.

Day 36 March 13-Rest

Day 37 March 14-Rest

Day 38 March 15-Rest

Day 39 March 16-Rest

Day 40 March 17-Rest

Day 41 March 18-Rest. During this rest time the Germans issued cooked rice, two boiled potatoes per person and one loaf of black bread (with sawdust filler) per day. The bread was to be shared with 10 men. Just before we left they issued one-half of a #10 food parcel per two men.

Day 42 March 19-Marched 9 miles to Himbergen.

Day 43 March 20-Marched 11 miles to Bad Bevensen.

Day 44 March 21 16 miles

Day 45 March 22-14 miles

Day 46 March 23-Rest.

Day 47 March 24-11 miles

Day 48 March 25-10 miles

Day 49 March 26-Rest

Day 50 March 27-Rest. Days 44 through 50 were spent on various farms in the Uelzen area. No two barns alike. Many Polish displaced people were forced to work on these farms. Some tried to get food to us but the guards chased them away.

Day 51 March 28-Marched 8 miles to Ebstorf and a railroad siding. They put 60 men into the 40/8 box cars and locked the doors. No room to sit down. Had to stand the whole time. No food or water issued to us at any time.

Day 52 March 29-Train. Stop and go all day and all night.

Day 53 March 30-Train. Stop and go. Many ill. Relieving oneself was a problem shared by all.

Day 54 March 31-Soltau. Got off train and marched to a large Allied POW camp, Stalag XIB at Fallingb. The guards divided our group, some placed in Stalag XIB (my group) and the others to Stalag 357, about one mile away.

My group of about 200 men were assigned to the camp theatre building. We slept on the floor.

(6)

STOCK MARKET-- CIGARETTE EXCHANGE--(LUFT V1 & LATER IN LUFT 1V)

<u>ITEMS</u>	<u>NORMAL PRICE</u>	<u>CEILING PRICE</u>
CANADIAN Chocolate	80	150
" Cheese	50	60
" Crackers	150	200
" Butter	150	200
" Jam	150	250
" Marmalade	150	200
" Sugar	50	80
AMERICAN Chocolate	100	100
" Cheese	100	120
" Crackers	100	125
" Margarine	0	5
" Jam	60	80
" Sugar	50	80
" Liver Pate	30	50
" Chicken Pate	30	50
" Coffee 4 oz.	100	150
" Coffee 2 oz.	80	125
" /Canada Orange Juice	20	50
ARGENTINA Honey	200	250
" Marmalade	80	100
" Drippings	10	20
" Crackers	175	250
GERMAN Jam	20	20

CIGARETTE EXCHANGE:

English--2 for 1 American

Canadian-3 for 2 American

English--3 for 2 Canadian

This system was started in Stalag Luft V1, early 1944 and continued with us when they moved us to Stalag Luft 1V.

DEAR GREG;

8/10/09

SENDING COPY OF ATTACHED FOR YOUR INFO AND TO MAKE CLEAR HOW IMPORTANT IT IS FOR THE PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN GOVT. TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WHAT WE POW'S WENT THROUGH IN EUROPE DURING WWII.

I ALONG WITH A FEW EX-POWS FILED A CLAIM AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF GERMANY FOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RETRIBUTION FOR INHUMANE TREATMENT.

BECAUSE, OUR POW CAMPS ARE NOT LISTED AS SUB-CAMPS OR CONCENTRATION CAMPS, WE ARE NOT ENTITLED TO MAKE A CLAIM. SEE DECISION MADE BY THE COMMISSION.

THE KEY MEMBERS ON THE COMMISSION EVEN CALLED ME TO SAY THEY WERE SORRY AND DID NOT KNOW WHAT WE WENT THROUGH AS POW'S, AS STATED IN THE MATERIAL I & OTHERS HAD SENT.

I WROTE TO MY GOVT REP. (SEE COPY) WHEN I LIVED IN FLORIDA AT THE TIME AND NOTHING MORE WAS DONE OR ANY ANSWER RECEIVED.

I HAVE A LOT OF MATERIAL ON HAND THAT I RECEIVED FROM THE COMMISSION.

LOOKING FORWARD TO MEETING YOU AGAIN.
HOPE I CAN OFFER SOMETHING AT YOUR MEETING.

(OVER)

GOD BLESS
Don Kumpen

DEAR GREG;

8/11/09

DUE TO PHYSICAL PROBLEMS BROUGHT ON BY THE TWO OPERATIONS PERFORMED BY THE VAMC HERE IN LEXINGTON, I'M SORRY TO SAY I WILL HAVE TO CANCEL MY ATTENDING YOUR POW ROUNDTABLE. THINGS ARE NOT GOING AS WELL AS I HAD HOPED BY NOW. I HAVE BEEN GIVEN APPOINTMENTS FOR CONTINUED THERAPY BY THE VA, STARTING THIS COMING THURS.

I AM REAL SORRY FOR LETTING YOU DOWN. I KNOW I COULD HANDLE ANY Q&A ON LUFT VI OR LUFT IV & THE "MARCH".

YOU HAD ASKED WHAT LABEL I WAS IN, ETC. IN LUFT IV — DO YOU STILL HAVE COPIES OF MY WRITE-UPS & DRAWINGS OF BOTH CAMPS? (SEE ENCLOSED)

I HAVE DRAWN MORE COPIES OF BOTH CAMPS & UPDATED MY WRITE-UPS, TO COVER I BELIEVE, DETAILS OF BOTH & MORE THEN THE ARCHIVES HAVE ON HAND.

EXAMPLE: NO RECORD EXISTS THAT TELL ABOUT THE MANY WHITE TENTS ERECTED IN LUFT VI TO RECEIVE MORE INCOMING AIR CREWS. MORE POW'S NEVER CAME - (10,000 SHOWN IN ARCHIVES BY ARMY INTELL. IS FALSE) TENTS WERE USED BY THE "SHOW BAND", TO PRATICE IN. I PLAYED DRUMS IN BAND. TENTS CAME DOWN SHORTLY BEFORE OUR DEPARTURE TO LUFT IV.

GREG, YOU WOULD BE MOST WELCOME TO COME & VISIT WITH US & STAY AT MY HOME FOR AS LONG AS YOU WISH.

YOU MAY LOOK THROUGH MY UP-TO-DATE MATERIAL AND ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT CAMPS I WAS IN & THE "MARCH".

DEAR JOE,

1-9-88

GLAD TO HEAR FROM YOU & TO KNOW ALL GOES WELL WITH YOU & YOUR PROJECTS.

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN SOME TRIP YOU & DOT MADE BY TRAIN. I USE TO LOVE TRAVELING BY TRAIN, BUT HAVEN'T DONE SO IN MANY YEARS.

IT IS NICE TO KNOW YOU HAVE CONTACT WITH PEOPLE IN POLAND & GERMANY.

IF, I HAD THE MONEY, I WOULD LOVE TO TAKE CATHY & VISIT POLAND & GERMANY & COVER THE AREAS OF OUR CAMP & OUR "BLACK MARCH", WITH A CAMERA OF COURSE TO RECORD ALL THIS. HOWEVER, I'M AFRAID THIS WILL NEVER COME TO PASS.

YES, I HAD A VIDEO TAPE, ^{made} but it only RUNS FOR 4 MINS. BECAUSE THAT IS ALL THE TIME THE TV STATION ALLOWED FOR OUR INTERVIEW.

I WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED IN HAVING A COPY OF THE NEGATIVES YOU HAVE & WOULD BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO PAY YOU FOR YOUR COST OF DEVELOPING & POSTAGE.

I HOPE YOUR POLISH FRIEND TAKES SOME GOOD PICTURES USING THE CAMERA YOU SENT HIM.

WE ARE STILL PLANNING ON A MAY TRIP TO LEXINGTON, KY. TO ASSIST OUR DAUGHTER WHO IS EXPECTING, THEN ON TO OHIO, PA. N.Y. MA. & MD. THEN HOME TO "GOD'S COUNTRY".

TAKE CARE, STAY HEALTHY & STAY IN TOUCH —
HOPE TO HAVE A MINI-REUNION HERE THIS WINTER, WHEN SOME OF MY OLD-POW BUDDIES COME SOUTH.

BEST REGARDS,

Don KREMPER

DEAR JOE,

1-30-89

YOUR PICTURES ARRIVED TO-DAY, NOT BAD TIME FROM N. J. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR EFFORT.

YOUR COST: PICTURES \$6.35 - POSTAGE \$1.05 - CHECK ENCLOSED FOR \$7.40. - AGAIN, THANKS.

