Little Soldiers
Big Battles

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Lewis Thomas, in one of the essays which he published in the New England Journal of Medicine, defined an autobiography as a chronological account of a lifetime with events arranged in progressive order as a purely historical account. He further refers to such an account which is augmented by "recollections which you may have dressed up in your favor", and by thoughts which may have occurred after the facts in the serial account, as a "memoir". In this account of the events of the winter of 1944-5 what emerges is a memoir in Thomas' sense. The facts are arranged chronologically but interspersed among them are reflections which were spurred by the memories of the events. This, therefore, is a memoir as defined by the recently departed New England Surgeon. The facts, however, have not been "dressed up".

ILLUSTRATIONS
All made by U.S. Army Signal Corp

i: Flanunerscheim collecting station: yard behind building were helmets were stacked after prisoners were logged in. Below: Interior of typical prisoner barracks.

ii: Above: Only POW letter to reach U.S.

Below: View through barbed wire fence from first POW Camp (Stammlager VIG). German Guard outside fence.

iii. German narrow gauge railroad cars used to transport prisoners.
Below: Ausweis (pass) issued to medical team at the Duderstadt Stalag 11B.

iv. Upper right: View from top of guards' quarters of barracks for prisoners and, in the distance, The Poltawerk munitions factory building.

Lower left: The Ziegelei brick factory south of Duderdtadt. Lower right: inside the Ziegelei, staircase leading to second tier of drying racks which served as bunks for prisoners.

v. Left and right above: Brick drying racks and stairways inside the Ziegelei.
Below right: The pump which was the only source of water for the entire Ziegelei.

vi. Prisoners inside the Polta Werk camp and, lower right, the cryptic calendar kept to mark off the passage of days.

vii: Unnamed Major from the Second Infantry Division on "liberation day" with Lt. Tenery, left, and Capt. Fred McIntire, right.

viii. Myself lighting up cigarettes for the ANZAC tankers who had assumed the role of Medics and ruled the whole Poltawerk compound.

ix: Temporary ID card issued by Major Derks from the SCHAEF Headquarters Recovery Team in Duderstadt.

Notes

Item # 1: First Day in Uniform – Photo of John Tenery with wife Elizabeth taken in New York in 1944.

Item #2: USS General Grant – After unit training at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, the 106th Infantry Division's, 123rd Regiment and Division Artillery cross Atlantic by way of the Azores, unescorted, to Liverpool on USS General Grant (converted liner Manhatten).

Item #3: USS General Grant

Item #4: Newspaper article

Item #5: Newspaper MIA notice

Item #6: Telegram 1 – Telegram informing Elizabeth Tenery of her husband's MIA status.

Item #7: Letter 1 - Letter from War Department with details about husband's MIA status dated 11 January 1945.

Item #8: Letter 2 – Second letter from War Department, dated 14 April, 1945. Note that he had already been liberated from the POW camp by the date that the letter was sent, but news of his liberation had not yet reached the War Department.

Items #9 & 10: Letter 3 – A more detailed letter from the War Department dated 24 April, 1945. As with the last one, it does not reveal that he had already been liberated.

Item #11: Red Cross armband and POW "dog tags"

Item #12: Prison Photos 1 – John Tenery's notes appear next to these photos. All of the photos of POW camps and freed POW's come from Army archives.

Item #13: Prison Photos 2

Item #14: Letter Written in Camp – The only letter from Stammlager VI/G to reach home. Written 31 December 1944 and delivered May 1945 [after wife would have received news of liberation.]

Item #15: The Ausweis authorizing the doctors to walk between Duderstadt and the surrounding villages in which prisoners were being "housed."

Item #16: Prison Photos 3 - The Stalag 11 B barracks with the Poltawerk in the background. This was an ammunition and pistol factory manned by Jewish women prior to receiving prisoners moved in from the Western front in spring 1945.

Item #17: Prison Photos 4 –
Top: The Ziegeleie brick factory, used to house prisoners being moved in from Eastern front.
Bottom: The interior view shows the ricks on which hundreds of prisoners were bunked.

Item #18: Prison Photos 5 – The only source of water (and hepatitis) for prisoners at Ziegeleie.

Item #19: Prison Photos 6 –
Left: The ricks on which the prisoners were stacked about six deep.
Right: The stairway to the second deck of brick ricks.

Item #20: POW's 1

Item #21: POW's 2

Item #22: POW's 3

Item #23: Photo after liberation – April 9, 1945, at the Polta Werk in Duderstadt, the ANZAK Corpsmen and I share our first pack of cigarettes provided by the Second Infantry Division. They are Sergeant Major Arthur King (with cap), Corporal Allen Crawford, Pvt. Winston Griffin and one whose identity has been lost.

Item #24: Photo after liberation 2 – Duderstadt, 9 April 1945 after liberation by advance units of the 2nd Infantry Division. A major from the division was the first to enter the Polta Werk compound and discussed plans for organizing the repatriation with Capt. Fred McIntire and me.

Item #25: Temporary ID

Item #26: Telegram 2 – From John Tenery to wife informing her of liberation from POW camp.

Item #27: Telegram 3 – From War Department

Item #28: Telegram 4 – From War Department

Item #29: POW Calendar with note from John Tenery.

Item #30: London Photos – With Bob and Fred McIntire at a field hospital somewhere north of London around 20 April 1945.

Item #31: Paris Photos – With Foxhole Fleege at the American Hospital in Paris on the 13-14 May escapade.

Item #32: POW Journal – While in the POW camps John Tenery kept a journal that he entitled "Kriegsgenfangenebuch" (going-to-war book). It contains plans for future hobbies and vacations, lists of books that he wanted to read, and elaborate recipes that he and

his fellow POW's dreamed up as they starved in the camps. On some of the last pages he wrote the names and addresses of some of the other POW's (see items #33 and 34.)

Items #33 & 34: List of POW's

Items #35 & 36: Letter to Wife 1

Items #37 & 38: Letter to Wife 2

Chapter One

Accidental Soldiers of the 106th Infantry Division

With the officers and enlisted men of the 106th Infantry Division assembled in the Post Theater at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, a dapper, mustached Major General Alan Jones addressed his troops from the stage. He had been preceded by the Deputy Commander who announced that the Division was on alert for transfer to a port of embarkation for movement to a theater of combat. Jones was obviously in high spirits, having secured permission from the War Department to take his long suffering Division into combat. As a Regular Army officer he had been in charge of training replacement units for shipping out to plug holes in active Divisions which had sustained major losses in the European Theater of Operations. His command had been levied thusly six times, leaving only a cadre of higher rank officers and men to start all over again the tiresome process of indoctrinating rookies. He was thus in high spirits and ended his challenging remarks with the prediction that his "Golden Lion" Division would "make history". What sort of history he fortunately could not foresee.

In those days the fetish for secrecy had pervaded the entire country, spawning a proliferation of signs everywhere to the effect that "Loose Lips Sink Ships" and the like. In our situation the attitude resulted in an order that all members of the Division were to be restricted to the confines of the Post until the transport trains were boarded. Since my wife had resigned her job in the Transportation Corps in the Battery in New York she accompanied me to the nearby town of Columbus where we had a small apartment. Feeling the need to advise her to depart for her home town in Texas, I promptly broke the restriction and dashed into town with the news of imminent relocation. We hastily devised a code by means of which I could keep her informed about where in Europe I might wind up. This involved mention of various species of birds which might slip by censors and let her know if our movements were to the east or south. This done I made a dash back to camp hoping to slip in without being caught in violation of the orders. On the way to the bus station, as I passed by an alley, a soldier staggered out into the street and collapsed with a knife stuck in his back. Acting with the instinct of a surgeon I knelt down to assess the nature of his wound and soon found myself surrounded by a crowd including several MPs. I recall crawling hurriedly to the edge of the crowd and escaping the somewhat delicate predicament and getting back to base as rapidly as possible. I had no desire to become history in such fashion.

The Army has a reputation for moving in fits and starts. But once a decision to move had been made things begin to happen in short order. The Transportation Corps lost no time in getting the troop trains into camp and soon the Division was loaded up and the move to Camp Myles Standish in Massachusetts began before we were really prepared for such a precipitous departure. It began swiftly but there were problems in scheduling such large movements so that our cars were held up in such places as the rail yards at St. Louis where we spent nearly a day of boredom watching the railroad workers clean up the trash which drops from cars jammed full of soldiers. There was one very busy black employee who wandered about with a long scoop, picking up strange objects. When we asked him what he was doing he explained that he was a "turd spotter". The car toilets bore the customary advice to avoid "flushing while the train is standing in the station". This injunction could not be observed during such long delays which we experienced on the way east.

Leaving behind that engaging problem we then had several days of profound boredom ahead. During the long journey on the Pennsylvania Railroad there were several occasions when fights would break out among the enlisted men and I tried to restore order only to discover that the Sergeants preferred to settle such matters without my interference. It was during those days that Lt. Richard Schaeffer and I were isolated in our car and I tried to get to know him. During the few weeks when we had participated in field trips with our Company B of the 423rd Medical Battalion we had few occasions to become acquainted since neither of us spent nights in the camp. I suppose that we each regarded the unexpected assignment to Infantry as an unjust reward for having signed on as reserve Lieutenants in the Medical Corps during the medical school days. Moreover, we were both plucked from residency status and called to active duty by some sort of lottery selection which apparently did not recognize our progress into specialty fields, his Internal Medicine and mine Surgery.

It was not easy to get to know Dick. He kept his own counsel and, more often than not, remained aloof from the men of the Company although he was, by virtue of having an earlier date of rank then mine, technically the commander of the unit. By the time our train unloaded at Myles Standish I still knew little about him. Once installed in our Quonset huts at the Camp we again had few opportunities for developing understanding. He availed himself of every opportunity to secure overnight passes to visit nearby Taunton Green. I, on the other hand, had pitched in to get to know the Company First sergeant and the dozen or so Corpsmen who rounded out the roster of men with whom we would function. In trying to look after their well being I had made the cardinal error of investigating the possible source of a bout of diarrhea which had plagued the troops one week end. Thinking that I had discovered the culprit when I saw cooks in the Camp mess hail tossing salads in forty gallon trash cans, I sought out the permanent party staff of the Camp and advised them of this deviate procedure. My reward was assignment as inspecting officer to check the sanitation in the mess hail for a week. This effectively removed me from the

daily business of assembling the Company so that, by the time the Division embarked for Europe I still knew little about Dick or most of the enlisted men of our group.

The need for security imposed by the war status imposed a new duty which Dick and I shared and which did give us an opportunity to know some details about the enlisted men of the Company. It was the usually odious task of censoring letters from the men prior to their being cleared through the Division postal section. Each day at mail call each man had to turn over his letters for our scrutiny. For this process we used razor blades to snip out lines containing details of our location and probable future movement. We usually performed this work in late evenings before retiring. In this small duty I got to know Dick a little better but still could not divine his thoughts about the military. His resentment continued to mount and this new work we both found distasteful. So we at least agreed on this one matter.

The 589th Field Artillery Battalion had departed for England before the Division reached Camp Myles Standish. The scuttlebutt had it that General Jones had been ordered to send this support group of the 106th as a separate unit . Supposedly he had gone to Washington to get permission to send the rest of the Division. Whatever the truth was, there was a long delay at the Camp before arrangements could be made for our transportation to Europe.

At last, late in November, we were again moved, this time to the Boston Port of Embarkation where we were transferred to the U.S.S. General Grant. This ship was formerly the ocean liner Manhattan which, by tearing out cabin walls, had been converted into a troop carrier accommodating several thousand men in two tier bunks. So it was crowded but had the advantage of speed. Cruising at over twenty four knots it made the crossing without destroyer escort. To elude German submarines the ship zig-zagged across by way of the Azores. The course changes were frequent enough that we could see the curving wake astern and imagine that the Captain had sensed trouble ahead and dodged lurking subs. None materialized and we entered the Irish Sea in daylight with the green shores of Ireland on our left.

When the ship docked at Liverpool a small brass band dressed like Keystone Cops, derbies and all, played such tunes as Yankee Doodle, supposedly to make American soldiers feel welcome. Most of us were actually watching nervously

as the cargo nets hoisted our bedding rolls out of the hold and dumped them on the docks. Occasionally a roll would tumble out and drop into the foul water of the harbor. Each such event brought a groan from our troops since most everyone had stashed away a bottle or two of whiskey in the bedding. The quartermaster would reissue bedding, but not liquor. Dick Schaeffer and I

managed to find our rolls and retrieve them from the mountain of identical olive drab canvas rolls. Our bottles were intact so we felt relief in finding our emergency rations had survived the helter skelter of offloading.

I still have no idea how our vehicles were transported but, somehow, the personnel and our original equipment all wound up in the neighborhood of Cheltenham in Worcestershire, about 150 miles northwest of London. The "hurry up and wait" phase was beginning all over again. The latrinograms had it that we would be sent to the continent any day but no one had a fix on where or in what role. We again fell into the routine of assembling the Company every morning to receive the report from the First Sergeant that "all men are present or accounted for". Since it was a simple matter to secure overnight passes I managed to visit my brother who was forecasting contrail conditions at the Eighth Air Force Headquarters at Thetford in The Wash northeast of London.

A day at the Air Force field brought the war a little closer as the B-17s were returning from missions with ragged holes in their wings and fuselages. As the bombers were on their fmal approach to landing some would fire rockets to indicate that their crew had sustained casualties and needed ambulances. A brief visit to a squadron briefing room revealed the chalkboard crew assignments. some bearing marks indicating airplanes which had not returned. So this was the war, up close and personal.

Back at Cheltenham I discovered that there was a fine exposure of Cretaceous chalk on a hifi just out of town. I collected a hand full of well preserved sea urchin fossils out of expeditions to this site. Otherwise there was little to do but await orders to move out. The censoring of mail continued with greater intensity and more and more strips had to be cut out of letters since most of them revealed our location in Cheltenham, a matter which was viewed as very sensitive by higher authorities. By the end of the stay in England Dick and I had come to know which men were making impossible promises to two women simultaneously. The topics upon which we could agree were thus becoming a little broader and we began to find common bonds in more areas although the association had yet to advance to friendship.

The people of Cheltenham were reserved and seemed to tolerate, rather than appreciate, our presence. Perhaps they were weary of the overwhelming number of Yankees who had descended on their island with equipment sufficient to sink it into the sea. We did, however, learn that they held a common belief that Henry VIII had sequestered one of his Royal mistresses in the old castle which housed the Division Headquarters detachment. It was, of course, the appropriation of such facilities which had forced the permanent residents into makeshift accommodations.

During the weeks we spent awaiting orders for movement the Division exercises were largely devoted to the learning of such niceties as the "Speedometer Interval", an equation which would be needed to calculate the distance between successive vehicles in cross-country movement. That, of course, like so many other matters, was only the application of common sense to details which most drivers would observe in everyday life. Of course the statistics dealing with highway accidents served to show that most citizens seem not to factor in such details in their daily life on the highways.

At last, in the last week of November, the order to move to the continent came and we were all loaded aboard our intrinsic unit vehicles; for the first time as I recollect. An Infantry Division on the road is a formidable assemblage of prime movers, personnel carriers, trucks and Jeeps. Like a giant caterpillar the mass of machinery and men drifted southward toward the English Channel.

The training in proper separation between vehicles paid off so that we made steady progress but had little opportunity for sightseeing before we crossed a hill to see a downward stretch of road leading down to the harbor city of

Weymouth. There at the dockside the trucks, tanks, personnel carriers and Jeeps were being swallowed up into LSTs (Landing Ships Tank). These small sturdy craft were leaving in groups of perhaps a dozen at a time to head out into the Channel. Our departure coincided with a change in what had been fair weather at Cheltenham and on the highways south.

Once aboard and under weigh we found, to our delight, that these were Naval craft, manned by servicemen rather than the Merchant Marine civilian crew who had treated us like cargo on the USS General Grant on the Atlantic crossing. On the 1ST we were welcome to frequent the officers' compartments and even the bridge at will. That, of course, is where Schaeffer and I remained during most of the crossing. What with the rough seas and excitement we were making deep inroads on the coffee supply all the way.

The Channel that day was very choppy, to say the least. Looking ahead and back along the line of LSTs I recall many times when the masts of the ships ahead and behind would roll until they were misaligned by at least 900. With this degree of roll several tanks in the hold began to shift sideways and finally one of them broke its moorings and slammed into the sidewall of the ship. This precarious situation was frightening but the sailors were accustomed to such problems and soon had tamed the loose object and moored it back in place. After that rough crossing we were glad to at last anchor off the harbor at Le Havre by nightfall. Only then did Dick and I find bunks and turn in for the night.

The next day we were again in the "wait" mode as LSTs were cleared for entering the Seine River mouth, At length, late in the afternoon the ships in our area began to weigh anchors in preparation for leaving. There was a commotion on deck which we soon found to be caused by the observation that the LST next to ours had raised, along with its anchor, a huge marine mine about three feet in diameter. It had all its little detonator horns sticking out so represented a serious threat. The commander of the convoy then ordered our 1ST, along with all others in the area, to leave that locality and get clear while the other 1ST crew managed to disengage the threatening object. With that behind us we then started up the river against its flow, proceeding very slowly. As night descended we stood along the rail of the ship as a sailor at the stern kept calling out to the bridge warnings that we were drifting too close to the shore. Thus preoccupied we got little sleep that night and were still a little groggy when we reached Rouen. Fortunately there was another "wait" so that when the Medical Battalion disembarked to be reunited with our vehicles we were rested when we hit the road eastward in the morning light.

The passage through France was, again, slow and halting, so that when night was approaching we set up a bivouac camp which was so large that it must have included the whole Division. As the cooks began to prepare a makeshift dinner we fmally saw real French people. They were mostly children who approached us asking for chocolate. They must have been trained to beg such favors from the Americans and at first we did have some small candy bars to quiet their requests. Finally, when they became annoying, I recalled the only French words I knew, the name of a popular perfume back home. So I motioned to them and said "Suivez moi". This, some smarter soldier told me, meant "Follow me". And they did; everywhere I went. We finally had to drive them off so we could set up camp.

By this time we had passed crossed most of the province of Picardy and stopped for another bivouac in a deeply forested area almost at the border west of Dinant in Belgium. By that time, in the first week of December the legendary worst winter of the century was setting in and the trees were covered with fluffy snow. Pup tents were scattered for miles around, most of them hidden from aerial reconnaissance, we supposed, although we had yet to see any evidence of the combat we knew we'd been "committed" to. The soldiers had built fires from the abundant tree cuttings in this commercial pine forest. Being tenderfoot soldiers they failed to realize that the rising hot air would melt snow. Consequently, their fires were usually snuffed out by the falling avalanches of wet snow.

After the "baptism" by snow the Division was once again on the road and in short order entered the town of St. Vith. Here General Jones had set up his headquarters and was being briefed by Major General Walter M. Robertson on the disposition of the units of the Second Infantry Division which we were to replace in the line. Major Edwin Neigus was moving in with the headquarters detachment of our 33 1st Medical Battalion and the Clearing Company, Once settled

in he then ordered our Collecting Company to move to its position in the front line to replace the equivalent unit of the Second Division near the village of Buchet where we were to support Colonel Charles Cavender's 423rd Infantry Regiment.

We were not in our combat attire but had retained the habit of wearing dress uniforms, complete with ties. This had made the troops of the 106th Infantry Division the object of some ridicule by the seasoned Second Division, who were turning over their prepared positions which stretched out along an 18 mile front covering the Ardennes and the Schnee Eiffel. They had been in combat since going into action on Omaha Beach the day after D-Day and were seasoned by the heavy fighting in the Hurtgen Forest. Their commander had seen to it that his troops acquired guns and supplies far exceeding their table of allowances. They had taken all that extra equipment with them as they moved north to attack the Roer River Dams. They had left behind a few of their personnel to show us where we were to be bunked before they, too, departed. So our Infantrymen had log-covered foxholes and the 331st Medical Battalion moved into the farm houses and tent sites which had been prepared by the Second Division's Medics.

We had been assured that the occasional passage of large caliber railroad gun shells was not a cause for alarm and that the nightly flights of Bed-Check Charlie was only a lone German airplane carrying no guns or bombs. We were also advised that German patrols might pass through our unarmed position on reconnaissance missions. When we heard them outside our little house every night we were not so easily calmed by the supposition that they meant us no harm. Less easily dismissed was the clanking and squeaking of heavy machinery in the forests just to our east. When we reported these sounds back to Division we were told that we were imagining these odd sounds or misinterpreting the sound of farmers' wagons.

Our mission was to provide medical support for the 423rd Infantry Regiment but we were within walking distance of their Headquarters in the village of Buchet. That made it hard to acknowledge the supposition that the patrols were not up to anything threatening. The only fixtures which our predecessors had left us were numerous 105mm brass shell casings which were standing at convenient locations within access of sleeping areas in the farm buildings a few hundred yards north of Buchet, which was just on the east side of the border between Belgium and Germany. In Buchet itself were the Headquarters of the 423rd Infantry Regiment for whose troops we were to provide our services. 1st Lt. Dick Schaeffer and I were the only officers in the Company and thus occupied a room on the second floor of the house. On the evening of 15 December, 1944, we had settled into a routine of playing gin rummy with our First Sergeant, a veteran of the long months he had spent with the 106th Infantry at Camp Atterbury in Indiana. By mid December we had come to appreciate the utility of the large brass casings since in the long hours of darkness of those winter nights we had become reluctant to leave our buildings to visit the outdoor latrines. This state of mind had been engendered by anxiety which grew progressively as we heard the guttural voices of German patrols who infiltrated our lines every night. Being young we had not lost the urination skill which was required to score direct hits on the open tops of the upright shell cases.

So, that night we had put aside worries about the creaking and ratting sounds to our east. Division Headquarters had told us that these were figments of our imagination so we had elected to retire for the night and make our last contribution to the cylinders which, during long nights, accumulated considerable weight, thus making them relatively stable. Bedding down had become a burdensome chore. The now familiar ultra-light camper's sleeping bag was not, to my knowledge, even available on the market; certainly not to the Quartermaster General. We were supplied with "bedding rolls", heavy flat canvas bags into which we rolled up the familiar olive drab wool blankets. Getting into these tombs required the patience and agility of a ferret. Getting out was less demanding as a rule. But it took patience.

Chapter 2

The Longest Day

At 05:30 the morning of the 16th what was later characterized as the heaviest artillery barrage of the whole war erupted around our position. Schaeffer and I jumped to our feet and performed an acrobatic clumsy hopping act trying

to escape what we called then our "fart sacks". The makeshift artillery urinals were kicked over and thus we spent the rest of the morning with damp socks in our combat boots. We managed to get into our quasi dress uniforms, however not putting on the neckties which had been the object of ridicule by our Second Division predecessors. We were thusly attired as we rushed to pull aside the blankets which kept the window at the east end of the room in blackout. The fireworks we saw would have been appropriate for the Fourth of July.

But this was midwinter in Germany, and there was nothing to celebrate. The tracer bullets of machine gun fire crisscrossed the scene as far as we could see; from the south, where the 28th Division was deployed, to the north where our 423rd Regiment was stretched out into a thin line covering some four miles before the 14th Cavalry took over. Even more awesome were the parallel trails created by the missiles fired by batteries of "Screaming Meemies". These were the Nebelwerfer multi-barrel rocket launchers, which were not only spectacular but creating ghostly wails as they flew. Most of these tracers were apparently arching over our lines toward some targets to our right rear. Dominating the scene however, were the brilliant cannon flashes followed by the whine of their projectiles which, again, were over flying our position.

