

Sgt James J. Dickerson  
3rd Bn. Hg. Co. 422nd Inf. Regt.  
106th Division



Front Row: John Alexander, Tom Karpine, Wesley White, Ed Christianson, ?, ?  
2nd Row: Leo Laisse, ? Searfoss, Al Cardini, Frank Glover, ? Lee  
Back Row: Lt. Gibson, Dick Lockhart, Charles ?, ?, ?, James Dickerson

Beginning October 12, 1944 boarded train from Camp Atterbury, Indiana to Camp Miles Standish, Mass, on way to Europe.

On October 20, 1944 boarded HMS Aquitania bound for Europe. Chased by jerry subs all across the Atlantic. We finally docked at Glasgow in the Firth of Clyde October 28, 1944.

October 31, arrived Stow on the Wold, England.

November 28, 44 left Stow on the Wold for South Hampton. 29th of November 44 boarded H.M.S. Langibby Castle and sailed across the English Channel and landed at Le Harare France on 30 November, 44.

December 2, 44 loaded on trucks and started on trip to front lines. Arrived on front lines on December 10, 44 relieving 2nd division and saw actual combat for first time.

We were in defensive positions until morning of December 16 when we were hit with jerry artillery barrage for about one hour. We were ordered on the offensive and fought our way up to Auw Germany by the 19th of December when we ran out of food, water and ammunition.

Being fog bound and no means of resupply either from ground or air, we were ordered to surrender. We were assembled in an old barn with machine guns all around us. Spent the night there with no food, water or blankets. They took our overshoes from us and some had their overcoats taken.

We started on the long march into Germany December 20, 44 with no food or water. We arrived in **Bitburg** that night about 11:00, about 45 km from where we started. We slept in mud and snow for the remainder of the night.

About 7:00 a.m. December 21, we got in line for something to eat. We were given some hard crackers and a can of cheese about the size of a #2 can. This was for seven people.

In the afternoon around 4:00 p.m. we would get one slice bread, one patty of margarine, and if lucky, syrup or jelly. I was losing weight fast. I weighed 160 lbs when captured.

We then started marching and about 10:00 p.m. we marched into Prum Germany where we slept that night.

About 7:00 a.m. we was lined up and they gave us one loaf of bread and some syrup for seven men. The bread was sour rye bread. This was December 22.. We then started -Dur march again. The men were really getting weak. Some were beat with rifle butts and some even shot when they got too weak to walk. The ones that were strong enough helped the weak ones to keep them from being shot.

Arrived at Gerolstein about 10:00 p.m. and slept in an old building that night. My feet and legs were frozen in Prum and had to march on them all day.

December 23, we were lined up about 7:00 a.m. and given about same food as before except it had to feed ten men, we then marched to a rail yard where we loaded on cattle cars where they had been hauling horses and had not cleaned then. We traveled until about 200 p.m. and pulled onto a siding at Limburg Germany. About 4:00 p.m. British reconnaissance planes flew over us for about 10 minutes and that night they came back and bombed us. We broke out of our car, let others out and scattered across a field. I was hit on right foot and lower leg with shrapnel, however it was not serious. I could still walk okay.

December 24, still sitting in rail yard and sometime in early morning of December 25th we moved out and rode until we came to Bad Orb, Germany where we marched up a mountain about 2 km to **Stalag IX-B** Prison Camp. This was a very sad day in my life. The day we were captured I told Ted Schrenk, my truck driver, that General Patton would bring us easter eggs. Our first meal in P.O.W. camp consisted of greens (I think tops from field beets) and potatoes boiled in just plain water and the weeks that followed were pretty much the same with few exceptions. We had for breakfast on December 26, one slice

bread, one patty of margarine and a cup of stained water they called coffee which was also menu in weeks to follow.

Greens and potatoes for noon meal. Greens, about one cup and potatoes mashed about 1/2 cup and about one cup of soup from potatoes and some stained water they called tea, with no sugar.

By this time we had settled into the routine of P.O.W. life. Everything infested with rats, fleas and lice. The jerry counted prisoners morning and afternoon. We liked to keep jerry confused by leaving head of line and crouching behind line to tail, and make them come up with too many or vice versa. We would do this until they threatened us and then we would quit for that time. I think they finally came to expect it.

On January 1, 1945 we filled out Red Cross cards. I don't know if they ever left camp. 5, January 45 we wrote our first letters home and they did leave camp and my wife got hers.

28, January was a black day. Two of the men got out of barracks and broke in the kitchen the night before. They were raiding the kitchen and the ferry guard walked in on them.

One of the men picked up a hatchet and chopped the jerry in the back 14 times almost killing him. The barracks was locked until about 9:30 a.m. on 28, January at which time they took us out and lined us up in front of machine guns and told us we would not get food or wood for our barracks until the guilty was caught. They also said they would give us 24 hours to catch the guilty. After 24 hours they would start shooting 50 each hour until the guilty was caught. About 3:00 p.m. the guilty ones came forward and surrendered. We had really got hungry by this time.

The days that followed was just same old routine until February 6. I was standing on the bank of a trench we were using for a bathroom when suddenly a jerry ME 109 plane appeared with American P47 following and firing on him. Bullets plowed up the ground on each side of me. Some of our men and some of the Russians got killed. We got our first Red Cross packages that day. A 10 lb package was divided between 4 men. That was first American food we had tasted since capture. The remainder of February was regular old routine except the letters we wrote home.

March 1, found us still marking time, hoping the war would soon end. Still more of the same old routine nothing to eat and losing weight. March 14, we got another Red Cross package for each three men. Anything American was good, but there just wasn't enough of it. News filtered through to us that our troops were making good progress.

March 27, we got Red Cross packages. This time 1 per 11 men. Still had good hopes. We were still being pestered day and night by fleas, lice and bed bugs. We looked like a bunch of monkeys picking lice.

March 31, they passed out 2 packs of French cigarettes per man. You could hear lots of artillery fire from the yanks. Easter Sunday April 1, the yanks laid a barrage of artillery fire on Bad Orb and followed up with tanks and infantry and Bad Orb was under siege on Easter Sunday as I had predicted from day one of captivity.

Monday, 2 our troops came into camp and started moving us by truck to an air strip near by. We pulled all our clothes off tossed them into a fire, was run through a delousing process, took showers and issued new clothes. Those who were too weak and sick to travel were taken by ambulance to hospital until they could travel. The rest of us were loaded on planes and taken to Camp Lucky Strike at LeHarve France. There we had our first real American cooked food since 18, December. Then the doctors checked us and we were assigned beds, real beds, for the first time in about 4 months. Our medical care was real good and the

kitchens were ordered to stay open 24 hours a day and give us food any time we called for it day or night. Some of the men didn't use good judgment and over ate, got bloated and died from it.

During the period of April 3 to April 12, just routine of making ready to board ship for U.S. of A.

April 13, got word of President Roosevelt s death, a sad day for us all.

April 14, they woke us up at 1:45 a.m. to load on trucks and catch our ship which was USS Anderson. Our first day at sea we were treated to Christmas dinner and was it good! The period from then to April 28, was just routine.

April 28, we landed in USA and trucked to Camp Kilmire NJ. From there we were sent home on 60 day R&R leave. Was at home on May 8, when Germany surrendered.

Well, that was the end of that ordeal and thanks be unto God for watching over us through those trying times.

During those times, I never gave up hope. When I left home I told my wife I have a two way ticket and intend to use both parts of it, and I did.



Page last revised  
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