STUDYING THE PICTURES BROUGHT BACK MEMORIES AS IF IT WERE YESTERDAY & I WOULD SAY THE PICTURES WERE TAKEN PRIOR TO MY ARRIVAL FROM LUFT VI.

WE LEFT STALAG LUFT VI ON JULY 15, 1944 FOR THE PORT OF MEMEL & BOARDED THE COAL FREIGHTER SAME DAY. I BELIEVE THE HEAD COUNT WAS 1800 - (1000 AAC & 800 RAF) NCO'S.

WE ARRIVED, AFTER A TRAIN RIDE FROM THE PORT OF ENTRY AT STETTIN TO KIEFHEIDE STATION, OUR LITTLE "JAUNT" UP THE ROAD TO FALK EXHAUSTED IN A FIELD NEXT TO VORLAGER, THE DATE WAS JULY 18, 1944.

WE STAYED IN THE FIELD OVER NITE & MOVED INTO "A" LAGER INTO TENTS, ^{NEXT DAY,} MY TENT WAS BETWEEN BARRACK 9 & 10.

DURING THIS TIME ONE OF THE GERMAN WORKERS WAS ELECTROCUTED WORKING ON A POLE. A CHEER WENT UP IN OUR TENT AREA, WHICH CAUSE THE GUARDS TO SHOOT THROUGH THE TENTS. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE NO ONE WAS HIT.

PICTURE 12 & 13 SHOW ROUND OBJECTS BETWEEN BARRACKS WHICH I BELIEVE ARE TENTS NOT YET PUT UP.

PRIOR TO OUR ARRIVAL ABOUT 1400 ^{WERE} ~~WAS~~ THERE, THIS IS WHY I THINK THE PICTURES WERE TAKEN LATE JUNE OR EARLY JULY.

WE MOVED INTO LAGER "C" IN LATE AUGUST '44.

(2)

BARRACKS WERE NOT COMPLETED, BUT THEY MOVED US ANYWAY. WE SLEPT ON THE FLOOR FOR AWHILE, UNTIL IN THE FALL, THEY INSTALLED 3 TIER BUNKS.

LAGER C NEVER HAD A FIRE POOL & I'M GLAD WE NEVER HAD TO USE ONE.

OF COURSE I STAYED IN LAGER C UNTIL WE MOVED OUT ON FEB. 6, 1945 FOR OUR "TOUR" OF NORTHERN GERMANY.

I HAVE OBTAINED NEW MAPS OF GERMANY AS IT IS TO-DAY, & MOST OF THE TOWNS WE PASSED THROUGH RIGHT UP TO LIBERATION ARE STILL SHOWN, HOWEVER MOST OF OUR "WALK" IS NOW IN THE RUSSIAN ZONE, EAST OF THE ELBE.

HAGENOW AREA - FARM - WALK FROM THERE TO GUDOW - STAYED OVERNITE - THEN DOWN TO BUCHEN & LAUENBURG - CROSSED THE ELBE & ONTO ENGLISH TRUCKS FOR A RIDE TO LUNEBURG & A HOT BATH.

JOE, YOU SAID YOU ARE DRIVING DOWN THE WEST COAST FROM ORLANDO AREA & NEAR CAPE CORAL, ON APRIL 6,

I-75 SOUTH FROM TAMPA - GOES THROUGH SARASOTA - VENICE - PUNTA GORDA - TURN OFF AT EXIT 26 & DRIVE WEST ON S-78.

EXACTLY 9 MILES TO STOP LIGHT AT DEL PRADO BLVD. TURN LEFT & DRIVE EXACTLY 3 MILES SOUTH ON DEL PRADO BLVD. (PAST HOSPITAL) WHEN YOU SEE DENNY'S RESTO - WHITE BLDG. JUST OVER CANAL - TURN RIGHT - S.E. 13th ST. - FIFTH HOUSE ON YOUR LEFT. #1454.

PHONE (813) 574-2269 - HOLLYWOOD, FL. IS APPROP. 140 MILES EAST OF ME. PLEASE STOP - LOTS OF ROOM -

BEST REGARDS - DON KREMPER



CREW ASSIGNED TO 94th B.G. - 331ST SQDN - NOV. 1943.
BURY ST. EDMUNDS (ROUGHAM) ENGLAND - 8th AAF.

SERVED ON BOMBING MISSIONS - NOV. 1943 UNTIL
FEB. 10, 1944. SHOT DOWN - CAPTURED - POW'S
FROM FEB. 10, 1944 - RETURNED TO ALLIED CONTROL
MAY 7, 1945.

SURVIVORS OF CREW TO-DAY - JULY 2009 -

TERRY BARKER - BOMBARDIER - MIAMI, FL. LOCATED ON
MY RIGHT FRONT ROW.

DON KREMPEL - ENG./GUNNER - MIDDLE OF FRONT ROW. -
ART PAXTON - RADIO/GUNNER - LOCATED ON MY LEFT
FRONT ROW - PORTLAND, OR.

I FLEW 15 MISSIONS - WOUNDED IN AIR BATTLE - LAST
MISSION, CRASHED LANDED ON FARM.

Don Krempel
LEXINGTON, Ky.



OCT. 1945

MY STORY

Virgina Woolf, the author and critic, once said;
"Nothing has really happened until it has been recorded."

With that thought, I want to document my experience of my last combat mission into Germany.

The date was Feb.10,1944. Our subsequent air battle causing us to be shot down by enemy aircraft, capture and imprisonment by German authorities for the duration of World War II in Europe.

I want to dedicate this story to my wife Cathy, who was always there all these years, understanding and compassionate.

(Being the wife of any ex-POW is a trying experience.)

To my wonderful children, Suzanne--Donna--Michael--Lynn and David, who I hope, will have a better understanding of their Dad and a different World at War, between 1942 and 1945, and the members of my bomber crew.

Don Kremper

April 2,1991

MY STORY

Each of us who was a POW had experiences and formed opinions different from those of his comrades.

Our minds and our health were affected differently and the after-effects of our incarceration vary in each case.

The life of a POW was a sorry one. It was one of fear, apprehension, deprivation, danger and frustration which took their toll on all of us.

Most of Hitler's high ranking officers, especially the Gestapo and the S.S. were inhuman, cruel and ruthless. Yet in all fairness, there were those responsible for our safety and welfare who tried to live by the spirit and letter of the Geneva Convention. Unfortunately, they were few and far between.

Much has been said about the International Red Cross and the marvelous work done by their tireless workers to get Red Cross food parcels and clothing to our POWs. The life-giving food and the warm clothing saved many lives.

The other international organization, seldom mentioned, was the Y.M.C.A., who filled the recreational and religious needs of the POWs. The recreational supplies helped preserve our health, happiness and stability. The educational and religious materials were a godsend as nearly everyone read, studied and prayed. For many their faith in God and their quiet moments of reflection and prayer sustained them when hope was faltering and life seemed futile.

European POWs of WWII suffered greatly, both mentally and physically from their experiences, especially those that survived the long harsh forced marches in the winter months of 1945.

D. K. 4/2/91

2. Brief History----

Not many people owned a new car. Basic items such as semi-automatic washing machine, refrigerator and gas or coal stove for cooking most people had.

Clothes, Shoes, etc., were made to last as long as possible.

* When the war came along, base pay for a Private in the Army was \$20. per month. In 1942, when I went in, \$ 50.00 per month was base pay. When I made P F C it was \$ 54.00 and Sgt. \$75.00. With hazardous duty pay in Europe added to base rate, I received \$ 145. as a Staff Sergeant.

* The travel experience throughout the United States and Europe, and the wonderful people from all walks of life that I met, would never have happened without WWII.

* As I traveled through the Southern states my eyes were opened to racial discrimination for the black people. I had never seen this in my town of 30,000.

Separate public bathrooms, drinking fountains, waiting rooms at train stations and their own restaurants.

Separation in the military organizations. They had their own barracks, mess halls, etc., and none flew combat out of England during my time. Most were in transportation and service organizations.

* I really learned to appreciate this country of ours over the years.

* I firmly believe my military experience was better than a Liberal Arts course in college, and one I never regretted, regardless of my POW experience.