By the time the men of the Company had assembled outside our building we were well aware that we were under fire; "baptized" as they say. As we analyzed the pattern of tracers, however, it was apparent that the heaviest action was to the south and north of our Collecting Station. Obviously the patrols we had heard had kept the attacking Reichswehr commanders advised of the location of the least likely resistance, and the Red Cross insignia on our uniforms and vehicles had identified us as unarmed. The attack was thus bypassing our position and the battle erupted south and north of our station. Dick Schaeffer, through our First Sergeant, set in motion the preparation of the operating room for handling casualties. While Dick and I watched the fireworks the corpsmen assembled the instruments, set up the operating tables and portable X-ray machine, and we were ready for business.

The month or so of training at Camp Atterbury had, despite the sloppy field exercises we had been through, readied the medics for setting up a MASH-like scene. As yet, though, there was no humor. Years later, in reading Winston Churchill's writings I ran across his statement that "Nothing in life is so exhilarating as to be shot at without result." We had been shot at but, so far, there had been no "result". In fact, as I tried to understand our situation, I began to realize that we had been "committed" to battle, but were not yet in the thick of it.

While awaiting contact with Regimental HQ, Dick and I began to see frequent passage of guided missiles flying over beneath the cloud cover. These were the infamous V-i "buzz" bombs which had been wreaking havoc in London. They were close enough to our site that we could see the stubby little wings and the flashes of light which occurred as the fuel detonations propelled the craft toward the northwest in the direction of St. Vith, or so I thought. Many years later I read that most of them were aimed at Antwerp. In any event, as long as their devilish putt-putt eructation's were audible and the engine had not been shut off to initiate the steep dive toward the target, there was no danger of being damaged by them in our forward position.

As dawn began to provide enough light I could hear that the methodical succession of "whump" explosions which were made by mortar shells impacting along the road toward Buchet where Col. Charles Cavender had his command post of the 423rd. By first light the German attack was beginning in earnest. Our Company's ambulance engines were started to warm them up in the severe cold of the night. I was still fascinated by the fireworks when litter bearers from the nearest Battalion Aid Stations began to arrive at intervals. These first casualties were infantrymen with shell fragment injuries which required only minimal dressing before they were loaded into our ambulances, as many as eight at a time, for transport back to the Division Clearing Company whose function was to stabilize the more seriously wounded for later movement to Field Hospitals to the rear. It was our job to attend to readily controllable bleeding and administer morphine as needed. Each soldier with a wound was first seen by a battalion surgeon who initiated the Field Medical Tag, a card about 3" by 5", on which was written a tentative diagnosis and a record of when and how much sedation had been administered. To this abbreviated record we added whatever we had done so that in the later

chain of evacuation the attending surgeons could avoid over dosage with morphine or repeat procedures which had already been performed.

The concept of placing surgeons so far forward in battle zones had been advocated by Harvard's Dr. Elliott Cutler who, along with Dr. Robert Zollinger had been consulted by the Allied Command in preparation for the invasion of Europe. It was their belief that in the fluid combat situations of World War II that surgeons were needed that close for a number of reasons. In the first place wounds could be treated definitively and often so successfully that some soldiers could be returned to combat duty. Their second object was to clear the battlefield of wounded to keep them out of sight of those who continued to fight. Thus morale could be improved by having the troops know that if they sustained wounds they would receive immediate attention. Moreover, the presence of wounded companions would instill fear in those still fighting.

The first more extensive injury encountered that day was a soldier with a dressing on his ankle and another on his groin. His tag revealed that bleeding from the ankle wound had been stopped by cutting into the site of the femoral artery and actually tying it off with ligature of catgut. This action at the Station was about as stupid as could have been carried out by the least experienced intern, for it cut off the principal blood supply to the entire limb. A simple pressure dressing and elevation of the leg would have diminished the ankle bleeding until, in the Collecting Company, we could have extended the wound enough to access the tibial artery. I made a mental note to admonish the Battalion surgeon. But before this became possible a later casualty informed us that the Aid Station had taken a round of incoming artillery and the young doctor had been killed.

By afternoon the din of battle escalated to the right of our position and must have involved the penetration of our lines by German troops, for we received our first enemy wounded. One was an infantryman with a bleeding thigh wound and, unaccountably, he was only semiconscious and unable to speak. The corpsmen went about cutting his trouser leg to access the thigh wound when the man began frantically to point at his trouser pocket where there was a strange bulge. One of our minimally wounded infantrymen immediately diagnosed the situation and carefully extracted a potato-masher hand grenade with its pin pulled and its handle held down by the tight trouser pocket. He calmly took the thing outside and lobbed it into a clear area where it exploded into fragments which, had it gone off in our room, would have done serious damage. With a dressing over the leg wound our curiosity then shifted to the mental problem. At first there were no obvious head wounds but for a small entrance hole above the left eye, but no exit wound. So, the first use of the portable X-ray apparatus revealed a bullet in the posterior cranial fossa apparently lying over the cerebellum. After lot of speculation it was concluded that the round had only enough velocity to enter the orbit and glance off the underside of the skull to be deflected along a superficial route to the rear without exiting, but doing enough damage to the cerebrum to account for the soldier's inability to speak.

By afternoon we had dispatched the last of our three ambulances to St. Vith and none had returned. The first attempt to use the telephone to call the division headquarters yielded contact with some Cavalry unit down near Bleialf who reported that they had been unable to call out at all. It dawned on us then that the patrols we had been hearing in the nights before the outbreak of shooting had actually been rerouting the lines which had been rigged by the Second Division. So we were incommunicado.

We then sent our liaison Sergeant off in the direction of Buchet to contact Col. Cavender's Headquarters for instructions. He returned after a few minutes to report that "there's nothing there but Germans". Dick and I, being thus in the dark, hastily considered our situation. With casualties having slowed down to a trickle and with no ambulances to take any of them back, it was concluded that we had best relocate toward SchOnberg ("relocate" being the militarily correct euphemism for "retreat"). As I recall it, there were no objections to this hasty decision, although we had no idea of what we would encounter on the way.

While the corpsmen loaded the few remaining casualties into the two 2 1/2 ton trucks Dick I and donned our field jackets. We picked up toilet articles, and crammed them into the little gas mask bags which had been emptied of their intended cargo. I also grabbed a 35mm camera and a pair of binoculars which had been brought along in the hope of

identifying the European birds. Everything else was jettisoned. Thus the letter I had intended to mail to Betty to assure her that I had not forgot that the 16th was her birthday, along with the lovely sea urchin fossils I had collected weeks before in England, were left for the amusement of the Germans, who I was sure were not far behind.

Although Dick was technically in command it turned out that I was ,the only competent map reader so led the way north toward Oberlascheid. Along this stretch of the secondary road we passed several isolated infantrymen of the 106th who were crouched behind trees seemingly awaiting targets to materialize from the east. I took this to mean that we had, indeed, been left beyond the front line. There was only occasional close small arms fire until after we turned west to pass Radscheid and the western end of what became known later as "Skyline Drive". To reach Schonberg we then had to negotiate a log road to the main secondary road running from Buchet to Schonberg. This rough narrow trail was known as the Engineer Cutoff. About half way down this road machine gun fire was rattling up and down a small gully which was probably a tributary of Ihren Creek.

With great presence (or absence) of mind I placed my steel helmet over my knees, figuring that knees were more sensitive to pain than scalps. After a pause to consider the risk of heading back to the east I took the two lead Jeeps and a quarter ton truck across the gully. The first 2 1/2 ton truck with a few casualties aboard tried to follow but became mired in mushy frozen creek bed until one of the men had the courage and presence mind to unwind the steel cable from the winch on the front bumper and attach it to a tree on our side of the creek. Thus he winched the 2 1/2 out and away from the track of the gunfire. This left Schaeffer and the other vehicles containing most of the corpsmen and the other 2 1/2 ton truck with some casualties aboard with a dilemma. He shouted back that he was going to retrace his route and try another way out. So our small group continued up the Schonberg road going north. I never saw Dick again, but heard later, in our first prison camp, that he and the other half of the Company had been captured and detained in a camp where he was killed in a bombing raid. I have never been able to confirm that rumor.

Reaching the end of the Engineer cutoff, our vehicles then raced north toward Schonberg but encountered a German anti-tank unit a half mile up the road. Since there were two 2 1 / 2 ton trucks lying in ruins on the left side of the road I assumed that we had reached the end the run. The Germans, astoundingly, came to their feet and waved us on, apparently respecting the Red Cross insignia on the side of the vehicles and on our arm bands. At that point we felt sure that we had been left behind by the 423'd and were lucky to have made our way through the lines and were back on "our" side. Another mile up the road, however, we came under artillery fire. Since it was coming from the direction of St. Vith we wondered whose guns were shooting at us. That was not the important thing so we all bailed out of the vehicles and took cover in the shallow roadside ditch. The shelling ceased after a few rounds leaving one Jeep damaged. So we drove the remaining Jeep and the trucks over to a nest of farmhouses on a hill overlooking the village of Schonberg. The buildings appeared to be unoccupied but for a lone farmer carrying buckets to a barn near the main house. It had been a policy to evacuate farm villages in combat areas so this shelter must have been taken over by our own troops who had established the positions inside Germany which we had just vacated . So we unloaded the litters and the few seriously wounded patients, including the German soldier with the head wound. We still had a small supply of morphine so eased the discomfort of several casualties before trying to establish a shelter for our small contingent.

There were only a dozen of us who had made our way through the hail of fire back at the crossing at the creek on Engineer Cutoff, so we prepared for the night in two of the buildings where we broke out the C-rations someone had thought to load aboard the larger truck. The sounds of battle were getting closer so we prepared wood fires in the fireplaces in the houses and tried to settle in for the night wondering what sort of predicament we were in.

An hour or so after dark we found out. The chilling sound of "burp" guns approached from the east, clearly something we had never heard at close range before. Those rapid-fire portable machine guns were the ancestors of the AK 47.

They fired bursts of eight or more bullets in a fraction of a second and were in good supply in the Wehrmacht. So much for sleep. The matter was settled in a few seconds. A rifle butt knocked out the window under which several of

us were sitting and a command, in English, advised us to come out with our hands raised. I was in no mood to disobey an order backed up with that sort of firepower.

The leader of the small group of Volksgrenadiers read us the Geneva Conference equivalent of the Miranda clause. He spoke fluent English, advising that, as Medics, we would be considered "Internees" and not prisoners in the conventional sense. Small comfort. So , in an hour or so short of a full day into our career as combat medics we had "relocated" to escape impending capture and had been apprehended in a not very heroic surrender.

Before we departed Camp Atterbury in Indiana for our journey to Europe, General Jones had told the assembled division that the 106th would "make history". And our small group went into history as a lost unit unaccounted for in the early analysis of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge. Much later, in reading accounts of Winston Churchill's exploits as a newspaper correspondent during the Boer War, I learned that, in commenting on his surrender to the Boers, he recalled a quotation from Napoleon to the effect that "When one is alone and unarmed, a surrender may be pardoned." So, we were indeed unarmed and apparently alone.

We were not long alone. The four German infantrymen who had secured our capture must have been from the 18th Volksgrenadier Division, which was an arm of the Fifth Panzer Army. They were not as Volksy as their name implied, these adjunct soldiers of the famed and feared Panzers. As soon as they had lined us up against the wall near the window they had smashed they immediately added wood to the fire, removed their boots and socks and carefully dried skin and foot gear. I recall thinking at the time that more American soldiers in that sector had suffered from frostbite than from wounds. Not these experienced soldiers. Having dried their feet they then cleaned and oiled their weapons. Not until those necessities had been accomplished did they eat. Their field rations were individually packed. Each man had a loaf of heavy bread and a substantial wurst about a foot long. So all they had to do was slice off what they wanted and they were ready for as much sleep as they could manage before moving on.

By dawn the Grenadiers had departed, leaving us with some gruff advice to stay put. Since the sounds of battle were getting closer I could imagine no sound alternative. The few casualties we had managed to bring with us were in good condition but for the still sedated or barely conscious German infantryman.

Taking stock of our supplies we again resorted to the remaining C-rations and had a breakfast of sorts while watching the road junction where we had been shelled.

It soon became apparent that the fighting was mostly to our south, the direction from which we had gained access to Schonberg. As we tried to assess the situation we became suspicious of the white objects which were along the crest of the hill to our south. The German troops we had seen were wearing white camouflage coats so when more such objects were spotted they became soldiers when, in fact, most of them turned out to be porcelain insulators on the power lines.

As this jittery frame of mind was put to rest and we were alone again yet another unit of Germans came down from the road junction and turned off to our little group of farm houses. I still have no idea who they were but they immediately began to take over the Jeeps and trucks and seemed to recognize that we were unarmed medical personnel. While the enlisted men amused themselves trying to learn to operate Jeeps their officers kept annoying me with repeated 'Warum"(why?) questions. What they couldn't understand was why the Americans were fighting the very people who were trying to save the world from the Russians. In the nearly ten years since I almost flunked German at Rice University I had still not become comfortable with trying to use a language where the verb always comes last. That, plus the fact that I was not in a very strong position from which to argue, left the issue unsettled.

Even more uncomfortable was the steady approach of battle to the road junction where we had been shelled. Artillery fire which seemed to be aimed just beyond our hill in both directions was intensifying. The weird warbling whine of 88mm shells was particularly unnerving. These cannon, which were originally designed as anti-aircraft weapons, threw high velocity shells which wavered in flight resulting in a pitch ossification which some Quartermaster troops had told

us sounded like "you ain't a'goin' back to AlaBAAAMMM!". There was a saving grace in their swoosh; if the round was going wide the Doppler effect lowered the pitch of the wail as it passed to one side, If it only became louder it was prudent to duck.

The German unit which had stopped for a few hours to argue went on about their business, which was apparently part of the effort to take Schonberg. As that battle escalated I began to observe the behavior of the enlisted men who accompanied the First Sergeant and me from Buchet. The most memorable of them was a corporal whose mail I had been compelled to censor, a very distasteful duty which was required of all officers. His many letters had been directed toward two women, one his wife. In addition to the very gaudy and explicit sexually oriented paragraphs he always inserted another in which he promised each lady a vine-covered cottage after the war. It had occurred to me that his only escape from that impossible dilemma would be to expose himself to all the incoming fire available. Instead, he crawled behind the iron wood stove, calling for me to make it known that it was against the Geneva code to fire on unarmed medics. Since there were no Germans in shouting distance his argument was ridiculous, at best.

The other fixed memory is of the very young and tidy private whose letters had all been to his mother. He was meticulous in dress and manner, which was probably why he was appointed our Company Clerk. While the rest of us ducked approaching shells this lad pulled his pants cuffs up above his combat boots to keep from soiling them as he stepped gingerly between the slushy snow patches. The rest of us ran directly from one cover to the next.

During that afternoon, before the small arms fire erupted around our hifi, an American Artillery Lieutenant materialized at our position on the run from action nearby. He was trying, he said, to get back to St. Vith and had spotted us as he worked his way around Schonberg. Despite my suggestion that he remain in our probably safe location, he took off to sneak through the woods south of town. Later, when the rifles and machine guns got closer, I wondered if he ever made it back. Forty years later, in MacDonald's *A Time for ,Trumpets,* I would read that he was either Harold McKinley or Ivan Long and that he did make it back. The night of the 17th remains a shade vague in memory. The battle sounds now included close small arms fire, particularly the dreadful rattle of the Burp guns which fired brief bursts of six or eight rounds in rapid succession. I have no idea where either side was located that evening, but we were on the receiving end of rounds entering the windows. The exchanges were clearly taking place down in the valley where Schonberg was situated, about a half mile west of our hilltop ringside seat. But I could not actually see the village itself.

The topography was not clarified in my mind until 1963 when I found the place just as I remembered it. The hilltop houses were the same and they could not be seen from the village. How we occupied ourselves that night I can not imagine, but it was probably trying to justify our erratic flight from a heavy combat situation. I do remember clearly that my own concern was with the notion that Col. Cavender had retreated (or "relocated" to the rear) without informing his supporting Collecting Company. The other alternative was that we had beat a cowardly retreat rather than relocate in the direction of the most audible battle sounds. Neither alternative explanation was very comforting. In the few remaining hours of that night, while alone again, I worried about the interpretation higher command would make of the hasty relocation. Dick and I made our own decision to get back to St. Vith but now I was solely responsible for the serious situation.

In trying to construct a credible explanation I kept remembering something my high school English teacher had said when I tried to forge an explanation for not having completed an assignment. Kathleen Witherspoon guided her classes through literature and my brother and I loved her and respected her authority. Our vocabularies were expanding exponentially under her tutelage. But, on hearing my lame excuse she said that I was "clandestine". I had a general idea of what the word meant. But after school I hastily consulted the dictionary to find that she implied that I had told a lie to deceive her. So, in the untenable situation I found myself in, I wondered if the excuses I was trying to construct would be considered "clandestine". I still do.

Early the next morning two officers wearing medical ornaments came to the hill and, in reasonably functional English, asked if I would join them at their Hauptverbandplatz in the village. On the condition that they would accommodate

our few wounded this proposition was eagerly accepted and we were then joined by Michael E.. Connelly, a Battalion Surgeon from the nearby 589th Artillery Battalion which had been supporting the Division and had been rounded up in the sweep up from Bleialf to Schoenberg. They were huddled behind barbed wire and watched as we wandered, unfettered, talking to the German officers. They obviously did not understand how we were not with them behind the wire fence. When Mike and I recognized the Brigadier General who had commanded the Artillery battalion we averted our gaze and, tried to avoid his unbelieving stare. After running this gauntlet we entered the German equivalent of a Clearing Company, which, we were told was designated the Hauptverbandplatz. There we were joined there by Lewis Myers and John Martin who had been recruited by the same team of German medical officers.

The prisoners we had walked past on the way down to the Hauptverbandplatz were probably mostly from the 589th Field Artillery who had been in intense action south of Schonberg before being rounded up in small groups. Colonel Cavender's mass surrender, I was to learn forty years later, had held out until the afternoon of 19 December when he reluctantly surrendered. Along with him was the son of General Alan Jones, the Division Commander. All in all the 106th lost 6,879 men as prisoners. Again, this knowledge came decades later, so was acquired long after the doubts about the valor or my retreat had been suppressed by later events.

Chapter 3

The Hauptverbandplatz

There were three surgeons in the Hauptverbandplatz. One of them, Sigmund, spoke some English. It was through him that we became integrated into a team which worked day and night handling the masses of wounded soldiers. On the following day we were joined by an Oberartz Dresen who was the senior surgeon. We also had the help of a very young German medic, Kurt Rettig, who had acquired English in school and served as our translator for most of the conversations with the other members of the team. The structure of the Hauptverbandplatz (or "Head Bandaging Place"), was similar to the plan our armed forces developed for management of battle casualties. One officer was assigned to triage and so worked through the several hundred wounded soldiers lying on the floor of a barn adjacent to the operating room. Since John Martin didn't have the stomach for surgery he joined the triage team and we rarely saw him during the workdays. They would send in, for definitive treatment, those whose wounds appeared to be survivable. Judging from the almost constant moaning, to which we never grew accustomed, many of the wounded must have been beyond salvation.

Only once did I find the time to look into the adjacent triage barn and saw the casualties, a hundred or more, lying in rows with the triage team checking them methodically. Both the American and German soldiers were bearing up silently but many of the most seriously wounded were moaning and calling for help. I did see some bodies carried out on stretchers to be loaded into trucks, presumably to be hauled to the rear. Others with wounds which must have been beyond the capacity of the Verbandplatz were carried to ambulances and probably evacuated to a definitive treatment facility. Their destination was never explained to us, however.

With Kurt translating, Sigmund, Mike and I became reasonably efficient functioning team. We worked constantly, taking brief naps on the floor when fatigue became overwhelming. We would awaken, startled, each time the almost constant artillery thunder ceased. This phenomenon was mentioned often in Erich Maria Remarque's *"All Quiet on the Western Front"* as a puzzling aspect of life during the trench warfare of the First World War. Of course, then it meant that the artillery barrage had been stopped as one side or the other was emerging from the trenches to assault the other. Since I had read that work, the concept of war which I had come to expect was influenced by that engaging book.

At first the casualties were mostly American and, of those, the majority wore red "Bloody Bucket" shoulder patches of the 28th Division which had been engaged on the right flank of the 106th and must have sustained the brunt of the German offensive in those early days of the Bulge operation. The operating teams were oblivious of the nationality of their patients. I still think that we were all more dedicated to Hippocratic than to political codes of behavior. Sigmund,

however, made one astute observation which was perhaps indicative of a less humanitarian attitude. He reminded us of our obligation to treat German casualties in the same spirit if the tide of battle should change. And It soon seemed to be going that way when, after the first few days, the majority of wounded were German.

One of the early American wounded men who passed through the station was Captain Jim Cagle who Mike knew quite well since he had been the Commanding Officer of the 589th Service Battery. He had sustained a shell fragment wound of the hip but was not seriously disabled. In fact, Sigmund and I debrided and dressed the wound without even using the Evipal general anesthetic.

We worked with the same dedication whether the patients wore gray or olive drab. Most of the wounded had sustained bullet or shell fragment penetrations which did not involve bone or vital organs. These we labeled, on their field medical tags, as "durchsplitter "auf' if the "split" passed through, or "zum" if there was only an entrance wound. The "zums" were handily dispatched by taking out the offending metal in the tradition of the Western movies where the victim was revived instantly on removal of the bullet. It wasn't that simple of course. In many of the wounds there was deep bleeding from arterial cuts and when such cases came to our attention we would try to induce brief anesthesia by intravenous Evipal use, that being the equivalent of our Sodium Pentothal. Evipal was used in the many amputations which were more freely employed than I would have thought necessary back at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital where I received my surgical training. I have come to realize, on the other hand, that we hardly ever saw gunshot wounds in Vanderbilt Clinic Emergency Room in the early forties, strange as that may sound to New Yorkers in the nineties. But, there in the heat of a very large battle, we must have treated hundreds of such wounds during the five days we served there.

There were several cases which made a more indelible impression. One of them was a German officer with a chest wound which had been sutured together in a more forward treatment facility. Since he obviously had also sustained a puncture of the lung he was in extremis from collapse of the lung due to accumulation of air in the rib cage. I then recalled a trick devised by Evarts Graham during the first World War. This consisted of inserting a catheter into the chest with a butterfly valve on its outer end. This was jury-rigged out of a finger from a rubber glove with both ends open so that when the man exhaled air would go out through the glove. With negative pressure during inhalation the latex glove would collapse and prevent return of air to the chest cavity. The lung would then re-expand and function normally. After this demonstration Sigmund and the Oberartz had a much better opinion of my abilities and they assigned more difficult cases to Lew Myers and me, now that Lew had shown that he was a very competent assistant. He, in fact, probably worked longer hours than I did since he often assisted Mike Connely when he and his German counterpart were taking turns at the operating table. Since we worked in shifts, resting briefly every few hours, one or the other of us was always at the operating table for the four days of the intense battle activity.

Another memorable case was that of a young German infantryman who was told that his leg would have to be amputated. Just as the technician was beginning the injection of Evipal he raised his right arm and shouted "Heil Hitler". That salute had been observed frequently when we were up on the hill but not around the Verbandplatz. The number of amputations was alarming, and often when we would take short naps on the floor there would be grisly extremity trophies right beside us.

There were other memorable amputations but the one which sticks in memory was a German soldier with an incomplete shattering of his leg above the knee who hopped into the room and mounted the table without much help. Sigmund turned to Mike and me and remarked that this was a good example of the bravery of the Wehrmacht troops. Of course this was an impressive display of courage, but the facet of the incident which made the most indelible impression was his youth. He could have been no more than 16 years old.

