

*Jim GOLLERT Family -
Keep in touch!
Best regards Joe Cittadini.*

20th Mission a short account

Revised July 1997

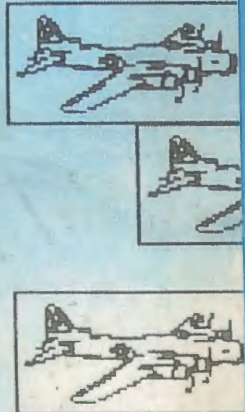
Gen. A. P. Clark's letter added Sept. 1997

Gen. L. E. Lyle's letter added Oct. 1997

As well as my memory serves

**The experience of an 8th Air Force B-17 crew on a daylight bombing mission flying out
of the English Midlands. Target: Berlin, 7 May 1944**

**Arduously assembled by
LCL Joseph L. Cittadini, USAFR Ret.**



**ORIGINAL
CREW**

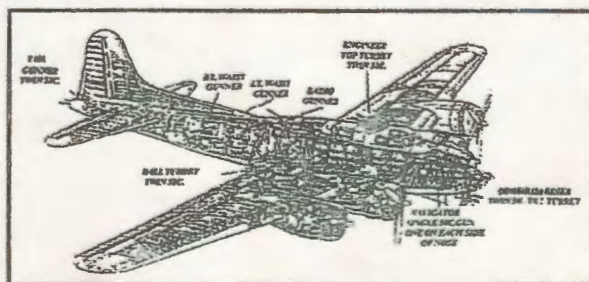


OPERATIONAL TRAINING UNIT

DALHART, TEXAS 1943

(left to right)

*Clarence E. Reed, engineer, RFD 1, Beaver PA
Roy F. Howell, waist gunner, Box 65, War, WVA
Irwin Bier, radio, 402 Lowell St. Vandergrift, PA
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20th Mission

A short account as well as my memory serves.

Updated November 2006

by

Joseph L. Cittadini

Lt. Colonel, USAFR, Ret.

*The experience of an 8th Air Force B-17 crew on a daylight bombing mission
flying out of the English Midlands. Target: Berlin, 7 May 1944*

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I am in my 80th year and in relatively good health. I am a retired Air Force Reserve Lt. Colonel with 19 successful missions.... I want to tell you a little bit about my 20th. Before I do, let me add an anecdote. Perhaps it will provide food for thought to counteract some of the stories you've heard about the abusive nature of the German soldiers: Recently I escorted a friend to a doctor's office. While we were waiting my friend asked me about the treatment we received in Stalag Luft III. He asked me if we were subjected to hurtful treatment. I told him that my association with the German Military personnel was about as good as we could expect. We did have many months of close to a starvation diet. At times we were subjected to harsh conditions due to weather. No time did I suffer personal abuse and in retrospect I must say that they tried to conform to the requirements of Geneva Convention of 1929 regarding treatment of POWs. They didn't have much to give us as POW's but I feel sure that their depot troops and civilians did not fare as well as we did because, in addition to the supplies they afforded us, we received Red Cross food.

The waiting room was small. What we said was easily heard by all present. A man and his wife sitting in the corner were listening intently. When there was a pause in our conversation the man spoke up and asked me which POW camp I had been in. As we talked we found that we were on the same march from Nürnberg to Moosburg and that General Patton's Third Army liberated us. He then told us a bit about his capture. His right arm had been badly mangled getting free from his parachute after his plane was destroyed by flak. The Germans brought him to a large hospital nearby. The doctor who attended him told him that damage was to his arm was so bad it had to be removed. The next day the surgeon who was to operate asked the wounded pilot if he would submit to an innovative, unprecedented operation that might save his arm. The surgeon cautioned the patient that if he could save the arm he mustn't expect it to be of much use. Our friend waiting here in the doctor's office with us said, "Whatever the outcome of the operation it couldn't be any worse than losing the arm to amputation." At this point he got up from his chair, lifted his right arm, flexed his muscle and proudly exclaimed, "He sure did a great job!" After the war he learned that the German doctor who had operated was a world-renowned neurosurgeon.

20th Mission

Shaken awake at three thirty in the morning by the 'night owl' assigned to get the

flight crews out of bed and on the way to the mess hall for early breakfast, I mumbled something unintelligible to let him know that I was awake. I hastily dressed in the cold of the damp English night. It was early May 1944.

My mind is dull and my body is tired. I shake my head in a vain effort to release the tension of my neck muscles. I try massaging the back of my neck but that too offers no relief. Two and a half hours sleep after a week of carousing in Scotland on flak leave is hardly enough for me. I am fatigued, mentally and physically. Ted and Jeff, my roommates and good buddies are getting ready too. We have nothing to say to each other. We are automatons responding as robots do without conscious thought. We we're all too tired and uninspired to think, let alone talk.

When I'm ready I gather up my brief case of navigation equipment, sling my knapsack containing my escape articles over my shoulder and hurry out into the cold darkness. With flashlight in hand as a headlight for my bike, I pedal wearily off to the base mess hall about a mile away. As I'm riding my thoughts go back to the first time I met Ted Goller. It was months back when I entered the BOQ assigned to our officer group in Dalhart, Texas. My memory is vague about this episode but I believe Jeff Brown met me as I entered. He introduced himself as the bombardier assigned to Ted Goller's crew. He told me that Ted, our pilot, was taking a shower and would be back in a few minutes. Jeff showed me to my cubicle which had a army cot with the sheets and blankets piled on the bare mattress. While I waited I made my bed in the Army style with the second blanket covering the pillow. Later I found that this 'bed dress' was necessary in the Texas panhandle to prevent the sand and dust from messing up the sheets and pillowcases. At that moment Jeff stuck his head in and announced that Ted had come back from the shower. I followed Jeff to Ted's cubicle and was greeted by a naked young man deliberately displaying his the full moon with his legs in the air and his hands grasping and spreading his buttocks. His awkward boyish giggle covered his embarrassment. I must admit that I was somewhat flustered. Later, I mentally related it to the art of establishing his territory quite similar to a dog marking his domain by urinating every few feet as he moved within his area.

Ted introduced himself while he continued to towel the moisture from his dark brown hair. We exchanged a bit of small talk as he dressed. When he stood up I could see that he was a bit over six feet tall, slender, lean and sinewy. Perhaps his weight was about 155 give or take five pounds His boyish grin belied his appearance of self-assurance. I guessed that he was about 20 or 21 years and ready to take charge of

the B-17 Flying Fortress and lead his crew off to war.

Big Jeff Brown our bombardier, from the ranch country of Texas was a solid muscular man. He seldom initiated a conversation and answered with only the necessary words to convey his thoughts. His high cheekbones and fine blond hair complemented his ruddy complexion. He was the strong silent type that gave the impression that he was a good man to have on your side when trouble came.

My mind is still in a daze as I enter the brightly lighted mess. My briefcase and knapsack are silent sentinels at a chair while I get on the fresh egg line. Fresh eggs in Britain are a luxury. I guess they are hard to get back home too. Personnel not slated to fly will eat powdered eggs if they want them but most will settle for cereal.

There are many tired looking new faces among the diners here this morning. I glance nervously around to try to locate a familiar face. A kind of panic wells up within me until I see one.

"Hey Al." I shout across the room. "What's new!?" Al Coloruso shouts a greeting back to me and I feel better. Al is a navigator flying with Ted Goller, my former pilot. I'm flying with his former pilot, George West. The switch was made to give me the opportunity to fly in a lead position. George West was now flying lead or deputy lead positions when our squadron was scheduled to fly group lead. Positions changed rapidly because of losses on each mission.

I get my eggs (sunnyside up) and return to my chair to eat. My eyes wander around the room picking out a few of the men I recognize. I dawdle over my breakfast with no enthusiasm --- despite the fresh eggs. Powdered eggs were an abomination invented by some guy back in the States who, it seems was doing his share to help Germany win the war. In my solitude my brain recalls faces that should be here this morning. I become melancholy with the realization of how many close friends are missing. Jim Geary, our original co-pilot, shot down on his seventh or eight mission. Don't know if he's dead or trying to get out of Europe via the 'underground'. Fioretti, Briley, Merlo, Griffiths, Small, Brookings, Big T and many more fine young men are gone now. As I think of them I say a little prayer for them and their families. I'm feeling low and my mind is still clouded because of insufficient sleep.

"Hey Tony, here's a chair"...Tony Credidio had just entered the mess hall. I need Tony near me to change my mood and cheer me up a bit.

"Where the hell's everyone"? I ask as Tony sets his eggs opposite me and plops into a chair. His big ugly features are wreathed in smiles as usual.. Tony is always in a happy state of being. He likes to tell the English girls that he has the ugliest pan in the E. T. O. That usually takes them off guard and they like him because they know he means it.

Tony fills in the news of the last week for me. He tells me of group leader changes made for the 545th and 546th squadrons. I recognize the names mentioned but don't know them. I give him a quick rundown on our flak leave in Scotland. I quickly tell him about our visit to Loch Lomond where it was cold and drizzly and the fish weren't biting. And of course of the beauties of Scotland that were so friendly. He explains the new faces by telling me of the plan to increase our group strength to 24 crews per squadron. He guesses that the invasion of the Continent will take place soon.

"How does the weather look to you, Tony?" Do you think the mission will be scrubbed?"

"Nah, we'll go today.....It's a M. E. Every plane will be flying today". Tony replied. "God I'm tired. What a week I had in Scotland. Those Scottish lassies are really nice. Something like the girls back home."

I leave Tony outside in the blackness because he has no bike and will take the truck down to the flight line. I mounted my bike and pedaled down to the briefing room. I locked my bike and wandered into the darkness behind the building. The night was black with many tiny stars feebly trying to alter it. I contemplated the hazy sky for a cue on what to expect of the weather. The blackness was beginning to relent with early signs of daylight approaching. The cirro-stratus gave no hint of what the weather would be when we returned from the mission. I secretly wished that it would turn bad so I could return to my barracks to resume my sleep, but I knew that it wouldn't. A shiver convulsed my body as I zipped my zipper and wearily made my way to the briefing room. The equipment trucks were lined up outside waiting to carry the combat crews to their planes which were strategically located around the perimeter of the airfield. It is almost 0430. Most of the aircrews were converging on the briefing room.

The large room was well lit. The wall behind the podium was draped to conceal the mission route and destination. Cigarette smoke began to cloud the low ceilinged room. The seats are beginning to be filled by the crew members who will be briefed on the route, times of departure and pertinent points leading to the initial point

where the bombing run will begin. Also the location and time we can expect to have fighter support and of the flak emplacements and any other information needed to complete a successful mission.

I find a chair in the rear of the room between Ted and Jeff. We are feeling a little better now so Ted and I are joshing Jeff Brown about his last excursion to London. Some little wench was giving the big innocent Texan from ranch country the runaround. We were afraid he might do something irrationallike marry her for instance. When we stopped fooling with Jeff, Ted asked me where we were heading today but I couldn't tell him because I was not flying in a lead position today. On days I fly lead I would have reported to the war room in Headquarters Building for a pre-briefing for lead crews.

I glanced at the formation board and noticed that Ted was flying in the number four position in the high squadron and West was in the three position in the lead squadron, neither being a lead position.

The M. P. brought us to our feet with a snappy "AT...TEN...SHUN!" as Col. Smith came into the room. He put us at ease and asked us to be seated.

"Gentlemen.....today we're going to hit the Hun with everything in the Eight Air Corp.....We are returning to a place we've been to before....."

As Col. Smith makes his speech the M.P. removes the curtain from the route map. All eyes are focused on the target for today.....Big 'B'. Big 'B' is Berlin. There are murmurs of disapproval and trepidation in the room which cannot in any way alter or affect the plans of the Bomber Command.

After big Col. Smith (he was all of six foot five or six, too big to fit in a fighter plane so as a West Pointer he was assigned to the heavy bombers) gives us his 'pep talk', old Major 'Pop' Dolan tells us about the number and placement of flak guns around Berlin. Most of us have heard and seen the guns in action before so we listen with half a mind. 'Cloudy' gives us the weather forecast and as usual we can expect to have low ceiling upon our return this afternoon.

The Navigators and the Bombardiers are dismissed to report to their respective rooms for special briefing covering their particular jobs.

On the way across the hall to the Navigator's briefing room. Sgt. Howell, one of Ted's waist gunners expressed a fervent wish that I might fly with them today. It was to be their twenty-ninth mission. We had enjoyed a fine time in Scotland together. I told him it would be nice if I could be with them on this mission. This mission was to be my twentieth. I hadn't flown as many as they had because usually I flew only when our crew was in the lead plane. I thanked Howell for his kind sentiments and said I sure would like to be going with them.

When I sat down at a table to draw the course lines on my maps, Coloruso was in the seat next to me. "Al, do you think we could switch crews so I could fly with Ted today in your place? Ted and his crew will be finishing their missions soon and this may be the last time I might get to fly with them...I'd like to do this for just for old times sake." Al thought for a moment..... "Well Joe, neither of us is flying a lead position so I don't see why not...I'll ask West."

We arranged it between ourselves and when the truck dropped me off in front of Ted's plane GOIN' DAWG my former crew gave me a warm welcome.

Big Jeff Brown wasn't flying with us. Our Group Navigator, Capt. Martin Vague, had checked him out as a navigator. He was flying with Johnson. In Brown's place a guy by the name of Grilli who was from a replacement crew was assigned to fill the bombardier slot. I hadn't met him before today but I would have the opportunity to get to know him better later on. He was a good man but a little green on combat discipline.

On Our Way

Our big plane gracefully left the runway and climbed to see the rising sun over the dip of the horizon. The ground below was still in darkness as we joined the squadron formation. The time it takes to form the group was usually about six to ten minutes if all goes well. The sun was warm and pleasant and having set up my navigation aids and having a few minutes with nothing of importance to do I relaxed and dozed off. The intercom chatter quickly terminated my snooze. Ted was grumbling to Martin his co-pilot about various things. Martin wasn't very alert. I guessed Ted missed his old co-pilot, Jim Geary. Jim had been shot down on his 7th or 8th mission flying with another crew. I first met Jim in Dalhart Texas where the crew assembled for Operational training. Jim had attended a military secondary school prior to eagerly applying for the Cadets when Pearl Harbor aroused us from the lethargy of civilian life. When he completed his training and received his wings he was disappointed in not being assigned to fighter pilot transitional training. At that time the demand was for bomber pilots. When we arrived in England Jim was impatient us to get into the fight as quickly as possible. He made his desire known to our Squadron Commander and very soon thereafter he was flying co-pilot with a crew who had lost theirs. He had in mind that as soon as he completed the required number of combat missions he would get back to the States and be able to request further training as a fighter pilot. At this point, after he had gone down with his new crew we had not heard whether he was alive or a P.O.W.

I glanced at my watch and checked my flight plan. We should be climbing to mission altitude by now in group formation to join the Wing. Shortly we would be crossing the English coastline heading out over the North Sea. A quick glance at my flight instruments ...I press my intercom button..."Navigator to crew...we're at 10500.... adjust oxygen masks and check in."

"Tail-gunner, OK!" Snapped Walton.

"Right waist gunner, OK!" From Howell.

"Left waist gunner, OK!" From Way.

"Radio, OK!" From Bier.

"Ball turret, OK!" From Wearne. He is a replacement filling in for Houston our

original ball turret gunner. Houston 'was stood down'. He had a face rash and was unable to put on an oxygen mask.

"Engineer, OK!" from Reed. Reed's position as engineer was behind the pilots where he could keep an eye on the flight instruments and man the top turret guns.

"Pilot and Co-pilot, OK from Ted Goller (in an undertone Ted instructed Martin, "You answer for me and yourself on these oxygen checks."

I said. "Navigator, OK!"

I waited for the bombardier who was sitting in the nose with me to answer. Grilli figured it was unnecessary because I could see him.

"Navigator to bombardier, I didn't hear you check in". I paused a moment. "Grilli, we run these oxygen checks every fifteen minutes. The way we do it, if everyone cooperates, it takes only a few seconds. It starts at the tail and works forward. You are expected to answer after I do. If you don't, the crew is on pins and needles waiting to hear your lovely voice. From now on you initiate the oxygen check every fifteen minutes....unless we are in a battle and you are firing your guns...out!"

Grilli acknowledged with a, "Roger, out."

I glance out the small window over my desk which is on the left side of the nose compartment, then out the window on the right side of the nose which is behind me when I'm seated at my desk. I make a note in my log that the group formation is complete. We were merging with the wing lead group. The clouds below us covered about four tenths of the sky at about ten thousand feet. We were approaching the English Channel and I could see that the cloud coverage appeared to be much greater up ahead. I log these observations in.

"Navigator to Bombardier, give me a nod when we cross the England coastline."

The ground below was still visible through the breaks in the clouds. He could look straight down from his position. That portion of the floor was plexi-glass he could determine precisely when and where we crossed the coast line. "Here's my map. Mark the point and the time of crossing. I want to determine the wind direction and velocity over the North Sea."

"Navigator...we just crossed the coastline." This was from Walton our trusty armament Sgt. "Thanks, Walton." I mutter and at the same time I am checking the time and the position as well as I could determine after looking at the map Grilli returned to me with an X to mark the spot we entered over the North Sea. Now, every two minutes I make an entry in the log. I need the altitude, air temperature, air speed and compass heading. Between entries I glance out the window for weather observations. I note that the cloud cover now is about seven tenths and increasing as we approach the continent.

Ted called to the crew to check the action of their guns with a very short burst. "Don't shoot any of our planes in the test." He warned. I quickly fire my left gun, then the gun on the right side. Both functioned. I get back to my attempt to determine the wind. I can see that we may not be able to pick a check point as we cross the continental coast line. I must assume that the lead navigator using radar has kept us on course. I must use that information to calculate the wind. It must be accurate because I will need to use it all the way in to Berlin and back if for some reason we lose the services of the lead crews.. Other than that we would have to depend upon the forecast winds that 'Cloudy' gave us at briefing. These forecast winds range in accuracy all the way from excellent to unusable.

Grilli is calling for a routine oxygen check. I automatically glance at my oxygen gauge and after Martin checks the pilot and co-pilot in, I say. "Navigator, OK."

Another look out the window tells me that I won't be able to get a fix on the enemy coastline but nevertheless I call Walton and Grilli and ask them to go see if they can find a hole in the clouds. "Grilli, here take my map again and see if you can determine the point of crossing. There are a few holes in the clouds maybe you can spot the line.

"My flight plan tells me that we should be crossing the coastline just about now so I look out my small window and all I see are clouds. White and fluffy and tinged with morning sunlight. I announce to the crew that we have crossed the coast line because my flight plan says so! I warn them to keep their eyes peeled for fighters. Ted adds a few words of warning and urges Reed who is manning the top turret guns to look into the sun for attacks from above.

"Flak!! 3 o'clock." bristled over the intercom. I get up from my desk which is on the left side of the B-17 nose and crane to see out the right window with my hands on my 50 cal. machine gun. I see the familiar black blossoms opening about two hundred yards away at our altitude.

"Well, that proves that we are over enemy territory." I state matter-of-factly as I jot the necessary information in the log.

Having been unable to get a visual checkpoint as we flew over the continental shore line I must use the forecast winds to figure our flight path. The lead ship is using radar to guide us to the target. By watching the flight plan and comparing it with the radar determined path I get a fair indication of the accuracy of the forecast winds.

They are not too satisfactory. The free air temperature is thirty eight degrees below zero and we are tooling along at eighteen thousand feet. The formation looks good from where I sit and our fighter escort is punctual in making rendezvous with us. All is going smoothly so I sit back and think about flying with my original crew today.