BRIEF HISTORY of MY MILITARY CAREER

- * Enlisted in Army Air Corps Oct. 26, 1942 at Grand Central Palace Processing Center in New York City.
- * Induction processing at Fort Dix, N.J.
- * Basic Training at Atlantic City, N.J., Oct. 1942--Nov. 1942.
- * Airplane Mechanics School at Seymour Johnson Field, Goldsboro, N.C. Specialized in A-20 attack bombers. Dec. 1942---April 1943.
- * Volunteered for Aerial Gunnery training, Buckingham Field, Ft. Myers, Fl. (6 weeks).
- * Assigned to type of bomber (B-17) and flight team, Salt Lake City, Utah, early June, 1943.
- * First Phase training on B-17's with assigned crew at Moses Lake AAFB, Washington.
- * 2nd and 3rd Phase training with crew at Kearney AAFB, Kearney, Neb.
Bombing ranges in Colorado.
Over water Navigation training in Galveston, Texas.
- * Left Kearney, AAFB, Neb., with 35 crews by train to camp Kilmer, N.J. for overseas assignment.
From Kilmer boarded ferry boat for trip to pier 90 across Hudson river in N.Y.C.
- * Boarded British liner "Queen Mary" Oct. 26, 1943, for four day trip to Firth of Clyde at Glasgow, Scotland. Slept in hammock on liner, one deck above engine room.
- * Boarded train at Glasgow for trip to English Airfield for various crew assignments. Pilots, Navigator, Bombardier and radio operators to special training. The other four of us sent to the Wash at Kings Lynn for specialized gunnery training.
- * Assigned to 94th Bomb Group, 331st Sqdn. on Nov. 15, 1943 as replacement crew. (Two other crews from our stateside training group assigned to other Sqdn's. in 94th BG.) All three crews, in time were shot down.
- * Shot down--captured---POW until end of war.
- * I found my service time to be a challenge and rewarding experience.
- * America, at the time of WWII, was still struggling with a serious depression. Jobs were hard to come by and the average weekly income was around \$35.00.

MY CREW _____ JUNE, 1943 _____ FEB. 1944

CREW FORMED AT MOSES LAKE ARMY AIR FORCE BASE AT MOSES LAKE, WASHINGTON.

WE LIVED IN TENTS AND COMPLETED OUR FIRST PHASE TRAINING AS A TEAM.

WE COMPLETED 2nd AND 3rd PHASE TRAINING AT KEARNEY AAF BASE KEARNEY, NEB.

UPON COMPLETION OF OUR TRAINING, WE WERE SENT BY TRAIN TO CAMP KILMER, N.J. THEN TO PIER 90 NEW YORK CITY, AND BOARDED THE "QUEEN MARY" LINER (OCT. 26, 1943) FOR OUR OCEAN VOYAGE TO ENGLAND, AND THE 94th BOMB GROUP, 8th AAF.

CREW:

L-R TOP ROW---

JIM MALLENGER	TAIL GUNNER
AL CLAPIE	CO-PILOT
REX SMITH	WAIST GUNNER/ARM.
DON ANDERSON	PILOT
ZEKE FEELEY	NAVIGATOR

L-R FRONT ROW---

KEN ESTEP	ENG/GUNNER
TERRY BARKER	BOMBARDIER
DON KREMPER	ENG/GUNNER
ART PAXTON	RADIO/GUNNER
DICK MITCHELL	RADIO/GUNNER

WE FLEW VARIOUS B-17s ON OUR MISSIONS, HOWEVER, THE PLANE WE FLEW THE MOST WAS "GOOD TIME CHARLEY THE 3rd." MODEL B-17-F SER. NO. 42-30378.

OUR LAST MISSION TOGETHER IN "GOOD TIME CHARLEY THE 3rd," WAS FEB. 10, 1944. SHOT DOWN BY ENEMY AIRCRAFT, CAPTURED, AND POWs UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR IN EUROPE, MAY 7, 1945.

MY MISSIONS

94th BG.-331st SQDN.-STATION #468-ROUGHAM, NEAR BURY ST. EDMUNDS, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND. NOV. 10, 1943 TO FEB. 10, 1944.

*=MISSIONS FLOWN WITH OUR CREW.

11/10/43-ARRIVED AT THE 94th BG. IN LATE P.M. FROM THE WASH, AFTER SPECIAL GUNNERY TRAINING WITH ESTEP-SMITH-MALLINGER.

11/11/43-AWAKENED EARLY A.M. & ORDERED TO TAKE THE PLACE OF ENG/ GUNNER TAKEN ILL AT THE LAST MINUTE. ISSUED BORROWED FLY-ING EQUIPMENT, AS MY GEAR HAD NOT ARRIVED YET. TARGET-MUNSTER-PLANE ABORTED OVER CHANNEL-ENGINE MALFUNCTION.

11/16/43-ASSIGNED TO EXPERIENCED CREW. TARGET-RJUKAN, NORWAY. TEMP. -70°F-BOMBED HARD WATER PLANT. GUNS FROZE UP.

11/29/43-ASSIGNED TO EXPERIENCED CREW. TARGET-BREMEN-HEAVY FLAK.

12/11/43-ASSIGNED TO EXPERIENCED CREW. TARGET-EMDEN-WITH ESTEP AND MITCHELL. HEAVY FLAK AND E/AC.

12/13/43-*OUR CREW-FIRST TIME ALTOGETHER-TARGET-KIEL.

12/24/43-*XMAS EVE-ST. OMER, FRANCE. TARGET-V1 ROCKET INSTALLATIONS. BOMBED AT 5000ft.

1/7/44--*TARGET-LUDWIGSHAVEN-HEAVY FLAK & E/AC-LONG TRIP.

1/11/44-*TARGET-BRUNSWICK-LARGEST AIR BATTLE OF WWII. CREW SHOT DOWN 8 E/AC-VERY HEAVY E/AC ACTION USING ROCKETS. ALL ON CREW RECEIVED DISTINGUISHED UNIT CITATION. GROUP LOST 8 PLANES OUT OF 17 TO TARGET.

1/14/44-*TARGET-(CODE CROSS BOW)FRANCE-V1 ROCKET INSTALLATIONS.

1/24/44-*TARGET-FRANKFURT-HEAVY FLAK AND E/AC.

1/29/44-*TARGET-FRANKFURT HEAVY FLAK AND E/AC.

1/30/44-*TARGET-BRUNSWICK-HEAVY FLAK AND MANY E/AC OF ALL TYPES.

2/3/44--*TARGET-WILHELMSHAVEN-ANOTHER BG. AT WRONG ALTITUDE, TURNED INTO US CAUSING NEAR AIR COLLISION. WE RETURNED TO BASE ALONE.

2/4/44--*TARGET-FRANKFURT HEAVY FLAK FEW E/AC.

2/8/44--*TARGET-FRANKFURT-HEAVY FLAK & E/AC.

2/10/44-*TARGET-BRUNSWICK-FLYING LEAD SQDN. SHOT DOWN BY ENEMY FW 190s MAKING A FRONTAL ATTACK BEFORE REACHING OUR TARGET. WE CRASHED LANDED AT BENTHEIM, GERMANY. WOUNDED-CAPTURED BY FARMERS. OUR GROUP LOST 5 PLANES TO-DAY. FLEW 100 COMBAT HOURS

1/11/43 TO 2/10/44 THE 94th COMBAT ASSESSMENT WAS:
A/C LOST=35 A/C DAMAGED=355

DON KREMPER 1/25/91

WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON

MISSING AIR CREW REPORT

- IMPORTANT: This report will be compiled in triplicate by each Army Air Forces organization within 48 hours of the time an Aircraft is officially reported missing.
- ORGANIZATION: Location- E.T.O.-; Command or Air Force-EIGHTH; Group- 94th Bomb Gp.; Squadron- 331st Bomb Sq.-Detachment-
2. SPECIFY: Point of Departure- Station 468;-Course-As planned. Intended Destination- Brunswick and Return- Type of Mission- Operational.
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY AT THE CRASH OR WHEN LAST REPORTED: 7/10th Cloud Coverage.
4. GIVE: (a) Date- 10 Feb. 44; Time- Unknown; and Location- In the Target Area, of last known whereabouts of missing aircraft.
(b) Specify whether() Last Sighted; () Last contacted by Radio; () Forced Down; () Seen to Crash; or () Information not Available.
5. AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF:(Check only one)(X)Enemy Aircraft;() Enemy Anti-Aircraft; () Other Circumstances as follows-No information. Believed enemy aircraft fire causes loss.
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Series- B-17F;A.A.F. Serial # 42-30378.
7. ENGINES: Type, Model and Series-R-1820-97; A.A.F. Serial# (a) 43-58341-(b) 43-63879-(c) SW-002357-(d) 43-57211.
8. INSTALLED WEAPONS(Furnish below Make, Type and Serial #)
List attached.
9. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS:(a) Battle Casualty (X) or (b) Non-Battle Casualty-
10. NUMBER OF PERSONS ABOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew-10; Passengers-None; Total-10.