Late in the afternoon of 17 December cannon fire broke out in the streets of Schonberg within a block of our location. Suddenly a huge Tiger Tank nosed around the corner next to the casualty barn and fired its awesome 88mm gun up the street outside our door. About that time a German officer staggered into the operating room on the stumps of legs which had been blown off at the ankles. He was hurriedly placed on the table and the amputations cleaned up and the

stumps dressed. A Few minutes later four haggard and scared American soldiers were dragged into the room and lined up against the wall. They told Mike and me that they were from a small anti-tank outfit who had been told that Schonberg was "lightly held" and had been ordered to attack the small group of defenders. They all groused that "old Bag Lunch" had no idea of what was going on. Of course, no one else did either, least of all our own team. This incident was further evidence of the magnitude of the communications breakdown which had afflicted our own units in the beginning of the battle.

There were many cases which could have been salvaged by blood transfusions if we had possessed even the crudest facilities. Since each soldier's blood type was imprinted on his "dog tag' matching donors and recipients would have been simple. There was one American officer with a shoulder wound which had severed an artery which had finally been accessed and ligated just as it was apparent that he was slipping into hemorrhagic shock. Since he was a blood type "O", and therefore a "universal recipient", if we had available large syringes we could have chosen any donor and rapidly pumped blood to save him. This sort of transfusion did not require banked blood but could be carried out in any location where donor and patient could be located near enough to each other for what we had called "multiple syringe" transfusions. But there were no large barreled syringes available and the man exsanguinated.

In a lighter vein, I also recall one German soldier with a penile wound which, on inspection, turned out to have been inflicted by a small caliber bullet which must have been a missile which had passed through another victim and lost most of its velocity so did little damage to his most precious possession. This case was unforgettable for another reason: above the pubic hair patch he had a tattoo which read "Nür für damen"" (for women only). We patched up the pitiful organ and wished him well.

It was ironic that we did not have any of the "sulfa" drugs available in the German medical installations. The antibacterial action of these compounds had been discovered by a German dye chemist, Domagk, but was not synxhesized in quantity except in England and the United States. Domagk, in fact was compelled by the Nazi regime to refuse to accept a Nobel Prize offer in 1939, the year the Germans attacked Poland. During my years at Columbia-Presbyterian we had been demonstrating that they were of considerable value in preventing contaminated wounds from becoming infected. The German surgeons used, instead, a flavine dye, Acriflavine, in some open wounds. At least they had the good sense not to suture battlefield wounds, but to pack them lightly with ersatz paper dressings. Amputations stumps were always left with long skin flaps and merely dressed with rubber drains to prevent accumulation of contaminated blood, as they should always be. This, then, was standard practice in both armies.

During the six days of the operation of the Volksgrenadier "bandaging place" Kurt Rettig had kept us warned that a tall Nordic officer with the dreaded zigzag SS on his coat lapel was planted there to report on any non-Nazi sentiments he could overhear. Sigmund and the others always became silent when he was around so we all regarded him as not trustworthy. As the flow of casualties thinned out on the third day this "Siegfried", as we called him, motioned to Mike and me to follow him to his room. There he had a small radio which was tuned to the BBC. So here the Gestapo prototype was keeping himself informed while terrorizing the rest of the staff. It was there that we heard that the German offensive had stalled out around Dinant near the French border with Belgium. That was encouraging but still we recalled having passed through Dinant on our progress toward St. Vith. So The front was, at that point, still far to the east. This information somewhat watered down our hopes that we would soon be rescued by a counteroffensive movement.

By the afternoon of 23 December the last of the casualties in the triage area had been evacuated by ambulances to the east and we at last had an opportunity to rest and enjoy German field rations prepared by one of their mobile soup kitchens. After the first real meal in a week Sigmund informed us that the next day we would be moved up to St. Vith which had by then been taken by German forces.

The next morning we joined in the loading of the vehicles for the relocation. At first light on 24 December the line of ambulances and trucks of the Hauptverbandplatz moved out of Schonberg and over the hill to the St. Vith road. Here we were greeted by an incredible sight of several miles of dilapidated vehicles ranging all the way from Volkswagens

to rumbling trucks which must have been left over from the plundering of civilian transportation equipment for use by the line units. Some of the lumbering wrecks were stalled and were being kicked and cursed by their drivers as though they were stubborn mules' whereas an American column of that sort would have simply rolled the stalled equipment off to the side and gone on forward, these people simply roped the dead car to the one ahead and towed them ahead more slowly.

There were some weird cars with large metal tanks strapped to their sides. Kurt Rettig told us that these were wood-burning devices which generated combustible gas which ran their engines. These clever contraptions represented one of the German engineering feats which had developed other alternative fuels as well. This was another piece of evidence which kept suggesting that the Wehrmacht was nearing the end of its rope.

When we arrived in St. Vith in the afternoon the unit set up in the basement of the St. Joseph Kloster, the nunnery which had served as headquarters for the 106th Division before they had been forced out. By this time the sounds of battle had moved on to the north and there were no new casualties arriving.

With no specific functions to perform I began to review what had gone before. It occurred to me that Mike and I had actually served more American casualties than we would have had we remained in our exposed locations. After all, our purpose in the military had been to care for the wounded, and we had done that many times over. And with the sounds of artillery receding to the north there appeared little chance that we would soon be liberated by some counteroffensive. So, the only option was to sit it out and wait for whatever might become of us.

By mid-afternoon of that Christmas Eve the clouds which had provided cover for the German offensive for nearly a week parted and the town of St. Vith began to come under intensive strafing attack by American fighter planes. They swept past our basement window spewing out shell casings like hail. We felt relatively secure behind the thick stone walls of the Kioster but wondered how anything could survive the storm of fire out there in the town. Trees along the streets were topped as though by lawn mower blades. Mike, being the eternal optimist, wondered if this signaled an Allied effort to retake St. Vith and thus bring about our return to our own side. Before we could speculate on this unlikely prospect some General, who must have been in charge of whatever Wehrmacht unit had taken over our old headquarters building, appeared on the floor to inspect the operation. When he found three American surgeons and the Medical Service Corps officer among the team operating the medical unit he gave orders that we should be removed from the forward position. He explained to us that he did not want to be caught with prisoners in the combat zone. Sigmund understood the problem and turned the solution over to a subordinate who had no idea of how to feed us into the evacuation chain. The only thing he could think of was to transport us back to a unit toward the rear.

Thus, as night approached we were driven in the equivalent our 3/4 ton truck over to Schonberg and thence south through Buchet via the same route we had covered on the 16th when fleeing from the front. From Bleialf the truck went east to Prüm, some ten kilometers deeper into Germany. During that ride we had our backs to several 40 gallon petrol drums and when we dismounted our coats had frozen to the drums so that we had to literally break loose from the ice on the cold steel. We were then led into what appeared to be a small headquarters of a service unit. Here, again, we were outside the evacuation route of prisoners and the officer in charge spent hours trying to find out where to send us next. At last, as dawn came we were again placed in another truck to begin a two day journey which has been telescoped into a recurring nightmare every time I try to reconstruct the events which followed.

The process of assembling memories into a chronology has been hampered, or abetted, however you want to look at it, by an understanding of the way the mind works when evoking recollections of things past. This has never been more lucidly analyzed than in John Livingston Lowes' 'The Road to Xanadu". In this landmark work, which Peter Medawar considers "worth the sum total of everything else which has been written on creativity by anyone at any time, including Plato", Lowes examines everything which Coleridge had experienced or read. From this wealth of material, including extensive scouring of all the travel books which were popular in the late eighteenth century, and which are known to have been read by Coleridge, Lowes formulates a theory of the functioning of creative thinking. The striking and puzzling juxtapositions of such contradictory visions as "caves of fire and ice" in the *Rime of the*

Ancient Mariner are shown to have been resurrected from what Lowes calls the "deep well of memory" . He points out that whatever neural connections which are involved in the process of memory are not stored in continuous and orderly files but are pigeon-holed in chains of images which have visual or auditory traces which are similar in content. Thus, when we try to recall incidents in our lives we evoke disappointingly brief recollections of a few seconds' duration of the tactile experiences but fail completely to evoke images of such things as once familiar faces. Prior to Lowes' revelations it had commonly been assumed that the startling incongruities in such apparently weird poems such as Kubla Khan were inspired by opium dreams. Not so. Their roots lay in the unraveling of memories dredged up in association chains with words and phrases which were not consciously filed in chronological order. Thus, in recounting these remembrances some are inexorably entangled with memories of other experiences which had a similar context. For example, I recall some of the stories told by the great surgeon and teacher Isadore Ravdin. In one of them he revealed that he had been in one of the surgical teams during the invasion of Italy at the Anzio beachhead when he examined a soldier who presented with anal bleeding. On inspection Ravdin found a finger! In another part of the tent there was a young surgeon who had lost a finger while performing a rectal examination on a casualty when a rifle bullet flew through the tent and struck his hand. This story has always been filed along with the surprising discovery of a bullet in the penis of the German soldier who appeared to have only an assortment of shell fragment wounds.

It has been arduous, therefore, to recreate the real chronology of events surrounding our capture and subsequent experiences without inserting facts which have been revealed by historians decades after the events herein recorded. Thus, the problem which caused me the most concern during most of the brief career in Gefangenschaft was the nagging doubt that I had been correct in assuming that Colonel Cavender had actually retreated without informing his supporting medical team.

The other most difficult aspect of retelling the story has been the expectation by most listeners that there was some parallel between the operation of the German surgical unit and the adventures so ably recreated in popular television series, MASH. That entertaining story was modeled after the Field Army Surgical Hospital which was headed by an Army Urologist friend of mine, Kryder van Buskirk, who did, in fact, have many of the qualities portrayed by Alan Alda as "Hawkeye". His unit, which had operated in the Korean War, was reputed to have exemplified van Buskirk's unquenchable sense of humor, which is a generic quality of most of the urologists I have ever known. He, in fact, was hired as a consultant during the filming and writing of this series. But under the circumstances which prevailed during the Battle of the Bulge, there was neither time nor inclination to find anything humorous in the hectic progress of the battle and our contribution to its action.

Chapter 3

Leaving *the Front*

After a week of working with German professional surgeons in an atmosphere of collegiality, doing our best to alleviate the suffering of the wounded soldiers of both sides, it was something of a shock to find ourselves being treated as enemies. The driver of the truck leaving Prum was in a sour frame of mind, probably because he had to divert his attention from attacking the enemy to helping us to get away from the combat zone. But a enlisted man private who rode with us in the bed of pickup truck was thankful that he was going away from the battle area. In fact, he behaved in a more humane manner and even shared with us some of the anise flavored cookies which he had received from home. Those little treats constituted our only Christmas dinner.

While negotiating the back roads heading to the north and east we encountered traffic heading west toward the front line. At every intersection there were German military police directing traffic. They were easily recognized by the huge crescent silver or pewter crescent ornaments hanging across their chests. Every time our driver encountered one of them the driver stopped and inquired about the way to the nearest site for disposing of prisoners.

I still have no way of knowing where or how far we traveled, but, in studying maps of the region I now think we passed near Losheim, which was the gap in the American defenses where the first penetration of our lines by the Germans occurred. The meandering ride wound up finding an installation which looked like an American Boy Scout campsite, complete with young boys in khaki uniforms lounging on the large porch. The driver left us guarded by the generous soldier while he engaged in some negotiation with what appeared to be the adult leaders of the Scout troop.

As the morning progressed he came back with several of the kids and an older Wehrmacht noncommissioned officer who indicated that he was on furlough after long action going all the way back to the Normandy D-Day fighting. He brought along several other prisoners who had managed to elude the mass surrender events which produced the great columns of prisoners we had seen around Schonberg. Our contingent of captives then grew to about a dozen men, including a few Air force crewmen and officers who had parachuted out of disabled planes into areas from which they had tried to elude capture. The guard in charge of the prisoners and the Hitler Jugend trainees with their Scout uniforms and, for this occasion, ancient rifles, formed us into a small column and led us past the nearby village and through what appeared to be a target practice range on the edge of town. As we marched the soldier in charge kept telling the kids about his participation in the fighting around Normandy. When we were negotiating the maze of earthen ridges he told the kids that, during the D-Day action, he had captured many Americans and simply shot them summarily.

At first it seemed that this was braggadocio intended to impress the Jugend kids or scare us. Whatever his intentions were, the result as partly both. I was apprehensive, as were others in our group, but Mike Connelly tried to quell our fears and made some progress until I saw him making the sign of the cross. Having been brought up in a Catholic elementary school I knew the Hail Mary prayer, having mumbled it every day along with the pupils who had been baptized, as I had not been. So I could lip-read Mike's words, especially the "blessed be the fruit of thy womb". Much later he confided that he had repeatedly mumbled, over and over, to himself the Lord's prayer. As the group went on past the secluded area of the shooting range, and no violence was evident, we relaxed and went on our way out to the secondary roads around the town.

I recall, however, the sense of relief and the memory it evoked of Dostoevsky's description of his narrow escape from execution. Decades later, in reading Betita Hardings "Phantom Crown", the thought was revived by her description of the execution of the Emperor Maximilian by the Mexican revolutionaries. As he and one of his Generals were led from their cells to the parade ground they heard a drum roll and Maximilian inquired if that were the "signal for the executions to begin". General Tomas Mejia replied "I can not say, Sire, this is the first time I am being executed". In any event, we resumed the long trudge along the roads northward.

It is about 60 kilometers from Prüm to Münstereiffel. The truck ride, which began before dawn, probably covered a third of this distance. Since we left the Hitler Jugend camp shortly after sunrise, and daylight at the latitude of the Ardennes in late December lasts only eight hours, we had probably covered another thirty kilometers before we reached the outskirts of Münstereiffel during the long winter twilight when the guards allowed us our second rest break. We were all tired, but oddly the Jugend were the most exhausted. Even the older Wehrmacht guard relaxed his vigilance. We took advantage of the halt to evacuate whatever systems were becoming urgently in need of attention. I found a convenient depression in a roadside ditch, dropped my pants and took aim. Looking down I found to my horror that I had chosen a spot which was preempted by one of the long handled "potato masher" hand grenades. I reconsidered hastily and chose a less threatening target. Then, while the guard was nodding, it occurred to me that I was still carrying a small 35mm Argus. I hastily scooped out a burial place for the camera on the supposition that it would soon be garnered as a trophy by the first formal prisoner handling facility we would encounter.

Resuming the march we passed the outskirts of Euskirchen long after dark. By this time the nearly full moon was half way up from the horizon and the sky was clear in the late December night. As I watched the moon I kept thinking that Betty was probably watching it rise back at home and thought somehow that it would be a mirror in which she could see that I was watching her. Back in George Williams' English Poetry class at Rice I had read that Coleridge, when he

was on the Island of Malta, wrote a letter to his sister Sara, who was back in England, in which he expressed the same thought.

This long march, or shuffle, had been too fatiguing to leave much energy for thinking, or talking. I suppose that we each had personal worries to consider and thus remained more less silent during the expedition. We had turned off the secondary roads without noticing the names of the villages we passed on the route but soon realized that the guards had reached some intended destination at Flammerscheim, whose name has never been forgotten. There we ran into the beginning of the formal prisoner processing which made further inroads on our mental functions.

We were led around to the rear of a two story house where there was a fenced-in yard where we saw layer upon layer of steel helmets, some of which bore the Red Cross symbol. This was a grisly sight which reminded me of the skulls in a medieval monastic ossuary. We were told that "fur zie das Krieg ist vorbei". Yes, the war was over for us, as they saw it, but the worst part was just beginning. So, they began the indignities by relieving us of our helmets and adding them to the trophies. Fortunately, they let us keep our thick wool caps which would later prevent heat loss from our scalps during subsequent exposure to the bitter cold.

By this time dawn was breaking and the staff of the prisoner processing establishment came on duty and began the formal part of the capture business, or, as we soon all referred to it, Gefangenschaft. These functions were carried out by a staff of "rear echelon commandos", which was a term we reserved for denigrating those support groups which were not involved in front line fighting.

The interrogation was, as we had anticipated, started with the "name, rank and serial number" routine which we had, in fact, been taught to expect in the unlikely event that we might be captured. The little officious clerical twerp who did the questioning reminded us that he knew from our Golden Lion shoulder patches that we were from the 106th Division which he apparently held in low regard. Since he had also confiscated our ID cards he had no use for the name-rank routine. He went on asking dumb questions about the objective of the Division's planned attack; another oxymoron.

After the grilling we were turned over, one after another, to a one-armed, one-eyed runt with a very bad disposition. He took great delight in pushing us to a door leading to a basement nest of cells. He started the descent into the dark abyss with a kick in the ass and some expletives which did not contain the word "willkommen".

We found ourselves packed into a small basement cell with virtually no light. To an uninformed observer we would have appeared abjectly sullen, and perhaps were. I believe, however, that we sat there pondering our plight, each of us trying to make sense of how we had fallen into such a situation. It was difficult to say aloud that we had goofed. I could see no way to make anything other than calamity of the fIx we were in. I had fled, been pursued and caught. Not even Mike was talkative. So we sat for a very long time, silent and contemplative.

The only sounds we heard during the next day were the singing of troops marching by the building. They were young soldiers who stepped briskly and were singing to the rhythm of their marching. I recognized one of the songs as "Lilly Marlene" but they were in German so I never heard the expected "Under the lamplight etc." which were the English words to the song which was popular on both sides in that year

Other than those few interludes the entire time we spent in the cell has been erased from memory. The next events began with our being herded into a column of prisoners and being ordered to march. We were still exhausted from lack of both sleep and food. We walked as "schnell" as we could and slogged past the outskirts of Euskirchen and thence eastwards along secondary roads with no idea of where we were headed. Again, we were not inclined to expend energy in talking. Fortunately we had our heavy wool caps and were generating enough body heat to withstand the cold weather.

Except for Mike Connelly, John Martin and Lew Myers I recognized none of the others. They probably had been with us in the Flanimerscheim cell but it was too dark there to discern faces at all. Most of the group were enlisted men from Infantry units except for the few Air Force crewmen. So we had nothing in common other than our captive status.

Along these roads we passed near a large hospital with a bold Red Cross on its roof. There were a few people along the roadside who were obviously not a welcoming committee. When they began to toss pebbles at us it was apparent that they had a gripe. One of the German guards said that the reason for their anger was that an American airplane had dropped a bomb down the elevator shaft and killed some nurses, or "Schwestern" as they called them. It was difficult to believe such a claim since the building stood alone and was clearly marked. Moreover there was no evident structural damage.

The march continued with occasional rest stops during which Mike and I were kept busy trying to dry and wrap the scratched and frostbitten feet of some of the airmen who had parachuted out of downed planes wearing thin soled dress shoes. Some of them had been attacked by the first people they had encountered and the Germans had slashed the soles of their shoes. We were on our feet for the entire journey. Actually, neither of us were overweight and noticed that the men in the group who were chubby and had probably not been accustomed to long walks were showing the most obvious signs of fatigue and weariness. Only six months before the long march I had spent many off-duty hours at the New York hospital walking across the George Washington Bridge and thence up and down the Palisades. I was reminded of those excursions when my steps would falter and the road felt as though it were oscillating like the walkway on the bridge. Otherwise I found myself in surprisingly good shape for the prolonged hike, considering that I was burning cargo for energy.

By early afternoon I began to see trees and fences decorated with tinsel. Since it was only a few days after Christmas I wondered if the people had actually been draping the fme shiny strips over areas remote from their homes. This strange sight was explained later when I learned that the Allied Air Forces had dropped the decorations as decoys to confuse the interpretation of their air defense radar screen images. We had seen the radar towers at ever more frequent intervals during the day so wondered if we were approaching a target area.

In mid-afternoon we finally reached our destination which turned out to be a large compound of barracks and barbed wire fences which was just west the city of Bonn on the Rhine river. We were led through the outer gate into a German office where we were lined up and initiated into formal Gefangenschaft.

Chapter 5

Dulag VI B

The German camp officials assigned quarters on the basis of rank, the enlisted men in separate barracks and the officers in exactly similar but isolated areas of the camp. In late afternoon of that 28 December Mike, John Martin and Lew Myers and I were led to a room with six double-deck wooden bunk beds with straw mattresses no more than an inch thick. The section to which we were assigned was already occupied by a few Medical Corps officers but was only about half full. We first met Captain Frederick Mclntire from Swampscott Pennsylvania. After the introductions Mike and Lew and I selected bunks and relaxed.

The sparse population in this camp was a result of our having been detained at the front while the large columns of Americans who had surrendered during the first week of the battle were moved much deeper into Germany, bypassing some of the older and smaller units of the system. Mclntire had, for some reason, also been rounded up late in the week and had been sent to the older, less crowded, Dulag VIB. Our trio had already been through the week at the Hauptverbandplatz and knew each other's history and personalities quite well.

Fred however, was still a bit new at the game and was not very talkative. Fred was solemn and Martin was more sullen and almost mute, possibly from the psychological trauma of the triage experience back at the

Haupberbandplatz. As we settled in we were visited by a Captain Charles Morse who identified himself as a veteran of Kriegsgefangenschaft who knew his way around and undertook to instruct us in proper conduct. It was he who, as I recall, was the first person to use that German equivalent of "Prisoner of war business". He was accompanied by a small Royal Air Force enlisted man who was called "Shorty" but who was , we were told, 'The Man of Confidence" for the entire camp. This meant that the German guards trusted him and sent him outside the Dulag in charge of work details in the villages around the camp.

Morse went on to explain the functions of the "Escape Committee" which, he said, exercised complete authority over any prisoners who might undertake to leave the Dulag. Of course, none of us in our group entertained any such ambitions since the wire and rifles all around rather discouraged any such plans. He and Shorty told tales of prisoners who had undertaken unapproved efforts to dig under the wire and had been shot as soon as they had been discovered. Shorty did, however, tell of a possibly apocryphal incident in which the Committee had approved a plan and aided one officer to dig under a fence and contact the "underground" and go all the way back to England. It was said that the escapee had sent a taunting gift back to the prison guards.

Fortunately we had arrived in time for the daily ration of soup, an nauseating mess of watery cabbage. We were famished so gulped it down without complaint. Mike and I took one bunk stack and Lew Myers and John Martin chose an adjacent double story bunk. We all suspended our small ditty bags, which had once been gas mask covers, from nails already on the four posters of the bunks. We stretched out on the hard bed planks for a long postponed rest.

As twilight approached we were alerted by the sound of antiaircraft guns down in the city of Bonn, which was a few kilometers to our east. All over the camp prisoners went outside to watch the show. There were scattered clouds which made it hard to actually see the bombers, but we were told, by the others, that they were British and that the RAF did most of its work under cover of darkness. But the most visible events were the beams of searchlights and streams of antiaircraft tracer shells as they were lofted up to explode like fireworks at high altitudes.

At intervals we could hear the swishing sound of bombs dropping near our location and followed by loud explosions from the target areas. Although we could not see the ground bursts they did seem to be nearby in or near the city of Bonn itself.

As we stood outside the barracks one shhhh sound did not change pitch so we knew that it was not going to fall far away from the camp. Guessing that the bombs were about to hit near or in the camp, most of us ran to gain access to a shallow trench, or ditch, around our building. We flopped down into the little depression in the terrain just as several thermite bombs crashed through the roof of our barracks shack. Looking into the windows of the building we could see the red-hot molten metal of the incendiaries dripping down to set afire all of the bunks in our barracks. So, on 28 December, the day we had arrived at Dulag VIB, we were once again, homeless.