Over the intercom I sense that Ted is having trouble with Martin, his co-pilot. The few words he mutters to him on intercom is making me feel uncomfortable. Somehow I sense that this is going to be my last flight for a long time. Before takeoff, West's engineer came over to ask me about an exposure meter he had loaned me when our crew went on flak leave. I hadn't had time to return it to him because we had returned to the base the night before. I thanked him for the use of it and told him it was in my flight bag in my room. To go help himself to it if I didn't make it back. I shouldn't have said that in front of my crew, but the words just slipped out. Then thinking back about the train ride back from Glasgow to Edinburgh. The cars were sparsely occupied. An old man came into our compartment to beg a few shillings. He was unkempt, his clothes smelled badly and his long beard was matted and dirty. The gleam in his eyes arrested my attention. We gave him some change and he sat down among us. Our small talk ceased. We sat there looking at each other and at him. There were a few awkward moments. Then Arthur Way, one of our gunners ordered him out of our compartment. We were all amazed because Way was a timid boy from Michigan and it surprised us that he took the initiative. This outburst of his left us dumbfounded. The old man got up and sidled toward the door. He opened it to leave. He turned and started to talk but paused. He looked at Way then glanced around the room eyeing each of us. He brought his eyes to rest on Way, cleared his throat to say something. "Son" he said and paused in contemplation. Then his eyes stopped momentarily on each of us. "All of you"He paused for effect as an actor would, and then continued. "You are lucky to be alive." We didn't say anything until after he had gone. We then burst into guilty laughter and teased Way with the phrase 'you're lucky to be alive' for the rest of the train ride. Now as I sit here at my small desk with a 50 cal. machine off to the side, I repeat the phrase again to my self. "Lucky to be alive."

"God dammit, Martin keep your eyes on those instruments." Ted was giving Martin hell again. I'm sure all the crew were feeling uncomfortable with me. A pilot and the co-pilot should establish the harmony necessary to give the crew confidence. We all have the responsibility to inspire trust that we all are able and are doing his share to give us a reasonable chance of completing a successful mission. They should work together as one. I was thinking what I guess all the rest were thinking: I wish old

Geary was up there with Ted.

"Martin, don't keep your head in the cockpit all the time, look around the sky! Do you see those planes at 11 o'clock high?" Martin must have nodded his head in affirmation because Ted continued. "Well why don't you call them out?"

"Fighters at Three o'clock high." someone reported. We had fighter aircraft visible up ahead and off to our right. The atmosphere on board became electric, tensions mounted.

"Navigator to crew..."We are supposed to pick up P-51's in about eight minutes...this may be them but don't take it for granted."

Some one else reported fighters over head. A second report positively identified them as our fighters.

"Pilot to crew....no matter how sure you are that they are our planes, keep an eye on them and track them with your guns. If they turn toward us fire at them when they are in range... the Germans have plenty of our planes and have used them against us more than once."

"What's wrong with number 3 engine?" Ted shouted. "Look at that oil gauge!! Martin, For God's sake wake up....give me more rpm's on Number 4...!!" Sgt. Reed, the engineer who was manning the upper turret guns was out of the turret scanning the instruments. He told Ted that number 3 is shooting oil but by this time Ted had feathered the defective engine.

Ted's voice was the one of extreme exasperation mixed with relief. "I didn't think I was going to get it feathered...I just had enough oil pressure to get it feathered." He repeated happy with the out come.

On a previous mission Ted had lost an engine on the bomb run. The high squadron had dropped its bombs late when the formation was in a turn and one of the bombs knocked out an engine and part of the plexiglass nose. He couldn't feather the engine and had to limp home across Paris with the bad engine windmilling all the way across the channel. The vibration of the windmilling propeller eventually tore it off and it cut a streak across the fuselage on its way through the air. It was a harrowing experience. In addition the navigator lost most of his maps through the hole in the plexiglass making the return to England more hazardous.

With one engine not functioning we were unable to maintain our place in the formation. Ted called the Group leader and told him that we would pull out of formation and lighten our load. With the bombs gone he thought that we might be able to maintain our speed and stay with the formation. We would attempt to fly the mission with the group for mutual protection. As soon as I heard of the engine trouble I determined our position. "Navigator to pilot. We are about thirty four minutes from Berlin. We are northwest of Hanover and southeast of Bremen. This is a well defended area with plenty of flak emplacements." The information didn't make the crew feel any better. This area had a bad reputation because of the losses our group had suffered on previous missions.

Out of formation we got our bombs away into the solid cloud layer about 6,000 feet below. Ted increased the RPM on the remaining three engines. During this time I was busy checking our location on the map to determine a heading back to England if the need arose. We were making up lost ground to get us back into formation.

More muttering on the intercom told me and the rest of the crew that something else was wrong. When I finally understood what it was all about I realized that number one engine was also out of commission and feathered.

Ted called the group leader to report our predicament and notify him that we could no longer remain with the group. We would have to return to the base by ourselves. Ted had swung Goin' Dawg 180 degrees and called for a heading back to base.

I gave Ted a heading to fly hoping to get us out of Germany over the North Sea by the shortest course. This would take us northeast of Bremen heading northwest into the Wilhelmshaven area. We could expect to encounter a well defended city because it was an important German Naval Base. Our indicated air speed was about 135 knots because we were descending to the top of the cloud layer. His intention was to ride the top of the clouds which were at about 11,000 feet. This plan increased the danger of flak damage but gave us a tremendous advantage to be able to escape enemy fighters by descending into the clouds if we were attacked.

At 11,500 feet we were skimming across the white fluffy clouds. At level flight we were able to maintain 120 knots. The world around us was a cloudless sky of the clearest blue and just below were clouds white as new fallen snow. With our oxygen masks and headphones blocking the sound of the engines we were in an ominous, peaceful stillness. There was no intercom chatter. We each were alone in our

solitary thoughts not wanting to voice them for fear they may discourage the other crew members. After five or six minutes we were feeling more comfortable and Ted interrupted the relative silence with: "Keep an eye into the sun. We are at 11,000 feet which is a perfect position for fighters to come from above out of the sun. Keep alert!!"

A short time later, Walton our tail gunner quietly and calmly stated: "Fighters off in the distance at 6 o'clock. I can't tell if they are.....wait a minute....they are coming our way."

Ted said. "Walton, watch them and tell me when we have to duck into the clouds. I don't want to let down unless it is urgent. We don't have enough power to pull back up once we commit ourselves into the clouds."

"OKNow!!" Shouted Walton. "They're coming in fast. There's two of them!! Me210's I think!"

Within seconds the white fluffy clouds were all around us. The blue sky was gone and we were letting down at 135 knots. I had my eye on the altimeter.

10,500.....10,000. Going down with almost zero visibility. I could see the inboard engines, one was propelling and the other had the sharp edges facing directly forward cutting the wind so no rotation was produced. Beyond the engines, the vague shape of the wing tips were visible.

"Navigator to crew....we're below 10,000 feet. We won't be able to climb to altitude on two engines so remove your oxygen masks and try to relax. We're in the Bremen area of Germany. If we are forced to bail out for any reason it is a good long walk to Luxembourg which is roughly southwest of this position. Beyond that is France and the Maginot Line which is occupied by the Germans. If you head directly east you will come into the Netherlands. I have no information on whether they have an underground to assist Allied airmen.

9,000 feet....8,000 feet. Ted asked me to look at the wing tips to see if we were gathering any ice in the clouds. Peering through the haze of the clouds straining to see, a frightening series of explosions shocked me. "BANG!" sharp and crisp. a "BANGBANG.....BANG..BANG." Without our oxygen masks the sharpness of the explosions were nerve shattering. I had never experienced the sound of 88 mm explosions without the dampening effect of the masks. At 7,400 we were seeing flak bursts. Hearing and feeling the explosive "BARUMPH!!" when the bursts are close to the plane we experienced the disruption of the air and we felt the plane shudder. The flak was quite accurate. They had our altitude and close enough for us to see the

black blossoms through the thick clouds. We were getting flak from the area somewhere northeast of Bremen. Ted executed some sharp evasive action and within a few seconds the flak bursts were no more.

Ted announced that we would continue to descend. He explained that at our present altitude we were sitting ducks for the German 88mm shells. Ted ordered the crew to test fire the guns again. The sound of our guns firing, pehpeh... pehpepeh... pehpeh... sounded for a few seconds. Then:

"Tail guns, OK"

"Right waist OK"

We all answered in turn assuring the crew that we were in good condition. At the end of the reporting the bombardier reported that his guns were not operating.

"Pilot to bombardier....work on your turret and report when they are functioning."

I watched the altimeter announcing the altitude every 500 feet. At 2,000 feet I began to worry inwardly. The terrain was not mountainous but there was a range of small hills about forty miles south of our flight path. We didn't know if the Germans had tethered balloons as the British had in the London area. We had no knowledge of possible high towers on hilltops that we could run into. At 1500 feet the clouds were still our only exterior companion. Goddammit, this stuff may go all the way down to the ground! Maybe the altimeter is reading incorrectly due to pressure differences. I had set it before takeoff at Grafton Underwood in the English midlands.

"Pilot to navigator, Joe do you have knowledge of the terrain in this area?" I told him about the hills south of us but couldn't give him any assurance that we wouldn't run into any high objects. I ventured a guess that we should be safe if we broke through the clouds before we reached 500 feet. At 1200 feet we hadn't broken through the clouds yet. I called the crew to tell them the altitude and asked them to report any openings in the solid clouds all around us. There was no chatter on the intercom. I was in a cold sweat and guessed that the rest of the crew were feeling the pressure too. At eleven hundred we were still enveloped in tiresome clouds. One thousand feet..no change.

"Reed!!" from Ted, "Isn't that a hole in the clouds at eleven o'clock?"

"Yes sir, I believe it is, Lt. Goller".

My eyes were on the spot and I saw a moment of green landscape below. It was like a breath of Spring after a long cold Winter. Then the clouds again! The green was gone! Moments later at 970 feet we broke through the clouds onto beautiful green countryside. It was a great relief to be able to see ahead. I could feel the warmth of the good earth as though I had just stepped out of knee-deep snow into a fairyland.

For a few moments I was back again in Vermont in my pleasant childhood. I had spent the morning plowing through snow hanging sap buckets on the sugar maples. I was tired and sick of the snow. Then like magic I stepped unto a patch of ground where the sun had trickled through the trees and melted the snow. It felt so good to feel the earth beneath my feet that I walked around in circles to enjoying the freedom from the snow.

It was a great joy to see the greenness of the grass and the new leaves on the trees. It was spring in Germany and a new hope was at hand. Up above the clouds were cold and forbidding as the snow and it seemed to weigh heavily on our B-17. As we broke through the clouds our crippled plane seemed to leap forward with new life. Nothing could stop us now, I felt!

Ted called us and gave us permission to remove the cumbersome parachutes that were part of our being once we boarded the plane. He commented that we were too near to bail out and there was no way to climb to altitude with only two engines functioning. I removed my back 'chute harness and unhooked my knapsack which I had fastened to the rings of my chest pack 'chute. Early on after my first combat mission, in addition to the chest pack, I acquired a backpack 'chute which fit snugly on my back. My thought was that if the plane was blown apart and I found myself floating in space, this would get me to the ground. In addition it was comforting to feel the warmth and extra protection that snug fitting 'chute provided. I placed the knapsack beside the forwards escape hatch so I wouldn't forget it if I had to leave the plane in a hurry. This escape bag of mine had become a joke around the base. My friends kidded me about the shaving equipment, the carton of cigarettes, the candy bars, heavy warm socks, and the small compasses and escape maps we were issued as a means of working our way back to France and hopefully the French 'underground'. They wanted to know if I intended to set up a store in some German prison camp. I enjoyed the good-natured ribbing but I had the satisfaction of knowing that if I had to bail out these articles might be the difference between becoming a POW or a successful returnee.

We continued our descent to tree top level. We were at 80 or 90 feet off the ground. Higher than that would allow the ground guns to track us and bring us down. At tree top level a gun emplacement would see us fleetingly.

"Pilot to bombardier...over."

"Bombardier to Pilot...Sir?"

"Grilli, have you been able to get your guns operating yet?"

Grilli mumbled something sheepishly which led Ted to understand that he hadn't done anything about them.

"Goddammit Grilli, get busy and get those guns operating in working order. What's the matter with you? Don't you realize the seriousness of the situation?"

Grilli started to pull his guns apart and after a few minutes work he reported that he had one of the twin fifties in operation.

"Pilot to ball-gunner....I had forgotten all about you...you're so quiet. You better crawl out of that ball. It would be a bad place to be in if we had to crash land in a hurry."

Wearne was flying his last mission. His crew had finished their missions while Wearne was in the hospital. He was assigned to Ted Goller's crew to replace Houston who had developed a facial rash which prevented him from using an oxygen mask. Houston was a good guy from New Mexico. He was part of our original crew. We missed him as we did Jim Geary our copilot and Jeff Brown our bombardier.

With map in hand I sat looking out over the pretty German countryside. I tried in vain to pick up a check point. Doing pilotage from seventy feet altitude is similar to walking cross-country with a sectional map that had details such as rivers, railroad tracks and cities. You could walk all day and not see anything that would be put on a map. I felt that we were farther north than I wanted us to be but I hesitated to make a correction hoping to see some landmark that would confirm my feeling. We passed some little farmhouses with cows and sheep grazing in the lush meadows. We scared a young boy who ran for cover when he saw this big plane that was foreign to him. About a mile directly ahead a train was puffing its way towards us. Its track would make a slow turn to the east about the time it would pass us.

Ted gave the crew orders to strafe and try to knock the engine out. I had a secret fear that it might be a 'flak-train'. We heard about mobile artillery units that were moved about to intercept the path of bomber formations. I was more interested in trying to match the railroad track with my map to get a checkpoint. I scrambled through the sectional that I had in search of a railroad that would be in the neighborhood that I figured we were in. As our guns opened fired I dropped my map to man my fifty caliber on the right side of the nose. I sent a spray of fire starting at the engine and sweeping all the way down the coaches as it moved out of range. I was still actively engaged in a bitter serious war. After we passed over train I could

hear Walton's guns in the tail spitting angry oaths of lead at the undefended train. We were approaching a more inhabited area. I was frantically searching for a visible landmark that could give us a check point on the map.

"Flak.....nine o'clock level." Came a quiet voice on the intercom. It shocked me into action. I thought someone must be kidding. My eyes glancing in the nine o'clock direction failed to see any of the familiar black blossoms at first. Then about half a mile away there was a black cloud drifting slowly away. They were firing in our direction but the shell exploded after it had passed us.

"They have our altitude all right but they are missing us by a mile". someone bubbled over the intercom.

From Ted: "Joe! What's that body of water directly ahead? It looks like a lake." I didn't see any water but I reached for the map as I let my eyes search the horizon. Then I saw it stretching out as far to the right as I could see. To the left, the lake seemed to end a short distance away. I frantically searched the map in the area I figured we were in for a small body of water but at an altitude of 70 feet I couldn't get a good perspective of the terrain. I strained to make intelligence of what was visible and relate it to what was on the map. Frustration turned to apprehension when a large black blossom formed off to the left about 200 yards away.

I called Ted on the intercom: "I am not sure what that body of water is, but let's not fly over it." Ted had already started to turn to the left having the same reasoning that to fly over the water would give the shore gunners a clear target with no trees to cut off their view. "O.K. Joe, we'll cut around it and stay above dry ground." We were heading toward the large flak bursts which didn't seem too wise at the time. Later we realized that perhaps the flak bursts were thrown in just that position to try to force us to fly over the water area. On this southerly course for about three minutes we had reached the south end of the what we assumed was a lake. (see ↗)¹ Ted slowly banked our big plane to the right to resume our original course and to keep away from the big flak bursts. As we leveled off on course I was manning the gun on the right side of the nose and gazing intently to determine the location of the guns that were responsible for the black blossoms. The next few seconds are still a

¹Jade Busen south of Wilhelmshaven (see addendum)

confusion in my mind. I was shocked to see about 300 yards away four concrete flak towers. They were partially concealed by large trees. I could imagine the twenty millimeter guns belching from the oblong slots in the tough concrete. My mental image became real when I saw the tracers coming in our direction. About the same time I saw tracers my fifty cal. was in action. I didn't answer Ted's question as to who was shooting and at what. It happened much too fast and it was all over not too soon.

Walton called from his position in the tail that the flames from our right wing were sweeping fifty feet beyond the tail. Reed received a slight flak wound, Ted picked up a few splinters of metal. All of this happened in seconds. Ted announced that he was going to set the plane down before it blew up. I kicked the forward escape hatch out and crouched beside it facing aft with my back pressing a bulkhead. I wondered if I could get out of the plane through this hatch. I felt my right hip burn when the plane eased onto the earth but I soon forgot it as our plane started to drag along the ground. I sat beside the open hatch and watched the soft mud come through the hatch. It continued to come in and pile up beside me until I thought that I might be buried under the mud! Finally the big plane ground to a halt and we all scrambled to get out and away from the inferno. The co-pilot's window had jammed shut due to the distortion of the structure. The bomb bay was burning furiously. We feared that the fuel might ignite. There were five of us forward of the bomb bay. Luckily Ted had opened his side window to aid him in the landing. Judging the distance to the ground through the front windows presented a more difficult picture on when the body of the plane would come into contact with the ground. As it happened Ted's window was one of two exits for escape. I was sitting besides the other. It was filled with mud to a height of two feet. Ted being closest to his window climbed out first and fell head first into the mud. Reed followed and then the co-pilot, Martin was waiting his turn. All this time which seemed like an eternity, I was standing below the flight deck expecting this fuel tanker to blow up in my face. Grilli experiencing the panic that we were in was pounding on my back trying to hurry me. He then started to burrowing into the soft mud hoping to get out through the escape hatch that I had kicked out. By the time I fell out through the pilot's window, Gilli's tunneling was bringing him out. Ted saw that he was stuck and despite the inferno, ran back to assist him. During this time the five men in the rear of the B-17 left through the waist door and were scrambling across the mud toward a road that was about seventy five yards away.

As I started toward the road waddling in the mud I managed to ask Ted if we all got out. His answer cheered me considerably. He said that they were all moving under

their own power. The soft gooey mud piled up on my sheepskin lined flying boots. With each step they became onerously heavy. The extra weight made me realize that there was pain in the region of my right hip. I dismissed it in my anxiety to put some distance between the plane and myself. I jogged along until I fell exhausted on the paved road. About that time a member of the Wehrmacht home guard came riding up on a bike. We were too tired to move or say anything for a few moments.

Ted noticed that I was favoring my right leg and asked about it. "My right hip hurts a little." I mumbled. "Is everyone else all right?" "Walton sprained an ankle and Bier got his face cut up a bit. He wasn't on intercom when I announced that we were going to crash land. The fire in the bomb bay drove Bier back into the waist. The rest haven't reported any problems."

"Ted, that was a sweet landing you made. I hardly felt any jarring at all."

The German soldier {I guess he was military} was off his bike and waving his old rifle ordering us to line up, five on each side of the road and no talking. On second thought he must have been a member of the home guard. I think he was too old to be in the wehrmacht.

The machine gun bullets were beginning to explode due to the fire. Our poor old GOIN' DAWG was burning furiously. The old guy asked with his few words of English if the bombs were still in the plane. We made him understand that we had dropped them. He asked. "Where?" We told him that we released them into a body of water. He thought for a fleeting moment, then with a nod of his head and a knowing grin he echoed. "In the water." He couldn't have been more eloquent in explaining that he 'heard that one before' if he had been able to understand and converse in our language.

Next he wanted to know if we carried side arms on us. We promptly assured him that we didn't. By this time a soldier appeared and starting shouting orders to us to starting marching. We soon got used to having German soldiers shout at us especially when they had an audience of civilians about them. In Germany the military was the supreme authority and they kept the civilian populace well regimented to take orders and jump when they were told to do so. He was proud to be able to issue orders to American officers with little fear of rebuttal. He told us to maintain a meter interval between us. With five of us in one lane and five in the other lane, he shouted. "Forward march!"

The pace was too much for me so Ted came up to give me a hand. Walton needed

help too. In a few moments our formation was ended. This riled the Pvt. of the Wehrmacht and he started to upbraid us. He derived a sadistic pleasure in shouting at us. Ted told the two men at the head of the columns to slow the pace to a crawl. This helped considerably. Ted then turned to the German soldier, "Why you pinheaded asshole, German soldiers who were prisoners of war of the Americans were being treated in a manner that we as American officers expected to be treated." This had little effect on him but he permitted a slower pace and the aid in helping the injured.

