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We were bouncing around in an LST on the English Channel after having left Portsmouth, England on Dec. 1, 1944. We lost both anchors on the channel and had to go back to Portsmouth. We finally arrived at the mouth of the Seine River in Le Havre on Dec. 8, 44. We had to wait for a French Pilot to guide us down the river. We passed one LST that had been sunk in the river. Just the upper portion of the LST was visible. We could see all the evidence of the battle that had taken place along the banks of the river. There were many vehicles that had been put out of commission along the way, (some German half tracks) and there were some dead German soldiers along the hedge rows.

All our vehicles and howitzers were lashed to the deck of the LST. Since we were overloaded I slept on the canvas cover on a truck, in between the bows. We swayed considerably from side to side. The food was good since the Navy usually had better food rations than the Army. I think we deployed at Rouen in France.

My next memories are where we suffered our first casualty. We were in Belgium. It was very cold with snow and ice all over. We were on a large hill when the truck column started sliding sideways. I don't know who the soldier was, but he was crushed between two large trucks. I remember seeing the launching platforms where the V-1 rockets were fired toward England. During combat we suffered many casualties (especially Forward Observers who were directing fire from forward positions) Lt. Col. Vaden C. Lackey called me in and asked me to volunteer as a Forward Observer. I had experience in fire control and knew what the duties were. He said it would be a trial term of thirty days for a direct field commission. I moved forward up with the infantry.

I was positioned in a pill box on the Siegfried Line. The opposite side had been blown out with an anti-tank gun which enabled us to observe in the right direction. The walls of the pill box appeared to be about two feet thick at the entrance and spiraled for over a full revolution. The first night we spent in the pill box we were hit repeatedly with the multiple rockets called screaming mimi's. The sound was deafening inside the pill box. The next morning I could see all kinds of movement in our direction. There were wagons with tree branches lashed to the sides filled with soldiers. There were many on bicycles and many on foot. I tried to communicate with our gun batteries but could not get through by radio or phone. When I left the pill box, I could not recognize the area at all. Trees were down all over. Our telephone wires were mangled in the trees.

Later we found we were surrounded by Germans. The ground was covered with snow. They had us covered with Burp Guns. The rate of fire is so fast it sounds like a continuous noise. Our Major Tietze was waving a white handkerchief and told us to surrender. The big problem was the weather. We had no tank support, no air support, and no food. It was freezing weather. We were very uncomfortable.

The Germans needed fuel badly and were making a large move toward the supply dump in Liege.

We felt like sad sacks when we were taken prisoner. We were marched to a churchyard. They made us take off our overshoes. They lined us up and made us empty our pockets. We had to drop our pants to show we were not hiding anything. They took money, cigarettes, watches, etc. I had slit the threads in the seam on my fly and slid my army watch down there. I also slit the threads in my waist band and hid some Belgian francs. They did not see them. I later gave the money to an "escape group" but didn't know if it was used.

It was extremely cold. We stamped our feet all night to keep from freezing. We were marched to a small town where boxcars were lined up on tracks. They were used by the French for 40 men or 8 horses. They were called the 40 and 8's. They put 65 of us in one boxcar. We could not all sit down at the same time. There was one vent flap on an upper corner with barbed wire across it. To get rid of our waste, we had to use a tin can, pass it around and empty it out of the flap opening. Most of us had dysentery. Our teeth were mucky since we had no toilet articles. It was so cold we stamped our feet continuously.

We were bombed once while we were in the cars. Some were screaming, some banging against the walls, and some praying. Guards finally opened the door and we ran out during the bombing. Later they herded us back into the cars. On Christmas eve I still had almost a pack of cigarettes that I had hid and I split them up amongst the guys in the car. I had to break them in half. We were in the car a total of eight and one half days. One day when we were in the marshalling yards in Frankfurt, we were next to a railroad car filled with peat. (coal with most of the by-products removed) We took one of the seat planks and fed it through the flap hole and managed to get several pieces by tilting the board so the peat would slide back into the car. It felt wonderful to feel a little heat for the first time since our capture.

Later we were detrained and had to march for three days. We had no sleep. We were so tired we found ourselves falling down and it made us wake up. One time we passed a field with sugar beets still in the ground. We ran to the field and ripped the beet out of the ground. We ate through the dirt we were so hungry. There was a horse and wagon at the end of the column. Every once in a while someone would pass out and would be loaded into the wagon. Once the SS came by on horseback and yelled at a prisoner who had stopped to relieve himself. He cursed at them and they shot him through the head. One time we could see large ovens ahead and everyone was fearful they might be for us. Especially Bill Rocker who was Jewish.

