

WW II Stories and POW Diaries of Robert E. Broach
August 12, 1943 to June 3, 1945

Daniels, Chisholm, Hall, Broach, Wiley, Wells, Phelps, Lee, Gray
92nd Bomb Group, 407th Squadron

The following was written by Robert E. Broach likely sometime after his capture or after the War ended.

THE YB-40 STORY

From Third Phase to Combat

The 'Thing' really had its conception in Salina, Kansas when, by sheer chance, thirteen crews were taken out of the SNAFU C.P.G. and formed into the II YB-40 Detachment. But it was not until "Moose" Carey got bopped on the noggin while watching the "Bulls Fight" in Juarez, Mexico that the spark of life was injected into the outfit and "Old Fortypuss" became a thing alive. I never will forget that particular moment. It was in the middle of the second fight. We had all bet on the bull in the first fight and lost, naturally. From the way the bull was faring it appeared that we were about to lose by backing the bull again. So it seemed a good time to have a toddy. I was in the process of mixing spirits and cokes when it happened. Some inebriated citizen on the upper tier was highly dissatisfied with the progress the Matador was making with the bull so he heaved a beer bottle at the bull, (or maybe at the Matador). The shot was OK on deflection but a shade short on range.

The missile landed squarely on 'The Moose's' head causing much blood to fly, hence spilling the spirited cokes. Well, "The Moose" and the bull were both in pretty bad shape and it was a toss up as to which one was losing the most blood, but since Carey seemed less expendable than the bull he was given a priority on treatment. A local sawbones patched his head up in the stable. After much confusion the bottle heaver was rounded up and hustled off to the clink. Carey got back to the ring just in time to see the last bull go down. - - -This incident was the beginning of the party that lasted on into the combat phase and beyond.

Our outfit had been brought to El Paso to pick up our new planes. Since they were the latest combat planes out we were slated for a round of special training. But still being part of the Second Air Force all we got were the planes. The training came later, much later, in the form of combat. It became just a matter of checking out the first pilots. In this bunch they were all good pilots so this was duck soup. The other crew members were not very busy so we set up base operations in the Hilton Hotel and ran a few missions on our own.

The married men all sent for their ever loving wives and the single men set their ever ready traps. What with Juarez just across the river, and trapping conditions excellent, we managed to run up quite a score. Much happiness was spread around and about. One Pat Brown was made especially happy.

It was evident that because of our new set up the bombardiers were to be taken off of our crews. The El Paso party took on the nature of a farewell for them. We knew such citizens as Maddox, Todd, Thasher, Spore, and all the rest would long remain in our memories. If they had remained with us the "Fortypuss" would have been even more of a fun loving creature if such a thing is possible.

At the end of the first week in El Paso, Washington wired that the major part of the war effort in Europe depended upon our early arrival. So one fine morning we bade bombardiers and radio operators good bye and took off for Florida. Why, I will never know, but Major Keck decided to fly our ship. So I had to earn my pay for the month and navigate to Orlando. The El Paso party had been a honey so this navigation was the last job I wanted. But with the aid of a few maps belonging to Doolin and one or two of Mr.

Marconi's beams we hit destination on the nose. Everybody showed up except Booker and Tucker. Booker had designs on a blond he had left in El Paso so he blew out a super

charger and turned back right after take off. Tucker thought pickings would be good in Tallahassee so he landed there. Both scored no doubt. It was quite a time before Tucker's ship was able to fly and it looked for a while like his crew was going to have to swim the pond.

Eventually all the boys got to Orlando and began to work. Trapper Miles was the first to get organized and before the rest of us cased the lay of the land he had the "Lay of the Land". Through masterful trapping and a fifth of scotch he got in solid at the Flamingo Club and proceeded to take over the prize, a torch singer named Jean. She was certainly a thing of beauty and only a shift of bases saved the trapper from a fate worse than death.

For our intensive work we were stationed at a satellite field near Williston, Florida. The work was not intensive, in fact it was not work. We were quartered in tents nestled deep in the piney woods far removed from the evils of civilization. The only modern things around were a couple of miles of fine runways and two ultra swank latrines. If there ever was a spot to foster concentration on work this was it. So the first night Major Keck decided that the woods were so good for us that we should just be confined to their limits. That was fine. We bought many, many cases of beer and set up an Officers Club 'neath the stars. The harmony was good and the tails were tall. When the stuff got too deep to bail out we just moved to another stump. But confinement was not for "Fortypuss" and orders were soon forgotten.

The wives arrived as usual and Lt. Bixler had a visitor from El Paso. The rest of us made a systematic search of the territory and found marked success. Everybody got around and about a great deal except C. Crites. He had wandered off to Miami without telling the Major, which was a mistake. He was made more or less permanent O. D. and saw a great deal of base operations.

"Fortypuss" seemed greatly at home in Williston. He liked to lay in sun or in the shade of the piney woods. He liked to play ball in the sand and blackjack in the tents. Every man in the outfit found amusement to his own taste. Stewart caught snakes. Carlson caught naps.

Smotherman drew beautiful women. Goat Baker drew flies. Leigh chased the gals. The gals chased Tucker. We were all accepted into the life of the countryside and would have been at peace with the world if we had not been so urgently needed in Europe, they kept telling us.

There was a cafe in town known as Handbury's. It was a fine place so I spent many hours there. The owner's daughter and I became fast friends. She seemed to have plenty of gasoline for her new car and Mr. Handbury had a lot of steaks. The picnics were frequent and afforded great sport. On these parties the "Goat" was the constant companion of Miss Jones. Bloody Bogard squired Miss Fugate. Tucker and Carlson haunted Gerty and her sister. McGrew courted a poetess. Cary and Ott chose Gainesville biddies.

There were many side trips to keep morale high and to build up a few flying hours. Trapper Miles, his sidekick Qua, and Murphy flew generals about during the day and played the field in Orlando at night. Keck took a party of friends to Alentown, Pennsylvania over Easter. Briggs engineered a trip to Wright Field via Chicago. From time to time we all worked over Orlando, Miami, and sundry points of interest in Florida. On one trip to Orlando, Casey decided upon a Buick sport coupe to solve transportation problems. Through this medium he latched on to a blond of no mean proportions. He did

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right well with her too so the car was a success. He failed however to contend with the fact that he could not get the Buick through the waist door of the YB-40. So when we left Casey had to leave the thing parked in the woods, perhaps as a monument to his great love life.

One day there was a great deal of confusion in camp. It had dawned on the brass hats that we were soon to take a very precious cargo across the sea with navigators that had not been checked out. To remedy this, all the navigators were shipped to Orlando for a workout in the "Navitrainer". Following this workout there was a check flight across the Gulf to Galveston and back. All the boys came through in good shape like the pilots had done before them.

Beside flying the big ones the more eager lads logged many hours in Piper Cubs. They were supposed to fly the things for turret tracking practice but they soon abandoned this for the more lively sport of rat racing. The good Lord was with the boys for they did things to those cubs that never should have done. Lt. Nester was especially shot with luck on this score.

The one party in Williston that we will all recall is the one that came off in Bob's Place, the local roadhouse. By hook or crook we managed to get hold of most of the dolls and all of the skebo in town. Booker mixed the drinks in quart milk bottles. Tucker went into a strip tease. Goat went into a coma. The evening was a big success and more or less

wound up our social life in this sector. Washington wired and we again got high behind and flew to Orlando.

In Orlando we took up quarters at the San Juan Hotel and proceeded to make ourselves ready for overseas duty. For the most part this meant that the married men spent 100% of their time with their wives, and the single men had fun as usual. We would have liked to remain in this condition for the duration but the die had been cast and we were combat bound. We were ordered to X point. (With stopover at Mitchell Field.)

I was again in the lead ship doing the navigating. Finding Long Island was no problem, but Mitchell Field was something else again. We spent so much time sightseeing over Brooklyn that we nearly ran out of gas. Then Mitchell was camouflaged and before we could spot it we were heading across the Atlantic. Luck was with us and we finally landed, (all of us).

Since some of the boys had never seen the big town we decided on a final party there en route to X. Headquarters were set up at the Hotel New Yorker and twice daily bulletins were issued regarding the weather. The proceedings at headquarters I know of only through hearsay for I went visiting in Westchester County. But from what I gather it was quite an orgy. Dave Pollack, unofficial host, stated that he had never seen such beautiful work. There was plain trapping, double trapping, and back trapping. Bogard seems to have won the prize with a Powers model, in and out of a fur coat. Even Miles was unable to outdo the Bloody One on this occasion. There was some talk about Major Keck and party but nothing definite.