After a lull in shouting orders, he asked in broken English. "Do any of you come from Milwaukee?" after a pause he added, "I have a cousin who lives there." We got a laugh from that statement. Ted told him that his cousin was a helluva lot better off than he was.

We marched for about fifteen minutes and finally came into view of the flak tower that set us on fire. Local residents lined the road to watch the spectacle of the vanquished flyers. As we drew near the tower four big guns went off in rapid succession. "BANGBANG!! BANG!..BANG!!!" My sore hip notwithstanding, I must have jumped a foot in the air. "BANG!...BANGBANG!!.. BANG!!!" Four more explosions shattered the quiet of the countryside. We were stunned by the deafening noise. If I heard it hundreds of times I think that I could never accept it without a sense of panic!

The vibration and din was unbearable! I glanced upward into the clouds and wondered if this could be our bombers returning from Berlin. A glance at my watch told me that it was too soon for their return. It might have been our fighter escort returning home after the battle.

The German officer in charge lined us up in front of one of the concrete flak emplacements and had us searched. They relieved us of all our possessions including our few cigarettes. At this point I realized I had forgotten my knapsack which had been my constant companion on each mission. It contained a carton of cigarettes, shaving equipment, extra warm socks, small compasses to aid in escaping and other small articles that might come in handy. I grinned to myself in ironic disgust. After a few moments of mulling it over in my mind I concluded that it was just as well because the enemy would have taken them.

We were herded into the flak tower up a flight of stairs and into a small windowless room. It must have been used for the storage of useless materiel. There were no

chairs. The room was only large enough to contain us in a standing position with two or three of us seated on the dusty floor. Walton I had priority on the seating space because of our injuries. We looked at each other without saying anything for a few moments in frustration and consternation. Then Reed burst out. "There's no window for ventilation. What the hell are they trying to do to us?" In a short while we became rebellious. Reed banged on the door and kept banging and kicking it until the guard with rifle in hand cautiously opened the door. Ted, who was our senior officer demanded an audience with the commandant in charge. In a few minutes a lieutenant appeared and wanted to know what the commotion was about. Ted spoke up and demanded medical attention for us and also demanded better quarters. "This room has no means of ventilation." boomed Ted, our senior officer. "We have rights to reasonable conditions of capture".

The German officer was a well behaved man. His English was limited and spoke only a few words. "You have no rights.....You killed two and wounded one." I knew that he was referring to the machine gun fire that I sent toward the slits in the flak towers. I felt a glow of satisfaction knowing we had inflicted some damage before being shot down.

"When we were flying we were at war with each other." I interjected. "You were shooting at us and we were returning the fire. You were our enemy then. Now we are your prisoners and demand that we be afforded treatment in accordance with the agreements reached by the International Convention at Geneva, Switzerland for prisoners of war."

The German officer gave it a moment of thought. He turned to the guard, gave him some orders and left without further word to us.

Ted tried to get friendly with the guard and succeeded in finding that the door was to be left open and that we would get some medical attention. In a few minutes we realized that we were going to get some action because a hospital orderly soon appeared. The orderly was complaining about giving aid to the enemy and indicated that he would not attend to us. Our guard who had two stripes listened to the orderly's complaint. With a curse at him he gave him a sharp swipe with the back of his hand which almost knocked him over. The orderly then proceeded to doctor our wounds with no further ado.

The guard told us that he was from Poland and had no sympathy with the German position but at present he could do nothing about it. We tried to weasel some

military information from him as to our location, the size and number of guns and the number of military personnel. We figured that by some chance our secret fantasies might be realized and we could bring this information back to our intelligence officers.

After the medical orderly treated my hip wound and took care of Walton's ankle, we were beginning to feel hungry. We hadn't eaten since the fresh egg breakfast which seemed hours ago. We started to complain about the treatment and the lack of food. We had so much success from our first campaign about the lack of ventilation and the need of first aid that we felt that we had the Germany army intimidated. Well we waited but no food was forthcoming. Then we started to demand the return of our cigarettes. This too brought no results. We changed our tactics and asked the guard how long we would have to remain in this vault. Actually that was what it looked like. A concrete vault. We wondered if they had any intention of keeping us here over night. The guard told us we would be moved in an hour or two. We didn't believe him but we hoped he was right. Days later we realized that during our time in captivity most of it was spent anxiously waiting to be moved. The cold, the lack of food, and the starkness of captivity were so intolerable that we felt that any move would be for the something better. We were soon to find out that the next move and each succeeding one did not provide an increase in our comfort.

In about an hour we were herded out of the vault back to the courtyard. My hip had stiffened considerably and I needed help. Walton seemed to be doing all right with his sore ankle. They had us climb aboard an open body truck which was large enough to carry ten prisoners and a rifle toting guard. The weather was clear and brisk which prompted us to huddle together for protection from the cold wind. We traveled about twenty miles and were not permitted to look over the sides. When the truck finally stopped we found that we were in military base. We were hustled into the base guardhouse. There were two large rooms and one smaller room that had toilet facilities. The smaller room had a barred small window about seven feet above the floor. Each of the large rooms had wooden long benches that would serve as beds if we had to spend the night. The guards put us in this enclosure and iron bars were locked behind us. There was no heating facility, no blankets and no mattress to soften the hard wooden benches.. I felt the bitter cold despite the clothing I wore on the mission. We sat dejectedly on the cold wooden benches after surveying our quarters.

*It must have been about three o'clock in the afternoon when the bars had clanked shut behind us. We thought they would provide us with food but it didn't happen. The short spring days at 48 degrees north latitude soon brought on the dusk so we settled down as best we could to try to blot out our discomfort with sleep. Sleep was very hard to come by. The cold and the hard benches were a poor combination to induce untroubled sleep. I dozed off from nervous exhaustion but soon awoke. Realizing where I was, I tried to relax so I could bring back sleep. I thought about Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. I tried to recall his words about sleep. 'Oh sleep it is a gentle thing...Beloved from pole to pole...To Mary Queen the praise be given....She sent that gentle thing from heaven that slid into my soul'.*

When dawn crept into our cold bleak room I aroused myself, stretched and tried to get up from the bench. The stiffness in my hip now permeated all the muscles of my body. Chatter, slow at first began to fill the room. Chatter interspersed with grumbling and vile language lamenting and bewailing our distressing straits. We took turns using the latrine. There was no soap and no means of drying our hands and face. I had no experience of being in a situation as mean as this and I'm sure that neither had any of our crew.

We spent many hours in this predicament. Late in the day Ted called me into the latrine and asked me to give him a boost up so he could so he could look out he small barred window. While I held him in this position he described what appeared to be a long inclined chute capable of holding a missile and giving it direction when fired. Ted thought it might be one of the sites used to launch the V-1 robot bombs or the V-2 long range liquid fueled ballistic missiles that were wreaking havoc on London. After a minute or two I told Ted that I had to let him down. He said "OK" and then boosted me up so I could see what he described. I thought that this information would have little value to the Allies. I was sure that our reconnaissance aircraft and our spies in Germany have much greater knowledge of this base than what we could supply by our casual observations.

In the late afternoon we were ushered into another building which housed the German officers mess. We were surprised to find the tablecloths on the long tables. We were served black bread with a cup of soup. Margarine and fruit jam rounded out the menu. I presumed that this was all they could muster up for their prisoners and I felt grateful for the effort made to accommodate us.

This routine was carried out for two days. We learned that the Germans were accumulating allied prisoners at this base until they had a sufficient number for shipment to the main interrogation center located in Frankfurt-on-Main. Early in the

morning of the third day we were given a ration of black bread and cheese to take with us and were moved by truck to the railroad station. The bread was sour and solid. A loaf about the size of the typical one pound American wrapped bread weighed about four pounds. To the American men it was almost indigestible. While we were waiting in the railroad station for our train, some of our men (still full of piss and vinegar) made pellets of the squishy bread and used them to bombard each other. The civilians waiting for the train watched in amazement at the spectacle of officers wasting food when all of them were on a starvation diet. I was ashamed of my fellow fliers for their childish behavior. I'm sure that when these jackasses learned what it felt like to be really hungry they would recall this episode with regret.

DULAG LUFT

When the train arrived in Frankfurt it was moved to a siding that bordered the interrogation center. DULAG LUFT is a contraction of durchgangslager or 'entrance camp'. We were marched to the gate and then herded into individual cells. Apparently we were being subjected to complete isolation. My cell had a small window near the ceiling at what appeared to be just above ground level. It provided light for which I was grateful. The bunk bed had a makeshift mattress and two blankets which were dirty. I'm sure that the room hadn't been cleaned since the start of the war. There were no other comforts. To use the latrine I had to bang on the door to get the attention of the guard. He would escort me then wait for me to return me to my cell. The trip to the latrine was a diversion from the long hours of nothing to do. Alone with my thoughts the hours were interminably wearisome. No one to talk to and nothing to read. Welcome distractions were: Twice a day I received a ration of food. The morning meal was some black bread and margarine with a large cup of ersatz coffee made from roasted grain and chicory. In the late afternoon I received a bowl of soup. I call it soup because I didn't know what else to call a thin watery gruel resembling porridge. That and the ever-present sour, heavy, under-cooked bread. After the evening meal I tried to blot out my discomfort with sleep. Sleep was hard to come by.

In the morning after breakfast I was escorted to the commandant's office for interrogation. The German officer offered me a cigarette which I eagerly accepted. He was a mild-mannered gentleman. His neat uniform had the insignia of what I

believed to be a captain. I was not familiar with the insignia denoting the rank in the German military. He asked me to be seated and we engaged in small talk for a minute or two. He then told me the date and place of my enlistment, my army serial number, 12083882 as a 'GI', the location and the time of the various schools I attended in the Army, the date of my commission and my serial number, 0809104 as an officer. After a pause he recounted the date and port of embarkation and the date of arrival at my air base in Grafton Underwood, England. He backpedaled to tell me that I graduated from Brooklyn Technical High School in February 1935 and that I was employed at Todd Shipyards in Brooklyn after enlisting while awaiting orders to report to the Army Classification Center in Nashville, Tennessee.

"Lt. Cittadini, you can see that I am in possession of a comprehensive resumé of Lt. Cittadini's background. It is my aim to identify the person sitting before me as Lt. Cittadini. Our enemies have had spies and saboteurs flown into Germany with

bomber formations in the past. It is my responsibility to determine that you are not a spy and that you are in fact, Lt. Joseph Cittadini, navigator on a B-17 piloted by Lt. T. Goller."

"But I am Lt. Cittadini, here are my dog tags to prove it!"

"Dog tags are easily supplied to spies. They are not proof." The German Officer cajoled.

"What other way do I have to identify myself that will satisfy you?"

"If you will name all the members of your crew and their positions I will feel secure in believing you are who you say you are."

I told him that I am authorized to give only my name, rank and serial number. With that reply the captain called the orderly and asked him to return me to my cell. I had another long day and night of recalling the past. At one point I tried to remember the words of the German war song which was very popular among the Allied soldiers too.

*Underneath the lamplight, by the garden gate
Darling I remember the way you used to wait.
T'was then that you whispered tenderly
That you love me, and would always be
My Lili of the lamplight my own Lili Marlene.*

*Orders came for sailing somewhere over there
Marching by the barracks was more than I could bear*

*I saw you standing in the street I heard your feet
But could not meet my Lili of the lamplight
My own Lili Marlene*

*Now I'm in the trenches on a frozen morn
Thinking of my darling and my distant home
Wondering if she is waiting there for me
To come, her joys to share my Lili of the lamplight
My own Lili Marlene*

*But I'll never see her and she'll never know
That I've been wounded and very soon will go
Thinking of her and long ago brings tears to me
I love her so, my Lili of the lamplight My own Lili Marlene*

The following day was essentially the same. We went through the same drill almost as if we were rehearsing a play. He may have added a few more details to what he knew about me and he emphasized the insignificance of the details he asked for. He repeated, "German Intelligence knew more than I knew about the 384th Bomb Group and the 8th Air Force." I did not tell him, but I did agree with him. He sent me back to my solitary cell to be left alone with my thoughts.

Next day we met again. While we were enjoying a cigarette the air raid sirens sounded. The Captain said. "Here comes your comrades. They crossed the coastline of England at 52° 20" N. Latitude and entered the continent at....." He reeled of all the pertinent facts of the bomber formation, the path they would fly, the target they would hit was to be oil refineries at Halle, the return track back to England etc. He sounded the same as our briefing officers back at our base. After the formation had passed we got down to the business of identifying Lt. Cittadini.

"Lt. Cittadini, the rest of your crew is out in the sunshine in the forelager. We have enough kriegies to make a trainload. They may be shipping out today or tomorrow to a permanent camp in eastern Germany. You will be left behind and may not be able to join them if you have to wait for the next shipment. "He paused for a few moments to let this sink in. "Lieutenant, I feel quite sure that you are Cittadini but suppose we compromise on my demand that you identify all the members of your crew and just

name one." I thought for a few seconds and agreed. "Which position would you like me to identify"? He asked, "what is the name of your right waist gunner"? I answered, "Sgt. Roy Howell". This satisfied him and a short time later I was escorted to the forelager and the reunion with my crew was pleasant.

While we waited to be sent to our permanent stalag I remember adding a sketch of the nose of our B-17 with the name GOIN' DAWG and below it the names of the members of our crew. This mural was put on the wall of the main room which had been decorated with names of previous captives.

That same afternoon we were marched to the railroad station in Frankfurt on Main. We waited on the platform with many German civilians who stared, some fearfully, some with disdain until we boarded the passenger cars that soon departed heading northeast from Frankfurt. During the journey which was a pleasant ride we discussed the fantasy of effecting an escape to try to make our way back to France. The train brought us to Sagan the next morning.

STALAG LUFT III

SAGAN, Germany

It was a nice Spring day. The trees were mostly of the evergreen type. The soil was dry and predominantly sandy. There were no hills that could be seen. In front of us was a ten foot high fence separated by a duplicate fence spaced about ten feet from the outside fence. In between the two fences were large loose coils of barbed wire that would make the passage for an escapee very difficult. A guard tower mounted on fourteen foot stilts controlled the entrance to the gate that could accommodate a very large vehicle.

The officer in charge had us line up and we took turns at answering a few questions and being photographed. We were assigned German dog tags in exchange for our American tags. After our group of 'new' kriegies were processed the large gate was opened and we entered the compound. All the 'old' kriegies who had the misfortune of being captured lined both sides of our procession craning to see a familiar face. As we marched through a shriek from the crowd greeted us. "HEY Goller!!...HEY Ted!!" came from a black bearded baldly headed guy with handle-bar moustache. Ted did a double take and returned the yell. "HEY..Ed. Ed Fioretti!! God it's good to see you! It was a moment to remember. Other joyful reunions were in progress

at the same time.

Ed Fioretti took charge and led us to the room he was occupying. There wasn't enough room to accommodate us so Ed packed his belongings and said. "Come on there are empty barracks that are available. We found one at the end of the enclosure that was empty. We took possession of a large room that had double deck bunks. This compound was one that was recently built in an area of ground bordering other compounds. The buildings were new. We were to be the first occupants.

We were issued an eating bowl, cup, knife, fork and spoon. The room was equipped with a large plank table and benches. There were a couple of large wardrobe cabinets one of which was laid on one side and served as a storage place for the canned food. A small pot-bellied stove to provide warmth in the cold weather rested upon a slab of concrete about 18" square and about 1 1/2" thick. The stove in our room was seldom used for warmth because the fuel ration was consumed in the kitchen for cooking. This small stove could easily be moved and the slab lifted to provide access to the ground beneath the barracks. We never tried to start a tunnel in this manner but we had all heard about the one built by the men in the British compound. The Brits spent months of tedious secretive labor excavating a tunnel. When it was completed the escapees were mowed down by the Germans waiting at the tunnel exit. They had learned about the tunnel in progress at some stage of its construction and chose not to interrupt its completion hoping for the opportunity to make an example of the escapees as a deterrent to future tunnelers.

We were given two lightweight German issue blankets and one U.S. Army blanket. A large burlap sack was issued which we filled with excelsior² from a pile that was dumped outside our barracks. This was to be our mattress. It was quite springy at first but soon flattened out and became quit hard and bumpy. When cold weather became a factor we found that the mattress was a poor barrier to the cold. The mattress rested on wooden slats, nine in number. The guards made periodic inspections to see that these slats were not used for other purposes such as firewood or more importantly as timbers to shore up escape tunnels. We referred to the guards as ferrets because they crawled under the barracks which were built about fifteen inches above the ground. They carried a long spike to probe the ground for

²long slender strips of wood about 1/16" square

possible tunnels.

Ed explained that we would get one Red Cross food parcel per man per week and the Germans would supply some potatoes, bread, margarine and occasionally some sausage, usually bloodwurst . The occasional bloodwurst issue always brought stories of human fingernails found in the sausage. This eerie chatter caused some of us (including me) to surrender our share to those with the carnal desire for food of any kind. The parcels were supplied primarily by The United States and Canada. Other countries that contributed were Argentina, England and New Zealand but I don't remember ever seeing any from them. The typical parcel contained soap, cigarettes, an Army issue chocolate 'D'-Bar, margarine (butter from the Canadians), crackers, cheese, meat(Spam or Corned beef), sugar, powdered whole milk, paté, prunes or raisins and fruit jam. It was a fairly good diet of about eleven pounds of food stuffs. In addition, the Germans issued what was considered 'garrison-troop' rations. Black bread which was a repulsive, soggy mixture, heavy and sour. It was transported into our camp in open horse drawn wagons piled like logs of wood. A number was carved into the top of each loaf denoting the month in which it was baked. The quip that was echoed with each time we received our bread ration was; 'we never knew what year it was made'. Some of the loaves were cracked and due to the dampness green mold formed which we endeavored to carve away. Perhaps if we had known about the source of penicillia we may have appreciated it . Toasting it removed some of the bacteria and reduced the sour taste a degree. In retrospect I attribute our relatively good health to the black sour bread. It provided needed fiber that kept our alimentary canal functioning healthfully.

The wash room was located at the south end of the barracks. The latrine was in a separate building removed from the barracks area. The 'athletic field' or parade grounds was outside the north door. All told the conditions could be described as livable. Our accommodations back at Grafton Underwood, England were not any better except there we did have fuel for our stove at our air base. We were happy and could not expect more than we what received. We fashioned pots and pans³ from sheet metal we obtained from the canned foods we received. Kriegie ingenuity came into play. When the fallen warrior was assigned to a room. He met with his roommates who were as helpless as himself. They soon realized that the few pots in each barrack's kitchen were insufficient to satisfy the needs of the twelve rooms all

³see Kriegie Ingenuity in Addendum

of whom prepared the food separately for their own room. In a week or two by saving the empty cans from dried milk and margarine cans by rummaging in the 'tin can dump' enough cans were at hand to make pans for baking. His tools were a wooden mallet of rough pine which he made himself, a dinner knife, and a stool whose seat was made of two boards with a slight space between them. By hammering a nail in the stool at one end between the cracks he achieves an efficient cutting tool. The dinner knife placed in the crack, using the nail as the fulcrum, is used to cut the sheet metal. The cut pieces are seamed together to make a sheet large enough for the pan size he was making. By folding the sides up and the corners in we have a serviceable pan for baking. After a month or two the room has enough pans so the artisan turns his talents to a creative hobby. Two of the guys produced an all-metal steam driven model of a Great Lakes coal barge. It incorporated two turbine drive shafts and twin screws. Another man built molds which he filled with cement to make a set of barbells. Another by punching holes in the sides of an empty margarine can made a grater which he mounted on cylinder with a handle to rotate it. This was used chiefly to grind crackers into flour for baking. One man salvaged the small globules of solder from the food cans that sealed the hole made by the food canner. In time he had sufficient solder to fill a mold he had fashioned from a borrowed pair of wings to produce wings for himself.