We arrived at camp 4B in a small town called Muhlberg between Leipzig and Dresden. We stood out all night in the cold. We had one overcoat over about four of our heads. We could see the V2 rockets being fired toward England. The launch site was on the side of a mountain. When the rocket was ignited it stood for the longest time without moving and fire was spewing out the back end. Then it would move straight up in the air until it finally arced out in a direction toward England.

This was the first time we were interviewed and records were made along with finger printing (I still have my record) We received food here. After 7 days we were loaded in to boxcars again. We went to camp 3-B which was on the Polish border at the town of Furstenberg on the Oder River. We received some clothes and toilet articles. I had fallen one time on the previous forced march where my leg doubled back underneath me. My knee was very sore and would ache so much during the night that I had to move my leg to a different position many times. I believe this is where I teamed up with Dick Hartman

as my "mucker". At 3-B my feet and toes were blue. I continually massaged them all the while I was there.

On the 31st of January, P-39 lend lease planes flown by the Russians fired on our camp. It was dusk and there was several inches of snow on the ground when they lined us up to move out. My socks were like baseball socks. The toes and heels were completely gone. During the day our feet would get wet and then they would freeze at night. We were only fed a few times during the week long march to the next camp. One time Hartman and I found some potato peelings on the ground. We were so hungry; we cooked the peelings in our "wind maker". In the last camp we inherited a wind maker from one of the permanent POW's. The wind maker was constructed from tin cans from Red Cross parcels. One can formed a housing where fins mounted on a spool and driven by a shoelace over a pulley arrangement forced air through a channel to the underside of a can with holes punched in the bottom. The forced air caused a blower condition which only required a few twigs to obtain a real hot fire. I guess we were fortunate to escape a real bad case of diarrhea since we were later informed by a guard that the Germans used human feces to fertilize their potatoes. Some prisoners got dysentery so bad from eating potato skins that it resulted in death.

While marching to the next camp, we hit air raids several times. We could see people running to air raid shelters. The guards kept us marching down the road. Several times the German civilians swore at us and threw things at us.

We arrived at camp 3A on February 7th. It was located in Luckenwalde about 35 kilometers south of Berlin. Camp 3-A contained about 35,000 prisoners of various nationalities. Each nationality was separated from the other by doubled barbed wire fences. At every corner there was a block house about 20 feet high with a German guard with a machine gun. The American Compound had eight huge tents which held about 400 men in each one. The ground was covered with straw when we arrived but it was soon matted down and full of lice. There were only two outside water taps for 3000 GI's and most of the time they were frozen.

There was only enough room for a man to lay down prone. When one tried to get up to go to the latrine, he would fall down dizzy and had to stumble his way out of the tent. The latrine was a huge pit at the end of the tent. It was about 6 foot wide by about 10 feet long. Crossed pine bows with one long log across provided the seat when one had to go. The so-called latrines were situated next to a fence. There was a path along the fence where German civilians walked from one town to another.

I remember Harry Shulaski from Long Island who seemed to have lost his mind. He talked constantly about his girl friend and President Roosevelt. He got so bad they finally took him out. I never found out what happened to him.

Cigarettes were the same as money. I sold the GI watch that I had hidden when I was captured to the Canadians in the next compound for cigarettes. I didn't like the Canadian cigarettes because they were too bland but they came in handy for buying food. I bought some crackers and cheese from the Norwegians for cigarettes. You had to bargain with the Norwegians with your back to the fence. When you threw the cigarettes over the fence you had to keep your eye on the guard and vice versa.

There were German guards' patrolling outside the fence with police dogs. I used to buy a small piece of dark bread for 3 cigarettes from the guard after dark. We were only getting

about 400 calories per day. We had to divide a loaf of sour black bread among 11 men for one period. We also received a small cup of dehydrated rutabaga soup. The rutabagas were black.

We also got 2 or 3 small potatoes and we had to be careful not to eat the skin. One of the medical men had estimated the number of calories. By this time I had lost close to 100 pounds. We looked just like the skin and bones people you see when they show the holocaust victims. We were very weak and at times we were scared because we could not remember much.

There were rules for anyone caught stealing another person's food. They would have to wear a sign around their neck which said "I am a thief" then they were thrown in the latrine.

A short time before we were liberated by the Russians a German General visited our camp and declared we should get Red Cross Parcels. We received one parcel for 2 men per week.

We were afraid the Germans were going to make a resistance stand right in our camp. They dug slit trenches and had mounted machine guns. However the day before the Russians arrived all the German soldiers left the camp. Many of them had civilian clothes on. The Russians came through the camp with large tanks. The Russian prisoners who were just skin and bones and very weak tried to climb on to the tanks and yelled "lets go". They were most likely afraid of retribution for having been captured.

We visited several other compounds. The worst was the Russian. They were in the lower level of a barracks building. There was at least a foot of water on the floor. There were dead Russians sitting at the table having died from malnutrition.