The German guards rounded us up again and moved us into an adjacent, intact, building which was similar to the first but had an attached room which appeared to have been used at one time as a dispensary of sorts. Otherwise it was identical to the many prison barracks throughout the Dulag system. It had a small iron coke-burning stove in the middle and bunks around the periphery. We soon found that the daily ration of hard coal or coke could be used sparingly to keep room at a temperature of around 600 F and maintain a kettle of hot water for rinsing the small glasses and porcelain covered bowls which we were issued. These were used to contain the soup rations and, on Saturday evenings, for shaving and keeping a minimal degree personal hygiene. Every morning the Germans would bring us our daily issue of hard coal and we would removed the old lumps which never actually burned down to ash but persisted as bits of rock which indicated either the poor quality of the coal or that it had been simply coke or very low quality anthracite to begin with. I had salvaged from the burned first barracks building my old steel mess kit and a Gillette double edged razor with one blade. The spoon, however, had been melted. To replace it I spent a day whittling a wooden spoon from a large splinter which had survived the intense incendiary blaze. This was accomplished with a Boy Scout knife which I had managed to hang onto throughout the various pocket searches on the way back into Germany. Its edge was far from sharp but was ground at frequent intervals on a small piece of sandstone which I had

found on the grounds around our building. So, the next soup ration, after it had been carefully divided into twelve equal portions, was consumed with the crude wooden ladle.

Shaving was a problem since the Gillette had been badly scorched. By the time Saturday came around I had recalled a trick my frugal uncle John had taught me of honing the blade edge by slipping it back and forth inside a drinking glass. Since whiskers are much softer than steel, a razor edge does not actually become abraded into dullness but becomes bent at its thin edge. Restoring the shape of the edge is easily accomplished by the same maneuver butchers use when they stroke their knives over a "steel". The inside of the glass provided the exact angle needed to straighten out the blade edge.

The food we were given was not substantial enough to clog teeth seriously, but keeping some degree of dental hygiene was a problem. Our toothbrushes had been completely melted in the fire. So, again, the Scout knife had come in handy. I fashioned a toothbrush from a splinter whose end was easily frayed by nibbling at it.

Our Saturday night PTA baths amounted to a ritual which was performed at the suggestion of the Catholic Mike Connelly who always performed a prayer session on Sundays. Having been brought up in a Catholic academy I complied with at least the ritual cleansing and mumbled through the prayers. The PTA acronym, by the way, was learned years later from the liberated wife of a good friend. After she had used the expression for a year or so she explained that it stood for "pussy, tits and arm-pits". That is roughly about all we could accomplish in the cold environs of the prison barracks. Besides, the German soap we were provided did not lather and probably had very little in the way of cleansing power.

The most problematic hygienic function, however, was bowel and bladder evacuation. The latter necessity was solved so long as the snow cover remained intact throughout the region. Finding a new spot has always been a dog's job.

For us it only involved not standing on an old one or saving pristine areas for saving uncontaminated sites for harvesting snow for melting and heating on the coal stove. The latrines, however, were located at some distance from our barracks and were near the fence which separated the American/French territory from that in which the Russians were confirmed. They were accorded by far the worst treatment of all the guests of the Reich. To add to the problem they were disgustingly careless about trudging the extra distance to their nearby latrines. Many of them were afflicted with dysentery and probably could not hold their fire until they reached the proper facility. So the entire region had the sort of odor which Gabriel Garcia Marquez seems to take delight in describing in his Nobel prize winning novels.

To add to all these burdens, we were not provided toilet paper. There was a sometimes available source of corrugated cardboard boxes which could be carefully torn apart to yield small patches of absorbent, if abrasively rough, brown paper. So we spent a lot of time dissecting these sources of recyclable waste.

Aside from these necessary chores our early days in the Hardthohe camp the daily routine was invariable. Having rations which barely provided calories to remain conscious we spent most of the time in long nights of sleep interrupted only by occasional bombing raids on targets within audible range. When these occurred we would slip outside into the cold night and watch the red lightning on the horizon, usually to the north toward the Ruhr Valley industrial complexes. Otherwise we turned in early and arose late.

But we were neither healthy wealthy or wise. We often made attempts to amuse ourselves each morning when the Feldwebel (Corporal) made his morning bed-check rounds as he brought in our daily ration of a loaf of bread and a pot of ersatz coffee. We had been given to understand that on his anival we were expected to spring to attention and greet him with "Guten Morgen Herr Veldwebel". To this salutation we began to add such insulting phrases as "you son of a bitch" and worse. He would actually smile and either was too ignorant to catch on or had so little interest that he never found out what we meant.

The coffee was probably mostly chicory but it was better than water so we came to expect and savor it. Lew Meyers had lived in Louisiana at one time and confirmed the opinion that this brew was, in fact, chicory, which is often preferred by Cajuns over coffee. The bread was not the soft, light loaves we had been accustomed to at home, but large very heavy and firm bricks which were solid and cohesive enough to slice with a knife (a saw would have been a better implement). As the only surgeon with a knife I was elected slicer. The operation was carried out with solemn ceremony since it required estimating the proper thickness which would cut it into 24 slices, making two slices for each man. The chore carried with it the responsibility of making the slices equal. Proper protocol also made it in incumbent upon the slicer to take the last piece. This was a very important part of the daily distribution since we were being fed no more than what was sufficient to maintain basic metabolic requirements. After the slicing ceremony we would each place half of one slice on top of the iron stove to toast it into a more palatable condition. The half-at-a-time practice was more efficient since there was barely enough room on the flat stove top for twelve half slices. Besides, it stretched breakfast out for a good half hour.

The bread, as I mentioned, was heavy and dark brown, probably more like the currently popular "whole grain" varieties. It must have contained coarsely ground cereal grains and we always suspected that it was augmented with sawdust. This notion was reinforced one morning when a horse drawn wagon was seen entering the main gate of the Dulag with a load of perhaps 200 loaves resting on the sawdust-covered bed of the vehicle. The loaves were not individually wrapped but lying in orderly rows and layers. The crusts were thick and hard baked to withstand any amount of jostling and handling.

Earlier in the mornings we were usually visited briefly by Captain Morse and his sidekick, Shorty. They went over still more details of the system they had worked out for organizing and controlling the captive groups. Shorty would usually tell stories of his having bailed out of a disabled airplane with a parachute which did not fully open. As he told it, he had fallen through a forested area, his fall being decelerated by tree branches and the impact diminished by thick snow so that he sustained only bilateral lower leg fractures. These injuries healed with considerable misalignment of the tibia and fibula so that he was permanently bow-legged. But Shorty's most entertaining contribution to the forestalling of terminal boredom was his eternal farting performances. We had all become more or less proficient in this necessary function, having existed for weeks on cabbage soups.

Now, the source of the power of our gas blasts was derived from the main element of our ration menu: the soups. For three days each week these concoctions were principally cabbage with small bits of potato. On three days each week we were served dickruben soup. That food source is the "thick beet" which, in normal times, is, to this day, reserved for cattle since it withstands storage under snow all winter long. To me, though, it was the same as the dreaded rutabaga. And I have never since been able to stomach that sometimes savored root. That menu omits Friday which was the only day we looked forward to since it yielded "erbsensuppe", a heavy and thick broth which was green enough to suggest that it might have contained peas. There were often even a few pieces of meat of indeterminate origin. We suspected an equine source, especially on the day or so after a horse had been killed outside the camp in a strafing run by a P-38. Whatever it was we treasured it and meticulously counted the pieces of meat in each bowl, splitting up the total so that each man got the same quantity.

I have been reserving an account of Shorty's flatulent skill. While the rest of us sounded off with some gusto and no shame he could control the volume and tone so accurately that he often did a reasonably accurate rendition of '~Yankee Doodle Dandy", including "riding on a pony" when he was in top form. The subject occupied a curiously large proportion of our free time, considering that it was all the freedom we had. Mike made the most intelligent contribution to those discussions when he explained that "the cabbage gives it voice and the erbsensuppe the authority".

Since we have mentioned Shorty's anal virtuosity it is appropriate to consider this function in more detail. The capacity of the bowel to produce gas is not peculiar to our species. It is, in fact, not a process which is performed by the gut itself. The trick is eloquently illustrated by cattle who accomplish the act with the aid of bacteria in the first and largest sections of their complex stomachs, the rumen. These microorganisms break down the cellulose in grass and hay to

produce soluble carbohydrates and, as a by-product, methane, a flammable gas which occurs in coal and crude petroleum reservoirs. The process is also performed in termites whose intestines are inhabited by protozoa whose cells are, in turn, parasitized by cell inclusions which were originally derived from bacteria. It is these sub-parasites which enable the termite to digest the cellulose in the wood of our houses. Together cattle and termites pass enough methane to account for the largest fraction of that gas in our atmosphere. Since it is one of the gasses which is implicated in the "greenhouse effect" it should be immediately apparent that our efforts to solve that currently popular environmental problem may be thwarted by the anal emissions of cows and the very insects which convert forest debris into the substances which our forests depend upon for their survival. We humans probably account for a minute fraction of the offending gas.

But to get back to the matter at hand, Shorty's astounding anal eloquence, I am reminded of a session of the American College of Surgeons during which a plastic surgeon presented a paper in which he described a method of correcting a cleft palate defect in infants which was crafted to preserve the function of the soft palate in such a way as to avoid the characteristic speech defect of children so afflicted. In his dissertation he likened the ring of muscles which control the production of speech to a sphincter. During the discussion which followed a hand surgeon reminded us that this terminology might just be appropriate and that we should not consider it demeaning when used to explain the phonetic accomplishments effected by the oro-pharyngeal ring of muscles. He suggested that we ponder a situation in which one is presented with a double handful of a mixture of solids, liquids and gasses. He then reminded us that the anal sphincter can differentiate among the three states of matter and release the gas while retaining the other constituents. So the hand, the palate and the anal sphincter each possess remarkable facility for carrying out complex functions. Shorty proved that assumption to be correct.

Before leaving this entertaining deviation I must refer to another item which always surfaces when the subject is brought to mind from the deep well of consciousness. This is a note in Richard Burton's notebook late in 1967, in which he refers to a dinner guest who one day reached "into the depth of his bowels and brought out a cosmic fart that shattered the eardrums. E. (Elizabeth Taylor) was delighted and tried to respond but her netherland was not talking." We were delighted by these devious amusements and our "netherlands" were always talking. In John Livingston Lowes' 'The Road to Xanadu" the Yale scholar explains the source of the astounding imagery in the poems of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry as the manner in which the mind stores memories in association chains which, when recalled , come flooding out in bunches of related items. He refers to this process as "the deep well of subconscious cerebration". From this "deep well" I also recall the astute observation made by one of our friends around 1940. He was Gudbrand Bjorke, who had escaped Norway just ahead of the German invasion and worked as an actuary in a Dallas insurance group. "Gabby", as we called him, once noted that "Americans very funny: when they belch they say pardon me: when they fart everybody laughs." This national peculiarity possibly explains our preoccupation with the subject matter discussed above.

Plagued with days of boredom and schemes for survival we would usually spend the evenings in discussions of food. The German camp authorities had, a week after our arrival at the Dulag, announced that, according to the Geneva Conventions, we would be "paid" an allowance. This materialized in the form of several mark notes and pfennig coins, which was ironic since the only place to spend this wealth was in a sort of Post Exchange. Since there was no food for sale we each "bought" blue notebooks and pencils. I, and probably the others, labeled the books "Kriegsgefangeribuch" and entered in them complex recipes for such delights as "roast suckling pig", a page-long description of the whole process, right down to placing and American flag in the pig's anus. In reviewing this notebook I fmd that over half of its pages are covered with recipes, most of them credited to Mike Connely or Lew Meyers. This recurring entertainment discloses the effect of hunger pangs more vividly than the remembrance of the gnawing hunger we experienced.

The development of the pig recipe began when Lew and Mike and I were trying to bring John Martin into the game. The Harvard graduate was usually aloof and not interested in our talk. On one evening he sat staring into space and muttered "my body craves salt". Lew told him that he should crave something more substantial "like the roast

suckling pig I once prepared". With Meyers directing traffic we then had four contributors to the game and came up with the following 3/4 page in the little blue book:

Roast suckling pig. 4-8 wks old. 12-18 pounds. Cleaned through belly only. No chest opening. Spit thru mouth and anus and legs tied to spit. Stuff with checken (Lew says just raw pieces, not diced) bread, raisins, onions, etc. FIRE build oak or hickory fire to start @ a large sack of charcoal. When coals right make a ring @ 8-10" around spitted & suspended pig. Drip trough under pig. Turn slowly & bake with drippings (startw ith butter) until hide brown and has ripe note when thumped. Bake a sweet apple for mouth, cherries in orbits, celery in ears, plum in navel and American flag on stern.

In these marathon menu and recipe bull sessions Oscar Keagy and even John Martin contributed what amounted to the wishes of starving men. In rereading these fantasies it is amazing that we should have sat by the hour laboriously recording such excursions of imagination as Lew's precaution that "before you try to cut marshmallows in half you should dip the scissors in flour to keep the goo from sticking to the blades". We even had a long argument on the relative worth of various dry breakfast cereals, concluding that they were all much too light except for shredded wheat brick-shaped loaves.

I still wonder why we, used these notebooks for such inconsequential matters and overlooked the opportunity to enter such data as dates, events and the names of our fellow inmates. Such a diary would have been an invaluable aid in reconstructing the history of that winter. The fear that we might provide the Germans with intelligence they could use against us was probably the driving force behind this omission.

During the first ten days or two weeks some of us still had the "ten-pack" Lucky Strike cigarettes which had been included in all our field rations and squirreled away in pockets to survive the searches in the first days of capture. There were five of us who spent a ceremonious half hour smoking one of these cigarettes each evening. We would each take one puff and pass the treasure on to the next man in the circle. When the butt was so short that another puff anld burn a lip the remaining short piece was opened and the tobacco dumped into a small pill box to be saved until enough remained to roll a new one, using papers donated by one of the guards. Toward the end of the remaining hoard the residual tobacco would have accumulated an astonishingly hefty concentration of nicotine. Somewhere along the line we began to watch for butts tossed away by the Guards who smoked the deadly Turkish Papirossas. These almost anesthetic weapons must have contained an extremely high nicotine content for we could use them to stretch out a pack of ten for over a week.

If we could have heard the public outcry over the alleged "addictive" effects of smoking which has so altered public opinion in the nineties we would have been as outraged as I am today. This effect is exactly what we were seeking, some small pleasure with a calming effect during a very troubling time. You may say, of course, that our craving only proves the case for the proponents of government regulation of this "drug". But there are all manner of activities and substances which provide a measure of pleasure even though there may be some price to pay for such indulgences.

It was more difficult to find ways to spend the short winter days. On some clear days the throbbing of airplane engines would bring us outside to watch the huge formations of B- 17 and B-24 bombers flying over the area. If they passed close to Bonn the anti-aircraft guns would go into a frenzy and the sky around the planes would blossom with black puffs. Occasionally a bomber would be hit and fall apart. We always counted parachutes when these wrecks would flutter down out of the rigid formations which the American Air Corps maintained even in the face of the intense fields of flack. When there were only five 'chutes we knew that two unlucky airmen were falling with the wreckage. On the other hand it was apparent that five of them would be in our situation within a few hours. None of them were ever brought to Dulag VIB however.

There was one memorable sight when a B-24 was hit in such a way as to leave the tail section, with its two vertical stabilizers attached, fluttering down with a pendulum-like swing more or less like the winged seeds of a maple tree. It

made a soft landing in fields a mile or so away from the camp and the tail gunner was captured and brought to the compound apparently uninjured.

I knew that, even though most of the B-17s made their way through the flak, a lot of them had probably sustained damage. During the month the 106th had spent in temporary encampment around Cheltenham, northwest of London, I had availed myself of an opportunity to visit my brother who has forecasting contrail conditions at the Eighth Air Force headquarters near Thetford in northeast England in the Wash. There I had watched squadrons of B- 17s take off on missions and return with portions of wings or tail sections missing. Usually when these crippled bombers approached the runway coming in they would fire red flares to signal that they had wounded aboard. The ambulances and ground crews would rush out to meet them and take over care of the wounded airmen. And I had also seen a blackboard in a squadron ready room with the names of missing crews listed along with the assignments for impending missions. Even a brief glance at these mission boards was enough to stop complaints about the air crews being pampered with ham and egg breakfasts and thick steak dinners.

Usually we could see tiny fighter planes engaged in fights around and between the bombers. They looked like mockingbirds chasing vultures, but occasionally one of them would spiral down out of the cluster, obviously having been heavily damaged by an enemy fighter. And once in a while a parachute would emerge from the arena of the dog fights. In any event, these inspiring activities miles above us were fascinating and reminded us that there was a real war in progress and that our side was doing its best.

Most of our afternoons were spent either idle or, when there was warming sunshine, looking through the barbed wire fences at the woods surrounding the camp. Having been brought up a bird watcher I kept an eye out for any moving object other than the occasional armed guard. The advent of an unfamiliar species brought on an urge to sketch it for later identification. Even in winter, with the ground covered with snow, I managed to sketch enough information to later pin down the White Wagtail and the Great Tit. The Tit was like our familiar Chickadee, but much larger. Wagtails, however, are strictly Old World forms. Occasionally small flocks of Crows and Magpies would fly past the area foraging for something under the snow.

From their activity Mike and I surmised that we might also discover something edible and spent an hour one afternoon scraping snow off the weeds which were still green underneath the snow cover. These, we concluded, might be cooked to bolster the cabbage soups. The little plants did add some flavor to the foul kohl messes but we concluded that it was not worth the effort and so abandoned the small attempt to live off the land.

Later in January an event took place which left a permanent memory of the starvation which we were enduring. During one night a rumor made the rounds of the "latrinogram" circuit that a carload of Russian prisoners had been offloaded into the camp and that one of the new arrivals was dead from starvation. Considering the sorry state of affairs in the Russian sector of the Dulag this was credible. What was surprising, however, was the visible fact that the remains were placed in the small dispensary-like room adjacent to our barracks.

That night, after "lights-out", Mike and I undertook a grisly and timid scheme to augment our protein intake with Russian steak. Two of us, I think the other was either Mike or Lew Meyers, actually slipped into the room and threw back the canvas cover over the corpse. We immediately became nauseated on encountering the emaciated thighs and concluded that the scheme was too unworthy and that Russians were probably inedible anyway. I have tried unsuccessfully to erase this scene from memory but have to acknowledge that it really happened.

As we retreated from the dark room, however, I did look around on a shelf in the room and found a small bottle labeled "ascorbic acid". Since this was Vitamin C I slipped it into a shirt pocket, having been tormented by memories of the scurvy endured by sailors in the early voyages of discovery. In the weeks that followed I would wrestle with my conscience once a day when the vial was surreptitiously sneaked out of the pocket and the little pifi swallowed along with the morning "coffee".

It is difficult to come to terms with little selfish acts of this sort. Whenever I would perform the little sleight of hand trick a feeling of guilt would remind me of selfishness. But I persisted in this probably totally useless deception and each time the guilt feeling would be reinforced. So, I would again recall Miss Witherspoon's characterization of my lame excuses as "clandestine".

As the weeks rolled on our hunger began to subside as we adjusted our activities to conserve energy and the body tissues began to atrophy from lack of exercise and as stores of expendable muscle and gut lining were being metabolized for support of brain function.

During those times, when the frigid winter began to give way to warmer evenings, we wandered out along the route to the latrines, passing within ear sight of the barracks occupied by Morse, Shorty, and a group of French prisoners. They were always noisy and laughing, a condition which seemed incongruous to our starving barracks mates. The reason for their hyperactivity soon became obvious when the smell of fried onions and potatoes wafted down to our location. It must have been Shorty, the Man of Confidence, who led work details down into a neighboring village where and was able to trade prison labor for food items which were hoarded by Morse and the others, particularly the Frenchmen.

I began to understand what Shorty meant, when on the occasional visits he and Morse made to our building, his standard opening remark was "this is fuck your buddy week in Gefangenschaft". We had thought it an odd pronouncement and wondered if the gaiety we heard during the evenings implied something literal. After all, their group was half French and our opinion of that bunch had not changed since our initial entry into the Dulag system.

Finally, on 29 January, Morse came with the word that Mike Connelly, Lew Meyers and I were to be moved to another location. We were given time to gather our little hoard of items and were ushered out the gate and into a 3/4 ton truck which hustled us through the remains of the city of Bonn and we were at last on the east side of the Rhine River. The traffic was heavy with the Military Police, wearing their wine-steward large metallic chest ornaments,, directing us northward through packed roads to the vicinity of Koln (Cologne) where, without setting eyes on the city itself, we were left at another Dulag, this time known as a Kriegsgefanerlazarette.

Chapter 6

THE LAZARETIE

The new camp was near a railway junction known as Rosrath but we did not actually see the village and only understood that it was about 20 kilometers southeast of Koln (Cologne) which, again, we did not glimpse at all. The introduction to the camp was carried out briefly by the German guards who turned us over to a Polish medical technician who informed us that the four of us were to become part of a team of medical personnel headed by a Colonel Trainsky. He also said that the inhabitants of the prison referred to it as Hoffnungstahl, which, I assumed was the name of the village near Rosrath.

The little hospital itself was a more substantial building which even had large prominent Red Cross markings on its low pitched roof. We found, much to our surprise, that the buildings were painted and clean. I think that there were only three or four barracks which were likewise painted and clean. They were connected by wooden plank walkways which were a bit higher than the level of the snow which still coated the ground all around the camp. There was a separate building which housed the German guards and another where a kitchen was located. As soon as Mike and Lew and I had this chance to look around we were ushered into what appeared to be an office with a small desk presided over by the Polish surgeon who was the head of the medical team.

Colonel Trainsky was surprisingly rotund, considering the rations we were provided, which were not much better than the Hardthohe starvation diet. In fact, most of the Poles were seemingly well nourished and we guessed that they had access to extra rations. The Colonel wore a heavy complete uniform which had withstood years of whatever tidying up

he could inflict upon it. It was a somewhat bilious brownish-green, an unappealing shade which an old friend from medical school days, Roilin Fillmore, would have called "turd-muggleydun". But the comical effect was made even more ludicrous by the three-cornered hat with a red band over the short bill which was somewhere near the front of one triangular peak.

We had arrived at Hoffnungstahl in the afternoon in time for a ration of soup. Meals were handed out at the kitchen and our first task was to decide which one of the three would be going to the kitchen for the food. We kept up a rotation routine the whole time we were in the camp. We were settled into our new quarters small room in the hospital where the three of us in were to spend a month, as it turned out. The room was a bit larger than a closet but accommodated two double bunks and three chairs. It also had a window which gave a view down the street toward the kitchen area and the German staff quarters. The new room was a distinct improvement over the Hardthohe barracks in that it was painted white and had a door leading to a hail off which were patients' wards and the dressing and operating rooms.

By evening we went out into the snow and saw red fires burning a long way off to the south, undoubtedly from the city of Bonn. Apparently we had been evacuated from that area just in time to escape the night attack. The next morning a few prisoners from Hardthöhe arrived and confirmed that not only had Bonn been virtually leveled but that the camp had sustained hits as well.

The next day Colonel Trainsky called us to the treatment room and gave us our instructions. Our principal intermediator in dealing with Col. Trainsky was the very intelligent paramedic, Waclaw Paraskiewicz who we all called Steve. He was the only Pole who spoke English, and he knew the language quite well. It appeared that the facility housed a few dozen wounded, mostly American, and that we were charged with assisting in the daily rounds to identify those patients whose dressings needed changing and to administer what aid we could to the sick. Trainsky, the sole arbiter of what was proper treatment, was in charge and made all the decisions. Charts were kept at the bedside of each patient but since they were in Polish we just had to take Steve's word for it that his translations were accurate. We could, of course, read the temperature graphs and guess who had serious infections.