The more artistic men bent their efforts to produce stage plays, create orchestral bands and edit a camp newspaper. The newspaper appeared on the camp bulletin board in its original form. There was no way or need to reproduce it. Weekly, most kriegies made their way to the central building, I think we called it the Library, to edge their way forward to see the latest issue. The chief feature of the paper was a comic devoted to the sex life of a couple of 'hot pilots'. The music and plays could not have given us more pleasure if we were seeing them from a Broadway seat.

News, to the kriegie, was among the more important things in life. Letters from home were pleasurable heartwarming moments but months out of date. The German Radio Broadcasts that were piped into camp near the central kitchen gave us the German perception of the progress of the war. It was translated by the men who were fluent in the language. Then it was delivered verbally to each barracks. One man from each room met with the courier in the vestibule to get the news. German newspapers were a source of news but we didn't accept their versions as 'gospel'. We were not permitted to have a radio in the camp but this too was overcome by kriegie cunning. With our own radio we were able to get the BBC. More about the radio news later.

In perspective, life in a German camp was frustrating and somewhat monotonous. It was your life in suspension. We lived for tomorrow. Today was something that stood in the way of tomorrow and could not end soon enough. Tomorrow meant liberation!

Through the great service of the Young Mens Christian Association and the Salvation Army we were supplied with musical instruments and athletic equipment. The Germans permitted us to use the plywood crates in which the Red Cross food was shipped. These were transformed into seats with just the right amount of incline to the back to make them more comfortable than many movie seats in the past. They were installed in the theater building which was provided by the Germans for the comfort and entertainment of the kriegies. It was constructed as any good theater designed for the presentation of plays and musicals. It had an orchestra pit and the seating plazas were constructed in steps each higher as the distance from the stage increased. There was accommodation for sliding curtains to conceal the stage. In a word, it was very professional.

After the summer games of softball and track the season and the weather moved our entertainment mostly indoors. We spent much of our time perfecting our contract bridge and the game of hearts. The theater season was heralded in with plays, some original skits some scenes from Shakespeare's plays. The musicians gave provided musicals presenting the great songs of the thirties and forties and a couple of theater dates of "Do you want to lead a band?" Because of the limited seating each barracks was scheduled and we never missed the chance to go.

When the cold weather brought snow it was used to form the perimeter of a pond which was laboriously filled by a bucket brigade. Ice skating and make-shift hockey were the thing for those brave and hardy enough to endure the cold.

Underground secretive operations were always in progress. We had the radio group each holding a part of the radio. At the prearranged time members of this group would convene at an assembly point to put the parts together and tune in the BBC. The escape committee was established to assist the man who desired to attempt an escape. This group would supply maps, compass, extra food and good advice. The best of which was, "You're being foolhardy. Hang around the war is soon over." The headquarters committee were the Senior American Officer Col. Alkire's staff to assist him with intelligence in contingency planning. I guess that the group assigned to contact and make friends with the guard for procuring forbidden materials may have been part of the headquarters group. There may have been more groups

operating but I had not heard of them.

As winter approached with the cold and bad weather our loneliness heightened. In December the news of the progress being made by the Allied armies brought new excitement of the possibility of a cessation of hostilities. We began thinking, 'home by Christmas.' The big guns in the east became more than a distant rumble. Speculation was rife with scenarios of how we would fare when the Soviet Army moved into our territory. At that time our conception of how friendly this ally would be was a question mark. All through the last decade we had been given lip-service by our government of why we must destroy this communistic combine. But in war, as in politics strange bedfellows happen. I never felt good about our relationship with the communistic credo as a replacement for theology. It seemed to me that Hitler's goal was the destruction of this form of government as was ours. We hadn't been informed officially but we had heard rumors that some of our flyers who had participated in one way missions, leaving bases in North Africa to bomb distant targets in Germany, too far for a round trip, would be routed to land in the Soviet Union. We had heard scuttlebutt that some of our men were shanghaied into fighting with the Russians or interned for ransom.

During the last week of January the orders came down from Col. Alkire to make an effort to walk the compound perimeter five to ten times each day to get in shape for a forced march to the west. This we assumed was to avoid being taken by the Eastern horde. The distance around the perimeter was roughly 3/4 of a mile, about 4,000 feet. The Red Cross food ration was increased to deplete what was stored in the forelager so none would be left for the invading Soviets. The extra food increased the energy of the kriegies enabling them to make the required laps around the perimeter each day. They also brought on a rash of sore feet and blisters. But it was better that blisters happened now than during the evacuation march.

About five or six days later with the artillery fire getting closer the order came to be ready to move out in thirty minutes. We knew it was coming but when the order came it was a bolt of lightning and the resultant blasting sound simultaneously. We were shocked into confused action. We quickly divided the stored food as best we could. We rolled our blankets into a compact roll that could be carried easily. The food that was being prepared for the evening meal was divided haphazardly. This was in sharp contrast to the usual meticulous division each day. Looking out the window we could see the large soft snowflakes drifting featherlike to the ground. The call came ushering us out to formation in front of the barracks. By the time we assembled

outside the announcement to return to our rooms came down through the formation. There was to be a thirty minute delay.

LEAVING SAGAN HEADING TO SPREMBERG

It was quite dark. The excitement and the stillness of the night softened the intensity of the cold. The snowflakes drifting lazily to the ground reflected the available light easing the intensity of the darkness. For the first few miles we had company slinking along the side of the road in the small trees and bushes. The townspeople were gathering the discards of the kriegies who found that they were carrying too much and were forced to lighten their loads. Cans of margarine were the first to be dropped. Later other canned foods were tossed along the side of the road.

The night was not severely cold and the exertion kept our bodies warm. The ten minute rest breaks after two hours of marching became too frequent. The stops were welcome but to get our muscles going after the breaks was becoming more difficult.

We were still marching at daybreak. About ten thirty A.M. we entered the small town of Freiwaldau. We were told that we would take a four hour break. It was cold enough for the snow to have crusted over. Blankets were unrolled on the snow which had stopped falling sometime during the night. As tired as I was I could not sleep. The town's people were kind enough to bring hot water to us so we could have some coffee and a bite to eat. At four thirty in the afternoon we were ordered to get ready to move on. We rolled our blankets which were damp from the snow. I was weary and feeling not quite up to going on. Nevertheless we marched on into the darkening day. About two ten minute stops later, I guess it was about nine P.M., we were moving through a forested area. Trees lined both sides of the road. The snow that had fallen was planked down and a bit icy making walking more difficult. The cold and the fatigue added distance to the few miles we had covered. Suddenly out of the darkness a terrible clatter and din struck terror into our senses. We scrambled off the road into the woods and hit the ground to get away from the cause of the fear. As I lay in the deep snow near a large tree about thirty feet from the road my heart was beating wildly. There was mass confusion. Some of the kriegies thought we were under a tank attack. Others thought that a low flying aircraft was in the act of

strafing our lines. It all happened in a very short minute. The shouts of 'camarada!! 'Americanisha!!' ' prisoners of war!' were being heard from the kriegies lying in the snow forty or fifty feet off both sides of the narrow road. The clatter became louder then ceased when the cause was in our midst. The guards who had joined us in flight were back on the road urging us to get back on the road. The guards had stopped a horse-driven farm wagon and was upbraiding the boy who had lost control of his horse.

This experience was a temporary revitalizer. Soon the high wore off and we were in worsened doldrums. Many men were too exhausted to continue to go farther. About an hour later we stopped in a small town. The large meeting room was warm. I said meeting room , but it might have been a stable. It was poorly lighted. We squeezed into it to get warm. I'm sure that many of the men who could not get in found some shelter in some public buildings. About an hour later one of our men made an announcement that a local doctor would be in to tend the sick. Those who needed help should remain behind. The rest must fall out and continue the march. As much as I feared losing contact with my roommates I judged that it would be foolhardy to continue. The old doctor treated the blisters and the other ailments. I didn't seek his help. Only rest and warmth could help me.

The next day the German guard who was left behind with us managed to get a farm wagon equipped with a hayrack to transport thirty men. In about an hour we arrived in a good sized town. Muskau was a manufacturing center of pottery, dishes and bricks. We found shelter in a large pottery factory. We entered a wonderland of dust and toasty warmth. The glazing kilns were not producing dishes at this time but we were told that the kilns are never permitted to die out. They are banked to conserve fuel and were providing much needed warmth. The factory was very large with kriegies camping in all the nooks and crannies. As I wandered through looking for my friends I spotted Bob Blaise on his blanket. I came up behind him. "Hey, Bob where's all the guys?" He didn't turn to greet me. Then I realized he was kneeling in deep silent prayer, thanking the Good Lord for bringing us through this hardship safely.

The following day after having some food provided by the Germans we marched into the city of Spremberg. The weather was somewhat warmer. Our spirits were higher after the rest we had in Muskau. In Spremberg we were quartered in a large gymnasium which was part of a German garrison. We spread our blankets on the polished wooden floor. It was clean, warm and comfortable. We were given some

very nutritious soup along with the ever present black bread. Our spirits were lifted and we felt that everything was taking on a different complexion. We were told that we would spend the night here which cheered us. We slept on our blankets on the floor.

The next morning after some food the Germans prepared for us we were marched about two miles to the freight yards and loaded into small boxcars. These were the notorious forty and eight cars of WW I which were featured in movies of that war. They were used at that time to carry forty men and eight horses to the front lines. The boxcar that my friends and I were squeezed into left no room for anything but a guard, his rifle and a oversize bucket. We had some men that were weak from illness and dysentery. There was not enough room in the car for all the sick to sit on the floor. We were packed in so tightly that a person needing to use the bucket could not make his way to it through the crowd. The bucket was passed from hand to hand over the heads of the standing men to the unfortunate guy who needed it. I can't recall how we managed to sleep or if indeed we did sleep. Nature, fortunately, has a way of blotting out many of our most unpleasant memories. I do remember that late in the afternoon the train pulled into a siding and we were allowed about ten minutes to stretch our legs and seek a solitary moment to relieve our burdened excretory organs in the field along side the track. On the second day we might have been given another 'siding' break but my memory fails me on this item. I do remember that on one occasion the excrement bucket being passed was near enough to me to see that it was very close to being full and in danger of slopping over the sides. Each time it was passed angry growls came from the kriegies cursing the pitiful Germans and their stinking freight car. We were worse off in this car than any pig in a confined pigpen that I had ever seen. I don't recall if we had any fluid to drink during this journey. Perhaps it was better not to eat or drink which would increase the need for elimination. When we finally arrived at the freight yards of Nürnberg we had been truly baptized in hell. After we were settled in Stalag XIII-D, a broken down filthy, vermin infested prison camp I asked some of the kriegies who had made the trip with us but in one of the other boxcars and learned that some of the cars carried fifty kriegies and a guard. I am positive that we had at least eighty in ours. C'est la guerre! Or as William Tecumseh Sherman stated in an address at Michigan Military Academy in 1879: "I am tired and sick of war. It is only those who have neither fired a shot nor heard the shrieks and groans of the wounded, who cry aloud for blood, more vengeance, more desolation. War is hell!" It is the fat cats who send brave youths out to die in order to protect their money and power. It has always been thus.

NÜRNBERG Stalag XIII D

Food from the Red Cross and from the Germans was at a minimum. The Red Cross trucks coming out of Switzerland were unable to get through. The Germans had very little to give us.

The food supplied by the Germans was prepared for us in the central kitchen by the American sergeants who elected to serve in the commissioned officer POW camps. Once a day they brought a large bucket of soup made of some kind of dehydrated green vegetable, perhaps cabbage, and, we thought, maybe a soup bone. We certainly couldn't tell by the taste that it had any meat. We were given about a cup of this concoction. The only protein we could detect was the little white worms floating in the soup. The worms were kind of discouraging but we consumed the slightly warm soup without looking at it too closely. The food value was negligible. Two or three times during our stay in the Nürnberg camp we were given a ration of process cheese wrapped in foil similar to the small triangles of Swiss-type cheese available today. Unfortunately they were rancid for the most part. We scraped away some of the decomposing green parts and ate the small amounts that remained. Later we found out that these process cheeses could be poisonous if the salmonella bacteria were present. Luckily the small amount that we ate and the condition of the men that needed the food so badly was such that we were not seriously affected. Other than these foods we received a small ration of the German black bread. Incidentally, back in Sagan the bread was delivered by a horse drawn wagon or a wood burning open bodied truck about once a month. The loaves were stacked neatly as one might transport fireplace wood. The loaves had a number cut into the dough prior to baking. We deduced that the number indicated the month in which it was baked.

We were fortunate to have had officers in our camp whose medical education was interrupted by the war. Some were studying chiropractic and others were in conventional medicine. These men acted as our medical officers. Their combined knowledge of nutrition gave some authenticity to the report issued by Col. Alkire in a letter to the German Kommandant which follows:

*Stalag Luft III
Nürnberg-Langwasser
Germany*

28 February 1945

*Subject: Complaints respecting the conditions of captivity.
To: The Kommandant, Stalag Luft III*

I. Under the provisions of the International Convention relating to the treatment of Prisons of War (POW) published at Geneva, Switzerland 27 July 1929 of which The U.S.A. and the German Reich are signatory powers, The Senior American Officer (SAO) of Stalag Luft III, Nürnberg, Germany presents in writing those basic requirements violated by the detaining power at this camp citing its authority is contained in the Convention and by subject. Violations are as follows:

A. P'sOW Camps: (Part III Sect. II Article 9)

1. Proximity of Military Targets: Stalag Luft III is within approx. three (3) kilometers of a major railroad choke point and marshaling yard. During the last two weeks the local area has been bombed by heavy aerial main efforts with apparent attention to the railroad targets. The dispersion of bombs, both day and night, has been close to this camp. There no slit trenches or shelters which the POW are permitted to use during raids. Prisoners are kept in the overcrowded huts at the point of guns. The location of this camp and local air raid precaution policy is unjust and untenable and a protest of the strongest nature is hereby registered for present and future consideration.

B. Food and Clothing: (Part III Sect. II Chap.II Articles 11 & 12)

1. Inadequate Diet: The present German ration to the POW according to medical opinion is less than that required for basic metabolism and will inevitably lead to loss of weight and starvation. Under the present unhygienic and unhealthful conditions resistance of the men will become so lowered as to render them highly susceptible to any disease.

2. German Issues: Dehydrated vegetables are consistently wormy. No ersatz jams or honey is issued. As closely as can be figured not more than twelve hundred and eighteen (1218) calories per man per day, which is insufficient to sustain existence for a protracted period. It is impossible even with an inflated

imagination, to consider the present German issue as 'depot troop ration'.

3. Communal Issues: Permission is requested to distribute food from kitchens during an air raid in order that such preparations as are possible, may be served warm.

4. Clothing Replacements and Repair Facilities: There is no stock of clothing nor is there replacements of repair facilities provided as required of the detaining power. The majority of the men from the Sagan area with only the clothing in which they stand. New Purges from the Italian Theater are destitute. Clothing and shoes now being worn are rapidly wearing out. Booty overcoats and trousers are suggested.

C. Installation of Camps: (Part III Sect.II Art. 10)

1. Overcrowding of Barracks: At the present time there is only 19 sq. ft. of floor space and 119 cu. ft. of air space per man. In this minuscule area our men must eat, sleep and live. This is a serious condition of overcrowding which may lead to epidemics such as cerebral-spinal meningitis, pneumonia, influenza, etc. aggravated by no heat, malnutrition and filth, as are the present conditions apparently condoned by responsible authorities

2. Lack of Heat: No coal is provided for the barracks and a shortage in the communal kitchens. Present ration is being used in seven kitchens. Two kitchens have been closed and still only 180 kg. per day per kitchen is available. This condition enhances the unhealthfulness of the barracks. Dirtiness of food, utensils and containers and means cold or lukewarm foods are supplied to the men. A minimum of 400 kg per day per kitchen is required.

3. Shortage of Bedding: Many men do not have the depot troop issue of blankets. Many have no beds of any kind and must sleep on the cold damp floors.

At present there are 1246 men sleeping on the floor in camps 5, 6, and 7. Stuffing and pallets are vermin-ridden with no replacements and no opportunity to clean those in use. It is felt that no 'depot troops' of the detaining power are subject to this treatment.

4. Poor Lighting: Lighting of the barracks and aborts is below standard for depot troops and no convenience of accessibility is afforded between the hours of 2300 & 0600.

D. Hygiene in Camps. (Part III Sect.II ChapII Art. 13)

1. Inadequate Bathing and Washing Facilities: It has been planned but not

executed in fact, to give showers to POW once each two (2) weeks. The shower officer reports that the Abwehr Dept. has interfered unnecessarily and better facilities are necessary in order to utilize the few facilities available. No laundry facilities, the lack of hot water, soap and space necessary for washing and drying clothes, dishes and food containers lead to infection and dysentery. Wash houses have not more than two (2) water faucets and due to overcrowding means that 400 to 500 men must depend on two (2) faucets.

2. Vermin: Rats, mice, lice, bedbugs and fleas are prevalent throughout the camps. Anti-vermin powders and disinfectant are too sporadic to be effective. The present disinfectant is too weak to destroy the vermin eggs and doubtful even that it liquidates living organisms indicative of the filthy conditions. A blow torch is necessary for elimination of eggs.

3. No Cleaning Material: There are no cleaning materials available for cleaning the barracks, kitchens and aboits, clothing and the POW's. Soap is not available. Brushes, mops, and brooms are non-existent. Disinfectant and anti-vermin powders are not issued. Fifty (50) rolls for 5,000 men for over one month has been the issue of toilet paper.

G. Entertainment and Recreation. (Part III Section II Chap IV Art 17)

1. Entertainment: Books are practically non-existent and congestion of billeting in camp necessitates utilization of space originally and normally used as a theater and chapel, for barracks. Intellectual and spiritual welfare is suffering under almost insurmountable obstacles.

2. Recreation: General space for calisthenics or organized athletics is not available. The total lack of facilities adds to the mental and physical discontentment of all concerned.

H. Canteen Supplies: (Part III Sect II Chap II Art 12)

1. Canteen inoperative: No provisions are available for purchase of articles such as razor and blades, soap, toothbrushes, combs, matches, barber tools and mirrors. These items are badly needed.

2. Authorities of the detaining power having announced their helplessness in alleviating these present deplorable circumstances due to transportation and material shortages.

The Senior American Officer suggests the following course of action subject to the approval of the German Reich, The United States and the Protective Power (Switzerland):

A. Parole March and Internment.

- 1. Prisoners of War of this camp will undertake (under parole not to escape) a march of twenty kilometers per day to the Swiss border where they will be interned for the duration of the war with Germany.*
- 2. Food would be provided according to the German march rations or one Red Cross parcel per man per 75 kilometers.*

B. Parole March to New Location.

- 1. Pow's of this camp will undertake a march of twenty kilometers per day to any location out of the military target area more accessible to the Red Cross supplies of food, clothing and medical equipment. Given the proper tools and materials they will do what construction work is necessary.*
- 2. Food will be supplied in accordance with A. 2 (above).*
- 3. It is requested that a representative of the protective power be permitted to visit this camp and confirm the veracity of these statements.*

*(signed) Darr H. Alkire
Col. United States Army Force
Senior American Officer*

I am not aware if any good resulted as a consequence of this communication but it was heartening to see our thoughts recorded in this manner. For a while we felt an expectation that a march of this nature might become a reality.