The Russians went into the woods after the Germans. After a while there was a very long line of German prisoners. They looked very scared, were bloody with bandages and had a bad stench from hiding in the woods. The Russian forward element was a wild bunch. We got some food which was not much better than the Germans. I remember a Russian woman soldier who fired a pistol in the air to frighten a horse with a wagon and make it run wild.

We had trouble trying to leave the camp. The Russians kept telling us they had people coming from Russia to talk to us. After 3 weeks of this stalling, we had runners go to the Elbe River to contact the Americans. They brought a truck column within a half mile of the camp and we left a few at a time. This is how we got back into the American hands.

One incident when we went into the Russian compound was where we entered a long building, and saw a beautiful painting on the back wall. The painting was The Last Supper and looked perfect in every detail.

There was an English soldier with an easel making a copy of the painting. It was said the prisoners had got the paint equipment by going on work parties and buying them for potatoes. At one time I bought some potatoes for cigarettes from the French. They used to go on work parties every day.

We were told how the Russians would hold up a dead comrade's body during roll call so they could get the extra food ration.

I used to force myself to get up and walk around the compound as many times as I could so that I would move my bowels. We also burned twigs in the wind maker to make a form of charcoal which helped to stop the dysentery. It would absorb the toxins in your intestines.

While we were waiting for the Americans to get us, some GI's went into a nearby town and came back with rabbits, potato flour, potatoes, and lard. We prepared a big feast. It was the worst thing we could have done since our stomachs had shrunk appreciably. I had a plate filled high with food. When we got into American hands, we were put on a very special diet. There were no condiments and the food was very bland. I remember bribing a cook in the mess tent for some succotash. It was delicious. For at least a year after my release my stomach got hot right up to my throat every time I ate. I wondered if it would ever go away and feel fortunate today that I don't seem to have a problem from it.

When we got into American hands we were showered and deloused at every place we went. They also issued new clothes at every stop and threw the others away.

We were finally brought to a huge tent city on the high bluffs of Le Havre in France. We were in camp Lucky Strike. There were many different camps named after US cigarettes. I kept going to the Red Cross station every day to find out how my wife was and if the baby was OK. I didn't know if it was a boy or a girl. They said they were sending wires, but I never got any information from them. It wasn't until the ship embarked in New York and I ran to a phone that I found out how everything was.

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#### Notes taken while a Prisoner of War

Captured near Schonberg December 19, 1944. Marched to Bleialf Stood in yard all night 20th marched 40 miles to Cerolstein. 21st cheese and crackers Box car for 9 days Bread 4 times, tea 3 times 23rd bombed at Limburg. Seven met killed (Warmouth and Wright). 64 officers killed at 12-A 29th hit 4-B at 1400, stood in line until 0430 on 30th. 7 days at 4-B. Split Canadian Red Cross Parcel with Chemuta. English and Canadian real swell. Jan. 6 left in boxcars for 3-B. Jan. 7 hit 3-B. Received shirts, handkerchiefs, shorts, scarfs, and toilet articles. Split 4 Red Cross Parcels with Hartman. Forced to evacuate 3-B by Russians on Jan 31st. Left 1800 and walked until 1800 Feb. 1st. Walked 120 kilometers to 3-A Feb. 7th. Bread 4 times, cheese and soup once on route. Troop activity all the way. Jerries digging in and making road blocks every town.

Sleeping in 400 man tents on straw. Only Jerry rations. War rumors and food main topics. No air raids from evening of Feb 9th. Artillery fire heard on the 13th. Possibly Jerry zeroing in. Believed German units training. Feb. 17th air raids frequent. Feb. 19th weathe rbetter. Air raids night and day. Mar. 5th received issue of Red Cross Parcels here. Ours will be Thursday Mar. 6th. Air raids still heavy night and day. Last night lasted 2 hours all around us. Good to smoke again. Living conditions still very poor. Weather pretty cold. Snowed last night Tent half down from storm 3 days ago.

Nov10 left POE  
Nov 17 arrived in England  
Dec 1 left for France, storms in channel, went back  
Dec 8 arrived in France  
Dec 11 entered combat  
Dec 16 put on 30 day trial for direct field commission as a forward observer  
Dec 19 captured  
Dec 20 hike  
Dec 21 box car  
Dec 23 bombed at Limburg  
Dec 29 4B  
Jan 3 first letter.  
Jan 6 boxcarsto3-B  
Jan 7arrivedat3-B  
Jan 13 2nd letter  
Jan 31 hiked to3-A  
Feb 7 arrived at 3-A tents  
May 1 Germans left 3-A  
May 2 Russians liberated camp  
May 7 Met U. S. thick column at Elbe River  
Jun 1 Arrived at Camp Lucky Strike in La Havre  
Jun 11 arrived in New York



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