From New York we flew to point X (Presque Isle, Maine). This was so far up in the woods that the maps ran out. But the town itself was quite gay, and much gayer after the arrival of

"Fortypuss". It was a shade cold for trapping. We had learned the trade in sunnier climates.

However some scores were doubtless made. For the most part we played poker and caught up on our serious drinking. Rumors kept coming in about the shortage of bourbon across the pond so, one and all, we laid in supplies for the long journey. Not having a

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bombardier to worry about I proceeded to pretty well fill up the nose of our YB-40 with jugs of all sizes. Regulations to the contrary such a cargo seemed to have very logical priority over rather bulky navigation books and star charts of various descriptions. So needless to say our ship was well equipped for the flight to destiny.

This still being the spring of 1943 we were more or less pioneers in flights across the Atlantic.

The thoughts of possible dangers ahead (including combat) did not disturb our dauntless group a great deal. We were however greatly sorrowed at the thought of leaving the trapping grounds of America for the unknown haunts of the United Kingdom and Europe.

It was with some misgivings that one and two at a time we took off from the frozen fields of Presque Isle for the more frozen fields of Goose Bay.

As predicted, Goose Bay was cold indeed. Cold and barren it was and foreign to the hearts of our fun loving group. Glad we were that our stay here was short and that we were once again winging our way across the cold North Atlantic, this time headed for Iceland no less. It was on this trip that we learned once and for all that weather, as predicted by weather boys, and weather as practiced by nature were two entirely different things. Being the trusting type I plotted our course according to the "winds aloft" report from Goose Bay. During our flight into the north there was a slight switch and a few drift readings showed that instead of a predicted tail wind that we were bucking a headwind of no mean proportions. Now with a heavily laden aircraft, flying over that cold, cold, water this can be quite a problem. It soon became apparent that if we were going to have enough fuel to make Reykjavik we must jettison some equipment or armor plate.

The YB-40 being built to withstand heavy enemy fire were well armored so we tossed quite a little of this material overboard. We were careful indeed however not to disturb the many jugs of precious bourbon. As always Lady Luck was with us and we did not run out of gas until we were taxiing down the runway at Reykjavik Air Base.

Now Iceland was something else again. More cold and lots of wind, and the sun would not stay in the right place, but just kept circling around the horizon like it was lost. This was most disconcerting because among other things it upset our drinking pattern considerably.

The base crews however must have not been so upset in their patterns because while we were catching up on a little sleep a few of them broke into our planes and proceeded to drink up some of our stock and then get sick right there in the planes. Although the base commander did apologize to some degree this did not replenish our supply.

Fortunately the damage was rather minor and most stocks were not greatly diminished. We were able to proceed to the United Kingdom.

The trip to Scotland was largely uneventful for almost all crews concerned. The one exception was Pete Casey and crew who chose the Peat Bogs of Ireland as a landing place and did quite some damage to one good YB-40. In due time however they did manage to join our group to do a little work over Germany. Now Scotland was a land we would all have liked to see more of. It was truly beautiful, and the dolls were relatively easy to catch. Once caught these dolls were also quite playful, especially after a tumbler or two full of Kentucky spirits. Would that we could again return to our youth and the fields of Edinburgh. Even though our stay in this fair land was short, it is full of fond memories.

Spring came to England in 1943 as it had for the 2000 years of its recorded history, only this time it also brought with it the 13 crew "YB Fortypuss". That made some little difference, especially to the cultural life of the island. We all knew that the war had taken its toll on our British comrades and it would be our duty to cheer them up (or at least to cheer up their wives and sweethearts). We set about at this task post haste.

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Operating out of Alconbury, near Peterborough, in the midlands of England, we covered the island well. London, however, was naturally our real playground. The activities that

occurred in that fog ridden city would fill several volumes. There was however one slight deterrent to our fun loving activities. We were now flying combat. We were also flying practice missions on any day that the sun came out and we were not scheduled over Europe. This all added up to a hell of a lot of flying, some of which was under rather adverse conditions, such as being shot at by the Luftwaffe and flack crews of the German Army.

The "YB-40" planes themselves were B -17's, heavily armored and armed. In essence they were "Fortress Fighters" intended to protect the lead ship in each formation. They had one drawback however, they could not keep up with the lead ship. In fact they could not keep up with the "Tail End Charley". The drawing board jokers neglected to calculate the weight of these planes. The same overweight problems that made it difficult to cross the Atlantic now made it virtually impossible to perform in combat.

The first breaking up of "Old Fortypuss" as a unit came when various crews were dispatched to other outfits to fly on the wings of lead planes. This never proved too successful and gradually the planes were phased out and for the most part the crews remained part of the 92nd Heavy Bomber Group. On a serious note for a moment all of these crews did well in combat.

So "Fortypuss" as a living creature was put to rest but his memory will linger in the hearts of many men for years to come. A few of the original crews, Miles and others, finished their tour and returned to the states. A few never made it back from Germany. Several landed in Stalag Luft III. But that is another "Hell of a Story".

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Capture to arrival at Stalag Luft III 1943

The following was written by By Robert E. Broach in 1943, sometime after his arrival at Stalag Luft III.

We have just graduated from combat in the ETO and have been retired, upon the invitation of the Ruhr Valley flak crews, to this quiet retreat in the center of the Reich, Stalag Luft III. As Jerry's guests, we are being treated fairly well. Our hosts require very little from us except our continuous attendance. We have many hours to ourselves to remember back over the events leading up to our present position. It is only natural then, at some time or other, each of us is tempted to write these things down. So for my own amusement, this is to be such an account. maybe some day this will be of interest when we manage to get together for a party and the bottle has passed around several times causing the stories to reach astronomical proportion; maybe not.

The story that is the most vivid in any Kriegie's memory is the one concerning his last mission and the trip to this camp. I have heard dozens of these tales and ours is certainly not essentially different from many others. But, for the sake of the records, here it is.

At four a.m. on the morning of August 12, 1943, we were aroused from our soft sacks at our base in England, and driven in a GI truck to the briefing room. We soon found we were there to get the story that goes with a trip to "Happy Valley". One look at the situation map and each man said a silent prayer. It was to be the first daylight raid into

the heart of the Ruhr. This meant that the odds against all of us getting back from such a heavily defended area were very slim. The briefing was conducted as usual with S-2 assuring us that we had nothing to worry about, for only about 3,000 guns could fire on us at one time. We were assigned to our own plane and were to lead the second element of the high squadron, lead group. In addition to our regular crew we were to have Lt. J. Overman as bombardier and Col. O. T. Spivey, a pilot-observer, in the nose. This was the pilot's, Lt. Eugene Wiley's sixteenth mission, my fourteenth, Co-Pilot Wells tenth, Lt. Overman's fifth, most of the enlisted men's fifteenth, and Col. Spivey's first. Our luck had all been good up to this point and several members of the crew felt that it was due to change. So it was.

We were given a very early station time so Wells and I did not have full time for our customary pre-flight naps. Take-off time found me a very sleepy second lieutenant introducing myself to a full colonel in the nose of our ship. The introductions were just completed when the fun began. On the take-off the supercharger on number one engine ran away. The plane lurched sideways and headed across the field at about a 60 degree angle to the runway. We had not gained flying speed so Wiley was forced to make the take-off across the open field. All of the planes had taxied to their positions on the runway and none were parked in this area. The one obstruction we had to clear was a brick building on the edge of the field. From the nose this offered quite a show and served to wake me up in rapid order.

We made the wing rendezvous, climbed to 28,000 feet, and set out on course. We left the English coast ten miles north of the briefed position but altered course to enter the Dutch coast at the correct point. All across Holland we encountered only light and scattered flak and a small number of fighters. At the German border this picture changed. FW-109's, ME-109's, JU-88's queued up by the squadron and came in on the formation from all quarters.

The lead ship was evidently under attack for by the time we reached the I.P. we were slightly off course and then altered the bombing run to 30 degrees instead of 130 as briefed. The run was short and with an extra man in the nose, Overman did not have the

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room or the time to properly operate the bomb sight. He salvoed our bomb load on Lt. Parker's range. Then it happened!

About 30 seconds after bombs away we received a direct flak hit which lifted the entire ship with its impact. Most of the damage was done to the left wing where I could see one very large hole from the nose. Number one engine was the first to go out and it was with a sad feeling that we watched the cowling rip off in the slip stream. Wiley announced over the interphone that he could not feather the prop and with this drag we could not stay in formation. He announced we would hit the deck and make a fight for home on our own.