Life in this camp never reached the level of being humdrum. We were happy to see that some of the sergeants that were shot down with us were moved into this camp. It appeared that many of the POW camps in Germany were converging on Nürnberg as a central point. The Russians were moving in from the east and the Allies from the north and west. These reunions lent a feeling of excitement that the end of the war was fast approaching. A pilot, I believe his name was Brown, wandered into our barracks one morning. He was an acquaintance of Ted Goller. They had gone through one phase of pilot training together. Brown had been shot down and

managed to evade capture. He was under the control of the 'French underground' awaiting the necessary connections to be able to return to England. He was enjoying a rather pleasant life in Paris as a guest of the French while waiting for the means to be transported to Spain. As the American Army drew closer to Paris, the Germans were packing and making preparations to leave. The day before they abandoned Paris Brown was picked up by the German Security Police. Being in civilian clothes with no evidence of being an American flyer he was hustled off to Buchenwald, a concentration camp near Weimar in central Germany. He was held there for a number of months until they could establish his true identity. He then was moved to Nurnburg and into our Stalag. His stay in Buchenwald was long enough to produce the look of starvation that was typical of many long term prisoners held in concentration camps. From what he described we assumed that he was subjected to all the discomforts we were suffering in Nürnberg. Cold, hunger, squalid filthy barracks and some abuse from the guards were his daily routine. He described the simple pleasure he enjoyed when the sun shone. He could lie on a large rock and enjoy the warmth of the sun. He was happy to be in this camp with us. He did not mention any brutal treatment or discrimination against any particular group. He felt that all in his camp were treated impartially.

The German news broadcasts into our compound kept us informed of the progress the Allies were making. Hitler's speeches to the people carried the message that they must never give up. New weapons were in the mill and that soon Germany will turn the tide and be victorious. He spoke of one secret weapon that in retrospect we believe that must have been the development of an atomic bomb. It could not have been the V-2 bombs that he was promising because these were already in use. Their effectiveness was minimum. In the progress of the war the destruction they wrought made no appreciable difference. They knocked out a few buildings in England but compared to the destruction the British and American bombers caused German industry, the V-1 and the V-2 were not much more than a nuisance. It would have been a different situation if he had been able to come up with an atomic bomb and could deliver it to knock out London completely as we did to Hiroshima and Nagasaki later in the war. Hitler didn't mention atomic warfare. At that time we were not cognizant of the concept. He spoke to his people in the strongest terms that very soon this nightmare would be over and Germany would dictate the terms of the peace treaty. We felt that many Germans were tired of the war and would welcome anything that would bring it to an end. In 1944 while we were still in Sagan an attempt on the life of Hitler failed. Some of his most trusted officers plotted to assassinate him by placing a bomb in the room where he was to meet with his advisors. It failed and thus

*failed to end the war at that time. I think that more than one of the plotters faced the firing squad. *Hitler had a charismatic personality of overpowering forcefulness. He knew how to appeal to people's base instincts and made use of their fears and insecurities. He could do that, however, only because they were willing to be led, even though his program was one of hatred and violence. His impact was wholly destructive, and nothing of what he instituted and built survived.*⁴ I guess in a way he was a madman but he was a pretty well organized guy with enough skills to keep control of his armed forces and for the most part was able to control the civilian population.*

The constant bombing of Nürnberg, at night by the British and during the day by the American B-24 and B-17 heavy bombers supported by the P-38, P-47 and the P-51 fighters the skies over Germany were uncontested. We had control of the airspace. The only exception was the German artillery. At night the British Pathfinder using radar would drop flares and incendiaries on the target area. Then for the next half hour the heavy bombers would fly in singly and drop their bombs in the fire area. This spectacle was an exciting experience that kept us awake and atingle many times in the last month we spent in this camp. The first bomb would get us out of our crude beds to huddle around the windows. When the exploding bombs lighted the dark sky over Nürnberg we would count the seconds until the sound reached us. Many factors alter the speed at which sound is transmitted but the generally accepted speed is five seconds to the mile. Our counts told us that the target was in the one mile distance range. With the sound came the tremor and quake of the wooden barracks in which we were living. It was exciting and disquieting. It brought a pleasant feeling of fear something similar to the fear one feels on an amusement park cyclone at the apex or the beginning, just as the car you're in starts down the steep incline. After these night bombing forays getting back to sleep was difficult. I would engage my brain in memory games recalling things in my past. Most of them pleasant memories of home and friends of my teen years. I tried to use this ploy to induce sleep. Most of the times it didn't help. Then I would recall thoughts that went back to better days in Sagan and I thought about the Cartoons in the German newspapers that we were permitted to read:

Effective cartoons appearing in the German daily newspapers carried messages to the German people and the people of the occupied countries who were sheltered

⁴Andreas Dorpalen, "Hitler, Adolph," Microsoft (R) Encarta. copyright (c) 1994 Microsoft Corp. Copyright (c) 1994 Funk & Wagnalls Corp.

from conflicting news from other countries.

Typical were cartoons depicting the flying American gangsters; Another cartoon shows that the American Army Air Force consisted of a large proportion of African cannibalistic Negroes. Another portrayed Jewish controlled England, Russia and America sending their native sons to their bloody death while the fat Jewish financiers sit in the safety of their homelands making more money.

By employing a smattering of truth to the ideas that the Europeans had formed over the years from our Jewish controlled Hollywood motion pictures, the German cartoonists have skillfully and forcefully hammered home these messages. To a people whose world news for the past decade had been filtered and distorted by experts in mass psychology it had the desired effect.

*One cartoon that appeared in the VOLKISCHER BEOBACHTER portrayed a P-38 fighter aircraft strafing women and children. On the fuselage of the plane was inscribed 'MURDER INC'. In the background President Roosevelt holding a Bible is instructing two pilots with an emphatic **"ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS!!** The character of the Pilots left no doubt that our Air Force is 50% Negro and 50% white. The Negro pilot has his teeth ground to sharp points. A U.S. Flag was on his left shoulder instead of Air Corps patch. The white pilot was a comic strip gangster with a black patch over his right eye. Both are scowling in their best stage manner. Another cartoon had two terribly obese individuals sitting in the sand of Miami Beach with their backs to the reader. Their bathing suits are decorated with stars and stripes and they are wearing enormous sun hats which form the apex of a pair of triangles whose bases are their buttocks. They are discussing the war in Europe. The man's hand sparkles with flashy diamonds and the woman has a string of pearls about her neckless neck. He says, "See my little Mickey Mouse, over there (in Europe) are the Boys, like good Americans, and here we are in America like good Jews"*

I didn't remember more. I must have fallen into a grateful sleep.⁵

During the day the American bombers in rigid formations came over to bomb the same targets. Generally we were not permitted to be outside the barracks during a bombing alert. After the first experience our SAO appealed to the Germans to permit us access to the slit trenches in our compound. I remember one occasion during a

⁵see German Propaganda in the Addendum

daylight raid when the bombers high in the cloudless sky, in beautiful formation, were leaving the target area heading back to their base. The German Captain who was with us through all our tribulations from Sagan to the present Stalag VIIA was looking upward into the sky he remarked. "What a magnificent sight!"

On a previous daylight bombing raid, (it might have been the first by the Americans since we arrived) we were in the barracks watching and counting the seconds. It was in mid-morning when the most terrible explosive sound sent us to the floor. We landed face down in the filth and sand on top of each other. My thoughts were that one of the planes had dropped its bombs early and they had landed in our midst. In a few moments we realized that the terrible sound was the firing of the heavy artillery that was located very close to our compound in conjunction with the descent of a P-51 that came screaming across at tree top level on its way to a crash landing moments away. This was no humdrum existence.

Later in the day the young fighter pilot who had been shot down was ushered into our prisoner of war camp.

A few days later in early March we were informed that we were going to have the luxury of a hot shower. We were advised that the hot water would be on for no more than three minutes. It was a refreshing three minutes but it ended too soon. Some of the men still had soap on them when the water was turned off.

The daily news report brought exciting news of the proximity of the U.S. Third Army under Gen. Patton. He was fighting to take Wurzburg about 55 miles to the Northwest. The camp was abuzz with rumors and expectations of imminent liberation.

In early April, I think it was Easter Sunday, we were informed by the German command that we were to get ready to move out with a few moments notice. Patton was getting close to Nürnberg. The Germans were not ready to allow us to be liberated. This march was unlike the march out of Sagan. It was much warmer, the sun was shining and we were exhilarated by the pleasant pine scented air and the expectation that we would soon be freed. We had very little to pack. Just our blankets and towels. We had no extra clothes just those we had on. There was little food to divide. We were very happy to know that we were getting out of these vermin infested quarters. Living here for about two months was an ordeal comparable to the train ride from Spremberg to Nürnberg. Both were circumstances of intensive discomfort and misery. Our small group stayed together. We marched out just before

noon and covered about thirteen miles before halting. We found shelter in barns located in small towns in the vicinity of Neumarkt. We were given a cup of soup and a slice of the heavy black bread. As we passed through Neumarkt we saw some of the devastation wrought by our bombers.

The railroad freight yards were a clutter of bent and dislodged track and railroad ties in sharp rapier-like splinters. It is hard to remember what happened on each day of the march. Small episodes stand out such as the heavy rain that soaked us to the skin one late afternoon. We found shelter in a barn, unrolled our blankets and slept until daylight and sunshine awakened us. Later in the day the Red Cross trucks intercepted us and we were issued a parcel of food for each two men. The two German guards who were part of our group participated in the food distribution.

Our marches after the second day were short. One day's march ended before the back end of the procession started to march. Our group was near the rear of the line. The road was straight with a slight upward grade. About a mile forward it took a slow curve to the right. We could see that the front end was disbanding and moving into barns. We at the rear of this contingent had just begun to join the formation. Three of us left the formation to visit a farmhouse about a couple of hundred yards off the road. The farmer lady was grateful for the cigarettes we gave her in return for three eggs. She said she had nothing else to share. We didn't press her. We knew that these poor civilians were having a tough time and that it was going to get worse for them as the war drew to a close. We could look forward to many pleasant days ahead back in the U.S. I didn't know what to do with a raw egg but good sense urged me to break a small in the top of the shell and swallow it. After I swallowed the egg I was sorry I did. No time in my life no matter how hungry, would I ever entertain the idea of swallowing a raw egg again.

When we arrived at the small town where we were going to camp for the night we found space in a large barn. The food that we had been given by the Red Cross trucks was pooled so we could prepare a meal of Spam stew. While two of our roommates set about preparing the food I wandered out of the barn. The farm machinery; plow, mowing machine, planter and harrow were old and out of date but were reminiscent of the farm machinery we had in the late twenties in Delaware County, New York. I lifted the cover of the planter to see the type of grain they were planting. It was a mixture of grains including many weed seeds. There wasn't much grain in the seeder. As I lifted a handful to look more closely the thought struck me that a boiled mess of this would make a good breakfast cereal with some milk made from the powdered

whole milk we had. I went back to my group and got a container that Bob Blaise had made from the sheet metal by hammering out the empty food cans. I went back and gleaned most of the small amount of grain left in the seeder. I rinsed it a few times to get rid of the dust that was part of the mixture and filled the pot with fresh water. The cooks put it on the makeshift stove to cook. In about an hour most of the water was absorbed and the grain was tender and mushy like oatmeal. We all enjoyed breakfast late in the day. The next morning we received word that the Colonel persuaded the German guards to put off moving until the next day. The weather was beautiful and another day's rest was the nicest gift we could have received at that time. Some of the men wandered into town to trade cigarettes for food stuff. I wandered through the barn. Up in the loft I found a nest of 13 hen's eggs. I felt a twinge of guilt as I scooped them up and brought them down to Bennett and Whidby, our cooks.

Cyrus P. Bennett impressed me as a quiet gentleman who was our chief instructor in contract bridge. He came from Short Hills, NJ and had the air of a person who was accustomed to a higher life style. Monroe T. Whidby was a good natured redneck from Fort Lauderdale, Fl. He was a police officer and a fireman prior to his stint in the Air Corps. Prison camp life made cooks of them and eggs sunny side up made a delicious breakfast.

It is difficult to remember the correct order of the events and which day each happened. The Danube wasn't blue, just an ugly gray. In the center of the bridge were two large bombs which we assumed were to be used to blow it up as the Allied Army approached. The civilian populace lined the road through the city to scowl at the 'terror fliers' who were the direct cause of their discomfort. As we neared the outskirts of the city we entered a good size area used as an athletic field for football. The sun was shining and the grass under our feet was soft and green. We started to unroll our blankets to get some rest and have some food. About a mile away we could see fighter airplanes attacking some target. Almost immediately a very large P O W sign made of sheeting appeared in the center of the field. Col Alkire's staff were 'on the ball'. We were uneasy about the proximity of the aircraft so we moved to the perimeter of the grounds. Our fears vanished when a P-51 and two P-47s flew over, waggled their wings and left.

With that we were ordered to move on. (we guessed that Col. Alkire requested the move.) We certainly weren't moving very fast. I doubt that we averaged more than eight miles a day. Our SAO probably was stalling with the hope that Patton might circle around and liberate us. At this point I believe that our German guards were not giving any orders.

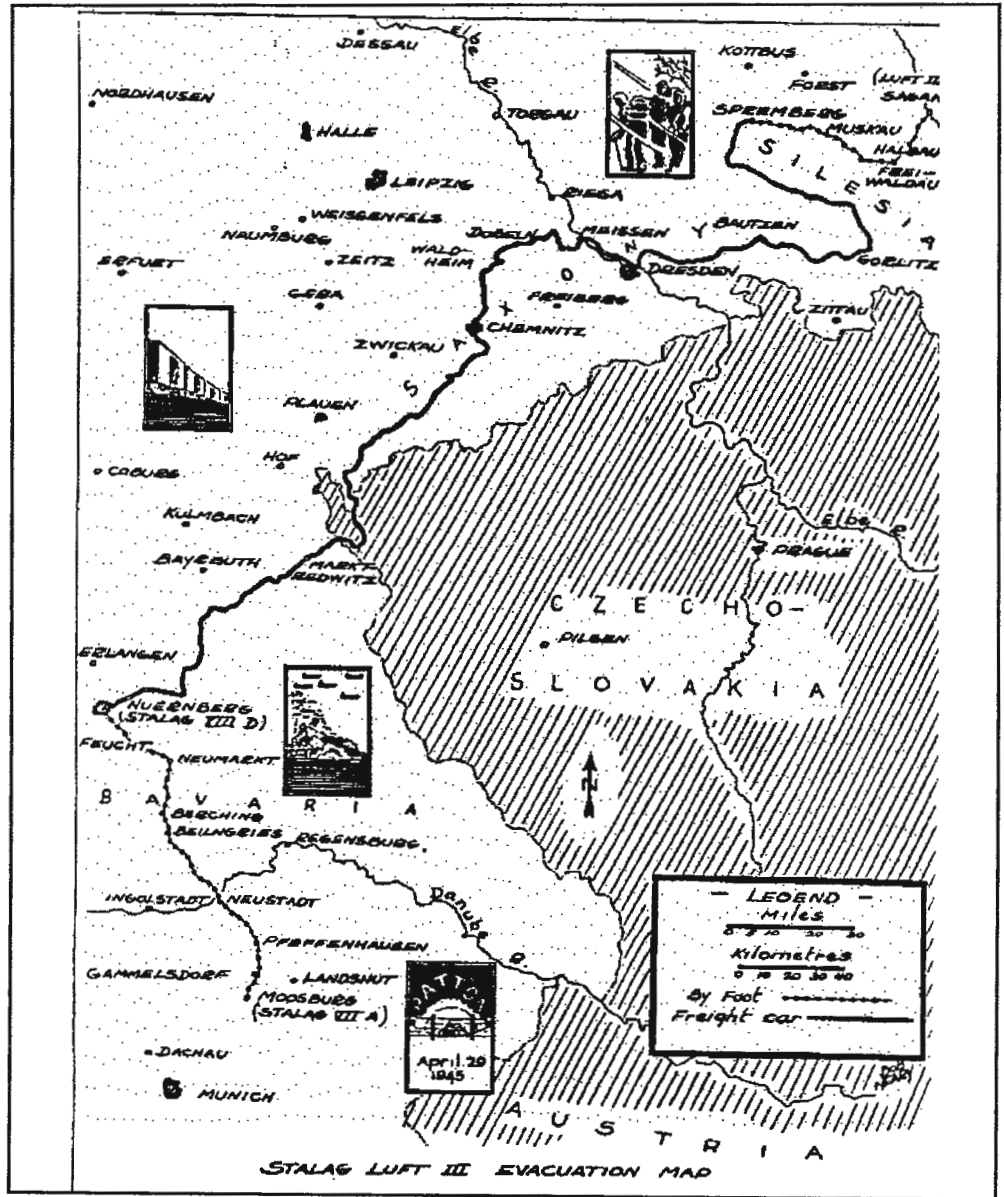
On the 12 April while getting ready to hit the road again we received word that President Roosevelt had died. It was a sad day because he was more than our commander-in-chief, he was a father figure. The sadness amongst us was shared by all.

A small road sign that indicated that Moosburg was eleven kilometers away. Early that afternoon we arrived in Stalag VII-A which was on the outskirts of Moosburg.

Bob Neary's map of the route from Sagan to Moosberg where our distress and suffering ended

Stalag VII-A
Moosburg

This camp had accumulated many POWs before we arrived. Prisoner of war camps from all of German occupied territory were being consolidated in this region. All the barracks were occupied with more than they were designed to hold. Consequently we were accommodated in some very large tents that measured were approximately 30 x 110 feet. There were four parallel rows of men head to head with about a two foot aisle at their feet to allow each kriegie



access to his location in the tent. Each man had about a two foot berth which was just about room enough to be able to turn over without disturbing his neighbor on either side of him. Each tent accommodated three hundred men.

Life in Stalag VII-A was tolerable. We had food supplied mostly by the Red Cross. Our combine set up an outdoor stove and we managed to prepare the canned food. Once we became used to the sleeping arrangement we liked it much better than sleeping in vermin infested barracks which we had in Nürnberg.

Each day some military activity that kept us occupied and aware that liberation was near. It appeared that we were not supervised by the German guards. There were one or two still around but most had vanished into the night. We guessed that they were reluctant to be taken by the approaching American Army.

The radio news informed us that Nürnberg had been taken and that Gen. Patton was heading to Munich which was about thirty miles beyond us. The rumble of distant artillery was getting closer. There was an occasional German aircraft seen flying low past our encampment. We wondered if it was being moved to some less critical area where it might be used in a final battle to survive. Munich was now under heavy bombardment from the air. This was the softening up process to make the city easier to capture.

We lived this way from the 13th to 29th of April. It was an exciting couple of weeks. On the 28th the artillery became ominous and threatening. Fear of being in the path of the oncoming army contrasted with the shining hope of imminent rescue confused our emotions. Later in the day small spotter planes with US markings circled very low over our camp to send radio information to their artillery. Excitement brought wild cheers from the kriegies.

Sunday, 29 April brought the General George Smith Patton's Third Army into the outskirts of Moosberg. Machine guns chattered from time to time. An occasional rifle was fired. Perhaps it was the Moosberg home guard putting up a brave last stand. Early after noon the firing ceased. General Patton came into the camp. Somehow I was able to squeeze into the room to listen to him tell us that we were great soldiers and would soon be transported to France. His single pearl handle pistol hung jauntily from his hip. We had heard that the other pistol was given to Dinah Shore.

The Army's bakery supplied us with freshly baked white bread. It was the most delicious bread we had ever tasted. It truly resembled the finest angel food cake.

The following day our group was taken by truck about twenty minutes away to an air base abandoned by the German Air Force. We were ordered to make ourselves comfortable and await the C-47 transports that would take us to France. Three of us found lodging in a farmhouse on the edge of the base. An elderly woman and her father made us welcome. We spent the day wandering about the base. At the perimeter of the field was a rusting-out fuselage of a jet fighter. The field was grass covered with no runways for the airplanes. The living quarters of the airmen were concrete structures slightly below ground level. Grass growing on the buildings provided effective camouflage. Evidence of rabbit fur led us to believe that rabbits were raised to by the former residents to supply food and fur material for gloves. I 'liberated' a couple of pieces of navigation equipment which I still have. One was the German equivalent of the E-6B computer and the other a triangle.