There were several airmen with leg fractures which had been sustained in parachute drops and had failed to unite. The Colonel had devised frames around their beds with ropes and pulleys arranged to maintain traction on these limbs. Now this was one area in which I had considerable experience from the years on the Fracture Service at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital under such giants as Bifi Darrach, Clay Wray Murray and Charlie Neer. It was obvious that Trainsky had added so much weight that he had succeeded in pulling apart femurs to such an extent that they would never unite. Every day, after rounds, we would remove some of the metal weights from the devices but the Colonel would come back the next day and start the hyperextension over again. I do not know if any of these distracted femurs ever united.

Steve's chief service to us, however, was his skill as a barber. He provided the only haircut I had during the entire period in Gefangenschaft and once a week, on Saturday evening, he shaved the officers. This he did with a straight razor which he honed to perfection on a leather strop. These tidying up ceremonies were in preparation for the Sunday Masses which Trainsky presided over and which Mike Connelly always attended. These shaves were carried out with a flourish and style which I had never seen elsewhere. He would, when he got down to the throat, tip our chins up and with a long sweeping stroke flash the razor from chin to Adam's apple as though he were beheading each recipient of his tonsorial skill.

Polish is a language which must be learned at a very early age since it contains phonemes which English speaking people can not acquire after childhood. Steve had taught us to say something which sounded like "Gin Dobre" for "good day". We always greeted the poles with this. Their expression for "thank you" sounded like "dobbshy" and we often bastardized this to "dog shit". Many years later I found that this was spelled in a rather strange and paradoxical

way, "dviekuje". These translations may be wrong, for a Polish dictionary is almost impossible to decipher and difficult to pronounce since most words have obscure diacritical marks on some letters.

The greater part of each day was spent changing paper dressings on infected wounds, mostly draining shell fragment injuries on chest walls. There were also a number of granulating open wounds on extremities which were chronically infected and healing at a distressingly slow rate. The inadequate diet upon which these soldiers existed virtually precluded mobilizing of enough protein to bring about healing even had we been able to obtain anti-bacterial drugs. As days went by it became apparent that the Colonel had available only two ointments for local bacterial control. One was "lebedol", a red salve which was to be used on draining wounds and was probably somewhat like the Acrifiavine antibacterial chemical dye which was even then obsolete in American practice.The other salve was "pellidol", a yellow ointment which was to be used on superficial wounds which were slowly healing by growth of flimsy epitheium over red granulation tissue. The most distressing cases were those men who had sustained penetrating chest wounds and had formed abscesses inside the chest. Their wounds continued to drain pus and most of them had become contaminated with *Conjneum diphteriae* and had grown gray-green membranes over the granulation tissue in their wounds. This diphtheritic membrane had been seen in some children with diphtheria before the days of effective antitoxins and antibiotics. But here we had neither penicillin nor the antitoxins which had been useful in America at the time.

Despite the paucity of adequate material resources for doing much real therapy we were once again in the position of actually performing some service for the wounded patients. The atmosphere of collegiality, which had buoyed our spirits in the Hauptverbandplatz, returned and we felt that we were doing at least some good for our patients.

In his detailed analysis of human motivation and means of achieving "happiness", *(In Pursuit of Happiness and Good Government),* Charles Murray refers to Abraham Maslow's 1943 article in which the categories of requirements for attaining this end were said to include 1) Physiological needs (i.e, food), 2) safety, 3) intimacy (belongingness), 4) self respect and 5) the need for fulfilling one's potential. At the Hardthohe camp we had none of these requisites. But in the Kriegsgefangener Lazarette we at least had a modicum of safety (the Red Cross marker on the roof), a good share of intimacy (or "collegiality" (as I have referred to the condition of working with professionals) and some, albeit limited, ability to carry out the work we had been trained to do. So, in a sense, we were more content than we had been in the camp near Bonn. This was nowhere more evident than in our little room for three where we no longer wrote unrealistic recipes and menus but turned to making lists of things we hoped to accomplish after our liberation.

Afternoons were spent with the three of us making the best of our isolation, either playing gin rummy or making idle talk awaiting the time when the call for meal distribution came and the next in the line of rotation went to the soup kitchen. Wandering about outside the ward building we could hear the radio speakers in the German quarters when the frequent announcements of impending bombing attacks were made. These broadcasts were always made by a throaty female voice and began "Achtung, achtung, die Lufflager Meldung:

Ein strengste verbinden bombieren thegen Uber die Niederrhein. .etc." We were well removed from the lower Rhine but always looked skyward for the occasional huge fleets of American B-17's and B-24's which must have been headed for targets far away from Koin. There were, however, many strafing and dive bombing missions which were aimed at targets near the camp. These involved steep dives by P-38's and P-52's. When going in, their machine guns fired so rapidly that the sound was more a ripping noise which always reminded me of tearing oilcloth. At the end of each dive the fighters pulled up after dropping a bomb and made an agonizingly slow ascent during which fountains of tracer bullets from defensive guns came perilously close to them. During the month in the Lazarette we saw not one fighter shot down.

At the end of each day I marked the passage of the day by filling in one more tiny square of a 2 inch square card with seven squares across for days of the week and nine squares vertically for the weeks. The first nine weeks, beginning with 1 January 1945, ended on 4 March and a new card, torn from a book cover, started the tenth week with 5 March. As the bombing a shelling of KO1n began to be deafening the little squares were shaded darker and darker. By 2

March the heavy bombardment which shook our building they were getting blacker and blacker, with some squares were changed to vertical stripes indicating the proximity of the fighting around Ko1n.

During many idle afternoons I entered long lists of things which I hoped to accomplish after being freed from the prison life.

Now, some fifty years later, in going back over the carefully detailed plans, I find, astonishingly, that I have done virtually everything I had recorded in that "wish-book". Right down to the acquisition of microscopes, telescopes, maps, textbooks and field guides and indulging in palaeontologic studies and woodworking, all these plans have been realized. There was even a page on buying dietetic scales and managing Betty's diabetes. This scheme resulted in such successful care that she has been awarded the Joslin Half Century medal for coping with that condition with no discernible retinal degeneration. The only major deviation from the dream scheme was going into Surgery instead of Pathology. I now think that the plan to follow the laboratory route was cooked up on the assumption that it would leave time for all the extracurricular hobbies so meticulously outlined in the notes.

So, for the first three or four weeks life in the Lazarette was predictable and, to a degree, rewarding. There was even one occasion when we had all agreed that one patient had developed appendicitis. And, being surgeons, we arrived at the usual conclusion that "when in doubt cut it out". I was assigned the task of administering drop ether anesthesia while Colonel Trainsky fetched the offending appendix. In those days, and under those circumstances, a ruptured appendix would have been fatal. So we had "fulfilled our potential" to some degree.

It was during those weeks that I found that the clinic was equipped with a regular hospital scale and discovered that the weeks of near starvation had reduced my weight to 40 kilograms (a mere 88 pounds). I had suspected that degree of cargo burning back at Hardthohe when up at the latrines with my pants down, revealing thighs looking like match sticks. But the numbers were chilling since I had always weighed 125 pounds through the years at schools.

The daily ward rounds and the routine dressings continued for two more weeks when, in the third week, a warming spell melted all the snow in one day and the grounds were running with water cascading down toward Rosrath. Artillery fire, which had been barely audible was now increasing off to the west and, by the 106th was clearly landing near the camp. These events raised out hopes for an early liberation should the Allied armies cross the Rhine.

But the routine duties in the wards and dressing room continued without change. I had learned the names of most of the patients but, for some reason, had not inquired about the circumstances of their wounding. There were so many of them that my mind could not hold all that detail, I suppose. Even so, one night when I was asked by one of the ambulatory patients to see a bedridden soldier with an infected chest wound, I visited the chap and found that he was refusing to eat. This loss of appetite was often a symptom of degeneration of the absorptive power of the intestinal mucosa as more and more of it was metabolized for energy. On this occasion I noticed that the boy had left his evening half slice of toast uneaten so tried to coax him into trying to eat it. When he refused I hastily, and without considering the consequences, bit off a chunk of it and ate it myself. I reasoned that a hungry man would retrieve his treasure. He made no move whatever. The other men in the ward reacted with some horror and it was apparent that this had been a selfish act on my part. This one incident revived the guilt feeling of having committed a clandestine act and, again, Kathleen Witherspoon's accusation was revived. With this on my conscience I went on about the daily routine but with less confidence that I was "achieving my potential".

One day when the artillery fire was getting closer and often causing the huge pine trees at one side of the camp to quiver like a cat's tail, it was Fred Mclntire's turn to take our bowl to the kitchen for the daily soup. Mike and Lew and I watched from our window as Fred walked back with the large metal bowl in hands which were beginning to shake a but from the shock waves of shells landing within the fence line. To our horror we saw him throw the soup away and put the bowl over his head. So we went hungrier than usual that evening and never forgave Fred for valuing his head

more than our stomachs. But when the next explosion was so close that it blasted molding away from the door frame of our room.

On 2 March the attack on Koln grew into a massive air raid with the detonations becoming continuous and the pine trees were snapping off their tops. By the night of 7-8 March spotlights illuminated the clouds over the city and we felt certain that our armies were taking the city. Much later we learned that the city was not to be taken for another month or so.

However, on the morning of 8 March the German camp commander name to our room to announce that Fred McIntire and Lew Meyers and I were to be moved to a camp much deeper into Germany and would depart within the hour by train from Rosrath. That would leave Mike Connelly back at the Lazarette and, we thought, would have a better chance being liberated soon. This possibility led me to suspect that Fred and Lew and I had been "selected out" by Trainsky who preferred to nominate the Catholic Mike to remain. As it turned out, the liberation of the Lazarette was not to occur until after Fred and I were freed along in April.

Meanwhile Steve took us to his room where he pulled up some floorboards and retrieved two loaves of very heavy and nutritious black bread for the three of us to take with us on what promised to be a long rail trip toward the center of Germany. So, the Poles did have contact with an underground and had been hoarding what we came to refer to as "iron rations". And Wacklaw Paraskiewicz shared his fall-back food with us.

Thus equipped we joined a group of about twenty ambulatory men who left the gates of the Lazarette in a hurried march down the hill into an area which had been strafed time and time again in the previous few weeks by P-38 Lightning's and P-47 Thunderbolts. We had watched their steep dives and bomb releases from the camp and were now wondering if they would return for such a moving target as our line of staggering starvelings.

Chapter 7

THE GREAT RAILWAY JOURNEY

Once our group had departed the gate at Hoffnungstahl we were marched in a straggling column down a hill to the south of the Lazarette through the small town of Rosrath where there was a rail yard with a string of box cars of the type known during World War I as "Forty and Eights". They were then used to transport either forty men or eight horses.

Before we reached the train, however, the sound of artillery resumed off in the direction of Koln and the guttural roar of shells passing overhead drew attention to the sky. For the first time I actually saw a large shell arc over the hifi to our east before it exploded on a hilltop a mile or so away. Again, I reasoned that we were being moved to avoid our being liberated by the attacking Allied forces. Whatever their intentions were, the Germans were hurriedly shoving us aboard the cars. I think that there were four cars assigned to this transport job and only enough prisoners to place some ten to twelve in each car. Once we were all loaded the sliding door of our car was closed and latched with a wooden bar which could be moved only from the outside.

Thus incarcerated we met our guard, a gray haired old soldier who sat on a keg leaning against the stock of a vintage old rifle. He was then, and throughout most of the journey ahead, glumly silent. We prisoners sat on the hard floor which was lightly sprinkled with a layer of dry hay. My suspicions that Fred McIntire and I, along with Lew Meyers, had been "selected out" by Colonel Trainsky were put to rest by the observation that the other ten or so members of the carload were not known to us. They were from the large group of convalescent patients who no longer required dressing changes and were quartered in another section of the Hoffnungstahl camp. The three of us formed a little group which remained isolated from the others.

As we checked out our accommodations we found that, although the door was closed, we could see the outside scenery adequately by peeking through the spaces between the slats on the sides of the car. Fortunately the early spring-like weather spared us the freezing temperatures which had proved fatal to some of the Russian prisoners who had arrived at the Hardthohe camp in January. Soon the train jerked into motion. The couplers clanked and rattled and we were under way.

We made good progress toward the east and passed through a small town identified by the sign on the station as Gummersbach, which I now find is located 40 kilometers east of KO1n. From there the train turned toward the north and kept its fast pace into the early dusk when it swerved off onto a siding and halted. The quiet was soon interrupted by more clanking of couplers and we heard our engine chuff off into the darkness. The old grizzly guard finally broke his silence and explained that our engine had been levied to pull freight headed back toward the western front. As he began to talk we asked him if he knew where we were headed.

It was only then that we learned that our destination was Fallingbostel, which he said was a large camp north of Hannover. Since none us of knew the geographic location of German cities we could only guess that it was a long way off. How far we had yet to go we had no idea, nor could we guess, that the trip was to be interrupted again and again by the loss of succeeding engines.

In the darkness, and isolated in the countryside, we prepared for a long night, trying to find some comfort by scraping up little mounds of hay for pillows. By pulling our woolen caps down over our ears we managed to assume a fetal position and got a night's fitful sleep. Our group of three engaged in some conversation about trivial matters but were mostly turning inward trying to assess our situation. I was still trying to understand how we had managed to become a part of what I supposed was simply the first lot of prisoners to be evacuated ahead of the advancing Allied armies. As I would discover years later, we were the only group to leave the Lazarette at Hoffnungstahl. Mike Connely, in fact, remained there until mid April while the armies swarmed across the Rhine and bypassed the small towns on the east bank.

On the morning of 9 March the sky was clear and, with a fine day breaking, the door to our car was opened by a contingent of young Wehrmacht guards from several cars up the line. They had brewed ersatz coffee and we were offered generous shares. With this welcome treat we cut off slices of the Polish "iron ration" bread for a light breakfast. The guards had built fires in a ditch alongside the right of way and were busily engaged in their morning twilight, shaving while looking into makeshift mirrors. We were not offered hot water so went unshaven as the morning progressed.

Later that morning a replacement engine materialized and backed into our string of cars with the usual rough bumping of couplers cascading down the line of cars and shaking us out of our lethargy. The German Eisenbahn employs a coupling mechanism entirely different from the familiar American device. In addition to the interlocking grasping hitches there are two round steel bumpers at each end of the cars. They have steel springs on their shafts which theoretically take up the shock of collision but, in fact, only serve to amplify the crunching sound when the cars meet and mate. With these noisy performances our trip resumed, again in a northerly direction.

After an hour or so of slowly passing small towns our engine suddenly accelerated and began to race forward. Looking out between the slats someone yelled that we were being attacked by allied aircraft. Then we saw a string of the deadly P-38 Lightning fighters peeling off toward our train. Having watched so many of them strafing around Hoffnungstahl we were all in a state of high anxiety when we suddenly found ourselves in darkness and the train screeched to a halt. The haste of the engineer was now understood: he had managed to slip into a tunnel. After a brief pause there was a gigantic wave of compressed air shooting through the tunnel from our rear and we knew that the fighters had skip-bombed the entrance into which we had escaped. Old Grizzly later explained that the tracks ahead of us had also been damaged and we would have to wait for repairs before resuming our journey. After what turned out to be a brief delay the train again resumed its progress. On leaving the forward end of the tunnel we saw several groups of elderly, shabbily dressed women armed with picks and shovels. Old Grizzly confirmed that these

were captured enemy citizens, probably Hungarian, who were impressed into labor camps. His analysis was confirmed by the sight of German guards standing by with rifles while the women went about their work.

Since we were approaching the vernal equinox the hours of useful daylight exceeded twelve hours and we reached a huge railway marshaling yard with signs identifying it as Soest. Here our engine was again requisitioned to pull a string of flat cars laden with armored vehicles off toward the west. Being again becalmed in a large city we resumed the card games, playing yet another boring card game.

After a few hands of Gin Rummy we heard the unmistakable sound of a large formation of bombers with their throbbing engines beating the sky above a deck of low clouds which had accumulated during the afternoon. Air raid sirens wailed and soon we could hear the sound of bombs exploding in the distance. The blasts got closer and before along we could hear the swishing sound of what must have been at least five hundred pound bombs shearing their way downward. The pitch of the swooshing sound of the bombs cleaving the air would get lower when they were going away from our site , obeying the Doppler principle we had learned back at Hardthohe. Soon, however, one wail only increased in volume and didn't change pitch. We all knew what was coming and flopped down on the floor of the car, fooling ourselves into thinking we were taking cover.

When this bomb hit the floor jumped up so violently that we were thrown upward about a foot. In the silence which followed, Fred and Lew and I sat upright and laughed at each other as we brushed the hay which we had thrown over our heads. It was in this moment of levity that Fred made a statement which has become a permanent fixture of my war stories. With a great sigh of relief, he said "I could smoke a cigarette a mile long". Old Grizzly seemed not only to understand but agreed to such an extent that he broke out a pack of his deadly Turkish Papirossas and passed them around. So, having escaped friendly fire yet again we sat there and enjoyed a good, relaxing smoke.

Whenever I recall this incident I pause in grateful remembrance of the Native Americans who bequeathed to society the beneficial effects of this weed which confers peace of mind to anyone who has had a stressful day or to any man who has acquitted himself honorably on the connubial couch. Even James Thurber's Walter Mitty, in his imaginary adventures, disdained the executioners offer of a blindfold while he took a last drag off his cigarette before flicking the butt away in a final gesture of courage, "inscrutable to the last". We were eminently "scrutable" and even more thankful for deliverance from our imminent danger when we discovered that the shock of the blast had jarred loose the latch which held our car door closed. After the respite of the Papirossas we followed Old Grizzly out to see what damage had been inflicted on the rail yard.

The group of younger Wehrmacht guards from a few cars ahead had also jumped out to find that the bomb had hit a train several tracks away from ours. Its cars must have been loaded with food supplies for we encountered hundreds of potatoes scattered all around the site. All of us, Germans included, began to rummage through the wreckage all around the area for this manna from the heavens. The guards built a fire from splinters of wood from the exploded cars and, as the charcoal cooled down, we roasted the spuds and had a feast of unimaginable dimensions. It was then that we realized that the Germans, even infantrymen, were on short rations. We all ate our fill and got back in the cars as nightfall approached. With full bellies we slept soundly after the sirens had sounded their long one-note "all-clear".

Early on the morning of 11 March the sound of a new engine awakened us and the coupling of the cars jarred us to attention. From the rail yard at Soest we then pulled out on to tracks leading west and soon found ourselves in the outskirts of Unna, about 30 kilometers down the Ruhr valley. In this heavily industrialized region just east of Dortmund we saw little else than the heavy smoke which belched from the iron works everywhere we looked. The route then became confusing as we were switched from one track to another, often being stalled for hours on end on side tracks. As night fell we passed through Hamm and, by morning of the 12th our engine was requisitioned and we were stalled in Bielefeld and realized that we were headed eastwards again in the direction of Hannover. Here we spent another idle morning waiting for an engine but had time to consider that we were in the heart of the main target area of Allied bombers.

From the Lazarette in Hoffnungstahl we had seen red fires all along the northern horizon and were told that cities such as Dortmund had been bombed repeatedly. After the Soest attack we were not enthusiastic about sitting idly in rail yards. In the afternoon we acquired another engine and resumed our scanning the scenery as we passed through a small village which was recognized by the station sign as Hameln. It was a quaint village with little story-book cottages and a bridge across a small creek. It suddenly occurred to me that we were in the home town of the Pied Piper of Hanilin. The Grimm tale, in its original, is called "Die Rattenfanger von Hameln". So, we were being led along by the rat catcher and on out of his town.

Now, somewhere along this tour of the Ruhr district we had taken on another passenger, a French officer who was added to the manifest of our car but deigned to speak to any of us, even the guard. He kept his distance through the night but we soon became aware of a bothersome itching which was readily diagnosed when it would progress with incredible rapidity up a leg and down the other. Incredibly, there was one instant when it seemed that one of the devilish critters started a run down one leg and then up the other, seemingly vaulting from the right to the left foot through the combat boots. The fact was that we were now lousy. And, of course, we blamed the Frenchman. Through the three months of Gefangenschaft we had never before been so plagued. My dislike for Frenchmen was reinforced by this contaminating incident, and we all tried to steer clear of the perpetrator of the lousy plague.

Lice and all, we were shunted around and resumed the journey north and reached switching yards around Hannover, some 40 kilometers north of Hameln early in the morning of 13 March. There, after some rearrangement of the cars in our train, we pulled into the passenger station at Hannover, a huge glass-roofed structure which was the first such facility we had encountered. On a platform outside our car there was a very active soup kitchen where passengers were being served. Old Grizzly opened the door of our car and made some sort of deal with the operators of the kitchen. Soon the other cars ahead of ours had been opened and the guards all arranged for servings of the hearty soup for all the prisoners in our train. To celebrate this manna we, in our group, decided to add to this meal slices of our Polish iron ration bread and thus had the most complete meal any of us had seen since the days in the Hauptverbandplatz back in December.

During the afternoon of that Tuesday the train made good progress another 45 kilometers north, arriving outside a huge prison camp which we were told was Fallingbostel. This large facifity resembled the concentration camps we had seen in newsreels of the facilities in which Jewish slave labor had been herded in the early '40s. As we were led out of the cars and on to platforms beside the tracks we could see huge brick buildings inside the gates and, beyond them, long rows of identical barrack-like wooden structures surrounded by intricate barbed wire fences.

We were then told that we would have to go through a delousing procedure before we could be allowed into the camp proper. This routine was well choreographed so that, like clockwork, we were told to remove all clothing, including boots, and place everything we had in cloth bags to which were attached name tags. Thus, stark naked, we were marched in groups of about forty into large poorly lighted rooms where we stood under shower heads and were instructed to take advantage of a minute of water flow to soap up. Then the water was turned off and we worked the minimal suds which the large brown cakes of alleged soap provided. After another minute we then had a last minute of rinse water before being herded out into the chilly evening air. I can not recall whether we were given towels, but I think that we simply "drip-dried".

In any event we were soon surprised to find that our clothing bags had been through a steam chamber and came out hot and surprisingly not emitting the sort of odor you would think might be stirred up from clothing which had not been changed three months.

I have since wondered why the gigantic German chemical industry had not infringed on the Swiss patent for DDT, which had been synthesized by Paul Muller in 1939 and had been widely used for delousing by the American armed

forces since the allied invasion of Italy. That insecticide had averted a typhus epidemic at the Naples landing area where it was simply blown into uniforms with puffers.

At any rate, there we stood forty skinny wannabe soldiers out in the cold drying off and looking like carbon copies of wasted human bodies. I was still at the 88 pound level which the scales back at Hoffnungstahl had revealed. We were also indistinguishable from each other until we recovered our uniforms and donned our insignia of rank. As we assumed that identity the Germans took over and divided us up according to rank, officers in one group, enlisted men in another. That Prussian habit persisted throughout the prison camp works.

Another recurring memory is of the similarity between the Fallingbostel camp and the Nazi extermination camps which we found out about in newsreels well after war had ended. The thp through the delousing showers was *in* rooms which appeared exactly the same as the shower stalls where the luckless victims of the Holocaust were gassed. The huge complexes of brick crematoriums between the main gate and the row on row of identical wooden shacks would always remind me of Fallingbostel.