(Starting with pilot, furnish the following particulars:
If more than 10 persons were aboard aircraft, list similar
particulars on separate sheet and attach original to this form)

Crew Position	(Last Name First) Rank	Serial #
1. Pilot	ANDERSON, ALTON D.	2nd Lt. 0-799220
2. CO-Pilot	CLAPIE, ALBERT L.	2nd Lt. 0-750773
3. Navigator	FEELEY, GORDON J.	2nd Lt. 0-690339
4. Bombardier	BARKER, BERNARD L. Jr.	2nd Lt. 0-747944
5. Radio Operator	PAXTON, LORRAINE A.	T/Sgt. 39319837
6. Ball T. Gunner	MITCHELL, THOMAS A.	S/Sgt. 38312735
7. TT Gunner	ESTEP, KENNETH N.	T/Sgt. 33257140
8. Tail Gunner	EVANS, KARL E.	Sgt. 16038289
9. RW Gunner	KREMPEL, DONALD F.	S/Sgt. 12159812
10. LW Gunner	SMITH, REX B.	S/Sgt. 12158174
11. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMN TO INDICATE BASIS FOR SAME:		

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Serial#</u>	<u>By Radio</u>	<u>Last Sighted</u>	<u>Saw Crash</u>
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Saw Forced Landing

12. IF PERSONNEL ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SURVIVED, ANSWER YES TO
ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS: (a) Parachutes were used-
(b) Persons were seen walking away from scene of crash-
or (c) Any other reason (Specify)--
13. ATTACH AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH, MAP, CHART, OR SKETCH, SHOWING
LOCATION WHERE AIRCRAFT WAS LAST SEEN.
14. ATTACH EYEWITNESS DESCRIPTION OF CRASH, FORCED LANDING, OR
OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES PERTAINING TO MISSING AIRCRAFT.
15. ATTACH A DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTENT OF SEARCH, IF ANY, AND
GIVE NAME, RANK AND SERIAL # OF OFFICER IN CHARGE HERE--
Colonel F. W. CASTLE, 0-319375.

Date of Report 12 February, 1944

Preparing Officer---

THOMAS C. S. HOUSER

2nd Lt., Air Corps,

Operations Adm. O.

DETAILS OF CAPTURE---Feb.10,1944-----

Estimate enemy fighter aircraft, type FW190 and ME109s attacked our Bomb Group the 94th, about 30 minutes before our designated target which was Brunswick, Germany an aircraft manufacturing plant.

We were flying lead plane, 331st Sqdn., when FW190s made a frontal attack-line abreast-firing canon. Hits between #3 and #4 engines caused a fire due to damaged gas and oil lines.

Action taken; Pilot, Don Anderson, dove plane out of formation ordered all bombs salvoed, and prepare to bail out.

Many enemy fighters attacked from all directions, causing a great deal of damage to our aircraft.

Smith-Mitchell-Evans and Kremper sustained wounds at this time. Estep-Barker and Feeley bailed out.

Fire went out in wing and plane now flying at 2000-3000 ft. on three engines.

Exit doors in waist and tail section damaged from enemy fighters and not able to use for bail out procedure.

We discover Smith's and Kremper's parachutes have bullet holes showing in packs and no spares available.

Now down to about 1000ft. and plane taking hits from ground fire and running on two engines.

Transfer of gas from wing tanks to no avail. Believe ruptured fuel lines drained some of the tanks.

A crash landing site is chosen and procedures put into action to prepare for a crash.

All crew, except pilot and co-pilot, Al Clapie, moved to radio compartment.

Site of crash was swampy flat farm land belonging to a large dairy farm near a small town called Bentheim, Germany, not too far from Holland border.

Impact of crash caused some bruises, but no broken bones.

I injured back of my head, neck and upper back by being slammed against bulkhead. Our landing speed was 100 mph, causing plane to furrow the ground and jam the ball turret up inside the fuselage.

We evacuated the plane through upper radio compartment hatch, set fire to plane and waded through cold water to higher ground.

German farmers approached us with guns and we surrendered. They brought a ladder for us to carry Smith to a large barn which was attached to their house. Language was somewhat of a problem, but we managed.

Smith was wounded badly in his lower extremities (stomach and legs). I washed his wounds with water furnished and sedated him with morphine from our first aid kit, Mitchell, Evans and myself hung in there with shrapnel wounds.

Shortly after this a few of the farmers took Mitchell, Paxton and myself to another farm close by. Anderson, who tried to escape after our crash, was captured and he was also at this farm.

While here, a local policeman came and took one of our dog-tags and had us walk into Bentheim. Mitchell had a lot of shrapnel in his legs, so Paxton and I pushed him on the policeman's bike.

When we reached Bentheim, the police locked us up together in one cell without any furnishings. We had to sit on the concrete floor. We wondered how long we would be here? That evening the military came for us, put us in a truck where they had the others from our first barn and drove us to Lingen, where they had a POW hospital and not very well equipped. The two Doctors I met in the emergency room were French who spoke some English and were POWs themselves. I was allowed to wash my wounds, but no medication or dressings were forthcoming. I gave them Smith's name, rank and ser. no. and this is the last time I saw him until Aug. 1945 at England General Hospital in Atlantic City, N. J.

From here they drove us to a German airfield at Quackenbruck. Luftwaffe guards locked us in a large room with double bunks. Two guards with automatic weapons sat in front of our door all night. During the night, more bomber crews and Allied fighter pilots shot down that day, ended up in this same room. Next day, they put us on a bus and drove to another large airfield at Oldenburg. It was here we joined up with Estep-Barker- and Feeley who had bailed out, captured as soon as they hit the ground. We were glad we were back together and wondered about Smith. Many American air crew arrived here throughout the day. Feb. 10, 1944 must have been a busy day for the German defense.

Oldenburg must have been a staging area for downed Allied airmen. That night (Feb. 12th) we were hearded on board a passenger train, under heavy guard and traveled all night. Walking wounded given rough treatment by some of the guards.

(see copy of German reports on capture and movement)

Train stopped at Frankfurt/Main, where we got off and the guards formed us up outside of station. When we marched down the street, between guards, the civilian population yelled "Luft-gangsters" and threw stones at us. Our guards had their hands full trying to ward off the civilians. After marching a few blocks, we boarded trolley cars which took us to Oberursel, the interrogation center for Allied airmen POWs.

(SEE OBERURSEL SECTION)

DULAG LUFT TRANSIT CAMP- OBERURSEL- FRANKFURT/MAIN, GERMANY
JUNE 1943 TO SEPT. 10, 1943.

On Sept. 10, 1943 the Dulag Luft transit camp, where POWs who had been interrogated and awaited shipment to permanent stalags, was moved from Oberursel to Frankfurt/Main.

Here it was situated in the Palm Gardens only 1635 yards N.W. of the main rail-road station- a location which was a target area and therefore endangered the lives of the POWs.

On Nov. 15, 1943 the Swiss Rep. from the International Red Cross stated, " This visit (to the camp) leaves a bad impression because of the new situation of the Dulag, so exposed to attacks from the air, which is not in conformity with Article 9 of the Geneva Convention."

Thus the following Swiss announcement in the spring of 1944 came as no surprise: " Dulag Luft, WETZLAR, is succeeding Dulag Luft, Frankfurt, which was destroyed in course of one of the latest (March 24th) air raids on Frankfurt. The camp is situated on a slightly elevated position approximately 3 to 4 kilometers W.N.W. from Wetzlar, a town some 50 kilometers north of Frankfurt/ Main and is a former German army camp."

Strength: During most of 1943, 1000 POWs a month passed through the transit camp. This increased to 1500 a month, half British and half American. 1944, the average influx of Allied airmen POWs would be 2000-2500- per month.

Camp strength fluctuated from day to day. Except for the permanent staff of 30, POWs seldom stayed more than 8 days.

° When I arrived from Oberursel Center I met the rest of my crew, had a nice bath and issued new clothes and shoes, all furnished by the International Red Cross.

The following was issued in a " captive case" and consisted of- 1 shirt--1 pr. drawers--1 undershirt--1 pr socks--1 pr trousers-- 1 blouse or field jacket-- 1 pr shoes-- 1 set of toilet articles.

Work: Since air force personnel consisted solely of commissioned and non- commissioned officers, no work beyond some of their own housekeeping chores were required of them.

Pay: POWs received no pay.