He pulled out to the left and started to dive for the clouds which formed about three-fourths coverage at 5000 feet. The sky was full of German fighters but only two singled us out for attack. We reached the clouds with just one 20 mm hit in the waist which did not injure anyone. By now the whole ship was vibrating very badly but Wiley and Wells

still had it under control. The interphone was partially damaged and worked only intermittently, but Wiley and I kept in contact. We took a heading of 300 degrees in order to get back north of the Ruhr and out of range of that damn flak, which by now was so thick the ships could almost land on it. A more westerly heading would have taken us through the whole barrage again. We proceeded on this heading for ten minutes and were ready to turn left and come out over the Dutch coast. At this point number three engine caught on fire and went haywire. This may have been caused by a flak hit from one of the airfields we passed over. At the same time the interphone in the rear of the ship went out. Since Grey, the tail gunner, was no longer in contact with the cockpit, he bailed out.

The fire in number three began to spread and within about three minutes the outlook from the nose was anything but good. It was evident that we had to get out soon so Wiley decided to set the ship down with a crash landing. We had lost so much altitude that a jump may have been fatal. The Colonel and Overman and I detonated our equipment and left the nose. We took up stations in the radio room with the rest of the crew. The whole gang was as cool as a bowl of cucumbers and methodically went about arranging themselves for mutual bracing. Daniels, the radio operator, had just finished establishing contact with England in preparation for ditching in case we reached the sea. He broke off contact when we came into the compartment and took up his place on the floor. During this time Wiley and Wells were going through the land procedure as if they were coming in on the final approach at our home base. Then with two engines out, the wing badly damaged and the nose on fire, they made a beautiful crash landing. We knocked down a telephone line, took the tops off a row of trees, and then skidded along the ground for about 100 yards. Number three engine was torn loose from the wing and landed back by the waist. No one was seriously injured. The boys in the radio room went out the back and Wiley and Wells climbed out the left cockpit window. We knew that we were very close to the Holland border but were not certain just which side we had finally landed on. It was not until sometime later that we found we were inside Germany by less than one mile. After finding that everyone was all right we decided to scatter. Sgt. Chisholm and Sgt. Phelps ran off across the fields to the west. Sgt. Daniels and Sgt. Lee followed close behind. Col. Spivey began to walk up the road to the north.

Overman, Wiley, Sgt. Groff, and I stopped on the road close to the ship to make inquiries of the folks that had gathered near the scene of the crash. But we soon found that none of them spoke English. There was much shouting and arm waving in the direction the men had run so we soon assumed that these natives were not of a friendly species. But it was not until a big Krauthead with a pistol and an older man with a rifle impeded our progress down the road to the south that we realized that we were already under arrest. It chapped us no end to know we had been taken by the home guard. However, the

Gestapo arrived in a very few minutes so we had the consolation of knowing they would have caught us if the civilians had not. The area that close to the border is always heavily guarded.

The soldiers lined us up with our hands above our heads and took everything from our pockets. While we were in this position Wiley was seized (as usual for him) by a call of nature and had to take to the ditch for relief. The Jerry soldiers accommodated him with paper.

There was much confusion around and about that it was not until a half hour had passed that Jerry decided that we should put the fire in the ship out. By then the nose and cockpit were gone but the flames had died down at the bomb bay bulkhead. Despite the fact that the wing tanks were still half full, they insisted that we climb up on the wings and shovel dirt on the flames that were licking around the engine nacelles. My right shoulder had been banged up in the landing so I could not handle a shovel. One of the guards took my shovel. After much shoveling they thought the fire was out but we noticed smoldering under the right wing which doubtlessly later reached the tanks. It would have given us great pleasure to see the final explosion but they took us away too soon.

The crash had attracted numerous citizens, many of whom looked none too friendly. A few of them had clubs so we were glad enough when the soldiers decided to move us from the area. The Gestapo first marched us about two miles into the little village of Ahaus. Here we became the center of much curiosity on the part of the old folks and much merriment for the kids. Many of the children could speak English very well and it was amusing to hear them speak with an accent that was far easier for us to understand than the British variety.

We went directly to the City Hall where we found Col. Spivey and all the rest of the boys.

The boys had been tracked down by a bunch of kids and captured by folks with pitchforks and rifles. Col. Spivey's route had taken him into the town itself.

They gathered the ten of us together in one of the city office rooms to wait for the arrival of the Luftwaffe troops, for luckily we were Air Force prisoners. It was about two hours before our transportation arrived. The local Gestapo used this time in a very poor attempt to interrogate us. They had a 15 year-old boy acting as interpreter and he was none too bright. They treated us with courtesy which strengthened our hope that we would be treated as military POW's despite the "terror gangster" propaganda. From this initial interview all that Jerry obtained was a confusion in his own mind as to how Wiley, as a First Lieutenant, could be the aircraft commander with a full Colonel on board. We all agreed to stick to the name, rank, and serial number routine. Jerry, with all his arm waving and jabbering, got no more than that, either then or later.

From Ahaus we were taken to Wesel in a model "A" Ford which ran as if it were using coal oil for fuel for the carburetor went out twice in the 15 kilometer trip. At Wesel we were again taken to the City Hall which was a very modern three-story building decorated throughout with Nazi emblems. We were first placed in what must have been the City Council room. It was a beautifully paneled room with a fine table and high backed chairs.

The whole crew was completely at ease and proceeded to make themselves comfortable and go to sleep. An old bald-headed German doctor came in and put a

dressing on Phelps's leg, for he had just now divulged the fact that some of that last shot of flak landed in his leg. He had said it was only a scratch before but the doctor found a fair sized flesh wound. We had been in this room about an hour when I was awakened by the shouting of a very fat Jerry civilian who must have been the mayor. He was very indignant about our being in his council room in the first place and doubly mad because we were

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sleeping on his table. Personally, I thought it was an excellent table for sleeping purposes but he was in no mood to discuss the point. The old boy had his way, so the Luftwaffe soldiers took us to a vault in the basement where we remained for the next twelve hours.

During this time Jerry gave us water but no food. They kept telling us we must wait until we were moved again until we were fed. Since we were all getting a bit hungry we thought it best to forget our troubles and go back to sleep, which everyone except the Colonel, did.

He was amazed by our lack of care and our ability to relax. He said we were the sleepingest lot he had ever seen.

About 2300 hours we were taken upstairs and searched again, this time by Luftwaffe officers. They put all of our belongings in a bag and told us they would be returned to us later. They took my GI watch and I knew I would never see that again. This search seemed stupid to me in view of the fact that it had been done before. But we soon learned something of Jerry's thoroughness the seventh time they effected this identical search.

By this time it was completely dark outside so Jerry decided to move us. We were placed in a very large bus and as we took our seats we found Sgt. Grey already there. He had been injured in his bail-out and captured shortly after hitting the ground. His injury was not too serious and we were glad to see him alive. Grey's appearance on the scene rounded out our full crew of eleven.

The bus took us to a Luftwaffe garrison just inside of Rhine. Upon our arrival we were given the first food most of us had seen for twenty-four hours. The rations consisted of dark bread, cheese, and imitation coffee. This tasted good to us despite the fact that the bread was a substance entirely foreign to anything we had ever eaten. When the food was all gone they took us to individual cells which might have been designed for prisoners of war for they did not resemble a post guard house. Each cell contained a straw bed and wooden stool. None of us wasted any time going to sleep.

Jerry awakened us the next morning with a ration of coffee and sausage. Then one by one we were taken to headquarters where we were questioned by an English speaking noncom. His secretary was a good looking Fraulein and kept her busy typing out the forms for the beginnings of our records. The noncom claimed to have been raised in the States and tried to draw us into conversation which would give him information. I thought he was very dull company and would have much rather talked to the doll, but

this was hardly the place to strike up a romance. He too promised that all of our possessions would be returned to us later. After this interview I went back to sleep. About mid-afternoon we were let out of our cells and allowed to go out into an enclosure adjoining the cell block. At Colonel Spivey's suggestion we took a few exercises but the largest part of our hour was spent talking to the guard who could speak a little English. While we were outside we were given a buzz job by an FW-190. This certainly brought back recent memories to us.

Shortly after this the pilot of the FW and two of his friends paid us a call in the cell block. They could not speak English but with the aid of the guard we carried on a conversation.

The FW boy had been up in the operations the day before and could easily have been one of those that we were swapping bullets with. Everyone was in a good humor for we were thankful to still be alive and the Jerry pilots were glad to have one less Fort in the air.