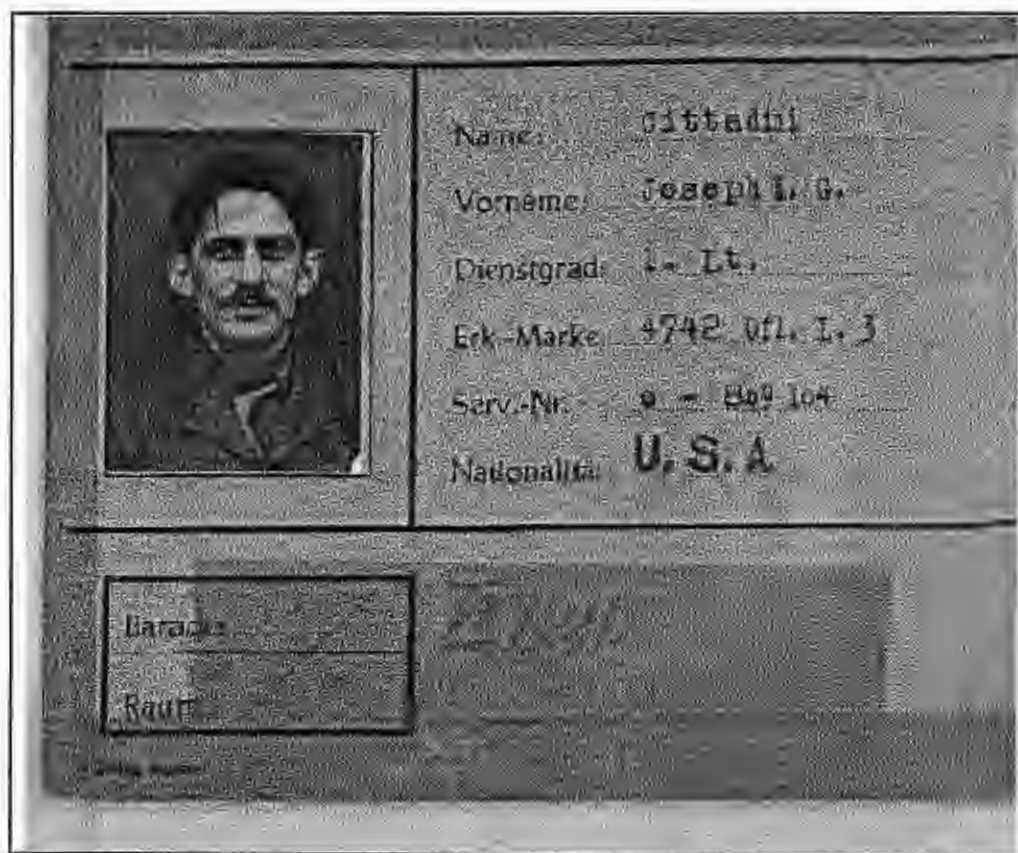
The next day Ted borrowed a WWI rifle from the old lady in whose house we were living. We wandered out into the woods nearby in search of meat for the table. Strangely, we found a number of men living in the woods. We assumed that they were hiding from the army, both ours and perhaps their own. They didn't bother us so we did nothing to upset them. Ted shot a small deer which we carried back to the lady who housed us. She was exuberant. She thanked us and told us that she would prepare a stew for us. I guess that this was the first fresh meat both she and we had in a long time.

About two days later the C-47's arrived to ferry us back to Rheims, France. Here we were showered, deloused and showered again. We were issued a complete set of new clothing including shoes that felt good. Now we felt that we were fit to return to the human race again.

We spent a few days in Camp Lucky Strike then by train to LeHavre. Here we boarded the USS Erickson (formerly the Kungsholm) for our trip to New York.

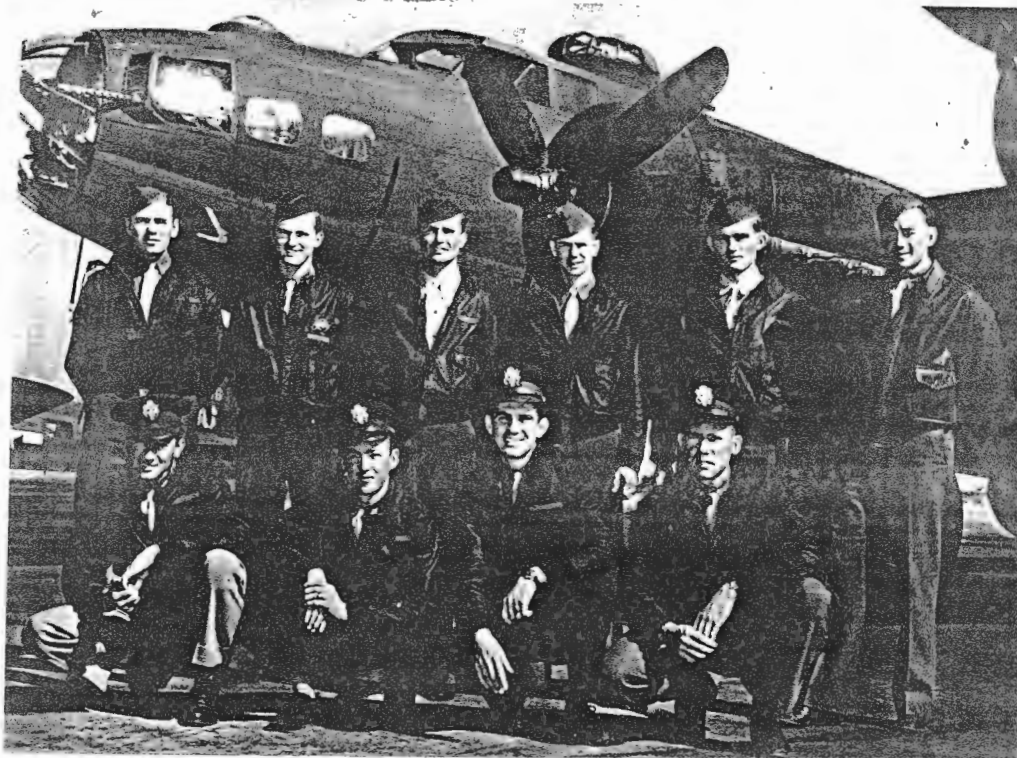
Addendum
to
20th mission

Some of the material in the addendum may have appeared in whole or in part in the 'Essay'.



This photo was taken at the gate of the compound prior to being incarcerated in Sagan. I had spent two days on a train from Frankfurt on Main to Sagan. I was dirty and tired and not quite ready for a photo-op. This was where I received my German dog-tags.

**ORIGINAL
CREW**

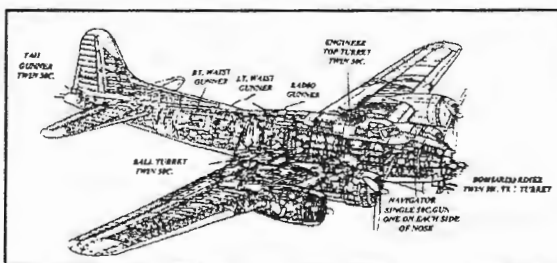


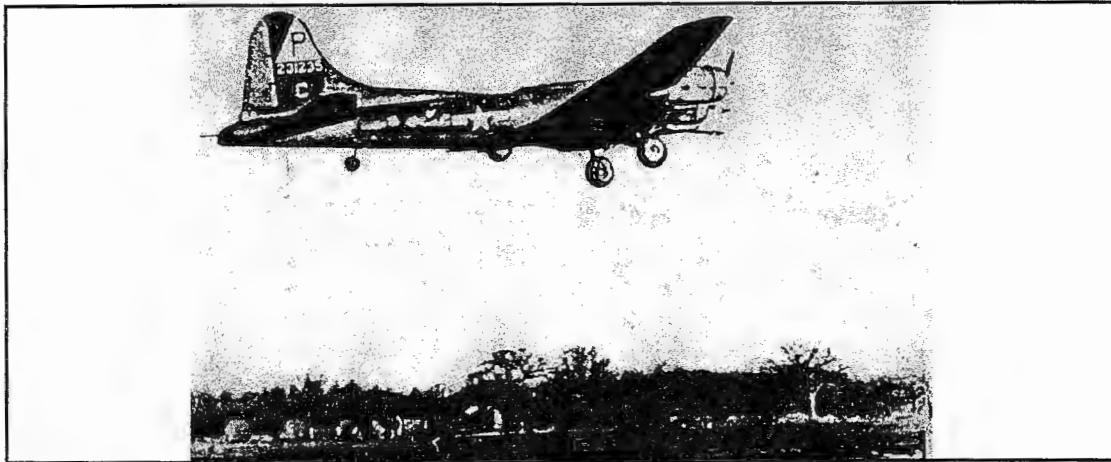
OPERATIONAL TRAINING UNIT

DALHART, TEXAS 1943

(left to right)

- Clarence E. Reed, engineer, RFD 1, Beaver PA*
- Roy F. Howell, waist gunner, Box 65, War, WVA*
- Irwin Bier, radio, 402 Lowell St. Vandergrift, PA*
- Arthur Way, ass't. radio/gunner, Cornell, Michigan*
- H. 'Murph' Walton, armorer/tail gun 209 E. Milan, Mexia, TX*
- Sam V. Houston, ball gun, Box 8, Cuba, New Mexico*
- Theo. Goller, Pilot, Rte. 1 Box 29, Cartersville, OK*
- James E. Geary, Pilot, 1301 N. Francis, OK City, OK*
- Joe Cittadini, Navigator, 9308 202 St. Hollis, NY*
- James 'Jeff' Brown, Bombardier, Rte. 2 Lexington, TX*





B-17 42-31235 SU-C GOIN' DAWG of the 544th Bomb Squadron lifts off runway 6 at Grafton Underwood on the morning of 22 March 1944 bound for Berlin. Goin' Dawg was lost on 7 May 1944 on another Berlin raid, flown by Lt. Theodore Goller.

Kriegie Ingenuity

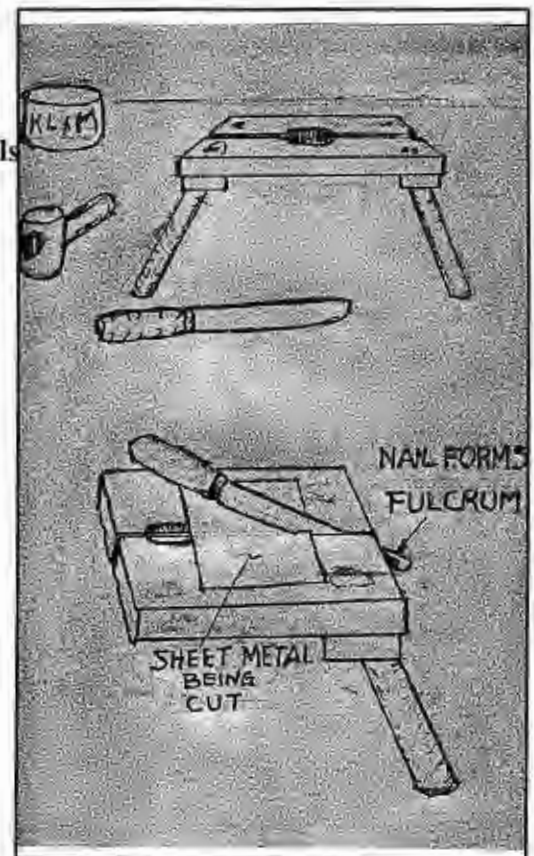
As a POW, a person has much time on his hands and a desire to put his creative talents to use. There were also some needs that the Germans did not supply. Cooking utensils were needed. By saving the cans that were provided in the food parcels and scouring the tin can dump enough sheet metal was accumulated to make pans for baking and cooking. His tools were comprised of a wooden mallet of rough pine which he made himself, a regular dinner knife supplied by the Germans and a stool with a very narrow space between the two boards of the seat.

By hammering a nail in the end of the seat boards between the space he has an efficient cutting tool. The dinner knife placed in the space between the boards and using the nail as the pivot point he is able to cut the sheet metal.

The sheet metal parts are joined by seams hammered together into a sheet large enough for his requirements. He then folds the sides up and folds the corners in.

Two men produced an all metal steam driven model of a Great Lakes coal barge. It incorporated two turbine drive shafts with twin screws.

Another man built molds which he filled with cement to make a set of barbells.



A grater was made by punching nail holes in the sides of a margarine can. He mounted it on a cylinder with a handle to rotate it. This was used to 'grind' crackers into flour for baking.

German Newspaper Propaganda

Effective cartoons appearing in the German daily newspapers carry messages to the German people and those of the occupied countries sheltered from the conflicting news from other countries. Typical were cartoons depicting the flying American gangsters; Jewish controlled England, Russia and America sending their native sons to their bloody death while the fat Jewish financiers sit in the safety of their homelands making more money. Another cartoon shows that the American Army Air Force consisting of a large proportion of African cannibalistic Negroes.

By employing a smattering of truth to the ideas that the Europeans have formed over the years from our Jewish controlled Hollywood motion pictures, the German cartoonists have skillfully and forcefully hammered home these messages. To a people whose world news for the past decade has been filtered and distorted by experts in mass psychology it was believable.

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Another cartoon has two terribly obese individuals sitting in the sand of Miami Beach with their backs to the reader. Their bathing suits are decorated with stars and stripes and they are wearing enormous sun hats which form the apex of a pair of triangles whose bases are their buttocks. They are discussing the war in Europe. The man's hand sparkles with flashy diamonds and the woman has a string of pearls about her neckless neck. He says, "See my little Mickey Mouse, over there (in Europe) are the Boys, like good Americans, and here we are in America like good Jews"



The cartoon pictured was taken from the German newspaper, VÖLKISCHER BEOBACHTER which was available to the kriegies. It represents the sword of Damocles depicting the imminent defeat of Britain, Russia and 'Uncle Sam'

S/Sgt. Arthur Way, is the only remaining non-commissioned officer of the original crew. That is, the only one were able to locate. We are not certain of the whereabouts of Clarence E. Reed, Roy F. Howell and Irwin Bier.

Arthur Way was on the last mission of GOIN' DAWG. We parted company with him and the rest of the non-coms when we left Dulag Luft, Frankfurt on Main for our train ride to Sagan.

Arthur has kept in touch with through the years and has been helpful in reminding me of some of the experiences we shared together. I consider it a privilege to call him my friend and buddy.

Some of the remaining material was supplied by Arthur. His experiences as a German POW were similar to mine but I believe more arduous especially during the last couple of months. His trek of 550 miles started 6 February 1995 took 84 days.....but let him tell it with the material he gave me:

The author of this letter S/SGT Arthur Harold Way was our waist gunner/radio operator. He was a member of our original crew who went through operational training in Dalhart Texas. He was on his 25th mission the day we were shot down. He is the only non-commissioned officer that we know of that is still alive and active. We know that Walton and Houston have passed on. We are uncertain about Reed, Howell and Bier.

The four commissioned officers are still in good health as of April 1997. Three were POWs. One, 'Jeff' Brown of Lexington Texas completed his required number of combat missions and was returned to the United States.

APRIL -3-1995

Letter

Former P.O.W. sheds accurate light on Memories story

Editor:

This is to the writer who wrote the 50 years ago article in The Reporter dated March 20, "P.O.W. Camp Eschyn."

I am glad for you that you did not see a real prisoner of war camp. The U.S. treated the German P.O.W.s as if we, as P.O.W.s in Germany, were treated as well which was far from the truth.

The first six weeks I was at Stalag-Luft IV, a camp in the part of Poland that was occupied by Germany at that time, our menu consisted of about 600 calories a day.

This is a list of the Reich issue for the week: army bread, one loaf, 2100 grams; vegetables-potatoes, 400 grams; other seasonal-dehydrated cabbage; jam, 175 grams; meat, none; flour, none; soup, oatmeal, barley or pea, three times a week; cheese, 46 grams (at times it was rotten limburger); sugar, 175 grams; smart?, 215 grams; salt, none.

Bread was given in the morning, about one inch of a loaf per man and potatoes were brought to each room in a tin water pail three times a week. Sixteen men had to divide what was in the pail.

The same was true with barley soup (which was the best). I never saw oatmeal or pea soup. Dehydrated cabbage was the most used and that wasn't even like good sauerkraut.

We were so bad off, some could not stand long enough to make roll call without passing out and had to be carried back to bed. I was so covered with malnutrition sores on both buttocks that I could not sit on a chair.

I was not the only one.

This went on from the middle of

May 1944 to the end of the first week in July. That is when we saw the first of the Red Cross parcels. Parcels were to be one per man per week. This never happened. The boxes were opened in the voelger and brought in piece meal each day, so we would not have a lot of food in the room at one time.

We were marched out of Stalag-Luft IV Feb. 6, 1945, just ahead of the advancing Russian army. We headed west and, to make the story short, 550 miles later at the small town of Bitterfeld, Germany, my group was liberated by the American Army Timber Wolf Division. This was April 26, 1945.

I weighed just a little over 100 pounds and was a walking body lice factory.

I did not leave France until the first of June and, by that time with good food and nothing to do, I had gained my weight back. So, when we got to the states June 13, you would never know what we had been through — the cold, the hunger every step of the way. It was 94 days from the time we left camp in northern Poland until we were deloused and showered with clean clothes at Reims, France.

This is just a rough outline of what some of us United States P.O.W.s went through and I know my experience in Hitler's Germany was not as bad as some. I had some very good buddies that either died during the march or had to be transported by horse drawn wagon.

It's been 50 years this year, but memories will not be forgotten.

Thanks for taking time to read this.

Just an old ex-P.O.W.

Arthur H. Wey
Gladsone

This is taken from my notes I made during my captivity in STALAG LUFT IV, at GROSS-TYCHOW at that time GERMANY.

These are the names of towns we were marched around or through in my eighty days on the BLACK HUNGER MARCH,

FEB-6-1945 We left STALAG LUFT IV at GROSS-TYCHOW-

BOISSIN	MUSEDOM	PARCHIM
ARNHAUSEN	ANKLAM	SPORNITZ
STOLZENBERG	MEDOW	LUDWIGSLUST
PETERHAGEN	NEW-BRANDENBURG	ELDENA
KOLPIN	PENZLIN	DOMITZ
GREIFENBERG	MOLLEN-HAGEN	DANNENBERG
WOLIN	WAREN	GUILDEN
SWINDE-MUNDE	MALCHOW	BEVENSEN
BENZ	PLAU	UELZEN

MARCH-28-45
 Two day train ride in 40 & 8 box cars through STENDEL to P.O.W. CAMP at ALTON-GRABERO, just east of the town of MAGDEBURG. We left ALTON-GRABERO by foot march on APRIL-12-45 past the towns of GORZKE, BELZIG, BLONSDORF, SEYDA, JESSEN, PRETTITZ, TORGAU, DUBEN, DELITZSCH, SOLLICHAU TO A LITTLE BURG BY THE NAME OF Krina. We waited here two days while the GERMANS and the AMERICANS got together and agreed to turn us over. They had to clear a mine field so we could walk single file through 5 miles to BITTERFELD, GERMANY. This was APRIL-26-45. The AMERICAN TIMBER-WOLF DIVISION WAS WHO TOOK CHARGE OF US.

APRIL-27-45 We were then taken by ARMY TRUCK to HALLE GERMANY air field (what was left of it) and stayed there in a barracks till MAY-10-45

MAY-10-Taken by truck to MERSEBURG AIR FIELD and flown to RHEIMS, FRANCE in C-47 aircraft.

This was the first place we were showered, deloused, and showered again, then given a complete set of new clothing, also shoes that fit. After 94 days travel we did feel more human and smelled a lot better.

MAY-12-left RHEIMS, FRANCE by C-47 and landed at LEHAVRE FRANCE and then by truck to CAMP LUCKY-STRIKE, where all returning P.O.W.'s were to stay in big tents till it was time to be shipped back to the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

MAY-30-I was taken by truck to the dock at LEHAVRE and boarded the USS EUGENE HALE a liberty ship.

MAY-31-After one day on ship we sailed for AMERICA. It took 13 days, some were beautiful and for about 3 days of storm it was not so good. But we did arrive past the statue of LIBERTY on a very clear day, on the 13th of JUNE 1945

We came into an empty pier, except for a small band. None of our relatives knew where we were, because most did not have any mail since CHRISTMAS of 44. We were trucked to CAMP SHANKS, NEW YORK.