MAIL: Transients were allowed to send their first letter or a postcard form informing next-of-kin of their status and address, but received no incoming mail. (See copy of my first card sent) Average time for both air mail and surface mail was four months. My letter form arrived in Kingston, N.Y. April 13, 1944, 12 days after the telegram informing my family I was a POW.

MORALE: Morale of men leaving Oberursel was usually at its lowest ebb, and it is small wonder after receiving food, clothing and mingling in comparative freedom with their fellow Americans that their spirits soared back to a level approaching normality.

*After a good hot meal, the camp Doctor gave me some pain medication and dressed my shrapnel wounds.

I was now ready to face whatever else the Germans had to offer. We didn't have long to wait. The Germans separated our officers and sent them to Stalag Luft 1 at Barth, Germany, on the Baltic Sea coast.

The next day they marched us to the railroad yards and jammed us into "40 and 8" box cars for our trip to a "permanent" stalag camp for non-commissioned officers.

The box car floor was covered with straw, but with the crowded conditions, none where able to lay down.

The car had one open window with barbed wire stretched across the opening. No heat whatsoever, except from each other.

We sat sometimes back to back for support or stood up.

Privation for all on this trip I will never forget.

Each of us had been issued one Red Cross food parcel and an army overcoat. Words cannot express our feelings towards the International Red Cross at this crucial time as we moved into the unknown.

The train stopped a few times going across Poland, unlocked the sliding door and issued us potato soup.

We traveled this way for 5 days, through Poland and up into German East Prussia. The further north we went, the colder it became.

We finally arrived at Heydekrug (near the Lithuanian border) not far from the Baltic Sea. This camp was called STALAG LUFT VI --date-- Feb. 21, 1944.

SIDE NOTE WHILE AT DULAG LUFT-OBERURSEL.

Returning from a mission in late Jan. by ourselves, an American P38 Fighter came up to us, radioed over that his compass had malfunctioned and he needed help to return to his base in England.

He was informed to tag along with us and we would see that he arrived at his base o.k. After crossing the English channel he thanked us and left our "formation".

Recalling the "small world" syndrome, this same pilot was shot down same day as I (Feb.10,1944) and ended up at Dulag Luft where we met and discussed "that" mission his compass didn't work.

Shortly afterwards he shipped out with my officers to Stalag Luft 1.

2nd Lt. Royal D. Frey survived his POW experience and went on to become Col. Royal D. Frey curator at the Air Force Museum, Wright- Patterson AFB, Dayton, Ohio.

WORLD'S GREATEST FIGHTER PILOT — 2nd Lieutenant Royal D. Frey was convinced he was destined to become the world's best fighter. On February 10, 1944, 2nd Lt. Frey lost one of the two engines on his P. 38 Lightning, and while nursing his crippled plane homeward to England, German flak hit his plane forcing him to parachute into captivity, end of his quest for fame as the Rickenbacker of WWII. Hanns Scharff treated him kindly, even sympathized with him.

(Frey collection)



GLOSSARY

Kriegsgefangenen----- Prisoner of War

Kriegie--- Accronym for German POW

Vorlager--- Outer lager housing German administration, guard barracks, warehouses and "cooler"(jail cells for POWs breaking the rules)

Stalag Luft--- Prison camp for airmen

Dulag Luft--- Transit camp for airmen, prior to being assigned to a regular camp.

Klim Can--- Milk spelled backwards. Contained powdered milk sent by International Red Cross. POWs used can when empty to eat out of, because the Germans only supplied a spoon and table knife.

"D" Bar--- Concentrated chocolate highly prized by all POWs.

Lager/Compound--- Fenced in area housing POWs.

Ferret/Goons--- POWs terms for some German guards assigned to spy on POWs inside their compounds, such as digging tunnels and any activity they felt endangered their rules and regulations.

40 & 8---- Type of railroad boxcar we traveled in. Term originated during WW1, capacity 40 men/ 8 horses.

Posten--- German for guard.

Appel--- Roll call

Raus--- Move

Kilometer x .6214 = miles

Miles x 1.609 = Kilometers

S-2---- U.S.A. Intelligent Agency.

STALAG LUFT VI--HEYDEKRUG--NEAR MEMEL-- NOW KLAIPEDA--
ON THE BALTIC SEA COAST. (OVERVIEW)

Parachuting and crash landing out of German skies, air crew men came to Heydekrug from all over the world; RAF and AAF, New Zealanders and Canadians, South Africans and Poles; pilots and navigators from Lancashire and Yorkshire, tail gunners from Texas, first engineers from Washington and static chasers from New Jersey. Some had come down during wild nights out of flaming "Lancs" and Wellingtons or big Sterlings caught in cones of flak and searchlights. Other RAF men blasted by sneak attacks of night fighters had bailed out into the darkness all the way from the Alps to the North Sea. The Yanks had come down during the day out of the Arctic stillness of the upper altitudes into the smoking ruins of target areas or the bleak fields of an enemy country.

The English arrived first in June of 1943 and set up the camp under "Dixie" Dean, a Scotch accountant who had traveled extensively in Germany before the war. Dixie entered the RAF as a pilot in 1936 and was shot down Sept. 12, 1942. Knowing the people and the language, he developed into an Ace camp leader at Barth and Sagon and became an authority on the Kriege's Bible, the Geneva Convention. Among the first Americans to arrive in February of 1944 was big T/Sgt. Frank Paules who was elected "American Man of Confidence." Dixie took him under his wing and together they began to organize and prepare for the men to come.

As the intensity of the air war over Europe stepped up in the early months of 1944 more American bomber crew men began to come in. Down through the heavy flak of Hamburg and Bremen and the Ruhr ("Happy Valley") out of rocket and fighter attacks in dog fights over Frankfurt, Brunswick and Essen and finally over Berlin itself, gunners from Forts and Libs hit the silk to start the long trail to Heydekrug. The American compound opened in February and grew like a boom town as groups of new men arrived to begin their long tour in the GTO.

Life was bleak those first days and nights inside the wire. Food was short and Red Cross supplies inadequate. The compound was either knee deep in snow or a sea of mud.

(1) STALAG LUFT VI HEYDEKRUG, EAST PRUSSIA, NCO CAMP

° Arrived Feb. 21, 1944. Off loaded from cramped box cars and escorted under heavy guard to Vorlager of camp. We had to stand outside in the cold and snow until they called us inside two at a time. Estep and I were the last two called. Once inside each POW had to submit to a strip search, have his picture taken, finger printed and issued a POW dog tag (1394) prior to assignment to a compound.

° I, along with three others from my crew, Estep, Mitchell and Paxton were assigned to compound E--barrack row F--room F6 and a top bunk.

° In due time 60 men called room F6 home.

° Barracks were built of brick on a concrete slab. Heat was furnished by an oven arrangement utilizing compressed coal dust mixed with clay, rationed weekly to each room. Great care was taken to make them last. The Germans issued each POW two thin blankets, which we suspected contained pieces of "barb-wire" because of the way they stuck into you at night. Thank God for a warm wool overcoat to help ward off the cold.

° "Honey buckets", as we called them, (large chamber pots) were kept in a small room to be used at night when they locked us in. All in room took turns cleaning them each day.

° Each room elected a "Food Coordinator" (also known as a "room Fuhrer" to go to the kitchen twice each day and draw rations for his room.

Example: Breakfast-- Ersatz coffee, made from barley kernals or acorns or weak tea made from???, black bread, which used sawdust for a filler and sometimes oleo or jam.

The bread had to be sliced evenly for 60 men, which was very nerve racking for our "Coordinator."

Men accustomed to flying fare found it difficult to adapt themselves to Kriege rations. As stomachs began to shrink they forcibly developed a taste for ersatz coffee, 'kolurabi soup and sawdust -flavored German bread. It took a bit of time to become accustomed to being fenced in like an animal inside the big barbed wire enclosures, to feel easy watching the tower guards swinging their machine guns during the day, and see the search-lights sweeping the compound at night. It represented a new low in comfort to try to sleep on a ladder-like arrangement of five bed slats covered with a thin straw tick. It took time to get used to the guttural shouting of the Krauts and lining up for roll calls and "Sheep counts" under the watchful eyes of the gray clad guards.

As spring-1944- slowly edged into the Baltic, things began to get better. More Red Cross food came in and the men learned to stretch their rations.

Kriege-wise the English had their Dramatic League, debating society, auctions, cricket and rugby games and an educational program. We learned from their activities and started new ones. A library and prisoner university were opened.