We learned from these fellows that they did not relish any part of an attack on a B-17 formation. They seemed very interested in trying to find out when we thought the war would end but on this score were non-committal.

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They were eager to talk about airplanes strictly from a professional point of view but we were limited in what we could say from a security standpoint. One of the Jerry pilots had a 50 caliber slug that he had removed from his fuselage and he was very proud of it. They wanted to hear us say that fighters were the big worry of a Fort and they were disappointed to find that flak had done the job for us. It seemed a bit fantastic that such a good natured conversation could be carried on by men who just a few hours previously had been doing their damndest to kill each other 25,000 feet up in the air. Shortly after 6:00 p.m. we were marched from the garrison to a small railway station just north of the city of Rhine. Here we were turned over to the guards who were to take us to our first prison camp. The two guards seemed a small force to take care of eleven men but in view of the fact that we were in a very densely populated area, dressed in flying clothes, unarmed, and with no knowledge of the language, escape was a rather remote possibility. So we went along with the boys with the guns.

As before, we were the center of civilian curiosity. The Nazi propaganda that all American airmen were gangsters must have borne fruit for the expressions on most of the civilians' faces resembled those of people looking at dangerous freaks. It was a source of amusement to smile at some and glare at others to watch their reactions. Our trip from Rhine to Koln was an uneventful ride in a coach very similar to the English third class car. We could not help but be impressed with the beauty of the countryside and the thoroughness with which every bit of land was put into cultivation. I kept comparing these scenes with tracts along railways in the States and came to the conclusion that on this score we came in second. This was especially true of the right-of-ways through the large cities.

As we passed into the Ruhr we saw increasing evidence of the destruction effected by Allied bombing. The approaches to each city were marked by miles of partially

destroyed buildings and there were very few railway stations that did not show the marks of a direct hit in the recent past. The spectacle was to be shown to us in vivid focus in Koln itself.

We arrived in Koln at midnight and it appeared that our guards were confused as to our train schedule from there. At first it seemed that we were to catch a bus from one railway station to another so we were marched across the river to a bus terminal. From the very first we could see the destruction within the city and there had been very close misses at either end of the main bridge we crossed. Buildings on all sides were mere shells and looked as bad as those in the worst areas in London.

The bus station where we finally halted was located directly across the street from the world famous cathedral of the city. We had heard through Jerry propaganda that this had been destroyed but it was certainly still standing on August 14, 1943. It had been hit but was far from demolished and the remarkable fact was that it was the least damaged of any building in that area. While we were looking up at the cathedral a young German officer who was slightly in his cups took it upon himself to express in no uncertain terms his opinion of nations that went about bombing churches. Of course, we could not understand his words but his arm waving and excitement left little to our imaginations. We will never know for sure, but strongly suspect, that it was under his order that we were marched for the next two hours through the areas of total destruction. During this tour we saw only a very few buildings standing. There was a light drizzle in the air and this gave a very sinister atmosphere to the unreal scene that presented itself to us as we walked

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through the ruins. It seemed as if our guards were lost for each time we passed a civilian they asked some question. This area was almost deserted which was probably a fortunate situation for us for in light of what we know now, it seems possible that the guards may have been purposely subjecting us to civilian violence. Similar acts were taking place in Hamburg at this time. The German people were just having the war brought to their cities and they were unhappy about the whole thing. But for some reason these thoughts did not enter our minds and we more or less enjoyed this personally conducted tour of the ruins that so few Americans had, up to this time, the privilege of making. The tour ended after we had completed a wide circle and arrived at a railway station not far from our departure point. I, for one, boarded that train possessing a new respect for heavy bombardment.

Our train was very crowded so all eleven of us, plus our guards, plus their guns and brief cases, were placed in a compartment designed for six. We put Lee and Groff up in the baggage hammock and the rest of us doubled up like sardines in a can. Naturally, we were uncomfortable as hell, but at least we had the dubious pleasure of knowing that the Jerries were in the same boat and they too had to bear up under Wiley's habits and he was in rare form on this occasion. But cramped as we were, we managed to get unconscious in short order. The rest of the night we spent shifting about and joining the guards in cussing Wiley.

We arrived in Frankfurt at 9:30 the next morning and were told by the guards that this was our destination. We were certainly glad to leave that train for among other things we were thirsty, not having had any water for 15 hours. But there was no convincing those squareheads that we would do better after consuming a little water and they told us by signs that we would have to wait until we reached our camp. We learned further that the camp was some distance from town so we must sweat out another train ride. In order to remove us from the crowd they took us into an abandoned office room next to the station, for we had an hour's wait for the other train. Outside of the window there was a large beer advertisement which certainly did not help my mental condition. So I went to sleep until train time.

The local train took us to an outlying village about 15 kilometers from Frankfurt. From town out to the camp was another four kilometers and we could have ridden a trolley but our guards decided we should walk. Just as we left town we passed a Shell Oil Company filling station which looked like a place to get our long delayed drink of water. We halted and proceeded to help ourselves but just as Wells finished drinking a woman came out in a big huff and cut the tap off. "To hell with it", we said and marched off. It began to rain so by the time we arrived at the camp we were all in a very low mood. Our guards saw us safely behind wire and bade us goodbye.

Because of the small size we knew this first enclosure was only for temporary confinement so we did not begin to form any conclusions. We were registered, searched and put in cells. Each cell held three men. I was placed with a co-pilot and engineer from another crew. This was our first contact with any other Americans. Maybe it was because we had Colonel Spivey with us or maybe we were just lucky, for our whole crew except the Colonel, were taken right on through the process of interrogation without being placed in "the cooler". We were taken individually from our cells and marched across the road to an old office building. Here we were each interrogated by a young Oberlieutenant (1st Lt.) who claimed to have been schooled in the States. Like the rest of the Jerries we had talked to, he started off on the old song and dance that the

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United States is a wonderful country and what a big shame it was that we were allied with the British. He beat around the bush for ten minutes before he asked me any questions. He had a long printed questionnaire for me to fill out but I only recorded my name, rank and serial number, home address and next of kin. How he knew our group and squadron number I will never know, but he had before him a file with a great deal of dope in it. He did not know what outfit I came overseas with and of course I did not tell him for if he had that information I would have sweated out many days in the cooler. He asked about the Colonel's duty and I told him nothing. For obvious reasons he was interested in the ages of the crew members and if we were volunteers or draftees. He asked specific questions about the guns in the nose and how the navigator found time to operate them. I suggested that he try it himself sometime for it was still a mystery to me, too. I kept saying, "I don't know", so many times that he must have concluded that I

was none too bright. He ended the interview by escorting me to the door with many gestures of good will. This all seemed stupid as hell but then Jerry's mind is a very confusing thing. I was very glad that the interrogation was over and was satisfied that I had made no breach of security.

Just after dark all of our crew except Colonel Spivey were taken from their cells and marched a half mile down the road to a larger enclosure. Here we were registered again and more cards were filled out. Barracks assignments were made for the sergeants and officers. This assignment meant that we had skipped our "cooler term" and were to be put right into the regular camp routine. The Colonel was taken directly to the cooler and spent a week there.

Upon reporting to our barracks we were told that since it was Saturday night the rest of the men were gathered in the mess hall for a little brew and close harmony. After our experiences during the past three days such news sounded too good to be true.

Naturally, we wasted no time debating the next move. The race to the mess hall was a dead heat between Wells and myself, both of us setting somewhat of a record for that particular distance. Within five minutes I was on my fourth glass of suds and Wells was carrying the lead in sundry verses of "Sing Us Another One, Too".

The beer we had was very mild but our spirits needed no stimulant after so fine an introduction into prison life. (We did not know this was the last suds we would see, except at Christmas, for well over a year.) In this mess hall we found several men we had known in England and in the States but a majority of the fellows were from the RAF. The AAF was just beginning its large scale operations into the Reich and we were the first "big class". The singing and suds soaking continued until eleven o'clock which was time for a lockup so we adjourned to the barracks. By this time Wells had established quite a reputation for his possession of such a large repertoire of miscellaneous ditties, the term "miscellaneous" being used in its broadest sense. During the course of the evening we learned quite a bit about what our prison life would probably be like, so we went to sleep that night with our minds much more at ease than before.