So, being divided into groups, Fred and Lew and I were led to an officers' barracks building where we were introduced to the British style of rank discrimination. The ranking officer in the group welcomed us and introduced us to the dozen or so other officers who were quartered in the room. Although the furnishings were the familiar wooden double layer bunks, the British had been tidying up the place with pictures and gadgets they had made out of hardware from Red Cross packets. We were very much surprised to learn that these parcels had been arriving at regular intervals and that they had, in fact, hoarded up a small supply of surplus items. After some discussion the group decided that the new arrivals should be allowed to split a can of "lemon curd" a thin but tasty British favorite desert. This bounty amounted to about two ounces of the first really civilized food we had seen in three months.

Soon after the hospitality gestures were taken care of it was explained that we would be introduced to the SBMO the following morning at a ceremonial welcoming. The acronym was translated "Senior British Medical Officer", apparently a position of considerable importance in the Fallingbostel hierarchy; just how important we would discover after a short nights rest.

I recall very little of the events following the pudding gift but think that the British medical officers were not very talkative. Most all of them had been veterans of the earlier campaigns in North Africa and had been incarcerated for so long that they had become acclimated to the condition and had worked out means of making do with what was available. We, on the other hand, were still somewhat in a daze after the long tortuous journey and so fell asleep without ceremony.

The next morning we were taken to another barracks building where the SBMO himself sat at a small table and accepted the salute we'd been advised to render. He responded a little stiffly, we thought, with the distinct palm-forward gesture which is habitual in all of the troops of the Dominion. I was not familiar with the ornaments which signify rank in the British forces but noted that he had two or three gold crowns on each shoulder strap. He must have been a Colonel. After a brief welcome he got down to the business of meeting by announcing that Fred and I were to be transferred to an area near Gottingen to do what we could to help look after a large influx of prisoners being marched to that area from camps which were about to be overrun by the advancing Russian armies. He explained that he had previously sent a British surgeon and a Catholic Priest to the area and that they had, through German channels, requested aid. The prevailing story was that there had been an outbreak of Typhus fever among the masses of the prisoners. Since this disease is transmitted by the blood sucking lice with which we had been afflicted in the last day of our rail journey it seemed quite possible that the SBMO had assumed that Fred and I were either already afflicted our were immune. On the other hand, perhaps he merely calculated that since the war effort had been a joint U.S. British operation the time had come for the Yanks to participate in the Gottingen mission.

The movement was to be by train, of course, and we were turned over to a guard who took us back to our barracks where we hastily got our little ditty bags of eating and grooming equipment, such as it was, and followed the guard

out to the front area of the camp at the site where we had disembarked from the box cars the evening before. After a long wait an engine with a passenger car backed into the platform area and we boarded.

Our guard was a Luftwaffe enlisted man who had lost one eye, apparently in combat, and had been assigned the obviously boring duty of escorting enemy prisoners. Despite this possibly degrading mission he was pleasant and pointed out the scenes along the way back across the flat land to Hannover. Our car was soon filled with troops who were, the Feldwebel explained, either going on leave or returning to their units by rail. Fred and I were a bit uneasy being surrounded by armed Wehrmacht soldiers who, strangely, took little notice of our grossly different uniforms. At most of the frequent stops along the line civilian passengers boarded the train which soon became crowded. These people seemed to enjoy the close proximity of strangers. They were laughing and poking each other in an atmosphere of congeniality, much as you might see in the Bierstuben in Munich today.

The train made good time retracing the 50+ kilometer route back to Hannover. In mid-afternoon we entered the Bahnhof at Hannover once again, this time to change trains for another passenger line going south. Before the next train was to arrive, however, the air raid sirens squealed and the people all ran toward the doors to stairs leading down to the air raid shelters below the Bahnhof.

Here we were once again wondering how the people around us would react to the presence of enemies in our easily recognized, though a bit grungy, uniforms. I had recurring memories of the rock-throwing civilians in front of the bombed hospital near Münstereiffel in the early days of our march to the rear. Looking back on those days I have wondered if the Germans recognized our Red Cross arm bands and knew that we were, as the first Wehrmacht official who captured us said, considered as "detainees" rather than as prisoners. In any event, the huddled masses in the bunker spent the hours of the raid amusing their children and gossiping. The most striking thing about their talk, however, was the lilt of the feminine German speech, a characteristic I had first noticed back at Hoffnungstahl when the woman came on the speakers with the warning of impending air raids in "die Niederrhein".

The Luftwaffe guard left us to pursue food or, we supposed, girls while we spent the rest of the night dozing with our backs to the bunker walls which occasionally shook as bombs exploded somewhere above in the city. In this situation we realized that we had felt much more comfortable with our guard nearby since his presence would let the onlooker know that we were not in a combative mode. The all-clear sounded much later in the night so we went back up Into the station early on the morning of 15 March to find that the glass roof above the boarding platform area had been shattered. Scattered among the shards of glass were leaflets which the bombers must have dropped. These little documents were warnings that passengers were traveling at their own risk since the Allied air forces would continue to attack the rail lines as long as the Germans used them to transport "war materials". We wondered how else they were to move anything if not by rail. The Germans were also annoyed by the propaganda leaflets and openly made fun of such ludicrous warnings.

An hour or so down the line the train came to a screeching halt, jolting passengers out of their seats. The engineer had tied down the steam whistle and abandoned the engine to race toward a creek near the tracks as the passengers, obviously accustomed to such emergencies. followed suit. We were right with the flow when we heard the unmistakable ripping sound of strafing fighter planes just ahead of our position along the railway. The approach of a line of the dreaded Gabelschwanzteuffel P-38's confirmed the engineer's assessment of the situation so Fred and I stopped our laughing at the fat German women who had been waddling over bushes with their skirts held high and joined them in crouching behind even the slightest rise in the terrain along the creek. This attack was much closer than the strafing runs we had observed around the camp at Hoffnungstahl and we knew how destructive they could be. On this occasion, however, they did not release bombs at the end of the run but kept level flight and soon disappeared. As we regained our cars it turned out that the target had been a line of flat cars with armored vehicles on another track. That string of cars was thoroughly demolished but we had again escaped friendly fire.

As we progressed on southward I resumed reading a copy of *Plato's Republic* which had been turned over to me by the British back at Fallingbostel. It kept occurring to me that in our isolated group, far removed from the battle zone

but still palpably involved in the war, we were like the philosopher's troglodytes in the cave trying to interpret the shadows we could see and understand the actuality of the war. Having seen both the front, the rear echelons and now the civilian population we had a fairly complete picture of the situation from both sides as well as in the battle lines.

We were, by afternoon, leaving the flat north German plains and, our guard informed us , entering the Harz Mountain district where the scenery became fascinating enough to get our minds off the uncertainty of our destiny. He reminded us that this was the area where, for four hundred years, the wild finches of the Canary Islands had been bred for export all over the world.

About 30 kilometers down the line from Hannover we passed through Hillesheim and continued down another 45 kilometers to Seesen where we were to change trains again. The next train south, however, was not due to depart until the following morning. The guard made a telephone call and was instructed to take us to a Hitler Jugend camp on the edge of Seesen where we were turned over to an officer who was probably the equivalent of an Army ROTC instructor and was in charge of a camp populated by a few dozen teenage boys who were attired in uniforms much like those of Boy Scouts anywhere else in the western world.

The camp commander called in his charges and proceeded to give them a lesson in how to interrogate prisoners. Fred and I were made to stand at attention while he went through a litany of questions which had no meaning under the circumstances but was probably designed to enhance the standing of the instructor in the eyes of the kids. So we dutifully identified ourselves and the organizations to which we had reported to so many months ago. The martinet then dismissed the boys and left us free to watch them play leap-frog and work up an appetite before dark. We were not fed, but escorted to a small room with bunks and a barred window. We were thus locked up again and left to our own devices. By now we were merely annoyed by such idiotic behavior and merely resigned ourselves to another night on the road.

An hour or so after dark a small group of the Jugend came to our window with a tray of reasonably palatable food which they passed in between the bars. So we had what was the best meal in months which we bolted down while answering questions which revealed how the Goebbels propaganda machine had been at work. These young children actually believed that London and New York had been leveled by the V-2 rocket missiles. We assured them that we had seen both cities in November and that they were quite intact. While they were digesting this information a bugle call summoned them for evening instructions and we were left to enjoy a comfortable night's sleep for a change.

Early the next morning, March 16, we were awakened by the one-eyed Luftwaffe guard and driven to the rail station where we boarded a train running south, getting deeper into the region known as the Schwartzwald, or Black Forest. I kept imagining that this was the area where Sax Rohmer's fiendish Fu Manchu launched his operatives on beams of light to fly across the world. This flight of fancy was terminated by the announcement that our next stop would be Duderstadt, a town about 20 Kilometers east of Göttingen.

Again, realizing that I was so close to the famed University, I recalled that the pioneer founder of the science of experimental embryology, Hanz Speeman, had done his seminal studies there and had trained Irwin Kitchin who, in turn, had passed on the tricks of rearranging the developing embryos of salamanders to our class at Rice University.

But this episode of daydreaming was interrupted when the guard summoned a staff car and delivered McIntire and me to a small hospital building called Der Haus der Jugend, a children's hospital. There we were turned over to a very pleasant young nurse who introduced herself as Schwester Erika Hein. She spoke adequate English and raised our hopes for what lay ahead. Until, that is, she hesitated to explain what we were there for, leaving that chore to a British surgeon who had arrived several days before we got there. He would be back later in the day, Schwester Erika explained, and we would then discover the enormous challenge which awaited us in and around Duderstadt.

We were shown to our new quarters on the third floor which was probably actually an attic, although it was spacious and clean. The room had a half dozen low bunks with linen so we were immediately encouraged to have improved our

lot by being provided with a welcome relief from the wooden and un-cushioned layered makeshift beds of the Dulags. With no other occupants In the room Fred and I hesitated to choose our beds so explored the quarters, finding that we also had, in an adjacent space, basins with running water and toilets. Since there were even straight-backed chairs we relaxed awaiting the return of the British surgeon.

We hadn't long to wait. The Royal Army Medical Corps Captain swept into the room with a flourish which belied his short stature. He introduced himself as R.M. Solomon and following him came a tall Officer who, was introduced as Father Frederick J. McManus, a Catholic Priest from South Africa. Bringing up the rear of this group was a Private Thomas Heavey. Tom was, they explained, Father McManus's "batman".

While Capt. Solomon was back downstairs with Schwester Erika Father McManus explained that Solomon was always referred to as "Lofty", not because of any reference in jest to his short stature, but to his commanding presence and confident attitude. These qualities became apparent when he returned to explain our mission and to outline his concept of how we were to carry it out.

Chapter 8

DUDERSTADT

To begin with, Lofty Solomon explained that the "typhus" epidemic story was erroneous. The real problem was starvation among thousands of British and American prisoners who were being marched back into central Germany to avoid their release by the advancing Russian troops through the eastern provinces, mainly Silesia. A large number of the prisoners were being housed in an old prison camp on the edge of town in barracks around an ammunition factory known as the Polta Werk. This facility was to be part of our problem, but the principal difficulty was some five miles south of Duderstadt at an abandoned brick factory, the Ziegelei. Lofty announced his plan with the sanguine confidence and authority we soon recognized as typically British.

When we had been assigned our bunks Fred and I surveyed our situation and settled in for the first night. In addition to our group of five there were already in place in the hospital attic room two French officers who were, as usual, uncommunicative. They probably were medical officers who worked in the Haus der Jugend, but we never inquired and they never explained. They left each morning and reappeared late each evening. They were a source of annoyance to us all since they jabbered in their argot French constantly and were so full of energy that they engaged in Karate kick pranks while dressing or preempting the toilet facilities which we had available just off our dormitory.

At the Polta Werk camp, which we learned was designated Stalag XI B, there were about a thousand prisoners in a mix of Russian, French and British soldiers. There was an Oberleutnant Fischer nominally in charge of the Stalag but the actual supervision was carried out by a group of Australia-New Zealand "medics". They were Sargent Major Arthur King, Lance Corporal Allen Crawford and Private Winston Griffin, all from New Zealand.

The ANZAC corpsmen wore Red Cross arm bands although they explained that they were not actually medical corpsmen, but tankers who had assumed that identity shortly after capture in the battles in North Africa in 1943. They had reasoned, correctly as it turned out, that they would be better treated by their captors if they were considered to be non-combatants.

What really mattered was that they were seasoned soldiers who maintained discipline in the multi-national Stalag herd of prisoners. When we would make our daily rounds of the installation at the Polta Werk they always saluted briskly and reported the situation with military precision and correct manner. It was Sergeant Major King who explained to us that the Polta Werk was an ammunition factory which had attached to the main plant a dormitory which, prior to its conversion into a prison camp, had been enlarged to accommodate a large force of captive young Hungarian girls who worked on the assembly lines. These women, who must have been Jewish, had been transported to concentration

camps a year before the Stalag had been established. The girls had written notes in pencil on the walls of their barrack buildings. The letters were not in German and none of us could decipher them.

The next matter which concerned us was the plight of columns of prisoners who were being marched out of the camps in Silesia to avoid their release by the advancing Russian troops. Since the Germans had no facilities other than the Polta Werk barracks these captives were being housed in an abandoned brick factory south of Duderstadt. This huge facility, known locally as the Ziegelei, was overwhelming the capacity of the Stalag XIB staff to guard and feed the influx of long columns of prisoners at irregular intervals. The German guards had appealed to the Burgomeister of for assistance and he, in turn, had called on Captain Solomon for help. So Lofty and Father McManus went with us to the Ziegelei.

There we encountered about a thousand prisoners who were occupying the drying racks, or ricks, inside an enormous building which overshadowed the kilns where bricks had been fired. This structure was three stories high and had large ventilation windows in a string of 21 such openings on each floor along the length of the building. The ricks had been arranged in tiers three layers high on each of the three floors of the building. There were ladders connecting each floor with four or five of them along the length of the structure. On our first visit we scaled the ladders and found prisoners in these makeshift bunks with only a bit of straw to cushion the hard wooden ricks. In the open yard between the kilns and the drying ricks there was a single hand-operated pump as the only source of water for the entire factory. Into these dismal facilities the prisoners were distributed in layers so that the building could accommodate as many as two thousand prisoners if fully packed.

On our first visit several guards from the Polta Werk accompanied us but on 19 March we were each issued an "Ausweis", a small document which authorized us to negotiate the "Stadtgebiet", or surrounding area, of Duderstadt between the hours of 06:00 to 20:00 without supervision by guards. I still have the typed paper bearing the signature of Oberleutnant Fischer who was, apparently, the commandant of Stalag XIB. This Ausweis was good for a week and was "verlangert", or prolonged, twice during the month of March to validate it through the first week of April 1945. This arrangement was instigated by Lofty Solomon who asserted his position as the SBMO in typical British style, confident and assertive, characteristics which undoubtedly enabled him to negotiate a plan in which the Burgomeister persuaded the farm families south of town to prepare large cauldrons of soup daily for some sustenance for the prisoners who were housed in the Ziegelei.

We developed a routine in which Lofty would visit the Polta Werk on alternate days and I and Fred McIntire, along with Father McManus and his batman, would make the long hike through Tlfthngerode and Immingerode to the Ziegelei. There was actually little we could do for the prisoners. They were mostly British and American veterans of the prison system. By that time they had been on the long forced march out of camps far to the northeast they were all gaunt and exhausted. Along the way they had existed on what little food the guards could scrape up from the farms en route. Many of them had contracted a chronic dysentery and were nearing the terminal stages of dehydration by the time they got to the brick factory. Through the Burgomeister we had been able to get a few simple remedies through a local hospital. They had been well supplied with aspirin but had not been able to acquire intravenous fluids which would have saved many of the prisoners who succumbed to their dysentery.

On one dreadful day Fred and I had managed to get seven men down out of the ricks into a space on the ground floor. Each of them appeared to be in extremis and, during the morning, six of them died in succession. Father McManus was distressed as he administered last rites to these poor souls. The seventh man in the row watched as his companions slipped away and turned to us with a determination to survive and somehow struggled through the day, ate soup and survived.

There was always a sizable number of men who had managed to pull through the ordeal with considerable reserve and joined in the task of burying the dead. As each death occurred Fred and I would detach one of the two dog tags and store it in a bag along with a sketch of the grave site. Actually this was the easiest task we faced on the mornings when the marching German guards announced that they were resuming the march northward. They would assemble

all the ambulatory prisoners and ask us which of them were physically unable to march. Fred and I were thus in a very unenviable dilemma on these mornings. None of the men wanted to resume what they considered a death march. We would select out as many men as we thought most likely to falter on the road. With each addition to the list the Germans would complain and, finally, reject out of hand the next candidate. As each column took to the road most all of them would look back with accusatory grimaces at the medical officers they considered as having doomed them. These departures constituted the most dreadful of all the memories of the entire period of Gefangenschaft, far outweighing the imaginary guilt of having retreated in the first day of the battle or of stealing the patient's bread back at Hoffnungstahl. Since we never received any word concerning the progress of those marching columns I still have no way knowing how fatal had been our decisions to condemn those men to a continuation of their long marches.

Back at the Jugendhaus we spent each evening tolerating the Frenchmen and trying to justify each day's tribulations to ourselves. These sessions were eased enormously by a small bit of thievery which McManus' batman, Tom Heavey, had been persuaded to commit. Each day he would go out in town and secure a pack of cigarettes by a little adroit shoplifting. As he opened each pack Father McManus would absolve Tom of his sin in the traditional Catholic rite, a few Latin words, and wave of the manus apostolicus, and then we would all light up and ease our consciences. At the time this seemed a bit unepiscopal but, under the circumstances, it was absolution of the kindest sort.

By the second week Lofty and Mac and I had established some rapport with the doctors at the local general hospital and had persuaded them to supply us with small bandaging kits and aspirin which were desperately needed at the Ziegelie. We felt that we were accomplishing a few little benefits which partially offset the guilt we were plagued with when we had to give in to the Germans' complaints about our trying to hold back so many of the prisoners from resumption of their possibly fatal march to the north.

We did need some ersatz dressings on such occasions as the time when two of the British made the mistake of brewing their tea atop the Ziegelei at night. Many of the Brits had been in prisons so long that they had rigged little water boiling devices out of Red Cross food tins. These consisted of small squirrel-cage blowers cut out of tin cans and turned by a hand crank with a pulley to create a draft which fanned embers under another tin in which water could be made to boil for their tea. The tea leaves, as well as the tins, apparently had been acquired from the Red Cross parcels. The point of this digression is to explain why we needed bandages. The German population, even in remote Duderstadt, enforced blackout procedures and the two soldiers had started their fire out on the tile roof so one of the German guards fired a shot at them. The bullet passed through the buttock of one of them. It harmed only his dignity but emphasized the need for maintaining the blackout.

There was actually some air activity around the villages that spring and we witnessed a strike which blew up a locomotive near the Haus der Jugend one night. The boiler blew and sent fiery pieces all around the tracks in a violent explosion. On one occasion, as I was wandering down toward the brick factory, a flight of Heinkel fighter aircraft swooped low over the road and streaked off into the distance so there was probably an airfield in the area. We had also noticed two or three antiaircraft guns with female Luftwaffe crews out on the edge town so supposed that they must have been placed there to protect the airfield, although that one flight was the only indication that it even existed.

Around the first of April the last of the long columns of prisoners arrived at the Ziegelei. Most of the group were in fairly good physical condition and by then the village Hausfrauen had adequate supplies of beet soup so there was food for most of them. Some, of course, had contracted the dysentery which was probably one of the bacterial diseases akin to cholera. This column was headed by a British Royal Army Medical Corps Captain Peter Tattersall whose name was entered into the Kriegsgefangenerbuch because of his extraordinary dedication to the group of prisoners for whom he assumed so much responsibility. He did come in to the Haus der Jugend for a bath and a meal but insisted on going back to his charges for the night. We tried to persuade him to stay with us but he insisted on remaining with his charges. The next day he moved out with the prisoners after helping us to persuade the German

guards to drop some of them off at the brick factory. His was probably the single most courageous act which I saw during the entire war.

With this last of the large groups of prisoners having departed the Ziegelei the visitations to both camps settled down to a routine of daily rounds. The early spring of 1945 blessed us with splendid weather for the hike down through Immingerode and Tiftlingerode and we began to achieve some degree of calm and enjoyable reflection on our circumstances. We were still prisoners, technically, but with the Ausweisen we were free to wander the countryside and even get to know some of the farm families along the route. On one occasion a child in a farm in one village had broken out in classical rash of measles and I was able to provide the parents with aspirin and a favorable prognosis.

The civilian population had long since concluded that Germany was going to lose the war so they became quite friendly, probably in the hope that they might be treated well by the invading forces. Schwester Erika talked freely about her brother who was in a "concentration camp" in Brazil after having been captured in the joint Brazil-U.S. operations in Italy. She was looking forward to the War's end and his return to Duderstadt.

Despite these favorable developments there were still many ingredients missing from the attainment of some degree of self respect. Fred McIntire and I were surgeons without any of the paraphernalia which our training had equipped us to employ. It must be remembered that in the '40's internal medicine was mostly a matter of diagnosis and prognosis. The battery of drugs and antibacterial chemicals which now constitute the armamentarium of the Internist were not even in existence in that decade. In going back over the Pharmacopoeia which residents carried back at Columbia Presbyterian Hospital I now find that the little booklet contains prescriptions for "Rhubarb and Soda" which was a sovereign remedy for all manner of stomach disorders as well as activated charcoal for treating diarrhea. Even morphine was designated as "Magendie", seemingly as a code word for concealing the fact that we were administering habit forming medications. What we really needed at Duderstadt was good internists, although they would have had little in the way of effective medications to work with. The doctors in the small Duderstadt hospital made a small contribution of remedies but we had no idea of how to translate their names for them into their American equivalents. So, we were faced with problems but provided no solutions. The only member of our team who actually made any difference in the lives of the prisoners was Father McManus. He was, in fact, the only one who stimulated the rest of us to hope for a better existence. Our conversations were perfunctory and I do not recall even inquiring about the past histories of Fred or Lofty. When we were not silently enduring the antics of the extrovert French room-mates we probably confined our thoughts to plans for the next day.

In the first week of April a German medical officer arrived on the scene and accompanied me on several of the walks to the Ziegelei. He spoke English fluently but never explained his mission. This led me to suppose that he had managed to fmd a way out of some unsavory assignment and came to Duderstadt on some pretense which he never revealed. He was, however, a good bird watcher and introduced me to the Zeisig and the Bachstelze (which I later found out were the Siskin and the Wagtail). It was he who informed me that our rail journey down from Hanover had passed through the Harz Mountain district of Germany and that it was the home of the domesticated canary. He disappeared as enigmatically as he had materialized and I never knew what he was doing there. His most significant contribution was in mediating, agreements with the Burgomeister for the benefit of the remaining prisoners.

Around the end of that week we began to hear artillery far off to the south and wondered whose guns were firing. In Duderstadt when we walked into the village there was an increased air of apprehension among the people. On several occasions there were small formations of Hitler Jugend marching around carrying Panzerfausts, the shoulder grenade launchers which were supposed to be capable of inflicting damage on tanks. The kids paraded these probably unarmed weapons with some air of importance although they did not seem to be really serious about their mission. But they were led by Wehrmacht soldiers who did at least pretend that they were ready to defend the homeland.