Softball, boxing and theatre groups began to work out. Soon almost every man in camp who wanted to do something found an outlet for his energy. The men began to build a theatre out of Red Cross boxes and junk. The Kriegees built a flashy house that was the "Show Spot of the Baltic." Tom Edwards, a veteran hooper and Boston vaudeville man, whipped together a crack variety production: "Blow It Out."

Competition became keen in volleyball, football and softball between barracks and compounds. Promoter George Pratt of Boston organized a great two-day International Boxing Show. AAF and RAF groups were allowed to visit and conduct competitive activities between compounds--Kriege life was not so bad.

Then in mid-July The Russians stepped up their summer drive.

Rumors began to fly thick and fast. Kriegees avidly read the "Barbed Wire News" and German radio bulletins and other news came out of the sky. We discussed rumors and news far into the nights. It looked as though we might be trapped--we hoped.

Instead we marched out and entrained for Memel, where we boarded a coal boat for Schweinmunde, then a train for a new camp Stalag Luft IV in Poland.

(2)

° Daily Routine:

Average daily routine for a Kriege in Luft VI, E compound:

Early A.M. doors and windows unlocked by guards.

Whistle blowing and yelling "Raus-Raus" by guards to fall out for roll-call by head count. This was performed twice per day-A.M. and P.M., regardless of weather.

Sometimes we had to stay out in the cold for hours, while the "Ferrets", as we called them, searched our barracks for hidden radios, tunnel activity and whatever else they felt a need to search for.

After this annoying routine, the count never was correct the first time, we went to our communal washhouse and latrine and made ready for breakfast.

° After breakfast, two men cleaned and emptied the "Honey-Buckets" from the night before.

° Made our beds--smoothed out the wood chip filled mattress, adjusted the five slats it rested on, straighten the two blankets. If, it was a nice day, aired the blankets.

° Walk around perimeter of compound for exercise. We tried to do this daily, regardless of weather.

° Check out a book from our library. "Dixie" Dean brought 6000 books from his last camp(courtesy of the YMCA) which were divided up for the three compounds.

° Play card games. Bridge clubs abounded on a daily basis.

° Visited barrack to barrack. Met newcomers at our compound gate. Some times we met old friends. Other times relatives rejoiced at seeing one another again. Told combat stories. Felt sorry for the one captured on his last mission-# 25. Each POW was allowed to tell his capture experience once!

(3)

Daily Routine:

- ° Work on building our theater. Material from Red Cross packing boxes and other odds and ends. Germans furnished all the tools. All tools rounded up at end of day by the guards.
 - ° I played drums, so was able to become a member of our compound band. We rehearsed almost daily to prepare for a musical revue we hoped to put on in our new theater. All of the instruments were sent by the YMCA. Sheet music and arrangements sometimes caused a problem, however, talent abounded and we managed.
 - ° Roll call again. Many of the POWs would shift around in formation to cause the Germans to miss count. This took place only when the weather cooperated.
 - ° Supper-- The kitchen furnished hot water for us to make our Nescafe powdered coffee from our Red Cross food parcel. Watered down soup, with strange things floating around or barley cereal and one or two boiled potatoes. Sometimes we could supplement with items from our Red Cross parcel, when we had one, and we always had to share with one to four other Kriegies.
 - ° Daily news-- someone would go barrack to barrack to verbally repeat the BBC news broadcast received on our "secret receiver" which was disassembled and hidden from the nosey "Ferrets". This sure beat the German propaganda they passed out.
 - ° Clean up ready for lock up.
 - ° Guards locked doors and boarded up the windows, which made for very bad ventilation throughout the long night.
 - ° Lights out---sack time.
-

(4)

ACTIVITIES:-----

° Boxing-- The German camp Commandant allowed us to construct a boxing ring next to wire fence adjoining the next compound, so the POWs there could watch. (See sketch) Matches were very good and drew large crowds. Three rounds per match.

American vs. American-- American vs. English and Canadian.

° Touch football and volleyball became daily sporting events. Games were of a short duration because our diet limited one's stamina.

° Compound E Newspaper:

"The largest number of readers per copy of any newspaper in the world." This was the proud boast of T/Sgt. Tom McHale, editor and publisher of the "Barbed Wire News," a newspaper published on an "if and when" basis. The reason was simple. German regulations and shortage of materials allowed only one copy of each issue. The lone sheet was posted on the bulletin board and read diligently by imprisoned American airmen. Labor was plentiful in a prison camp, and the staff of our paper included experienced writers, cartoonists and artists from all sections of the U.S.A.

First issue appeared in April, 1944 and continued until our evacuation.

° Kriege "Stock Market"--

CIGARETTES from food parcels were used for bartering for food items and as money when playing poker.

A stock market was developed so a set quantity of cigarettes bought a food item. This method eliminated the black market system that was flourishing at the time. (See chart that shows how system worked) page #6 .

(5)

° THEATER:

We completed our theater, which to us was a real show piece. Comfortable seating constructed from Red Cross wood crates. Stage had a draw curtain. Our band in an area down front by stage. Some talented artist painted Vargas type female models poster size to hang around the walls, which really gave the theater class.

While the theater was under construction a talent search was made throughout the compound for those interested in performing in a musical review. Finding talent was never a problem.

Costumes were made from the linings of RAF jackets which were white wool and other G.I. clothes. Cloth was dyed where possible. The Germans supplied some costumes, thanks to the salesmanship of our compound leaders.

Those in the band were issued new G. I. shirts, pants and shoes from the Vorlager warehouse. With this issue we all looked alike and presented a professional appearance.

The show was a success, thanks to the expertise of one Tom Edwards, an experienced showman. We had many different acts of singing and dancing. The name of our "big" production was called "Blow it Out".

We had a full house each day, with the camp Commandant and his staff attending our first' show.

(While rehearsing for another show in early July, orders came down to prepare for camp evacuation.)

NOTE: HEYDEKRUG TODAY (1991) IS CALLED SILUTE AND IS UNDER RUSSIAN CONTROL.

THE PORT OF MEMEL IS NOW CALLED KLAIPEDA.

Joe;

Aug.6,1993

Obtained the attached from the Gov't. Archives in Suitland, MD.,and thought you might like a copy for your files.

I arrived in Stalag Luft 6 in Feb.1944 with the first group of American aircrew Sgt's.

Dixie Dean RAF,was the Man of Confidence who came there with experience from other Stalags.Dean remained in this assignment over RAF personnel until our evacuation in July,1944.

Frank Paules was elected Man of Confidence to represent all American POW's,for the length of our stay.

Luft 6 under Description which I highlighthd is not accurate information.

The camp never exceeded 2000 NCO'S Allied Airmen,of which a few were American Paratroopers.

Tents were put up but never occupied.I played in our band in E lager and we use to practice in them.

Evacuation took place between July 12 through the 15th.

Two old coal colliers were used from the Port of Memel.

The RAF and Americans went on the "INSTERBURG"and the rest of us on the "MASUREN".My group left on July 15,1944 and arrived at the "garden spot"of Poland,Luft 4,on July 18,1944.

When the Russian's arrived in Luft 6 area in late July they utilized the empty camp for their POW's.

Luft 6,in my opinion,was the best organized camp of all the POW camps I was in.

MAP---Shows POW camps utilized for Allied Airmen early on in 1943 and 1944.

LUFT 4---Sure outgrew it's capacity of 6,400 in the latter half of 1944.

Take care and stay in touch.

Best Regards,

Don Krempfer

DONALD F. KREMPER
9020 C S.W. 93 LANE
OCALA, FL 34481

MY STORY.

Each of us who was a POW had experiences and formed opinions different from those of his comrades. Our minds and our health were affected differently and the after-effects of our incarceration vary in each case. The life of a POW was a sorry one. It was one of fear, apprehension, deprivation, danger and frustration which took their toll on all of us.

Most of Hitler's high ranking officers, especially the Gestapo and the S.S. were inhuman, cruel and ruthless. Yet in all fairness, there were those responsible for our safety and welfare who tried to live by the spirit and letter of the Geneva Convention. Unfortunately, they were few and far between.