The German name for our camp was Dulag Luft. It corresponded to what our Army would call a prisoners' pool or reception center. It was into this fold that Jerry collected all the Allied aircrews whose odds had run out. Fortunate for us this Luftwaffe takes care of all airmen. From Dulag on we were given as good treatment as any class of prisoners and better than many. Regardless of this fact, it is to the work of the International Red Cross, and not to Jerry's generosity, that all of us owe our health and present state of well being.

At Dulag the individual food parcels that the Red Cross issues to each prisoner each week were all pooled. The mess then was handled by a permanent camp staff made up of

British officers and men who had been there since the first part of the war. They did an excellent job. Since our food was all prepared for us we had very little to do during our

stay there. We learned that we would only be there for a few days so we made no attempt to form permanent habits. We read, played chess, exercised on the playing field and talked with the other crews. I read The Memoirs of Madame DuBarry, which was hardly the proper brain food for one just entering so cloistered a life.

From the Dulag journal we found that almost all of our friends that had gone down before us and whom we thought were dead, were still alive and had passed through this camp enroute to the big clink. The fact that 'The Moose', 'The Nose', and many others were still around and available for future reference was very heartening news.

On our third day in camp we witnessed a sight that made us very happy and yet caused each man there to experience a strong feeling of loneliness and of being out of the picture. We had all wondered at some time or other how a combat formation of forts looked from the ground, but few of us ever entertained any thought of seeing a Jerry's eye view of one. About mid-afternoon we heard the air raid signal. A few minutes later the flak batteries in Frankfort went into action. This was the first time I had ever seen flak from the ground and I might add that it affords a much different picture than when it is playing tic-tac-toe on the plexi-glass. At first we could not discern their target but soon we saw a lone fort in the east headed north. Jerry was tossing red flak in his direction as a guide to the fighters. We all crossed our fingers for the B-17 but his number was up. The co-pilot of this same ship showed up in our midst a few days later.

About twenty minutes after this first alarm the flak began again. This time their target was evident, for out of the east came the largest formation of forts we had ever seen assembled in the air. They were flying a beautiful formation. A Jerry fighter heading into that bunch was facing a terrific concentration of fire power. It was clear that their course would take them out of range of the Frankfort flak but Jerry continued his fighter directing fire. It would be hard to describe our feelings as the boys flew past, but I for one would have sweated out any number of lead plane rides to have been in one of those ships and when I have said that I have said it all. The Germans around camp looked at the formation in wonder for even though they had been getting the hell bombed out of themselves at night, they were not used to seeing the raiders by broad daylight and in such numbers. We knew the target that they had just visited and were certainly sweating out the success of that mission.

By now a sufficient number of men had passed through the cooler to fill up the officers' quarters at Dulag so we were told that the officers would be transferred that same evening to the permanent camp. We packed up the few belongings the Red Cross had issued us and prepared to move. The enlisted men were being sent to a different camp so had a last talk with them. When we left the camp there were seventy officers in the outfit, about half of whom were English and Canadians.

We were all marched from Dulag back to the railway station we had left a few days before. The "hurry up and wait" process worked here just as if the American army were running things. But then we were not in the slightest hurry. Jerry picked out six men to clean out our "coaches" which turned out to be cattle cars from which the cattle had just been removed. They were old 40/8 cars which had been taken from France. I am not sure how eight horses would have felt about the situation, but I speak with assurance when I say that 40 men fill such a car to capacity. There were no benches or blankets, so each of us

made ourselves as comfortable as possible on our barracks bags and settled down for a long ride.

For rations we were issued one Red Cross parcel for three days. This plus some hot concoction that Jerry dished out made the food situation not bad at all. But getting rid of the food once it was eaten was another matter. Needless to say, very few cattle cars are equipped with latines and this one was no exception. We had no relief on this score for the first 24 hours. The second day Jerry finally saw his way clear to let us out for a few minutes while the cars were in a marshalling yard. The reason for letting us out then was that all of the guards got out also. The actual distance from Frankfort to our destination was only three hundred miles but our route took us in an arc to the south so we must have traveled about four hundred miles during the 38 hours we spent on the train. This added up to a very poor ground speed. This slow rate was caused for the most part by the fact that we were attached to a freight train and were held up many hours in various switching yards. The train made excellent time when it was in motion. Because of our crowded conditions the trip was anything but pleasant but in spite of this, most of the boys were in very good spirits even after 38 hours of it. I was in a car with most of the RAF men. They afforded a lot of entertainment by hours of singing. I slept next to a Polish pilot who had flown one whole tour with a fighter group and was almost finishing with his second round when a mid-air collision brought him down in France. He had been through both the battle of Poland and the London blitz. He had once been shot down over London and thrown in the clink as a Jerry because he could not speak English. His hatred for Jerry was very intense.

Due to the limited view one gets from a box car I saw very little of the country in our trip across Germany. As we passed to the east we saw less and less damage from bombing.

(Since then this situation has been greatly improved, however.) We reached our destination On Friday morning, August 19. We were certainly glad to climb out of that box car. We found that we were in Sagan, about 90 miles southeast of Berlin.

Without delay we were marched to our camp which is located less than a mile out of town. Here we again went through the process of being searched, photographed, fingerprinted and registered. Our flying suits and whatever equipment we had managed to hold on to this far were taken from us and receipts were handed out with the same old story that it would be returned to us when the war was over. Same stuff, and in the meantime I must tell time by the sun. One by one we were questioned by a Jerry officer about our work in civilian life, supposedly for the purpose of seeing if we had any qualifications that would be of use here.

We had learned by now that the less we told the Jerries the better, so we all had a wise answer for them. Wells told them that he had been a traveling man of no mean proportion and would gladly tackle any product with a route to the west. I said that I had dabbled in public relations work and would be glad to help out on any complaints that might arise.

They informed me that hardly any complaints were coming up these days so I would be unemployed for the duration. These interviews took only a very short time so we were soon marched into the enclosure that was to be our home for many months. What has happened since our arrival at Stalag Luft III belongs to another story which as yet has no end. Through the courtesy of the Red Cross and the existence of the Geneva Convention we are leading fairly normal lives.

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Our future rests with the fortunes of war.

By Bob Broach

1943

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The following was written in two diaries kept by Robert E. Broach while POW at Stalag Luft III and later in Moosburg through liberation and docking at New York harbor. The first Diary begins April 30, 1944 and the second begins October 10, 1944.

April 30, 1944

Today closes the longest month I have experienced since we landed in Germany. Our morale has gone up and down depending upon the current feeling toward invasion prospects. At the first of the month we thought the big push would come any day. Now, I begin to wonder if it is going to come this spring. It seem likely that we may be here another year so I shall begin to condition my thinking on that basis.

Up to this point I have honestly felt that this type of life has been beneficial for me, but from now on the results may be different. The past 262 days have given me plenty of time to think, and to evaluate the past in an unmolested abstract manner. As a result of this I have taken stock of many of my short-comings. That is probably for the best. But this type of thinking has a limit. If I have a year or more imprisonment ahead of me I will do well to let my thinking be more objective and much less subjective.

During this month I received 17 letters, the latest being from Sis Bettie (mother) written Feb. 27th. These set my mind at ease about things at home. But, they also brought to mind the disagreeable fact that we are out of the picture, at least for the time being.

Flo's letters still indicate that she really is serious about our affair. Maybe she is, but I have many doubts.

She had my picture made up and sent it to Sis Bettie for Christmas. She is a very thoughtful doll. Frances' letter was typical, but I enjoyed it a great deal.

In camp life this month has seen great strides taken toward putting us back in a military frame of mind. We now have big SMI's complete with locker and personal inspection. Col.

Spivey is determined to preserve our training. Despite many opinions to the contrary, I think he is right. Without some sort of supervision we would live like a "flock of

peasants" (to use the Goat's expression). Conditions last winter were ample proof of that.

Combine life has been fairly smooth. I had the Gi's for 10 days which may have accounted for the few days when I did not seem to fit in just right. The Goat and I had difficulties over KP. As a result of the racket he made over this he was tried, and convicted of being a public nuisance by a "kitchen court". In connection with "J" combine we laid down 15 gallons of brew. If all goes well it should be ready for July.

We have taken up bridge again as a nightly pastime. For reading I finished:

Roughly Speaking - Pearson

Keys of the Kingdom - Cronin Bright

To The Wanderer - Lancaster Disputed Passage - Douglas

Low Man on a Totem Pole - H. Allen Smith

Rain in the Doorway - Thorne Smith.

Besides these I spent some time in the reference library. Nothing formal. Have even slipped in attending the Army classes.

We have come to an end of the present KP schedule. Tomorrow Ernie and I go on cooking and KP combined for a week.