I left CAMP SHANKS, NEW YORK after a 3 day stay by train to FORT SHERIDAN, IL. I stayed there 1 day and left for MICHIGAN on the CHICAGO & NORTHWESTERN RR AND got to ESCANABA, MI. the next morning. After hitch hiking to CORNELL:

found the home boarded up, a cousin came and told me every one had moved to near DETROIT. But there was one sister & husband in ESCANABA visiting his parents. I contacted them and then I felt like I had come home.

Supplemental RED CROSS PARCEL distribution from FEB.6=to
APRIL, 26-45.

FEB.6-45-----	1-PARCEL, PER MAN.
FEB.23-----	1/3 PARCEL, PER MAN.
FEB.28-----	1-PARCEL PER MAN.
MARCH.19-----	1/5 PARCEL PER MAN.
APRIL.1-----	2/11 PARCEL PER MAN.
APRIL.4-----	1/2 PARCEL PER MAN.
APRIL.12-----	2/5 PARCEL PER MAN.
APRIL.18-----	1-- PARCEL PER MAN.
APRIL.21-----	1/7 PARCEL PER MAN.

Total PARCEL AMOUNT for journey of estimated 550 miles. Germany furnished no meat for all this time, and most of the bread was bartered from the guards, for cigarettes. No chance to bath except to wash hands or face when we got enough water to do so, which was possibly once a week. I came down with body lice about the middle of MARCH, near BRANDENBURG, and did not get deloused till I got to RHEIMS FRANCE. MAY-10-45. I also got my first real change of cloth at that time since the cloths I got at STALAG IV possibly in JULY or AUGUST-44.

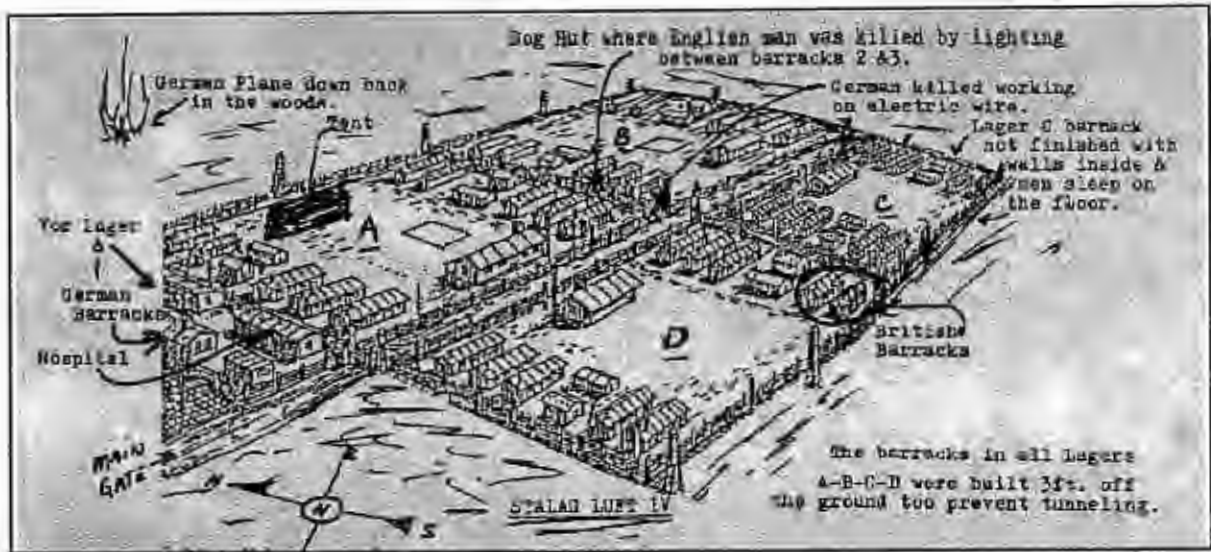
We were given no supervision from the time we were trucked to a GERMAN AIR FIELD at HALLE, GERMANY, APRIL, 27-45, till we were moved out MAY-10-45. The ARMY did give us ARMY RATIONS-K-and c.

They trucked us to MERSEBURG, GERMANY, then by C-47 transport to RHEIMS, FRANCE.

FROM MY NOTES FROM MY BOOK I CARRIED FROM STALAG
LUFT. IV. GROSSTYCHOW, POLAND.

ARTHUR H. WAY
8307 M LANE
GLADSTONE, MI.

49837



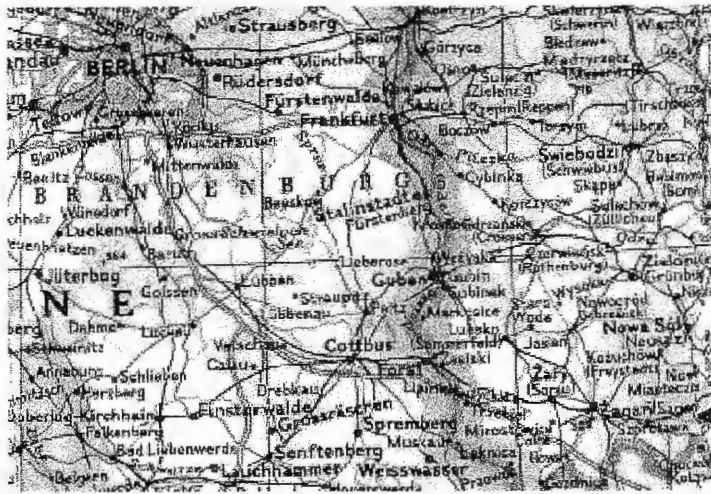
STALAG LUFT IV at Gross Tychow

Life at Luft VI was a grinding bore, sometime unbearable. It was only when the kriegies were on the road west to avoid being freed(?) by the incoming Soviets that the men could reflect on this camp as a place of relatively comfortable refuge.

Recently SSgt. Arthur Way supplied the following paragraphs describing the scene in the fuselage, aft of the bomb bays, during the last few minutes prior to the 'wheels up' landing of Goin' Dawg:

"To lighten the load on the plane SSgt. Howell and I opened the waist door and threw out all the flak suits and anything we were not going to need even our parachutes plus some ammo." Arthur wrote. "The minute Lt. Goller started to put the plane in a sharp turn to avoid going over the 'lake', the belly of the plane became a very good target for the gunners in the flak towers. They could not lower their guns enough to hit us square. They did lob the 88mm. shells over us that exploded and sent shrapnel through the fuselage near and to the rear of our waist positions. While our plane was in the bank to the left, I could see nothing through the waist gun window but blue sky and the tracers of the 20mm. aimed at the right wing and belly of the plane. As the plane flattened out I saw we were on fire. I don't know who reported the fire first but I called on the intercom and said we were on fire! After that all hell broke loose. Lt. Goller said we were going to land and he managed to cut down a power pole with a transformer on it. The plane fishtailed and I was thrown from the right waist position to the left waist. Howell from the left waist wound up in my spot. I don't know how the rest of the crew fared but I hung onto the ammo belt fastened to the gun with my shoulder against the ammo box. That was a wild ride!! It seemed forever but I imagine it was only a few minutes."

Signed: SSgt. Arthur Way



Stalag Luft III was located about 95 miles southeast of Berlin on the outskirts of Sagan

To avoid the oncoming Soviet Army Stalag Luft III was moved to the city of Nürnberg.

As Patton's Third swept across Germany approaching Nürnberg, Stalag Luft III moved south to Moosburg. It was here that Patton overtook the ragged kreigies and returned them to the American Forces.



A. P. CLARK
12125 AMBASSADOR DR. #103
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

9/9/97

(Ed. Note)

General A. P. Clark ret.
former POW of Stalag
Luft III & former Supt. Of
the Air Force Academy
received a copy of Col.
Cittadini's 20th Mission
from Arnold Wright,
Author & Historian of
World War II.

General Clark's kind
comments in this short
letter to Col. Cittadini
have been added in late
September 1997.

Dear Joe,

Arnold Wright was kind
enough to send along the copy of
your fine account of your short
down and time as a POW. It
will be added to the growing
collection of memoirs and other
historical items in the Staley kept
in the Historical Collection here in
the Air Force Academy library.

Your support is appreciated
by all of us who work for the
library here. Your account is
well written and does not
appear to suffer from the exaggerations
so often found in these accounts.

Thanks again and warm regards,

Gen. Clark

Ed. Note:

Major General Lewis E. Lyle USAF Ret., President of The Mighty Eighth Air Force, Savannah GA received a copy of Col. Cittadini's "20th Mission" through the efforts of Arnold Wright Author and Historian whose devotion to the Eighth Air Force, European Theater produced "Behind The Wire. Stalag Luft III. South Compound" and others.

General Lyle's warm approval of "20th Mission" is expressed in this letter.

It was added to the document in late October 1997.



The mighty Eighth
Air Force Heritage Center

Lewis E. Lyle
Major General, USAF, Ret.
President

P.O. Box 1992 • Savannah, Georgia • 31402
(912) 748-8888 • 1-800-421-9428



The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center

P. O. Box 1992 • Savannah, Georgia 31402 • (912) 234-1992

80A97

Dear Joe,

Your memory certainly served you well in your "20th Mission a shot account." You did a great job and it read like it was live.

As we try to tell the story of the mighty 8th at the Museum in Savannah I have often said "If we only cover the stories of those shot down I would be happy."

We who were never prisoners of War have a hard time understanding the horrible conditions you endured. And to think the 8th alone had over 28,000.

Thank you for taking the time to write this great account of a hair raising event.

This will be a valuable addition to our library and working with children in our education program.

Thanks for a great TIME account of POW sacrifices.

Sincerely
Lew Lyle

Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum
Veteran's Database Entry

Veteran's Name: Goller, Theodore Jr.
Serial Number:
Position: Pilot
Rank: 1st Lt.
Group/Squadron: 384th BG/ 544th BS
DOB:
Place of Birth: ~~Ruffin, SC~~ OK
Name of Base: Grafton Underwood
AAF Number: 106
Date of Death: Feb '06
Place of Burial: Houston Veterans' Cemetery, Houston, TX
Scores:
Awards: POW
Experiences: Shot down 7 May 1944 in B-17 #4231235 "Goin' Dog." POW.
Record Source: MACR 4811

(4) B-17

42-38161 379THBG 525THBS (FLAK)

CRASHED NEAR WOLVEGA MACR 4559

(P)1ST LT. CLARENCE E. DARNELL	POW	ROYSTON
(CP)2ND LT. JOHN E. JONES	POW	MUNCEY
(N)2ND LT. ROY M. BISTLINE	EVD	SCARSDALE, NY
(B)2ND LT. WALTER J. TYSON	EVD	LITTLE NECK, NY
(TT)T/SGT. JAMES R. WILSON	EVD	WATERLOO, IO
(R)T/SGT. TOM W. WILKENS	POW	LAKWOOD, OH
(BT)SGT. WILLIAM H. SNIDER	POW	WILLOW BRANCH, IN
(RW)S/SGT. LEWIS P. RULE	POW	CLAYPOOL, IN
(LW)		
(TG)S/SGT. THOMAS P. REILLY	EVD	BROOKLYN, NY

(5) B-17 BLUES IN THE NIGHT 42-37791 379THBG 526THBS (FLAK)

CRASHED NEAR WITTENBURG MACR 4558

(P)2ND LT. THOMAS M. SMITH	KIA	ST. LOUIS, MO
(CP)2ND LT. ROBERT C. SCASE	KIA	WELLSBORO, PA
(N)2ND LT. JAMES C. CHAMBERLAIN	KIA	ORANGE, TX
(B)2ND LT. THOMAS P. MORRISON	POW	LONG BEACH, NY
(TT)SGT. LEON M. WOZNAKIEWICZ	KIA	SUNDERLAND, MA
(R)S/SGT. GEORGE A. BILOHLAVEK	KIA	ROCHESTER, NY
(BT)SGT. FRANCIS A. ZAMBIE	KIA	HELENA, AR
(RW)S/SGT. DAN L. KILLINGSWORTH	KIA	PAMPA, TX
(LW)		
(TG)S/SGT. WALTER A. FRENCH	KIA	AUGUSTA, KS

(6) B-17 GOIN DOG

42-31235 384THBG 544THBS (FLAK)

CRASHED NEAR BRAUNSCHWEIG MACR 4811

(P)1ST LT. THEODORE GOLLER, JR.	POW	RUFFIN, SC
(CP)2ND LT. GREGORY L. MARTIN	POW	OAKLAND, CA
(N)1ST LT. JOSEPH L. G. CITTANDIN	POW	NEW YORK, NY
(B)F/O EUGENE P. GRILLI	POW	ROCHESTER, NY
(TT)T/SGT. CLARENCE E. REED	POW	FREEDOM, PA
(R)T/SGT. IRWIN L. BIER	POW	VANGERGRIFT, PA
(BT)S/SGT. WALTER E. WEARNE	POW	BLOOMFIELD, NE
(RW)S/SGT. ARTHUR H. WAY	POW	CORNELL, MI
(LW)S/SGT. ROY F. HOWELL	POW	WAR, WV
(TG)T/SGT. HORACE M. WALTON	POW	MEXIA, TX

(7) B-17

42-5879 385THBG 548THBS (FLAK)

CRASHED AT PECHTERFELD MACR 4562

(P)2ND LT. SIDNEY R. HOFFMAN	POW	LOS ANGELES, CA
(CP)2ND LT. JOHN E. BRADY	POW	ROCHESTER, NY
(N)2ND LT. CARLETON E. BROOKS	POW	CINCINNATI, OH
(B)2ND LT. RALPH W. GOCHNER	POW	O'PALLON, IL
(TT)T/SGT. LEWIS E. OHINN	POW	WALLA WALLA, WA
(R)S/SGT. ANTHONY J. DEL GIZZI	POW	NEWTON, MA
(BT)SGT. CARROLL M. MIDDLETON	POW	STREATOR, IL
(RW)SGT. JOHN S. JACOBY	POW	OAKLAND, CA
(LW)SGT. HAROLD W. SCULL	POW	CRISFIELD, MD
(TG)SGT. EDWARD J. HUNTER	POW	PITTSBURGH, PA

LAST NAME	NAME	RANK	POS	FATE	LOCATION	DATE	ASS'ND	PAGE
Gekahis	Anthony	Lt	P					82
Geller	Herbert S.	2 Lt.	CP	KIFA	1615 to 6500	3/19/45		178B, 180
Gennette		S	BT	POW		10/14/43		
Gent	D. B.	S	TG	F				
George	David E.	S/S	LW	KIA	3508 to 9100	4/27/44	4/23/44	102K, 103
Gerber	Leonard (NMI)	Lt	B	POW		2/11/44		65
Gerbig	Lawrence W.	S/S	TOG	CT				
Gerhold	Melvin H.		AC	POW		7/12/44		131
Geriak	John	S/S	R	NC	G/U	4/25/44		103
Gerlach	Mencseslaus A.	2 Lt.	N	KIA	3530 to 6123	11/30/44		158
Geronimo	J. S.	Cpl	TT	F				120B
Gerow	Francis	T/S	R	CT		12/16/43		12B, 56, 68B
Gerson	Frank	S/S	GC	CT			1/6/43	
Gettle	Jesse R.	Pvt	GC	CT			1/6/43	
Getty	Darrell C.	F/O	B	POW		4/13/44		
Gibbens	Neil S.	1 Lt	GC	CT				
Gibson	James A.	1 Lt	P	CT				
Gibson	Merle L.	2 Lt.	PFF					
Gibson	Virgil L.	S/S	WG	CT				
Giguere	Henry P.	2 Lt.	N	KIA	3574 to 1202	7/16/44		110A, 131
Gilbert	Stanley M.	2 Lt	P	CT				
Gilbert	William T.	2 Lt	N	CT			12/1/44	
Giles	John P.	2 Lt.	N	F			4/23/44	
Gillespie	Keith W.	S	BT	CT				
Gilliam	Charles L.	2 Lt	B	F			7/17/44	
Gillis	John J.	T/S	R	KIA	1260 to 1202	7/25/43		19
Gilmer	Charles E.	2 Lt	P	CT				
Gilmore	James K.	S/S	WG	CT				
Gilmore	James R.	Capt	P	CT				
Gilmore	William F.	Maj.	P	DITR		11/26/43		39, 49
Gilrane	Harry A.	S/S	RW	POW	17B	1/4/44	9/14/43	39, 60
Gilroy	Robert P.	S/S	NG	POW		10/11/44		153
Ginder	John P.	S/S	TG	CT				
Ginsburg	Norman L.	2 Lt	B	CT		4/25/45		
Girard	Donald R.	S/S	WG	POW		3/4/44	9/5/43	69
Gissing	Robert	S	TT	CT				
Gist	Cecil B.	S/S	TT	CT		7/30/44		
Givens	Paul S.	1 Lt.	B	POW	Stal. 4	9/6/43	6/22/43	33
Glancy	Donald B.	2 Lt		F			7/24/44	
Glass	Louis V.	S/S	TG	CT		4/25/45		
Glass	Walter C.	Pvt 1c	GC	CT				
Glenn	Theodore K.	2 Lt	CP	CT		4/25/45		
Glotfelty		T/S	AC	CT		7/1/44		
Glover	Carl L.	S	GC	CT			1/6/43	
Gober	Claude I.	2 Lt.	B	KIFA	1605 to 8522	11/13/43		47C, 48
Goble	Charles D.	2 Lt	P	CT		1/1/45		190
Goetz	Carl H.	S/S	R	POW		12/12/44		160
Goetz	Jack K.	S/S	TT	DITR		12/30/43		58
Goldberg	Irvin	Cpl	GC	CT			1/6/43	
Goldburg		S	AC	CT		7/30/44		
Goldman	James A.	2 Lt	B	DITR		12/30/43		58
Goldman	Robert P.	T/S	R	POW		7/29/43	6/22/43	20
Goldsborough	Richard H.	S	TG	CT		4/25/45		
Goldsmith	Alan E.	2 Lt	N	CT		4/25/45		
Goldstein	Bernard	Cpl	GC	CT			1/6/43	
Golka	Larry J.	S/S	WG	POW		7/16/44		131
Gollér	Theodore, Jr.	1 Lt.	P	POW	Stal. 1	5/7/44		105, 110, 110A
Gomez	Antonio C. Jr.	S/S	LW	POW	con.	12/1/43	10/18/43	55

FRIEDRICH AUGUST GREVE

Die Luftverteidigung
im Abschnitt
Wilhelmshaven
1939 - 1945



2. MARINEFLAKBRIGADE



Hilfswillige russische Kriegsgefangene (HIWIS) brachten die Munition von einem abgelegenen Munitionsbunker in die Flak-Stellung. Dafür bot man ihnen angenehmere Lebensbedingungen und eine reichhaltige Verpflegung an.



Die „fliegende Festung“ B 17 im Anflug.

schussbeteiligungen“ ersonnen. Wenn ein Bomber von der Flak getroffen und zum Absturz gebracht wurde, konnte man natürlich nicht mit Sicherheit aussagen, welche Batterie oder welches spezielle Geschütz die tödliche Granate abgefeuert hatte. Es ließ sich aber nachträglich durch die dokumentarisch festgehaltenen Schusswerte feststellen, ob die Batterie

Erfolge im Abwehrkampf bei der Reichsverteidigung. Am 7. Mai 1944 sollten die Löninger Jungen endlich einen eigenen direkten Abschuss erleben. Um 11.25 Uhr wurde der „Anflug einer B 17 Flying Fortress in geringer Höhe aus Richtung Brake, Kurs Nord-West“ gemeldet. Der Bomber kam genau auf die Schweiburger Flakbatterie zu!

Sofort wurden alle Waffen gefechtsmäßig besetzt. Auch die vier großen 10,5 cm Geschütze. Doch diese durften nicht eingreifen. Immerhin flogen ihre Granaten bis zu 17 km weit, und das hätte großen Schaden im Lande anrichten können.