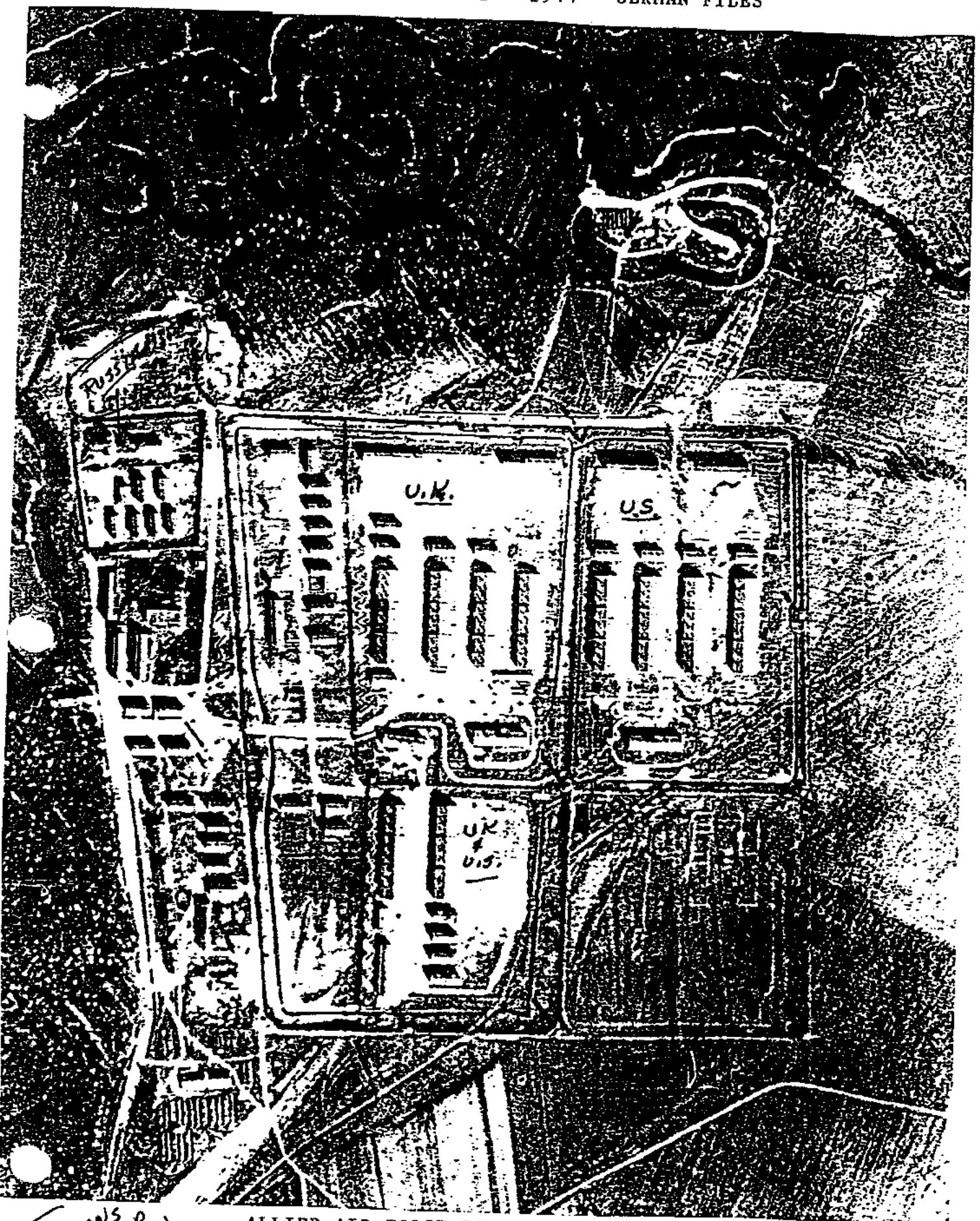
Much has been said about the International Red Cross and the marvelous work done by their tireless workers to get Red Cross food parcels and clothing to our POWs. The life-giving food and the warm clothing saved many lives.

The other international organization, seldom mentioned, was the Y.M.C.A., who filled the recreational and religious needs of the POWs. The recreational supplies helped preserve our health, happiness and stability. The educational and religious materials were a godsend as nearly everyone read, studied and prayed. For many their faith in God and their quiet moments of reflection and prayer sustained them when hope was faltering and life seemed futile.

European POWs of WWII suffered greatly, both mentally and physically from their experiences, especially those that survived the long harsh forced marches in the winter months of 1945.

D. K. 4/2/91

Donald F. Krempel



RUSSIANS
IN UPPER
CORNER

ALLIED AIR FORCE POW CAMP
HEYDEKRUG--EAST PRUSSIA--GERMANY (LITHUANIA)

HEALTH (cont.)

The infirmary which should have a minimum of at least 150 beds, has only 70. As a result, many of the sick are hospitalized in their regular barracks. Washing & toilet facilities are satisfactory.

RELIGION :

Three British chaplains hold services in the barracks chapel. At the request of the POW's the Camp Commandant has applied to his superiors for a Roman Catholic chaplain.

PERSONNEL :

Man of Confidence: T/Sgt. Francis S. Paules
Secretary: T/Sgt. Jos. H. Harrison
Camp Commandant: Oberst Hoermann Von Hoerbach

MAIL :

Average transit time for surface mail from camp to U.S.A. is 9 weeks; airmail is 1 month. Letters to camp from USA require 2 months travel time. Book parcels have been held at camp before distribution for periods up to 6 months because of too few censors.

RECREATION :

Although space for athletics is limited, POW's play baseball, football, & other games for which YMCA has provided equipment. Educational courses are available with POW instructors in subjects ranging from banking through foreign languages. Entertainment is provided by a band, a choir, & a dramatic group which presents occasional shows at the camp theater. The library has 6,000 books.

WORK :

Work is not required. Some POW's work of their own volition in the carpenter shop, making clothes pins for the central laundry.

PAY :

Not known.

SERVICE ROAD BETWEEN LAGER 1 & LAGER 2

N

GATE

KITCHEN/STAFF BLDG.

WARNING WIRE

"C" LAGER

- 2500 POWS
- NO FIRE POOL
- 12 ROOMS/BARRACK
- OPENED AUG. 1944
- EVACUATED FEB. 6, 1945

A=WASH HOUSE
B=ONLY WATER SUPPLY
C=LATRINE

MY "HOME" DON KREMPER

S/N 12159812 POW #1394

STALAG LUFT IV

GUARD TOWERS

LAGER "D"

STALAG LUFT IV STATUS AS OF JANUARY 31,1945:

- * 8,033 AMERICANS
- * 1 NORWEGIAN
- * 2 FRENCH
- * 60 POLISH
- * 3 CZECH
- * 820 BRITISH

On January 28,1945, 1500 Americans were sent to Barth (Stalag Luft I).

On February 2,1945, 1500 Americans were sent to Nurnburg.

On the 6th of February,1945,the remaining 5700 Americans were marched out along with RAF air crew, to begin the "BLACK MARCH" in the worst winter in Europe in over 50 years.

D.K.

Donald F. Hemper



EVACUATION OF STALAG LUFT IV FEB.6,1945.

D.K. 8/03



LIBERATION STALAG LUFT IV---MAY 2, 1945---NEAR GUDOW,
GERMANY. "C" GROUP L--R
"MAN OF CONFIDENCE"---FRANCIS TROY
INTERPRETER--- JOHN KOHL
GERMAN OFFICER FOR "C" LAGER---HAUPTMAN SHETTER
DOCTOR FOR "C" LAGER---CAP'T. LESLIE CAPLAN

D.K. 8/03

(7)
AMERICAN RED CROSS POW FOOD PACKAGE NO. 10

- ° 1lb. Margarine
- ° 6 oz. Jam
- ° 8 oz. Cheese
- ° 7 oz. Crackers *
- ° 8 oz. Chocolate
- ° 1 lb. Powered Milk
- ° 6 oz. Pate Liver or Chicken
- ° 12 oz. Spam
- ° 12 oz. Corned Beef
- ° 2----Bars of Soap
- ° 2 or 4 oz. of Coffee (PowderedNescafe)
- ° 8 oz. Sugar (cubes)
- ° 1 lb. Raisins or Prunes
- ° 7 3/4 oz. Salmon
- ° 7 --- Vitamin Tablets
- ° 5 ---Packs of Cigarettes

* Crackers were a hard item to divide among your partners, so sometimes we grated them and added some chocolate, powered milk, raisins, water and baked, then divided.

Note: A POW never received one whole package for himself in any of the camps I was in. He had to share with two to four others and divide all items as equally as possible.

If,he didn't smoke, he had the opportunity to buy items with his cigarette allotment.

Hon.Clifford B. Stearns
2352 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington,D.C. 20515

Sept.7,1997

Re:Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the U.S.--
Holocaust Survivors Claims Program.

Dear Hon. Stearns;

Request your review of this program in its entirety
and agree or disagree to the rules laid down by our State
Dept. and Germany.