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May 9 - Tuesday

Last week Ernie and I had a busy time doing all the combine chores. Naturally Ernie was chief cook, but we were both busy as a couple of cats. I now have a better understanding of what the cooks have been doing for the past 9 months.

Mail has come thru very well. The censors are catching up the slack under a new system.

PeeWee has gone to the hospital for observation. He has had a cough and was running a daily fever. Nightly bridge has continued. Intracombine relations are in good shape.

Have read No More Gas by Nordhoff and Hall. It was the story of the Tuttles of Tahiti.

This family reminds me of our own family in many ways. One of my letters was from Dr. Storer. Have just written him a card. Also, have written to Sister (eldest sister, Edith).

May 17 - Wednesday

Just finished Wickford Point by Marquand. It gave lots of food for thought about the varying values separate classes place upon everyday affairs. I still think this place has given me a chance to evaluate things in my own mind much better than ever before. But this past week nothing has seemed of much value. I was especially conscious of this feeling while I was in the reference library this morning. I was trying to clarify my recent thoughts on the life of Christ and was very surprised to find that even on this subject I could not draw any definite conclusions. Today's mail brought old letters from Homer, Pat, Flo, Aunt Natalie, and a recent letter from Mary Evelyn Pigford. M.E.'s note had a P.S. from the doctor that Sis Bettie was in good health. That was fine news.

Now to write some letters.

May 21 - Sunday

We are still sweating out the invasion day by day.

Jerry seems to be expecting it anytime. His propaganda has taken on a new phase in which he speaks of the possibility of not only an invasion but a successful one as a foregone conclusion. We hope he is right in predicting it as coming soon, but as the days go by the problem diminishes in my mind.

Twitchel just finished an excellent description of life in Stalag Luft III for a radio program that is to be recorded here for reproduction at home next Christmas. But as I knew it would be, his work was thrown out by Spivey and the thing is to be written by Ray Brunn. Reason? If a true picture is given of a Kriegie's outlook on this life then the picture that has been painted at home is made ridiculous.

Two book parcels came through from Sis Bettie yesterday. Have nearly finished one of the books, My Pillow Book, by Alice Hagen Rice. This book is a collection of philosophical quotations on the subject of religion. The gist of them all is that within each person there is the ability to put ones life in tune with the intelligence behind the Universe, God, if one is able to rise above the adversities of life. In reality, it is a mystics approach to religion.

I need some development of the inner source of power the mystics speak of, for I certainly find the necessity for it in this place where minor irritations are magnified many fold.

I am going to make an effort for a few days to apply the Golden Rule here. If it works, I am sold.

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Dearest Sis Bettie: Yesterday brought me two book parcels from you and we are all enjoying them already. Have had a lot of fun this afternoon reading some of the poems aloud to the boys. The last books I received are still going the rounds and will be for weeks to come. So you see we really appreciate them. A Red Cross man was here recently to take some group pictures of us. If you get the Red Cross Bulletin you may see them sometime. If so, I am in the front row of our barracks and the four men on each side of me are the fellows in our combine. We have the same gang that started together last summer plus Luther Baker whom you should be acquainted with from my letters before I got here. We are still one happy family and continue to get along swell together.

May 22 - Monday

This journal may not have been a good idea at that. I have begun to experience a feeling of something unfinished hanging over me if an entry is not made. It's been a good day.

Ten trips around the track, three chapters in Fairchild-Furrvis-Buck, and two hours at the concerts. The new PA system is hot in operation and the recordings sound fine. A Red Cross representative was in camp today. He took group pictures by barracks. Relations were good today. Small talk from Goat and Jr. ignored. Chenault is a fine example of a dividend on an investment in Whatever-It-Is.

June 4 - Sunday

Ernie and I have just finished up our second turn in the kitchen. We worked well together despite the fact that I shot dice through one dishwashing turn. Won too. We sampled the brew Friday night and it was not good. The news seems to be looking up. Read the Life of Will Rogers written by his wife. He was certainly one of the "real persons" that Link refers to. Am in the process of reading So Little Time by Marquand. It is a good example of pre-war thinking. He is a master of subtle debunking. Have begun a practice of walking the track just before lock up with Young Siebert. His civilian job was very similar to the one Carl Bruce had and his tales are the same as Vaughn or Carl or Bryan might tell. They certainly take me back home. The big news of the week is the arrival of 2½ tons of fine grade toilet paper. My newly organized softball team, the Six to Five Players, lost their first game this afternoon 12 to 10 to the coon dig capsules. WE WAS ROBBED
June 7 - Wednesday
The big news of invasion came yesterday and morale hit an all time high. I was on camp detail at the time so I got to see them in action. Despite the good news, I have personally been in a slump today. This might be due to a small run-in with Jim Heaberg in the game last night. This was certainly nothing serious but it left a bad feeling. He screams way too much. We consumed a dishpan full of the brew to celebrate the news. This batch is no good. I laid \$10 at 1 to 10 that Jerry would capitulate within six weeks from today. I don't think I will win but the odds are fine.

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this show. Small is a push over in Heads Up.
Today is the first day I have had any feeling about being a prisoner. It would be fine to see
June 15 - Thursday
Sam was certainly right when he said that the time after the invasion would be the longest.
We sweat it out by the hour now.
Bill Carey has started a daily newscast over the PA system. It comes off at 2130 and is a summary of O.K.W. In addition to this program, they have begun a series of two hour programs each Thursday and Saturday afternoons. The first one went off very well. I typed part of the script and enjoyed the work a great deal.
This past week has been bad for me from a sociological standpoint, but probably not as real pleasure.
bad as many others. Seibert and I have been fairly regular with our walks and these are a
My thinking processes must be slowing up. I came out a poor second in a discussion of Lloyd C. Douglas' merit with Twitchell and Norton.
No mail today.

June- Tuesday

As usual, since the invasion, we are sweating out O.K.W. each day. Bill Carey's summary at

9:30 is fine. When we stop to think about it, the boys in the compound are about the most interested analysts of this war. Our news room presents a fine picture of this history that is now being made. Of course, Jerry's reports are beginning to sound natural to us after listening for a year. Beginning last Thursday I began losing chocolate on Cherbourg. That city has cost me a month's supply already.

Lt. Delany, the editor of the Kriegie Times, has been asking me to try a feature article for the paper but i have not been able to get the old noggin in gear.

Ernie and I are sweating out the chores this week. Block 56 had the scales this afternoon. I tipped up at 150.

I still have a pot.

July 1 - Saturday

The Russian offensive is still going strong and is turning into the greatest rout in history. The Allies are ready to cut loose in the West and optimism is at an all time high. The latest purge brought hopes that the war will end this fall.

Big Ed Conley and Bob Miller moved into the combine yesterday and we changed things around very satisfactorily. Wells is like a bear and getting worse. I leave him strictly alone.

Wrote this verse last evening:

TO THE LAST PURGE

You caught your chunk of Jerry flak,
And now you rate a Kriegie sack,
Complete with pallyass and hay,
In which to earn your flying pay.

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So trim it up quite like a fort,
And fly it to the west abort,
Just fly back by ten o'clock,
To taxi around within the block.
Refly each mission mile by mile,
In the best of Kriegie style,
When you've built up time enough,
Land it back at Stalag Luft.
So the older men can interrogate,
And get the dope hot and straight,
'Bout dolls we left and the price of gin,
And when the hell the war will end!

July 6 - Thursday

We took shots this afternoon for typhoid and I feel like hell. They say it hits a man harder if he has had the stuff so that is doubtless my trouble. Wrote Sis Bettie a nice letter and Jack Bryan a card. Only received one letter lately, hope to hit tomorrow. The Fourth was a big day here with Sunday games going all day long. Col. Spivey gave a fine address in which he stressed changing conditions and the new world we would face when the war is over. This has long been a topic of thought for me. I just hope I have not changed myself. I would give a lot to be able to leave this place with the confidence I possessed about the first of February. Now, I have a rather sloppy outlook on life, which lacks confidence. I think I have learned many lessons here, but this is not the proper place for constructive thinking after ten months.

Received my March to May parcel today. It contained mostly food. It was very welcome. Two boys from Tulsa came in the last two purges. They are named Hess and Franks. I did not know either of them, but had a good time talking to them. Received a gash Canadian cigarette parcel from the Lions Club in Henrietta. Cheap talk is about to take place.

July 12 - Wednesday

Following the typhoid shot I felt tough for three days and stayed close to the sack. Monday Bill Dorney and Dell Porter moved in with us to complete the 12 man combine. The back room now has 3 twelve and 7 ten men combines which makes for very crowded conditions.