On 8 April, a Sunday, when Fred and I went to the Polta Werk compound we noticed that there were no German guards around. The ANZAK trio told us that they had disappeared overnight. We stayed at the camp and heard the sounds of battle approaching around noon. Suddenly we could see across the field to our north a flurry of activity as

German horse-drawn artillery pieces hurried toward town along a road about a mile away from our location. As they fled on foot shells began to explode around them and right behind them a few Sherman tanks came into view. I recall one German who ran right through a fountain of debris from an exploding shell. He did not even stumble but continued his flight. The horses were also running and not one of them fell. But as the tanks came closer their machine guns went into action and the fire fight erupted. We had been watching from the rooftop of our barracks but when the meadow in front of us began to be ripped by bullets we scrambled down and took cover inside the room. The action moved rapidly into town as more tanks and troop carriers followed the first wave.

As nightfall approached we decided to remain at the Polta Werk since there was still fighting going on between our location and Duderstadt. The Germans must have had more force available than we had thought, for at dusk there was an exchange of fire between cannon on the edge of town and the advancing Shermans. At one juncture tracer missiles could be seen bouncing off the tanks and as darkness fell one German Volkswagen, apparently full of fleeing officers, tried to take a side road away from the fight. A hail of tracers converged on the vehicle and it caught fire. We saw no one emerge from the car.

As the sounds of gunfire receded during the night Fred and I sat about with the ANZAC men wondering what we should do next. The whole camp was restless, to say the least. The different nationalities clustered together in a chaotic state as some wanted to make a break and get away from the camp. It was obvious that we would all have to wait for the rescue troops to find us and the ANZAKs persuaded the others to sit it out for the night. Which is, I think, just what we did. I suppose that we took cat naps since Fred and I were away from our bunks in the Jugend Haus. Our imminent release should have been a stimulus for a celebration but there were many serious problems ahead of us, the most. urgent being the question of how or whether to get down into town and contact the American troops.

Chapter 9

Liberation

On 9 April, after a restless night, Mclntire and I were unshaven and stifi wondering how we would be perceived by the approaching American combat forces. After all, I had absconded from the first assault back in the Schnee Eiffel so might be considered less than heroic. I still had the Witherspoon "clandestine" Albatross around my neck over such matters as why so many of the prisoners around the Polta Werk and the Ziegelei were gaunt and unkempt and we were relatively healthy.

After four months of gradually progressing from subjugation by the Germans and the"men of confidence" back at Hardthohe and the Poles at Hoffnungstahl, we had ourselves become "men of confidence". This terminology was peculiar to the Dulag Archipelago but is synonymous with "trusty" in civilian criminal prisons where trustworthy inmates are accorded minimal privileges in return for serving as intermediaries between the guards and the less cooperative inhabitants.

While the mass of prisoners around town were confined the officers had Ausweises and almost unlimited freedom. We had taken advantage of every opportunity to augment our food intake and had thus regained much of the weight lost in the first three months. I imagined that there would be some explaining to do when the liberating teams assessed the situation. But, for the time being we accepted our relatively privileged position without bullying our consciences with such comparisons.

All that dissolved into elation now that liberation, no matter what form it was to take, was at hand. Soon a Jeep pulled up to the gate of the Polta camp with a Major who came up to us wearing, of all things, the shoulder patch of the

same Second Infantry Division which had made so much fun of us when we replaced them in the line back in the Schnee Eiffel. What really mattered was that we were on the verge of freedom. Or were we?

The Major was accompanied by a Signal Corps photographer who recorded the meeting and the conference with the ANZAK corpsmen. Some four years later, while on a mission to Washington from an assignment in Rio de Janeiro, I had an opportunity to review the files in the Signal Corps archives at the Pentagon. Their records were so well documented that I was able to secure prints of most of the photographs which were made at the Polta Werk as well as down at the Ziegelei. I still have 8 x 10 prints of the meeting with the Major and one of myself and the ANZAC crew. In the same collection are prints of the scrawny prisoners from the Polta barracks. In these photos there is ample evidence that we, Fred and the ANZACS, were much better fed and cleaner than the prisoners in the barracks. At the time I think this did not bother us very much, but I have since wondered if the comparison was noted by liberators.

In studying the photograph of the conference with the Major it is obvious that Fred and I were not really at ease. We were smoking up a storm and appeared worried. For that was precisely what we were. The Major was explaining to us the procedure by which our repatriation and return to U.S. would be effected. We would, he informed us, be trucked to a tent city on the French side of the English Channel to await space on ships going back across the Atlantic. So we were facing yet another stage of imprisonment. This was not exactly what we had in mind.

Our first assignment, however, was to make lists of all the prisoners at the Polta facility, breaking it into separate segments for the various nationalities represented there. This task we turned over to the ANZACs who already knew most of such information. I tried with some residual high school Spanish to summon the Spanish prisoners who had fought with the Free French units in Algiers. When my recollection of the the proper words proved inadequate one of the group spoke up and asked "I say, can you speak a little English?". So list-making was delegated to the Sergeant Major.

Fred McIntire and I then made our way back through town to the Haus der Jugend to regroup. On our way we saw white flags hanging out of most every window in town and small groups of Germans in the streets talking to tank crews and soldiers in personnel carriers. The air was almost festive, ,with kids waving at the American soldiers after first being frightened by their first glimpse of the firepower available to the American infantrymen. On the way there was one unforgettable incident when one of the tank crewmen made a funny serpent hiss at a boy and then laughed when the kid cringed. After that the children realized that the soldiers meant them no harm and the whole crowd relaxed and appeared to welcome their invaders.

The events of the next four days have become homogenized in my memory. The chronological order seems elusive, but there remain the letters to my wife which were written on the tenth of April, the day following the arrival of the Second Division. They are on letterhead stationery of the Polta Werk and both were written on the same day. The tiny calendar also has "letter" and "Gen. Robertson" in tiny but legible characters. The evening letter summarizes the four months of shunting around the four prison localities. Referring to the 10th it mentions that I had seen "many stars and Colonels". That line fixes the date when Fred and I were driven over to the 2nd Division Headquarters and met Major General Walter Robertson.

He was very busy directing his Regimental commanders for the next phase of their rapid movement northward, warning them that the Division on their left "does not move as fast as we do". Even so, he was anxious to hear what had happened to the 106th after he turned over his position in line to us. He knew, of course, the fate of General Jones but had not heard details of the action between Bleialf and Schoenberg. We were surprised that he took so much interest in our stories. He, as well as everyone we ran into that day, seemed dedicated to making us feel welcome back into the fold.

The letterhead also confirms that, by nightfall, we had also accompanied some officers over to the Polta Werk factory itself. As I recall there was still a uniformed German officer there who surrendered his 7.25mm Luger pistol and showed the officers inside the factory. Fred and I picked up stationery and huge Nazi swastika flags as souvenirs and I

took possession of the Luger. Although we were later warned that it was illegal to bring weapons back with us this pistol was safely smuggled all the way home.

Among the prints obtained years later from the Signal Corps archives there are photographs of the Polta Werk barracks showing the distribution of "C" rations to the prisoners. In one of them Staff Sergeant Smallwood has both hands full and is surrounded by empty cans on the table. They were all ravenous and bolted down the first good food they had seen in months. Smallwood, however, sticks in memory because later that day, or the next, when we made the rounds at the camp he was found almost comatose. As I detected the odor of acetone on his breath I concluded that he had oyer-taxed his pancreas and was in diabetic acidosis. That was the only really scientific diagnosis I had made in months and the repatriating team agreed. So he was evacuated separately and probably got home before the rest of us.

On 11 April the repatriation group from SHAEF (Supreme Headquarters American European Forces) contacted our group at the Jugend Haus and issued us small typed Temporary Identification Papers to replace the laminated ID cards which had been confiscated back at Flammerscheim in December. Mine was signed by "Major John P. Dirks, PWX, SHAEF". This acceptance of our word that we were who we pretended to be was crucial, for we had nothing other than our "dog tags" to verify our credentials.

It was Major Dirks who explained "Project R', the detailed program for returning liberated prisoners. We were all to be evacuated through a tent compound on the French side of the Channel to await space available for transport across the Atlantic. This facility was, by some strange reason, called Camp Lucky Strike. Meanwhile we were to be considered as patients until our physical condition could be assessed. Fred and I were to assist in filling out Field Medical Tags for the American personnel at the Polta Werk and the Ziegelei. Since there were no serious infections or diseases all the tags bore the same diagnosis: "malnutrition".

Back at the Haus der Jugend that night Lofty Solomon, Father McManus and his batman, Tom Heavy, met with Fred and me trying to imagine how we could escape the fate awaiting us , which was, in effect, a return to the regimentation and isolation of yet another supervised detention.

On that day or the next Lofty Solomon, with typical British ingenuity and brashness, confiscated, not a Luger or a Nazi souvenir, but a shiny black Mercedes Benz automobile! He hinted that he had liberated it from the Burgomeister but never told us how he had pilfered the key to our escape from the imagined horrors of Camp Lucky Strike.

Up to that point our lives had been managed by external circumstances. During the Duderstadt month the five of us gradually asserted more and more internal control. We had done the best we could, under the circumstances, to be of some use to the prisoners. The frustrations we encountered in obtaining food and medications for those who were confined had tainted our enjoyment of the liberties we had attained by accident of rank and profession. But with the arrival of the SHAEF team we were ready to assume internal control of our destinies. And, as it turned out, we did so exceedingly well. So well, in fact, that the telegram sent by the Adjutant General to my wife stated that her husband had "RETURNED TO MILITARY CONTROL THIRTEEN APR45", four days after the Division had arrived at the Polta Werk gate. That telegram, incidentally, was not delivered to her until 29 April! We, in fact, were under our own control from 9 to 13 April.

During those days we made the rounds of the Polta Werk and the Ziegelei assisting the repatriation teams in logging in the freed prisoners of various countries of origin and filing out Field Medical Records to aid in assigning them to treatment facilities at Camp Lucky Strike where needed. During these procedures the Russians had slipped out the gate and took off on their own in a column of seemingly aimless wanderers.

During the same day, 12 April, when we returned to the Jugend Haus, Schwester Erika informed us that the German radio had announced the death of President Roosevelt. This word was spreading through the town as well as the US

Army ranks. The Germans went out of their way to express their condolences and seemed genuinely touched by the event.

On the day we arrived I called my brother Bob at the 8th Air Force headquarters and arranged for him to get off letters and telegrams which would be the first news to reach home of our release, or "return to military control" as the later telegram from General Ulio, the Adjutant General, hopefully stated on 29 April. Bob hopped a train and came over from his base the next day and got the full story and passed on news from Texas.

The brief stay at the hospital demonstrated that there was really no need for treatment but the staff had no idea of how to dispose of vagrant POWs who didn't even have ID cards or orders. The nurses, however, were much amused by our anecdotes and kept us occupied spinning yarns most of which were accurately told. Of course they were all beautiful but our hormones had still not caught up with our other nutritional deficits so nothing occurred which might have been out of line.

Which brings me to answer the many curious questions I have been asked by people over the years concerning whether or not POWs engaged in "sexual fantasies" during their confinement. I suppose this proclivity is related to the puzzling phenomenon which occurred back in the days when Flag-Pole Kelly sat atop poles all over the land in the twenties. John Steinbeck commented on this question in "Cannery Row" when the citizens were absorbed with the sitters' problem of personal hygiene. It has been annoying to have to explain that starvation extinguishes those fires rather effectively. We had no such daydreams then or even later in the recovery phase. Sex just never entered our minds.

After a week or ten days the War Department was finally convinced that we were really who we claimed to be and sent the telegram to our families that we had been "returned to military control". Since this message was dated 29 April I have always supposed that our fingerprints had been sent back to the Pentagon for verification. I can think of no other way to explain the long delay surrounding the provision by the Army of new ID cards.

Now that we had authentic identification we were shipped to London to a "Casual Detachment" where dozens of other POW's were collected into a theoretically manageable group to await orders for transportation back to U.S. We were, then, not the only prisoners who had eluded the system and wound up in England instead of Camp Lucky Strike. I have no idea of how the others slipped through the net but there were about two dozen such adventurers in our motley assemblage of "casual" souls.

When it came to entering our names on the rosters of those bound for the dreaded tent city Fred and I applied the same malnutrition diagnosis to our own cards but omitted our names from the lists. For by that time Lofty had conceived a more devious scheme for evading the evacuation to northern France. This idea hatched when the 104th Division followed the 2nd into the Duderstadt headquarters building.

It was there that we all met General Terry Allen who took time out from directing the chase against the, by now, fleeing German army, to entertain us with a memorable steak dinner. In conversation after dinner he informed us that there was a fuel operation being carried out at an airfield near Gottingen. He suggested that we seek out the officer running the show and persuade him to smuggle us aboard a plane heading back to England. This sort of scheme was typical of Terry Allen who had been relieved of command of the First Division in July of 1944 when Omar Bradley found that "the whole division had assumed Allen's cavalier attitude". In his autobiography General Bradley admitted, however, that Allen "would serve me again with distinction in Europe". He certainly served us with the flair which characterized him in his actions. Moreover, he invited us to follow along as his 104th moved northward.

To facilitate our movements he also sent us over to his motor pool where the mechanics painted 104th identification numbers on the Mercedes so later we were never stopped by the ubiquitous MPs. By that time Duderstadt was inundated by war correspondents and photographers. They descended upon us back at the Jugend Haus and we were

briefly celebrities, being interviewed by the press with their clipboards flapping. Nothing ever came of these potential stories, but we were amused and so, apparently, were they.

The next day we shuttled back and forth from the Polta Werk and the Jugend Haus working with the recovery teams and the Quartermaster units who were recording the burial sites at the Ziegelei. For some reason these organizations had overlooked the fact that the five of us should have been included in the roster of those to be shipped out to the Channel camps. We didn't push the matter and on the morning of the 14th we left town driving toward Gottingen. We didn't have far to drive before seeing C-47 cargo planes landing and headed for the unloading strip at the edge of the field. There we found the Major in charge of the fuel depot operations and Lofty made a deal with him. Since he was, by now, far behind the advancing armies and had very little opportunity to acquire souvenirs, he immediately took the Mercedes in return for placing us on the manifest of a C-47 headed back to England for another load of fuel drums. So we were sneaked into the Dakota DC-3 without orders.

On boarding the plane we found that the craft had been rigged with bench seats along the sides of the plane. We also found that there were already on board a half dozen foreign troops wearing odd uniforms with wrap-around dirty white headgear. They were totally confused, having seemingly been hustled aboard by some advancing unit which had freed them from the Germans in the area. We were told that they were Sikhs who would be returned to England for repatriation to their native state of Punjab in India. The Sikkim warriors had a reputation for murderous fighting and had sided with Britain in both World Wars and were universally feared for their stealth and hand-to-hand combat skills. Moreover, they obviously had never flown before. Moments after takeoff they glanced out the windows and immediately threw up in unison. They, like most all recently freed prisoners, had gorged themselves so the emesis was copious. When we encountered turbulence the bilge began to slosh fore and aft. To escape this ebb and flow of filth we hurried forward stepping gingerly to avoid the slush and stood just aft of the navigator's console. From this advantageous position we could take in the scenery ahead and watch the dreaded German territory slide by below. I recall vividly the devastation in one large town which we were told was Kassel. There were a few crumbled buildings around overlapping bomb craters where thousands of people had once lived.

After about a half hour flak bursts began to make puffs ahead of our path and the sharp thumps grew closer. The navigator explained that we would have to turn east to get around the Ruhr pocket where the Germans were surrounded and still trying to down Allied aircraft. This maneuver took us over France and finally the English Channel was on the horizon. As the white chalk cliffs came into view Lofty Solomon lost his composure for the first time since we had encountered him at the Jugend Haus. With tears streaming down hi~ face he was at last over his native land. His joy was infectious but we had yet to deal with the problem of what to do on landing since we were now really loose cannon. We had no orders and only the flimsiest identification documents.

The plane landed at a field north of London which was near Huntingdon where the 97th Field Hospital was located. Since Fred and I had Field Medical Tags the base officers agreed to provide us transportation to the hospital. Lofty, Father McManus and Tom headed for telephones and got in touch with relatives who must have wired them money for they soon took leave of us and headed for their native bases with our best wishes. We never saw them again.

At the 97th McIntire and I were admitted as patients and relieved of our grungy uniforms. At first we wore regular hospital pajamas and gowns but were soon ouffitted with new uniforms, including the "Eisenhower jackets" which were new to us and much dressier than the "pinks" and blouses which had been the regulation items before our loss of contact with the Army.

Chapter 10

The Loose Cannon

After arrival in London on 29 April and assignment to the "Casual Detachment" Fred McIntire and I found ourselves in a very loosely organized group of officers and men who had evaded the normal process for repatriation of Prisoners of

War. The unit was directly under Headquarters United Kingdom Base. My actual "return to duty" was accomplished in orders from the 4204th Hospital (whatever that was) returning me to duty. That duty was finally decided in UK Base HQ orders on 10 May 1945 designating me as the officer in charge of RO Group E220- 10, a collection of apparently unmanageable Ex POWs who crawled out of the woodwork and proved embarrassing to UK Base, who had other plans for us.

Meanwhile, the Detachment was housed in what appeared to have been a small Bed and Breakfast establishment in Knightsbridge, a block from the Marble Arch monument, and adjacent to Hyde Park. Since no one knew what to do with us we had almost unlimited access to off-base leave and, of course, availed ourselves of every chance. When not off on these escapades there was plenty to do within the reach of walks and the underground subway system. The Kensington Park complex of museums and the beginning to be reactivated zoo were prime attractions as well as was Royal Albert Hall.

It was fun to read the underground maps and devise a path down the "Outer Circle" and across one of the radial tunnels to the "Inner Circle" and arrive at Albert Hall. That was a good fifteen minute expedition. Later on, while just walking around, I found that it only took about ten minutes to walk the way out to the orchestra recitals. But during the stay we got to know London quite well.

Meanwhile I had linked up with and adventuresome Cavalry Lieutenant Fleegy who wanted to be, and was, known as Foxhole Fleegy. He had become a friend of an MP officer who he referred to as "The Sheriff of London". His connections apparently were influential for he had taught Foxhole to apply at UK Base Headquarters for compensation for losses of personal equipment lost in battle. This procedure was so simple that we claimed to have been relieved of all manner of cameras and Zenith Overseas Shortwave Radios. So we soon had solved the money problem and ran about with several hundred dollars in "script" usable anywhere in Europe.

On 4 May I took the train up to 8th Air Force HQ where my brother Bob was still forecasting weather. There he learned that on the next day a mission was scheduled for a B-17 squadron to fly over Holland to drop C-Ration packages on the airfield at Amsterdam and that, since the Germans had guaranteed not to shoot them down, the flight was not to count as a sortee for purposes of rotation back to the US. Ergo, crew members were eager to stay behind and let ground crew members go along for the ride. Bob was able to get me posted to one B-17 as the Tail Gunner.

The squadron consisted of about 18 B- 17's and lined up to take off and circle around and regroup in formation over southern England before crossing the English Channel. I was confined to the tail gunner's tiny cramped quarters and imagined what it must have been like to sit there with flack bursts all around and no hope of being able to wriggle out of the little access should the plane be hit by anti-aircraft fire. This was a sobering experience, especially since we had been so close to such air bursts on the way past the Ruhr pocket in the C-47 out of Gottingen. And, also, we had seen the bombers hit by flack over Germany and spiral down with fewer than seven parachutes following them.

Once across the water the squadron descended to only a few hundred feet as we flew past crowds of people running back and forth waving Dutch flags in celebration of the approaching end of the War. On the approach to the airport the bomb bay doors were opened and I could see the cartons of food being dropped as people rushed out to retrieve them. This was obviously a day for celebration.

The next few days I stayed in a hotel in Cambridge and visited the University Colleges to see the famous laboratories such as the biology institution at King's where Sherrington had devised the Kymograph and other apparatus we had used in the physiology exercises back at Rice University. His laboratory looked exactly like Joseph Davies' room at Rice. That evening I attended a lecture by Sir J. J. Thompson, the physicist who had discovered and measured the charge on the electron.

Another afternoon I shopped about in Heffernan's Book Store where I acquired a number of books on Geology and ornithology as well as Aristotle's *Generation of Animals,* and the first volume of the first edition of Darwin's *The Descent of Man,* a rare and very valuable find. While thus browsing I caught sight of a familiar face and recognized it as belonging to none other than Sir Bertrand Russell. I introduced myself and had an interesting chat with this giant of mathematics and philosophy. I was overwhelmed by his presence and have forgot what we talked about.

On 8 May Bob and I hopped the train down to Paddington Station, arriving as the crowds were turning out to celebrate yE Day. In Piccadilly Circus the celebrants were getting almost out of hand when word passed around that the King and Queen would soon appear on the balcony at Buckingham Palace. We followed the surge of many thousands over to the Mall and on to the circular drive around the statue of Queen Victoria, arriving in front of the Palace gates just as the Royal family came out to the balcony. The young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret were alongside the King and Queen and waved back as the people cheered. This scene was photographed from the street as well as from atop the Castle and every year since, on yE Day, it has been rerun on TV so that the reminder of that moment has been kept fresh in great detail.

On 13 May, after a few days of boredom reading in the Knightsbridge Casual Detachment lodgings, Foxhole and I were itching for more adventure and he sought out his friend, the Sheriff of London, who put us in contact with a pilot who was out at Heathrow Airport getting ready for a flight to Paris to take some diplomat to a meeting there. He let us aboard without papers and we took to the air, letting down to a few hundred feet as we swooped over the French farms en route. The pilot was enjoying himself buzzing the small groups of farm hands in the fields. But we made it safely to what must have been Le Bourget airfield. From there we took a taxi into the city and spent an afternoon touring the Champs Elysee, the Arc de Triomphe and the Louvre as well as Hotel des Invalides where the ornate marble tomb of Napoleon lies.

As night approached we went to the Red Cross center where we had heard that we could find lodging for the night. As the line we waited near the registration desk where we heard the clerk ask to see the orders on which the registrants were authorized to visit Paris. Of course, we had no such papers. We were in a predicament. This time I came up with the deception. Out on the street I saw an MP vehicle approaching and told Foxhole to fall to the ground. With one hand on his shoulder I waved the MPs down and asked them to take us to the nearest Army Hospital to seek aid for Foxhole who, I alleged, had had a diabetic hypoglycemic episode. The kids bought the story and we were soon at the American Hospital in Paris at Point de Neuilly.

The nurses on duty in the Emergency Room were let in on the ruse and spent a few hours lapping up our Prisoner stories and providing a fantastic dinner. They then took us to what must have been a VIP suite. The bathroom fixtures were gold plated and the whole sleeping arrangement was like paradise to us. This hospital looked after VIPs of both the military and the diplomatic corps in Europe. The commanding officer of the hospital then took us to the roof of the building where he had photographs taken of us (and later mailed copies to us back at our home addresses.)

After such a surprising red carpet treatment he had a staff car take us to Le Bourget where we went down the ffight line trying to get a ride back to London.

It was in that mode that the Air Police nabbed us and we spent an hour being interrogated by a Lt. Clayton Fenton, the Security officer for the AAF Station 180, 302nd Transportation Wing. After he was convinced that we were not enemies in disguise he had orders cut and mimeographed for our "return to proper station without orders". The orders directed that the air crew have us "shown to the Traffic Control Officer upon boarding Aircraft and surrendered to security control officer at destination." Thus we were escorted by Air Police to a B-24 on the flight line and, since they already had a full crew aboard, Foxhole and I were told to stand on the walkway above the bomb bay doors.

The B-24 is a high wing heavy bomber with the belly a scant two feet above the runway, The bomb bay doors had to be kept open for ventilation so we perched on this narrow walkway all the way across the Channel and watched as the plane let down at Heathrow and our feet dangling only inches above the tarmac. As Lt. Fenton had directed, the crew

called in the Air Police who escorted us to the Casual Detachment where we were not scolded but welcomed by all after what had been a hairy adventure.