Germany did not abide by the rules of the Geneva Convention
in many cases and nothing was done about the deprivation we
went through after the war with Germany.

Not all POWs of Germany during WW11 come under the agreed
terms,but many like myself do.

Many of us suffer to this day with physical and emotional
problems.

It seems to me Congress did not do their homework before
signing off on our State Dept. decision with Germany.

Sincerely,


Donald F.Krempner

9020 C SW 93 Lane

Ocala,Fl. 34481

Ph.(352) 873-1455



U. S. Department of Justice

Foreign Claims Settlement Commission
of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20579

August 26, 1997

Mr. Donald F. Kremper
9020C SW 93rd Lane
Ocala, FL 34481-9285

Re: Claim No. HS-980
Decision No. HS-759

Dear Mr. Kremper:

Enclosed is a copy of the Commission's Proposed Decision on the above claim. Unfortunately, as indicated in the Commission's Final Decision on Scope, it appears that the Holocaust Survivors Claims Program does not cover this claim.

Objections: If you believe that the Commission made mistakes of fact in its Proposed Decision, you may file an Objection, asking the Commission to reconsider the decision on the claim. However, since the Commission has now issued its Final Decision on the Scope of the Holocaust Survivors Claims Program, the determinations of law made by the Commission in deciding your claim are no longer open to objection.

This means that you *may* file an Objection if the Commission made a mistake of *fact* that may affect the outcome of your claim -- for example, *if* you were held in a camp that is not listed in the enclosed decision on your claim and *if* that camp was a recognized concentration camp (rather than a POW camp or some other type of Nazi facility).

However, your Objection generally may *not* argue that a camp which is listed in the enclosed decision should be covered by the claims program, because the Final Decision on Scope has already settled such issues, as a matter of law.

If you plan to file an Objection, please call our offices (202/616-6975) as soon as possible, so that we may discuss your case.

If you are entitled to file an Objection, you may also request an Oral Hearing to present that Objection to the Commission. Oral Hearings are held in the offices of the Commission, at 600 E Street, N.W., Suite 6002, Washington, DC. Objections (including requests for Oral Hearings) should be postmarked as soon as possible and, in any event, no later than fifteen (15) days after receipt of the Proposed Decision.

To file an Objection, you must send a letter stating that you object to or disagree with the decision of the Commission. Your letter should also:

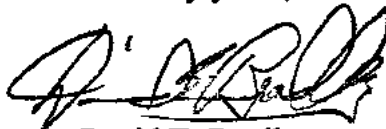
- Include the number of your case (the "HS-" number), your current address, and your daytime telephone number.
- Give a short explanation of what mistakes of fact you believe the Commission made in its decision on the claim.
- Include any new information, documents, or other evidence you want the Commission to consider in reviewing your objection. (You should send the original and three copies of any document you want the Commission to consider. If you send a document in a foreign language, you *must* send a verified translation into English.)
- State whether you plan to come to Washington, DC to appear before the Commission in person at an Oral Hearing (to make oral argument or to present live witness testimony). Ordinarily, no transcript of the oral hearing will be made except upon prior request and at the claimant's expense. Note that the Commission expects to hold Oral Hearings in early September.
- If you do not wish to travel to Washington, DC, the case can be handled by mail.

Under the Commission's regulations, a Proposed Decision becomes final thirty (30) days after receipt unless an Objection is filed.

We regret that we cannot advise you more favorably concerning your claim, and wish you well in pursuing any other avenues that may be open to you.

If you need any further information or other assistance, please feel free to write or call. Our telephone number is 202/616-6975.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. E. Bradley', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David E. Bradley
Chief Counsel

Enclosure

FOREIGN CLAIMS SETTLEMENT COMMISSION
OF THE UNITED STATES
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, DC 20579

In the Matter of the Claim of

DONALD F. KREMPER

Against the Government of the
Federal Republic of Germany

Claim No. HS-980

Decision No. HS-759

PROPOSED DECISION

This claim against the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany is for persecution by the National Socialist (Nazi) regime during World War II.

Through its Holocaust Survivors Claims Program, as authorized by Congress, the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission has jurisdiction to

receive and determine the validity and amount of claims by nationals of the United States against the Federal Republic of Germany covered by Article 2(2) of the Agreement Between the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Government of the United States of America Concerning Final Benefits to Certain United States Nationals Who Were Victims of National Socialist Measures of Persecution, [which] entered into force September 19, 1995 ("the Agreement").

22 U.S.C.A. §1644(a) (1997). Congress has directed the Commission to decide those claims in accordance with "the criteria applied by the Department of State in determining the validity and amount of claims covered by and settled under Article 2(1) of the Agreement [i.e., the Holocaust claims paid in 1995]." *Id.*

Based on the State Department's criteria, the Commission has determined that prisoners-of-war (POWs) are eligible for compensation in the Holocaust Survivors Claims Program *if* they were interned in a concentration camp or sub-camp recognized as such in the registry of the International Tracing Service of the International Committee of the Red Cross or listed on the so-called "BGBl." roster of concentration camps. *Final Decision on Scope of Holocaust Claims Program*, Decision No. HS-II (1997).

According to the claim form and supporting materials submitted to the Commission, claimant served in the U.S. armed forces during the War, and was shot down on February 10, 1944 and captured and held as a POW at camps including Dulag Luft, Stalag Luft VI, Stalag Luft IV and Stalag 11B.

Upon capture, claimant was first taken to Oberursel, Germany, where he was held in solitary confinement and interrogated, then taken to Dulag Luft in Frankfurt am Main. There, he was loaded onto overcrowded boxcars (with little or no food, no water, and no provisions for sanitation), for a seven-day journey en route to Stalag Luft VI.

During the summer of 1944, claimant and other POWs from Stalag Luft VI were transferred to Stalag Luft IV, in the infamous "Heydekrug Run." First they were packed like sardines into the hold of a coal freighter, with no food and

no water for the crossing. When they disembarked, they were shackled to one another and transferred to another boxcar for transport. When they reached their destination, they were off-loaded and forced to run the approximately three miles to Stalag Luft IV, prodded by bayonets, clubbed with rifle butts, and attacked by vicious guard dogs.

When Stalag Luft IV was evacuated, claimant was dispatched on a brutal forced march across northern Poland and Germany. The march, which began in a blizzard, eventually spanned more than 85 days and covered 600+ miles. The marching columns were strafed en route. Cold and starving all the time, the POWs were forced to sleep in open fields in the snow, or in barns (when available). Claimant ate boiled grass and cattle feed along the way, and dug in the frozen fields for turnips and potatoes. He went four days with no food at all -- other than a single lump of sugar he had saved.

During his internment, claimant was held in cramped, essentially unheated barracks; indeed, he had to sleep in a tent on the ground at Stalag Luft IV. He was forced to subsist on a starvation diet, and suffered from exposure to the bitter cold and the elements, deprived of warm clothing. Sanitation was primitive at best, and medical care was non-existent.

As a result of the harsh conditions of his interment, claimant suffered at the time from maladies including malnutrition, dysentery and frostbite, as well as the injuries he incurred in his crash landing which were never properly treated. And he is plagued to this day by pain in his knees, back and ankles, as well as numbness in his legs and feet.


Unfortunately, however, this claim is not compensable here. While claimant's long months as a POW must have been an ordeal, the places he was held are not recognized by ITS or BGBI. as concentration camps or sub-camps. The claim thus is not within the scope of this Holocaust Survivors Claims Program, as defined by Congress and by the agreement between the United States and Germany.* Accordingly, the claim must be and is hereby denied.

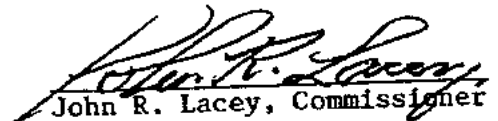
*The Commission notes, however, that the Agreement discharges and settles only those claims which are covered. Claimant therefore retains the right to pursue reparations through any other available forum.

The Commission finds it unnecessary to make determinations with respect to other elements of this claim.

Dated at Washington, D.C. and
entered as the Proposed
Decision of the Commission.

AUG 26 1997


Delissa M. Ridgway, Chair


John R. Lacey, Commissioner

NOTICE: Pursuant to the Regulations of the Commission, any objections must be filed within 15 days after service or receipt of notice of this Proposed Decision. Absent objection, this decision will be entered as the Final Decision of the Commission upon the expiration of 30 days after such service or receipt of notice, unless the Commission otherwise orders. FCSC Regulations, 45 C.F.R. 531.5 (e) and (g) (1996). --

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