Read Parnassus on Wheels by Christopher Morley and A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith. IGB was a good book.

The after-lights-out conversation was very humorous last night. It was Bongo's birthday so I wrote him a verse. He came back with limericks about a lot of folks, some of which were not bad.

My mail is still not coming thru. One Jan. 16 letter from Sis Bettie today. Dorney and I are going to exercise?

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July 14 - Thursday

The health program is on! For the past five days Bill Dorney, Ed Connelly, and I have been doing exercises as they should be done. We either do them after lights-out or early in the morning. Yesterday we got our time screwed up and got up before seven. I think these will put me in good shape for the trip home which I am laying 6 to 5 will come about by November.

Young and I started in a class on Real Property. Lt. Caroselli is the instructor. He seems competent to me but Cy is a little leery of him. Just polished off Kitty Foyle by Morley. It was a fine book. Wish I had read more in civilian life.

On July 14 (Tono) Sined gave birth to 8 cats in our coal bin. It was great fun. She had quite an audience.

I have a summer cold.

The Russians continue to advance like hell.

There was an attempt to assassinate Hitler today.

July 22 - Saturday

It is one of those rainy days that takes me back to other Saturday afternoons in Tulsa. I could enjoy those same sessions much more now for a year in this place has done a great deal toward bringing my mind to rest. We used to drink in order to forget the mess things were in. When we get back things may still be in a mess, but at least for a while there will be a period of optimism and reconstruction. Then we can drink for recreation, and the hangovers will not be nearly so bad. It will be interesting to see if Donovan has the same feelings about this subject. We both drank for the same reason before, but expressed it differently. I know now that he was not speaking idle words when he said I was a hard person to get along with. I knew it then, but was too busy sticking my head under the ground to do anything about it.

Today is the day I predicted great developments. So far, Jerry has reported: 1) landing of our troops on Guam, 2) sensational gains on the east front. The Russians are still going faster than we ever expected it would be possible for them to move. It looks as though they will take Lemberg and Brest-Litovsk by the old method of by-pass. Warsaw may well be taken in August. If this happens, October looks like an excellent month.

July 28 - Friday

I view of recent O.K.W. reports it seems as though my prediction for big events on the 22nd was 48 hours late. The 20th might prove to be significant. Movement on the east front is so fast that it looks as though Jerry is not even putting up a very stiff rear guard action in a withdrawal into this country.

I have taken over the bookkeeping for the First League Ball Club which has served to revive my interest in that field.

Our nightly class in calisthenics has turned into a class in weight lifting at 2000. I am still doing a few pot exercises.

Frank Smith and four other repats left on the 26th for some collecting point. Porter is still here.

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Just finished Rogues Gallery by Frank Scully.

August 4th -

Received five letters yesterday and five today, so am in a good frame of mind. Heard from Mr. Byrd, Mr. Lane, Turk, Jessie, Jack Clements, Aunt Margie, Margie, Sis Bettie. Mama reports that Margaret has married Dingy Marshall. I must drop her a note. Wrote to Kent Buelah.

The boys have started to move in France and the Russians are pounding at Warsaw. October looks like a fine month.

Porter left today.

We have a BG in camp now. His name is Yaniman (or Vaniman).

August 13 - Sunday

Yesterday rounded out our first year in Germany, and we observed the day by having Col.

Spivey over for a big dinner. We really put on a spread from soup to nuts. It must have been good for the Old Man is sick in bed today.

This year has not been a waste by any means. For being here under isolated conditions has given us all time to take stock of ourselves. Our combine can truthfully say that its members have learned to live together. We should certainly be able to spot the men from the heels when we get back into regular life, for life in here has given us many lessons in what to look for in a citizen. The Allies have done wonders in France. They have taken all of Brest and are now driving back north and may catch quite a batch of Goons west of the Seine.

The Russians in our Vorlagar put on quite a show for us this evening with music and dances.

Dreams lately have been horrible. Twice in the last two nights I have dreamed that Sis Bettie has lost a leg.

Next date to watch is August 15th to 17th.

August 19 - Saturday

Big ASMI was just completed and the place looks fine.

The 15th proved correct as a big day with an invasion of the south coast of France. Next day to watch is Sept. 29th.

A May 24th letter from Sis Bettie strikes a lonely note.

August 23 -

The heat wave is really on. The past three days have been scorchers. Downey's health movement is still going strong and I am losing just a little pot.

Jerry seems to be withdrawing all troops from France so my prediction about France and Warsaw falling together may stand up.

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The Goat is in a foul mood. He was removed temporarily from the first team and is bitter.

Just paid Steward 5 bars of the 10 I lost to him since 55 won this quarter. The slump the boys hit this last week cost me lots of chocolate.

September 5 - Wednesday

Things are really looking up. The boys have joined the lines in south and central France. They are attacking in Lorraine and going like hell thru Belgium. The Russians declared war on Bulgaria today. They doubtless want to be in on the peace. That should bring that situation to a head fast. Finland is about through. So it looks like the 29th.

Health program proceeding well. Waist is down slightly. We go on half rations next Monday.

September 11 - Monday

It looks as though Russia intends to occupy the Balkans, and be on the ground for dictation of peace terms before they strike the final blow at Germany. Bulgaria is at war with everybody. The Allies seem to be putting the push to Aachen.

Morale is high and work on log books has hit an all time high.

Short air raid last night, long one this afternoon.

Half rations started today.

Mail situation is terrible. I have never felt so out of touch with home and strangely enough I do not feel so badly about it.

September 12 - Tuesday

The day started off well with a FW-190 spinning in and exploding just outside of Sagan.

The heavies were overhead at noon.

56 lost a heartbreaker to 40.

The news map front moved half way across Rumania.

Weights alone this morning. Second day on half rations, no difference.

September 15 - Friday

The "tightening up" program hit a new high today. The chain of command has been announced and General Military Discipline will be observed. We now have reveille, fallout, and march to appel. We hold the good thought that this is all indicative of the near end.

"Our days of Kriegie ease are done,

The war is very nearly won,

It's hut to appel and keep it neat,

The Sagan Bridgehead stands complete!"

Three letters from home today. One from Sis Bettie, written April 30, mentions just recovering from pneumonia. She must have made a complete recovery for a May 27th letter, received last month, speaks of changing things about at 1440(1440 South Boston, Tulsa, home). Am thankful the two letters were received in reverse order.

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No mail from Flo in so long that I have decided that she has found new interests. Leigh Francis' letters are still as entertaining as ever.

The Russians seem to have started a move in the north with 40 divisions. Our forces are hitting the west wall. The 29th looks good.

September 19 - Tuesday

Ernie and I are on KP and doing well.

Paratroops hit in Holland across the Rhine.

The combine is strangely tranquil except for Jr.

September 24 - Sunday

Ernie and I just finished what we hope, and privately think, will be our last turn at KP.

Despite half rations, we fed the wolves well. Galloway was a little upset about certain citizens continually letting their tape worms get the better of their manners. Stuff may all be rationed shortly.

Jones is still in the hospital (since last Tuesday), so Willie and Goat take over tomorrow.

This bridgehead across the Rhine looks fine.

September 27 - Wednesday

The boys seem to have hit a snag in Holland but the big stuff is on.

Bridge tournament is at a peak.

New purge in from Budapest. One boy from Claremore.

Health kids again in action after a week layoff.

Deep into Eddington.

10,000 personal parcels now in this area.

October 2 - Tuesday

The medics found a case of diphtheria in block 52 last night. Today that barracks was placed "off limits" and the men isolated from contact with the rest of the camp.

Personal parcels are at last coming into camp. Reliable sources say that there are several thousand in the Vorlagar for us. Ernie, Dorney, and Big Ed have hit so far. I got a parcel of Herbert Tarryton's from Mr. Baxter.

The Jerry radio is bleeding about the "impending attacks in the west". Warsaw is about to kick in. Four letters from Sis Bettie this morning brightened my mood. Everything seems alright at home, but the thought persists in my mind that I will never be content back in Tulsa again. Also, had a nice letter from Dorothy Daniel.

Red B., a boy in the front bay, has a large idea about a block musical. I may vomit!

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October 3 - Wednesday

Tonight Major Hall told us of the latest bit of Cs on the part of the Jerry's. Now they say we cannot own tin cans, hence, cannot make the dozens of articles necessary to combine life. This comes right on the heel of the dope we got on the treatment the goddamned Goon POW's are getting in the States. Also, next week we start 14 men combines.