In fact, it turned out that UK Base HQ had issued orders on 10 May appointing me as "in charge of RO GP E220- 10 during entire movement from present overseas station to reception center in the United States). Moreover they had sent train tickets for me and the "group" and we had only hours to get ready to go to the station for the train for Portsmouth for loading aboard a ship headed back across the Atlantic. I do not recall who all was included in Group E220 but most were enlisted men who I never got to know.

On boarding the ship we were assigned bunks by rank so I wound up with a few officers among which was a Chaplain who became seasick as soon as we had cleared the English Channel and got into the rough seas of the North Atlantic. As usual we were a merry bunch and I tied my boots to the overhead beam so that when the ship rolled they would swing wildly. This, of course, only served to worsen the poor chaplain's retching.

About the second day out, while shaving, I noticed that my eyes were green. When this was called to the attention of the ship's Doctor I was removed to the sick bay where I was to remain isolated in quarantine for the entire voyage. Although I had no nausea or other symptoms he concluded that hepatitis might be infectious so quarantined me to the sick bay where I was to have virtually no contact with other passengers. So, I remained in that small room below the waterline for the entire voyage across the Atlantic. In looking back I recalled that the probable source for the hepatitis was the water at the Ziegelei where there was only one pump for the entire camp. And that water was unquestionably contaminated by excrement from the thousands of prisoners who passed through that temporary shelter. Whatever the source had been I was thus isolated and back in confinement all over again, So, my deviations had caught up with me. My thoughts again went back to Miss Witherspoon's accusation that I was "clandestine". Now it was payback time.

But it was more than that. With nothing else to do than listen to the churning of the engines and the ships screws, I began to devour the books which I had brought along for the voyage. I do not recall how many days it took for the convoyed vessel to make the crossing but many days were devoted to the intense study of a book which I had acquired in London; James Henry Breasted's *The Dawn of Conscience,* a long discussion of the origins of civilization in Egypt. His studies had the advantage of having access to the hieroglyphic records of the ancient Egyptian Pharoes and their scribes going all the way back to the fourth millennium B.C. This knowledge had been accumulating as a result of the translation of the Rosetta Stone by Jean Francois Champollion in 1822. Breasted was the first Egyptologist to examine these ancient records for the evidence of the beginning of the study of ethical and moral principles. Only then did I realize that the works of the philosophers which we had studied at Rice went back only to the Greeks and Romans and those Europeans who folllowed in their footsteps. It became obvious that the Egyptian writings had been the stimulus for the works of the earliest recorded Greek works. Thusly preoccupied I spent a good part of the purgatorium examining my own principles and how I was to justify to my own conscience the many instances when I had doubted the worth of my actions, not only during the Battle and afterwards, and also in matters such as having been formally declared AWOL on the Paris escapade, but extending back over all the time since Miss Witherspoon's detection of my "clandestine" streak in High School.

There were many such Albatrosses hanging around my neck and I felt compelled to make decisions about which ones to toss overboard and which ones to overwhelm by taking "arms against (them)... and by opposing, end them". This was the hard part. I had, somehow, to behave more honorably than before. Without going into detail, I felt obliged to adopt a more direct approach to all my prior dilemmas. The problem here was inescapably tied to either Hobbesian egoism, i.e. actions were justifiable if they were in the best interest of the agent, or to some higher moral principle but might still be defended on the basis of the situation at hand and not on categorical imperatives. So I took the easier way out and set course while still in isolation. In that mode I could even treat lightly the still annoying memory of the night beside the Russian steak provider and thank whatever principles I had that we didn't fall back on the cannibalistic excuse. There were many questionable decisions to defend and all were examined with soul searching scrutiny and settled on what still may have been spurious logic. So some Albatrosses were still in place when at last

the voyage was over and I was carried ashore on a litter and entered into the camp hospital at Camp Myles Standish, the same camp from which the 106th had departed six months earlier.

I was placed on a low fat diet for a few days and finally released on the condition that I take the fat soluble vitamins which that diet didn't provide. When they mentioned Vitamins C and the B complex it was evident that they. were rookie internists and did not realize that I knew that their regimen provided only the water soluble essential vitamins. So I clamored for, and got, prescriptions for the D and other fat soluble vitamins.

After a week or so of this dietary mismanagement I was finally given rail tickets and orders for evacuation to Reception Station at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. After a brief ceremony there I was told that, under the provisions of Project RO, repatriated Prisoners of War were to be given a thirty day leave and were to report to an installation in Miami Beach after that month for reassignment to permanent duty stations, those assignment to be made in accordance with our wishes for whatever type of career we chose to follow.

My family had met the train in San Antonio, so after the short debriefing at Fort Sam Houston we were free to explore home and Arizona for a month and reconstitute the memories of the winter at war. So the summer of 1945 was spent roaming Arizona and shed as much as possible of the residual trauma of the winter of war.

In the long run I found that I had been awarded a Bronze Star for "valor" (sic), the Combat Medic's Badge and three battle stars for the European Theater of Operations ribbon. These were given to anyone who had been in the theater, had been in a real battle, and had been there when Victory was achieved. Having served on both sides of the line I thought this justifiable. The "valor" part was another matter but I lived with it.

I wanted to get these excellent photos on the site as soon as possible. Tomorrow I will put them in order and add the labels.

Thanks to the family for photos.

apc/pe

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

AG 201 Tenery, John H., Jr.
PO-S 1570001

11 January 1945

Mrs. Marilyn H. Tenery
1903 Lansford Avenue
Dallas, Texas

Dear Mrs. Tenery:

This letter is to confirm my recent telegram in which you were regretfully informed that your husband, First Lieutenant John H. Tenery, Jr., 01773904, Medical Corps, has been reported missing in action in Germany since 21 December 1944.

I know that added distress is caused by failure to receive more information or details. Therefore, I wish to assure you that at any time additional information is received it will be transmitted to you without delay, and, if in the meantime no additional information is received, I will again communicate with you at the expiration of three months.

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

The personal effects of an individual missing overseas are held by his unit for a period of time and are then sent to the Effects Quartermaster, Kansas City, Missouri, for disposition as designated by the soldier.

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

Sincerely yours,

J. A. ULIO
Major General
The Adjutant General

1 Inclosure
Bulletin of Information

lmg/jss

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Tenery, John H., Jr.
PO-S 1570 001

14 April 1945

Mrs. Marilyn H. Tenery
1903 Lansford Avenue
Dallas, Texas

Dear Mrs. Tenery:

As promised you, I am writing again regarding your husband, First Lieutenant John H. Tenery, Jr., 01773904.

It has been my fervent hope that favorable information would be forthcoming so that you might be relieved from the great anxiety which you have borne during these months. It is therefore with deep regret that I must state that no further report in his case has been forwarded to the War Department.

I wish to again emphasize the fact that the Commanding Generals in all of our theaters of operations are making a continuous effort to establish the actual status of personnel who have been reported as missing, or missing in action. In many instances the War Department must rely upon reports received from an enemy government through the International Red Cross for information.

You may be certain that when any information is received, it will be promptly transmitted to you. In the event no additional information is received, I will again communicate with you three months from the date of this letter.

Sincerely yours,

J. A. ULIO
Major General
The Adjutant General

WAR DEPARTMENT
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

AGPO-S 201 Tenery, John H. Jr.
(18 Apr 45) 01773904

18 April 1945

Mrs. Marilyn H. Tenery
Route A, Box 95
Waxahachie, Texas

Dear Mrs. Tenery:

Your letter of 10 April 1945, has been received and I have had the records of your husband, First Lieutenant John H. Tenery, Jr., carefully checked in an effort to determine the reason for your request for your change of address having apparently been overlooked.

I find that the records of this office disclose that on 3 August 1944, your husband designated you as his emergency addressee and indicated your address to be 1903 Lansford Avenue, Dallas 3, Texas, the same as that of his mother. When your letter of 12 January 1945, was received, your address was properly noted in the records of this office and due to a clerical error, the letter of 14 April 1945, from this office, was incorrectly addressed to you. Although you state that you have written on numerous occasions requesting a change of address, there is no record of the receipt in this office of communications from you, other than your letter of 12 January 1945. Realizing the deep human feelings involved, every effort is made to forward casualty information to the designated emergency addressee with the least possible delay, and it is most sincerely regretted that my letter to you of 14 April 1945, was not correctly addressed. You may be assured that this matter has been investigated and that further reports which are received will be sent to your proper address.

An additional report concerning your husband has now been received which states that Lieutenant Tenery was the medical officer of a company which was providing medical support for a combat team of an Infantry Division in the vicinity of Bonwet, Germany. The enemy opened heavy artillery fire against the sector and your husband's company was separated from the rest of the division and may have been captured. No further details are available but you may be assured that every effort is being made by our theater commanders to determine the whereabouts of our personnel who have been reported missing in action. Prisoner of war lists received in this office through the International Red Cross have been carefully checked

AGPO-G 201 Tenery, John H. Jr.
(10 Apr 45) [illegible]

But, up to this time, your husband's name has not appeared on any of these lists. Due to the present state of the German nation it is likely that some reports of our men taken prisoners of war are not being reported in accordance with the terms of the Geneva Convention.

You have my sympathy during this period of uncertainty, and my hope that favorable information will soon be received regarding your husband.

Sincerely yours,

J. A. ULIO
Major General
The Adjutant General

POLTE Werk Duderstadt

GESCHÄFTSLEITUNG

10 April 1945

Dearest Betts,

I've time for just a short note — but the most important one I ever wrote, for as of yesterday at noon I'm again a free man after nearly four months of being kicked about all over Germany as a Prisoner of War. At times it has been pretty rough but the Yanks came to town yesterday and it's all over now. I was captured just one day after your birthday and guessed that I'd be free on our fifth anniversary; missed it by just a few days!

There's no telling how long it will take me to get home but it can't be too quickly for me. I had never known how homesickness could affect one but now I've had a good sample of it and always keep one eye turned to the west. I'm strictly ready to see you.

I think I'll be allowed a 30 day leave so we'll have a glorious holiday quietly at home (Dallas apartment if you will) or spend the most of it seeing New Mexico. Turn it over in your mind and we'll do what you want.

POLTE Werk Duderstadt

GESCHÄFTSLEITUNG

In the excitement I hardly know what else to say — the whole story will take many evenings to tell you and I'd best not start on it before I get home. Aside from that story there's only one thing left to tell: I never knew how much you meant to me until I was completely cut off from any chance of communicating with you. If it's at all possible I love you more than ever. Most of that, too, will have to wait until that morning I arrive at Union Station. But it will keep — it's certainly survived these months of storage in grand shape.

So — until then — take it easy and look for me soon. I'm on my way home.

I'll write at every opportunity.

All my love, forever
Jackson

POLTE Werk Duderstadt

GESCHÄFTSLEITUNG

10 April 1945

Betts Darling,

It's been a hell of an exciting day what with the interest our arrivals have been showing in the prisoners they've liberated. I've been interviewed by so many Colonels and Generals I literally and figuratively see stars.

Things are a bit quieter tonight so I'll add a postscript to the hurried note today.

In more detail this is what happened: I was captured the day after your birthday (details unimportant) and put to work in a [illegible] medical installation [illegible] wounded American prisoners. It was long, hard work and there was precious little stuff as food, not even for the Germans. After a week I was moved by truck and train to [illegible] a few kilometers from Bonn. The trip was a sort of nightmare since every time we got in a truck our air force managed to come over and strafe all around us. So they finally gave up and walked us the last 60 kilometers, 39 of them in a single afternoon and evening. It would take me hours to tell about that "hike". The first night at the Bonn camp the R.A.F. paid a visit to that city and dropped a few stray eggs on our camp. They were uncannily accurate so I bounced about in a dugout while our barracks were destroyed along with all my kit so when the show was over I faced the winter with what clothes I had on my back — overcoat gone, gloves gone, hat gone etc. etc. Well, we found a [illegible], intact barracks and moved in for a month of short days and long, hungry nights.

POLTE Werk Duderstadt

Then some Jerry decided that a camp on the East bank of the Rhine near Cologne needed a couple of American Doctors so they moved two of us there a few days before the RAF returned to Bonn and finished demolishing our former camp. At Cologne the food was very little better — we got our usual cup of nasty coffee for breakfast, a bowl of turnip, cabbage or thin potato soup for lunch and three slices of bread for dinner — but we fell heir to a carton of Red Cross cigarettes each (the only Red Cross I got with the exception of a half a food parcel) and managed to use them to trade for extra bread. We worked pretty hard there on sick prisoners and time went right by so after about six weeks we suddenly found that our troops were across the river from us — and firing very noisy artillery right over us. The excitement was terrific — we thought we'd be liberated, but Jerry herded us into boxcars and moved us east. After six days (a hair-raising story) in those cattle cars we wound up in a hell of a big prison camp about 80 kilometers north of Hanover. Several times we were frightened pretty badly by our air boys and were pretty damned disgusted when, in less than 24 hours, I and another American Doctor were put back on the railroad and shuttled back to Duderstadt (another long story). We were here (34 Kilometers East of Gottingen) for 3 weeks treating sick, exhausted prisoners who had been walked 800 Kilometers to get

POLTE Werk Duderstadt

them away from the Russian advance. This has been the strangest part of the whole show and will take days to tell. After 3 months behind the wire we suddenly found ourselves at liberty to walk all over town and for miles in the surrounding country. We've treated hundreds of very ill, unbelievably exhausted and worn prisoners under circumstances so primitive that one can scarcely believe it. We've had to work damned hard but fortunately have managed to scrape up plenty for ourselves to eat (unfortunately the marching prisoners presented a feeding problem we were never able to solve satisfactorily). Well, more of that later. Suddenly, on April 9th, while making a list of men who could walk (the Germans were about to march us out!) I looked out a window and saw a column of German horse-drawn artillery running like mad. Real live Yank tanks came over the hill and after a brief and one-sided, but terrifically exciting, battle Duderstadt fell with our injured American tanks and hundreds of the happiest humans I've ever seen, and I included myself among them.

I've dreamed of freedom for four months but never once have I associated the thought with anything but you and now, at last, I'll be starting. I've no idea at all how long it will take. That's no matter, now. All that counts is that I'm on the way now!! And I love you always.

Jack

31st December 1944

Beth Darling, this is my second letter since I was captured. In case you didn't get the first: I'm all in one piece, unhurt, and waiting for & dreaming of the day when I'll at last return to you. I'll never leave you again!

This is New Year's Eve! We've a bit of snow but no firecrackers, no other way of celebrating than staying up for midnight. Hope your New Year's hasn't been marred by the MIA telegram. Was the wait between that and the 1st letter very long?

I think you might as well write to me at M. Stammlager VI G, Bonn a. Rhein, giving name, rank + serial #.

Ask Red Cross about everything you can. They help a lot, altho' I am not yet in contact with them.

Darling, there's not much I can say in so short a space — would like to write every day that I love you with all my heart — think of it always.

All my Love,

Jack

Lance Cpl. Allen Crawford, NZA # 1[illegible]
53 Stapleton's Rd.
Richmond, Christchurch, SI, [illegible]

Pvt. Winston Griffin, NZA # 132[illegible]
4 France St.
Omaru, SI, NZ.

Cpt. Frederick J. Mc Intire
28 Puritan Park
Swampscott, Mass.

Capt. Peter E.R. Tattersall
22 Clinton Road
Penarth, Glamorgan, Wales

1st Lt Lewis A. Meyers
RD # 2, Bx 255
Johnstown, Pa. Ph 44111

1st Lt John B. Martin
Box 592
Fredericks town, Pa.

Michael E. Connelly
Sharon, Pa.

Carl Oscar Keagy, Capt.
% Bell Telephone Co.
Bradford, Pa.

Capt. F. J. Mc Manus
% Bishop's House
Boyet St.
Capetown, South Africa
% Michael Mc Manus
Beaghmore, Carrigallen
County Lietrom, Eire
% Sister M. Bernadette
Convent of Mercy
Milton Road, Gravesend, Kent, Eng.

Capt. R. M. (Lofty) Solomon, RAMC
Homewood
Burke's Road
Beaconsfield
Buck's, England

Marshal Jean
Vauxsous Aubigny
Haute Marne, France

Thomas Heavey
15 Brampton St.
Newton Heath
Manchester, England

Pfc HN Martin (of 49th Stn Hosp)
Mrs. C.D. "
114 Vineyard Ave
Hillsboro Tex.

Sgt. Maj. Arthur King
Automobile Assn.
Invercargill, S.I., N.Z.

106th Infantry Engulfed by Nazis' Ardennes Push

With the 106th Division in Belgium, Jan. 22 (AP).—One of the major battles of the war burst upon the 106th Infantry Division just five days after it took up positions Dec. 11 on what was supposed to be a "quiet" sector in the Ardennes.

And two days later two regiments and supporting artillery and armor of the Golden Lion Division were wiped out.

Until yesterday censorship had forbidden transmission of the details.

(Secretary Stimson announced Jan. 18 that the 106th suffered 8,663 casualties in the German offensive in the Ardennes, including 416 killed and 1,246 wounded. He said most of the division's 7,001 missing were presumed to be prisoners.)

The men of the 422nd and 423rd regiments were engulfed by the overwhelming weight of the German break-through spearhead. Only a handful came back, but they pitched in and helped the remaining regiment, the 424th, made gallant delaying stands before and behind St. Vith.

The attack against the 106th started in the foggy dawn of Dec. 16 with a tremendous artillery barrage against their line that curved northward from the center of the Schnee Eifel, a rocky wooded ridge 10 miles long and two miles wide astride the Siegfried Line.

Five minutes later the Germans opened up against St. Vith. The civilians, all pro-Nazi despite their pretense at being friendly, were in their cellars, warned beforehand of the impending shelling.

Enemy Swamp GIs.

By daybreak of Dec. 17 the Germans had thrown two divisions into this part of the front. By midmorning enemy columns swamped the 422nd and 423rd regiments and the 424th was forced to withdraw.

The two regiments continued to send back reports of the fighting until radio contact was lost. At 3:35 p. m. on Dec. 18 the radio sputtered that all units of the two regiments were in need of ammunition, food and water. Because of the fog, parachuting supplies was out of the question.

The last message came from the 422nd at 4 p. m., that day and from the 423rd at 6 p. m. Both said: "We are now destroying our equipment." That was all, and presumably most of the two regiments were taken prisoner.

The Germans then headed for St. Vith. They were stopped temporarily by the 81st and 168th Engineer Battalions, fighting heroically under Lieut. Col. Thomas Riggs of Huntington, W. Va.

Early on Dec. 18 division headquarters began moving west out of St. Vith. Some units were halted by English speaking MP's who turned out to be Germans in American uniforms. One of them fired a rocket which signalled the opening of a terrific barrage against the division's halted vehicles.

The Germans occupied St. Vith at 11 p. m., on Dec. 21 after a stiff fight by the 424th, one combat command from the 9th Armored Division, Riggs' fighting engineers and the 112th Regiment from the 28th Infantry Division.

Exhausted and sorely depleted, the 106th pulled back to reorganize on Dec. 23. The next day he men were thrown into the line and helped halt the Germans on the north side of the salient between Stavelot and Manhay.

Missing in Action in Germany

LT. JACK TENERY MISSING OVER GERMANY SINCE DECEMBER 21.

Lt. Jack Tenery of the infantry medical corps, nephew of Dr. W. C. Tenery of Waxahachie, is missing in action since Dec. 21 in Germany, according to a telegram received from the War Department by his wife, the former Miss Betty Casebier, of Waxahachie.

Below
The Ausweis authorizing the Doctors to walk between Duderstadt and the surrounding villages in which prisoners were being "housed"

Nr. 8

Vorläufiger Ausweis

Gültig vom 19.3.-25.3.45

Der Oberarzt [illegible] ist zur Betreuung der Kriegsgefangenen eingesetzt. Er ist berechtigt, die Kgf.-Lazarette aufzusuchen und darf sich zu diesem Zwecke im Stadtgebiet Duderstadt in der Zeit von 6,00 - 20,00 Uhr frei bewegen. verlängert bis 1.4.45

Duderstadt, den 19.3.45

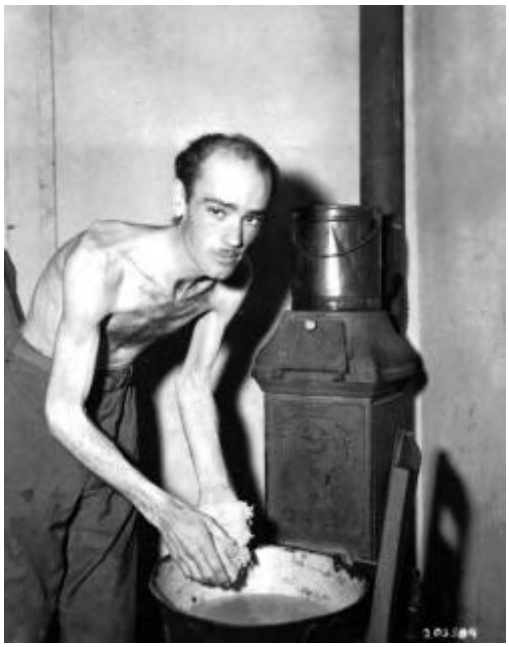
A.B.

[illegible]

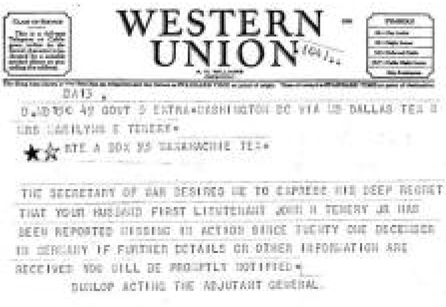
Oberleutnant

[illegible]

POW Calendars. White on back of Cambridge hotel chit & covers from 1/1/4 to 3/4/45. Red begins 3/5/45 to 6/6/45. Black indicates bad days.




Absender:
1st Lt. John H. Tevery. (ASN 01775904)
Deutschland (Allemagne)



WESTERN UNION

DA13

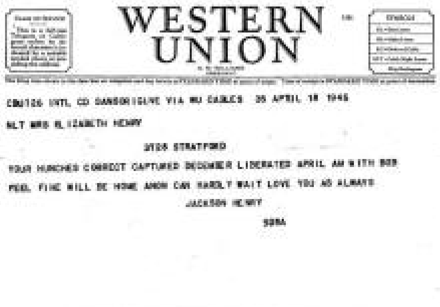
D.WDT5C 42 GOVT 3 EXTRA=WASHINGTON DC VIA WU DALLAS TEX

MRS CAROLYN E TENERY=

RTE A BOX 95 WAXAHACHIE TEX=

THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET THAT YOUR HUSBAND FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHN H TENERY JR HAS BEEN REPORTED MISSING IN ACTION SINCE TWENTY ONE DECEMBER IN GERMANY IF FURTHER DETAILS OR OTHER INFORMATION ARE RECEIVED YOU WILL BE PROMPTLY NOTIFIED=

DUNLOP ACTING THE ADJUTANT GENERAL.



WESTERN UNION

CBU126 INTL CD SANBORIGUVE VIA WU CABLES 35 APRIL 18 1945

NLT MRS ELIZABETH HENRY

3126 STRATFORD

YOUR HUNCHES CORRECT CAPTURED DECEMBER LIBERATED APRIL AM WITH BOB FEEL FINE WILL BE HOME ANON CAN HARDLY WAIT LOVE YOU AS ALWAYS

JACKSON HENRY