Dann kam das viermotorige Flugzeug in Sicht, eine B-17 Fortress, eine „Fliegende Festung“. Ganz offensichtlich war sie beschädigt und hatte daher den schützenden Verband verlassen müssen. In 70 bis 80 m Höhe näherte sie sich der Schweiburger Batterie. Diese hatte zum Eigenschutz eine 2-cm-Flak, Modell 30. Das war zwar nicht mehr die modernste leichte Kanone. Sie verschoss aber sehr wirkungsvolle kleine Granaten mit einer Feuergeschwindigkeit von 120 Schuss pro Minute.

Der riesige Bomber kam in 70 bis 80 m Höhe auf die Schweiburger Batterie zu. Die Soldaten an der leichten Flak eröffneten das Feuer und trafen die „Fliegende Festung“ mehrfach. Diese schoss mit ihren schweren Maschinengewehren zurück. Dabei wurde der



Notlandung auf einer Wiese in Diekmannshausen. Die Flieger unverletzt gerettet, das Flugzeug kaum beschädigt. Da steht die B17 plötzlich in hellen Flammen. Die Besatzung hat den Bomber angesteckt, damit er den Deutschen nicht unversehrt in die Hände fallen konnte.



Verbrannt. Das blieb von dem großen Flugzeug aus Amerika.



Josef Lübken vor der Tafel mit den Abschussbeteiligungen der Schweiburger Flak. Er überlebte diesen Einsatz nicht.

rie ihre Geschosse so platziert hatte, dass diese eventuell zum Absturz des betreffenden Bombers hätten führen oder dazu hätten beitragen können. Das zählte dann als „Abschussbeteiligung“, und die Batterie wurde dafür mit der Verleihung eines Wimpels belohnt. Am Fahnenmast der Batterie Schweiburg flatterte die Reichskriegsflagge und darunter eine Reihe von Wimpeln, Dokumente über Abschussbeteiligungen als

Löninger Gregor Kramer, der im Kommando-Gerät stand, durch einen Splitter verletzt. Das Flugzeug verlor sichtlich an Höhe, aber die Amerikaner wehrten sich weiter, sogar noch bis kurz vor ihrem unvermeidlichen Absturz. Über der Stellung der Schweiburger Batterie schwenkte der Bomber in süd-westliche Richtung. Wahrscheinlich fürchtete der Pilot einen Absturz im Jadebusen. Kurz darauf gelang ihm eine Notlandung auf einer Wiese in Diekmannshausen. Glücklicherweise konnte die gesamte Besatzung das Wrack

lebend verlassen. Trotz des wilden Schusswechsels gab es auch hier nur einen Leichtverletzten. Kurz vor ihrer Gefangennahme steckten die Amerikaner ihr Flugzeug in Brand. Sie wollten es nicht ihren Feinden unbeschädigt überlassen. Später gab es noch Ärger mit dem Batteriechef, wie Robert Kramer, der Zwillingbruder des verletzten Gregor berichtete. Auf dem Kommandostand tat immer ein Luftwaffenhelfer als zusätzlicher Ausguck Dienst, um den Luftraum zu beobachten. Man saß dann oben auf der



Die von der Batterie Schweiburg am 7. 5. 1944 abgeschossene B 17 Flying Fortress, notgelandet auf einer Wiese bei Dickmannshausen.



Die ausgebrannte Flying Fortress.



Zehn amerikanische gefangene Flieger der abgeschossenen Flying Fortress beim Eintreffen in der Batterie Schweiburg.

Stahlkuppel und ließ seine Blicke schweifen über das breittene Land, das Meer hinter dem Deich und den weiten, weiten Himmel. Neun Zehntel seines Lebens wartet der Soldat vergebens, heißt es ja. So auch hier. Trotzdem war dieser Posten beliebt, denn man konnte sich durch eine Öffnung in der Kuppel gelegentlich mit Luftwaffenhelferinnen unterhalten, die dort ihren Arbeitsplatz hatten und bei einem Luftangriff die Messdaten des Kommandogeräts weiterleiten mussten.

Nun hatten aber auch die Männer am schweren Maschinengewehr auf dem Deich den Befehl erhalten, das Feuer auf den anfliegenden Bomber zu eröffnen. Aber die Soldaten gaben keinen Schuss ab. Unverständlich! Da besetzt man vier Jahre lang eine vollautomatische schwere Waffe als Objektschutz, ohne dass sich ein Gegner zeigt, und nun, da ein viermotoriger US-Bomber auf die Batterie Schweiburg eindreht und diese mit Bordwaffen angreift, schweigt das Maschinengewehr! - Feigheit vor dem Feind?

Und das war des Rätsels Lösung: Der Löninger Junge, der als Lufttraumbeobachter oben auf der Stahlkuppel des Kommandogeräts sitzt und fasziniert den Schusswechsel zwischen der 2-cm-Flak und dem anfliegenden Bomber verfolgt, befindet sich genau in der Schussbahn des schweren Maschinengewehrs!

Die Soldaten der Schweiburger Flakbatterie nahmen die amerikanischen Flieger gefangen. Bei der Durchsuchung stellten die Deutschen mit Erstaunen fest, dass die Amerikaner eine erstklassige Ausrüstung für eine eventuelle Flucht besaßen. So hatten sie deutsches und niederländisches Geld, einen Kompass in einem Uniformknopf eingepasst und buntbedruckte Seidentücher, auf denen ganz Deutschland und die benachbarten Staaten exakt als Landkarte abgebildet waren, eine erstklassige Fluchthilfe. In der Tat wurden viele alliierte Flieger von den Holländern versteckt und anschließend mit Hilfe der Wider-

standsbewegung über Frankreich und Spanien zurück nach England geschleust.

An der Gefangennahme hätten sich die Flakhelfer gern beteiligt, aber auch hier wieder einmal ihre kuriose Situation: Einerseits standen sie Tag und Nacht an einer der kompliziertesten und gefährlichsten Waffen des Zweiten Weltkriegs, andererseits aber durften sie noch nicht einmal einen ganz normalen Karabiner führen.

Das Finale

Im August 1944 wurden die Jungen der ersten Gruppe entlassen, und im Januar 1945 kam die zweite Gruppe nach Haus. Nun trennten sich ihre Wege. Einige hatten das „Einjährige“, also ihre Mittlere Reife, erworben. Die anderen waren in die Klasse 7 (heute Klasse 11) versetzt worden und konnten für kurze Zeit das Gymnasium in Cloppenburg besuchen. Einige vom Jahrgang 1927 zog man sofort zum Arbeitsdienst ein. Nach einem halben Jahr wurden sie Soldaten, nahmen an den verlustreichen Endkämpfen in Deutschland teil und gingen den bitteren Weg in die Kriegsgefangenschaft. Für viele dauerten diese Einsätze mehrere Jahre. Josef Lübken und Franz Lange verloren dabei ihr Leben.

Andere hatten mehr Glück, aber allen hatte man ein Jahr



Sehr exakte Landkarten von Mitteleuropa - auf hauchdünner Seide gedruckt - besaßen die US-Flieger als Fluchthilfen.

ihrer Jugend genommen und sie in den gnadenlosen Krieg der Erwachsenen eingebunden. Und mit den Löningern viele, viele weitere deutsche Jungen. Insgesamt gab es 220.000 Flakhelfer bei Marine und Luftwaffe. Sie alle erlebten in viel zu jungen Jahren Schreckliches. Viele wurden verwundet, zu Krüppeln geschossen oder

beim Dienst an den Kanonen getötet. Man hatte sie in den Zentren des Bombenkriegs eingesetzt, da wo Bombenteppiche vom Himmel fielen, wo Städte unter Explosionen und Bränden in Schutt und Asche sanken, wo Menschen von Bomben getötet wurden. Wo nach den Angriffen tagelang Brände gelöscht, Menschen aus den Trümmern gegrä-



Zehn Amerikaner, „baumlange Kerle“, wie Robert Kramer sagte, auf dem Weg in die Gefangenschaft. Für sie ist der Krieg zu Ende.

Die ausgebrannte Flying
Fortress.



Zehn amerikanische ge-
fangene Flieger der abge-
schossenen Flying For-
tress beim Eintreffen in
der Batterie Schweiburg.





DECLASSIFIED

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

REPORT ON CAPTURE OF MEMBERS OF ENEMY AIR FORCES

POST: Headquarters, Airbase A

PLACE: Oldenburg

DATE: 8 May 1944 at 0730 h

REGARDING: Downing of a Boeing Fortress B 17

AT: Suderschwaburg, Community Ja²s, south of Jade-bay

ON: 7 May 1944, at 1130 h

NAME: HEARLE

FIRST NAME: N E

RANK: Sgt

ASN: 17265106

RESULT: Captured

PLACE AND TIME OF CAPTURE: Schwaburg, on 7 May 1944 at 1140 h

*Out in fleet
MAC 12
4711*

Kochler
Major,
Commanding

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

REPORT ON CAPTURE OF MEMBERS OF ENEMY AIR FORCES

POST: Headquarters, Airbase A

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DATE: 8 May 1944, at 0730 h

REGARDING: Downing of a Boeing Fortress B 17

AT: Suderschwiburg, Community Jade, south of Jade-bay

ON: 7 May 1944, at 1130 h

NAME: GOLLER

FIRST NAME: T

RANK: Lt

ASN: ~~0-851946~~

RESULT: Captured ✓

PLACE AND TIME OF CAPTURE: Schwiburg, on 7 May 1944, at 1140 h

of Goller, Shevdone

But in file

*MACIP
4811*

Kochler
Major,
Commanding

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

Report Concerning Capture of Aircraft

Hdq: Airbase Command A 16/XI
Place: Oldenburg
Time: 8 May 44, at 0730 hours
Time of Downing: 7 May 44, at 1130 hours
Place of crash: Suderschweiburg, community of Jade, south Jadebusen
Kind of Capture: Flak (Marine-Artillery)
Aircraft type: Boeing Fortress, B 17
Identification: "P", blue side fin "C" kokarde SU
Serial No. 231235
Condition of the aircraft: 85% destruction, destroyed by fire

KU 1742

7 May 44

2. At 1130 hours, Suderschweiburg, CR 55, Boeing crashed, 85% destruction, 10 men captured, identification markings, blue P in white triangle C serial No. 23135 C. Oldenburg salvaged.

MACR
4811

KU 1742

DECLASSIFIED

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

Report Concerning Captured Air Forces Personnel.

Airbase Command A.

Place: Oldenburg

Time: 8 May 44, at 730 hours

Subject: Boeing Fortress B 17, Suderschweiburg, Community Jade, south of
Jadebasen, 7 May 44, at 1130 hours

Name: Grilli, Eugene P., D-10 72
Bier, Irvin L., Sgt., 33294664
Way, Arthur B., Sgt., 16087832
Walton, Horace W., Sgt., 38413085
Wearns W.E. Sgt., 17165106
Reed, Clarence E., 33305349
Howell, Roy E., Sgt., 15337966
Martin, Gregory, Lt., O 819719
Coller T. Lt., O 801946
Cittadini, Joseph L.G., Lt., O 809104

Disposition: Schweiburg on 7 May 44, at 1140 hours captured

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Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

✓ First Lieutenant Theodore Goller, Jr.

Mrs. Lena M. Goller, (Wife)
Route 1,
Ruffin, South Carolina.

✓ Second Lieutenant Gregory L. Martin

Mrs. Anna L. Martin, (Mother)
3545 Jordan Road,
Oakland, California.

✓ First Lieutenant Joseph L. Cittadini

Mrs. Florence S. Cittadini, (Wife)
9308 202nd Street,
New York, New York.

✓ Flight Officer Eugene P. Grilli

Mrs. Loretta D. Grilli, (Wife)
409 Winton Road North,
Rochester, New York.

✓ Technical Sergeant Irvin L. Bier

Mrs. Mildred L. Bier, (Wife)
402¹/₂ Lowell Street,
Vandergrift, Pennsylvania.

✓ Technical Sergeant Clarence E. Reed

Mrs. Dorothy E. Reed, (Wife)
612 Fourth Avenue,
Freedom, Pennsylvania.

✓ Staff Sergeant Walter E. Wearne

Mr. Dewey B. Wearne, (Father)
Bloomfield, Nebraska.

✓ Technical Sergeant Horace M. Walton

Mrs. Helen Lee Walton, (Wife)
209 East Milan,
Mexia, Texas.

✓ Staff Sergeant Arthur H. Way

Mrs. Carinne M. Way, (Mother)
Cornell, Michigan.

✓ Staff Sergeant Roy F. Howell

Mrs. Virginia L. Howell, (Mother)
War, West Virginia.

Small wood didn't exist in 1944



Direction Picture 1 was taken from



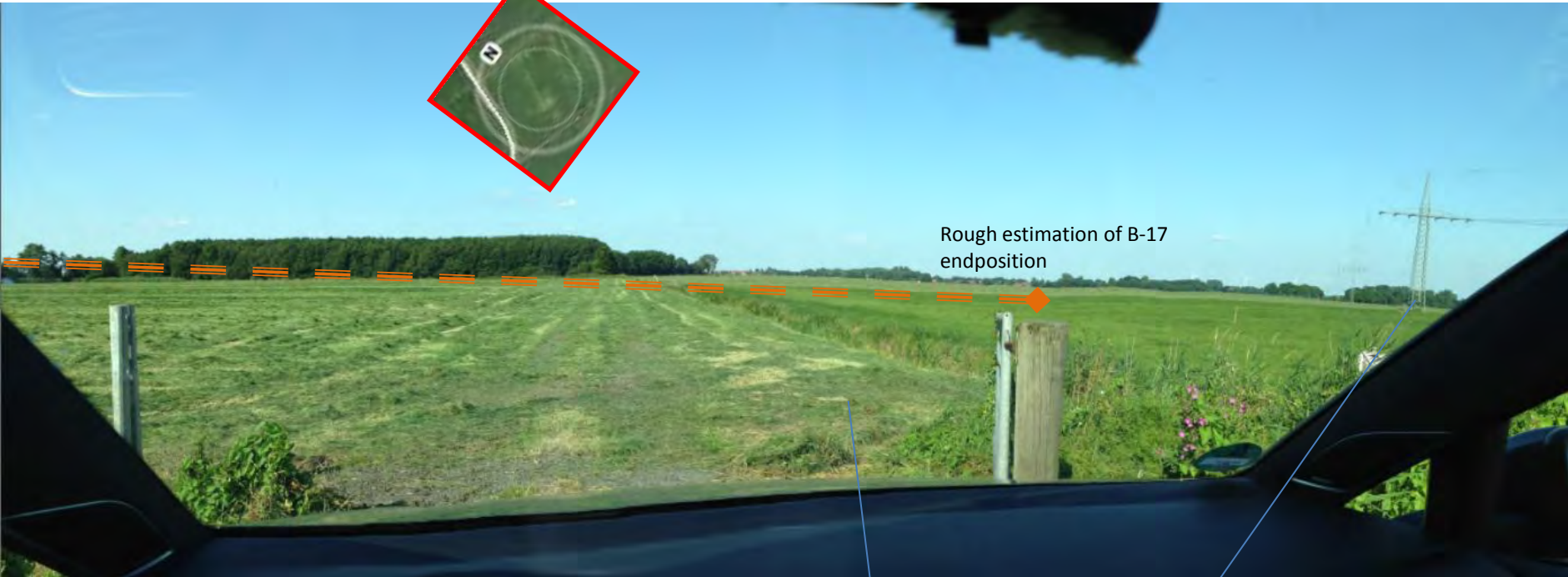
Mr. Heinrich Bartels House

B-17 came in at Low-Level

Picture 1



Rough estimation of B-17
endposition



Mr. Heinrich Bartels House





FRIEDRICH AUGUST GREVE

Die Luftverteidigung
im Abschnitt
Wilhelmshaven
1939 - 1945



2. MARINEFLAKBRIGADE

FRIEDRICH AUGUST GREVE

Die Luftverteidigung
im Abschnitt
Wilhelmshaven
1939 - 1945

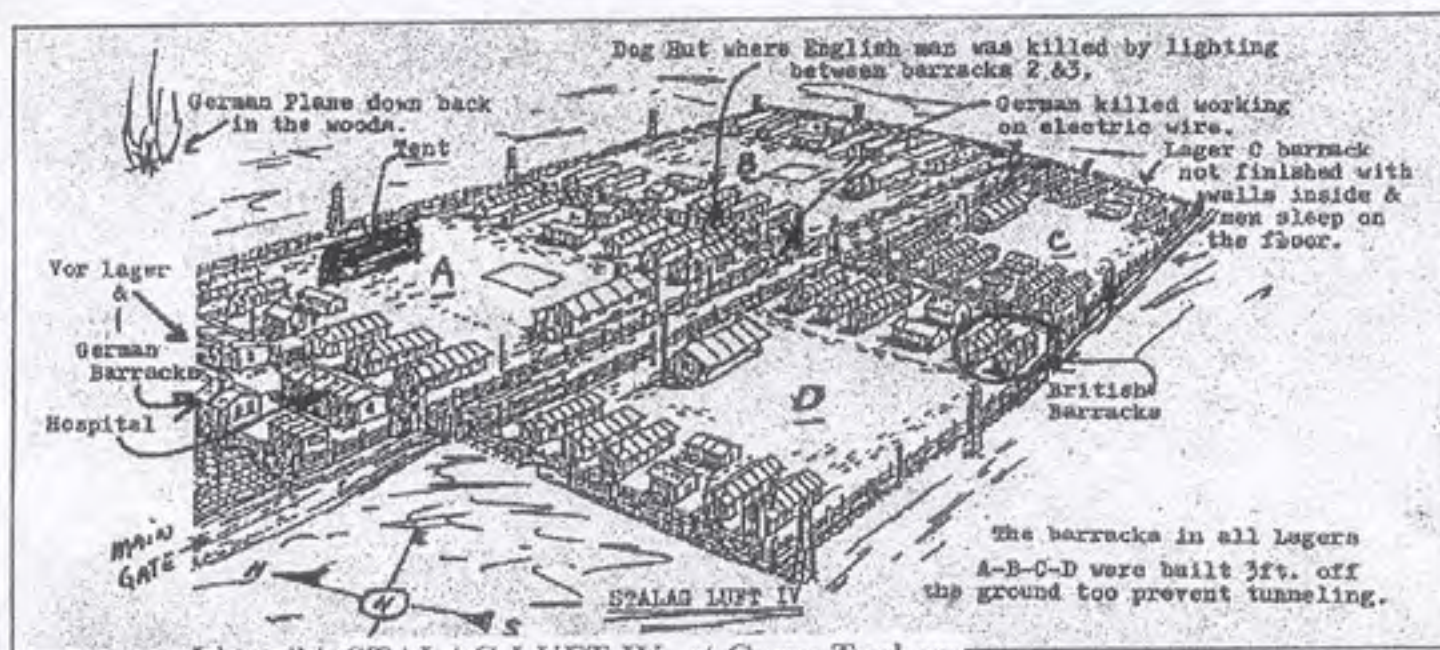


2. MARINEFLAKBRIGADE



Joe's original crew - Dalhart Texas 1943

Standing L to R, Clarence E. Reed - Engineer; Roy F. Howell - Asst. Engineer; Irwin L Bier - Radio Opr.; Arthur Way - Asst. Radio Opr.; Horace M. Walton - Tail Gunner; Jeramei V. Houston - Ball Turrent Gunner.
Kneeling L to R, Theodore Gollar, Jr. - Pilot; James K. Geary - Co-Pilot; Joe Cittadini - Navigator; James J. Brown - Bombadier



STALAG LUFT IV at Gross Tychow



Die von der Batterie Schweiburg am 7. 5. 1944 abgeschossene B 17 Flying Fortress, notgelandet auf einer Wiese bei Dickmannshausen.



Die ausgebrannte Flying Fortress.



Zehn amerikanische gefangene Flieger der abgeschossenen Flying Fortress beim Eintreffen in der Batterie Schweiburg.



Die von der Batterie Schweiburg am 7. 5. 1944 abgeschossene B 17 Flying Fortress, notgelandet auf einer Wiese bei Dickmannshausen.



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