The following is from second Diary

October 10 - Tuesday

This was a fine day for I got out of the compound for the first time since being here. MC and I got to take a walk under the regular Jerry system. We made a circle tour of this area, covering a circumference of about 7 miles. It was a pleasant (and strange) sensation to get outside the confines of the barbed wire. There is some beautiful country surrounding this camp. This is evidently a focal area for thousands of prisoners of many nationalities.

The O.K.W. news is fine. They say big offensives have been opened on all fronts. There is a breakthrough at Aachen which looks very good. The Russians are rapidly acquiring all of Hungary and are pressing close to Memel on the Baltic.

I finished The Nature of the Physical World by Eddington. Started this book just one year ago and have read it on and off all during this time. It is an excellent course in the elements of modern physics as founded on Einstein's work. Wish I had read this work while I was at school in St. Louis. It has been the basis for a lot of thinking while being cooped up here and has led me into much reference reading.

October 13 - Friday

The stuff was not mellow today so the flap hit a big low. Am not too discouraged myself. The bunks were triple decked last Thursday. Without thinking PeeWee stuck Ernie on the top tier without consulting him. Quite naturally, Ernie was put out about it and began looking around for another combine or room to move into. He may move to 1 or Block 39. I certainly hope he does not leave here.

The mail is coming thru in rapid order now. The past two days have brought me 4 letters up to September 6th. Was sorry to hear of Edith's death.

October 20 - Friday

The mail situation has been excellent during the past week. I scored about 20 times. Highlights: my stuff got home; no promotion; Mary Glass sold one of Cecilia's colts for 10 G's. Was very sorry to learn that Edith passed away August 26th.

The bunks are all tripled now. My sack has been "winterized" with a quilt.

The Allies are regrouping along the west wall. The Russians are mopping up the Balkans and along the Baltic. The Jerry's are calling up the last reserves.

Got a may parcel Tuesday, mostly food. Got 5 books from Vandivers.

October 24 - Tuesday

Had a fine surprise Sunday when Sgt. Mickel turned up in the new purge. He went down with Captain Sergeant on August 17, 1943. Naturally, he has quite a story. We had a hell of a big time rehashing the days during phases. He is a good boy.

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Ernie and I are on KP and doing well. He went on his walk this afternoon and I got all sorts of help from MC and Dorney.

Morale in camp is high, but no one has any definite reason why.

I owe Small two lbs. of sugar.

Klimno is here for a game of Ace-Duce.

October 29 - Sunday

Just finished the ordeal of KP and just in time. Was getting disgusted with everything, especially a couple of characters.

Ernie and I wrote cards to Ruth Millett of the Scripps Howard papers and Clara Booth Luce asking their opinions of the ideas that Ilka Chase set out in In Bed We Cry. We may get answered next year.

Opinions now seem to place the probable end of the war after the first of the year. Sad thought, but after all what is a couple of months?

November 4 - Saturday

Well, our thinking has finally come to the point where most of us plan to spend a big part or all of the winter here. It is no longer "home for Christmas", but "maybe it will end during the winter". When analyzed it seems that the set-back at Arnheim was the blow that was just enough to stop the Allied drive. It will take time to regroup and bring up the stuff to start again. The Russians have hit a hell of a wall in East Prussia. We need a first rate breakdown within Germany to turn the trick. This could happen any day (or the day after).

There seems to be a real tie-up in the Red Cross Parcel Transportation channels. The SAO came out with an announcement of $\frac{1}{4}$ rations if a substantial shipment does not come thru by the 15th of this month. Also, we must, by order, begin to save food toward a two weeks supply on our present rations. This actually puts us on a $\frac{1}{4}$ basis now.

We got two more men in the combine Friday. Hadfield moved over from "K" and Capt. Jack Long came in on a new purge. Long is an ATC pilot from Miami, Florida. He seems to be a nice guy. He is quiet and is highly recommended by Bill Carey who knew him in college and high school.

With the increase in combine size we switched the "J" system of KP Ernie and I took a small on the deal having just finished our week. On the new set up, Baker and I cook until

tomorrow then go to another job.

Hand came back Friday, PeeWee Monday. Jones is back at the Vorlagar Hospital after a successful appendectomy at 8C.

Tonight we have the Col.'s personal supply of records, so we will play them until the small hours.

Still active in the Health Kids.

November 7 - Tuesday

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It's Election Day back home, but at SL III it's just a typical rainy, bleak day in the bag.

For the past couple of days we have hit a decided low in morale. Yesterday we got by the whole day on Goon rations. It looks as though about 90% of our food during the next couple of weeks will be just that. We got a shot in the arm by the arrival of personal parcels for Porter, PeeWee, Mc, and Jones. Porter's chocolate came in very handy. I am now even with Small.

Odds in the camp are about 5 to 1 for his re-election.

We are in hopes a new offensive will open up after the election. It is hard to believe that this thing is being dragged out for political reasons, but after what has happened over the Polish question we can accept anything as possible. If Russia, England, and the US could have agreed on the post-war government of Poland and the Balkans, I think, this thing could have been brought to a close this fall despite the setback in Holland.

Last night Ed Norton took me to a forum meeting that was very interesting. It was composed of Burbank, Brunn, Allen, Twitchell, Shore, McCray, Goodson, Norton, Braley, Kauffman, and about a dozen others. They have been meeting regularly for the past few months and it seems to be an intelligently conducted affair. Twitchell was the speaker last night. He talked on the Pragmatic school of modern education. His main point seemed to be that in an ever changing society (which is any civilization) there is a need for an elastic education system to keep in line with the times and further to direct the trends of the future. The pragmatists, headed by John Dewey, believe this can best be accomplished by integrating the various fields of learning so each individual will be able to see "the big picture". In our present system of specialization, there are large gaps between the experts (leaders in the field) that make a concerted leadership difficult. There are also large gaps between the leaders and the people they lead which make their direction of affairs unintelligible to the masses. He quoted rather convincing figures on the trend of our society and the need for such a revamping of our educational system.

The discussion was good. I hope to be asked to join them regularly.

November 9 - Friday

No election returns yet. We had a flurry of high spirits at supper last night when Wells said O.K.W. just reported the opening of a large scale offensive in the Metz sector. This seems to have been pretty much of an overstatement.

My September 30th date was rather disappointing, but despite this fact, I am going to privately sweat out December 3rd for big things.

Conditions within the combine are not good. The trouble seems to be in space.

Fourteen men crowd the hell out of our corner, but what the hell, we soon will have 18.

Am reading Fosdick's On Being a Real Person. He spreads it on a bit thick, but puts over many good ideas. He certainly hits me right on the noggin in some respects, namely, in being too egocentric. Have always been conscience of the fact, but have done very little about it. He has a good chapter on "getting oneself off of one's hands", which is very good. If such a thing can be done in here it can be done anywhere, so it is worth a whirl.

November 12 - Sunday

Yesterday was Armistice Day and I observed the day by going to a service in the theater.

General Vaniman and Col. Spivey both gave short talks. Both were optimistic about the

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end of this particular war. The gist of the stuff was that the peace after the last war was botched up by the United States' determination not to be involved in world politics and that we should not repeat the trouble again. Both praised FDR and his foreign policy. Col.

Spivey also took the opportunity, as he always does, to remind the boys that they are not going home as returning heroes, just as plain citizens. The General phrased our position very well when he said we could appreciate life better when we return to a normal existence because of the "ride death took on our wing".

Today was fine outdoors. Took a lot of laps then came to the reference library. Stayed here all during afternoon and evening. Finished a few chapters in Rivers of Glory, and five chapters on an outdated book on aviation by Bradley Jones.

November 16 - Friday

Last night we had the first snow of the year. Today the slush is a foot deep. We got to see a movie, The Spoilers, this morning. It was very good. My May to July parcel arrived earlier in the week. It included some fine articles and a sun tan outfit; 16" shirts, 36" pants. Plan to make a winter ski suit out of the pants alone.

Dorney and Miller are on cooking this week and are doing a fine job in spite of all kinds of uncalled for advice on the part of a certain sour individual. Incidentally, the citizen in question is fast acquiring the disfavor of everybody in the outfit. Ernie and I are toying with the idea of moving into 39, but I am not too eager.

Rumor has it that the Goons in the Vorlagar say a big move is on in the west.

November 18 - Sunday

The past couple of days have seen the boys in high spirits. Maybe the movement in the west is significant. Weather seems to be the key factor. We are having fair weather here today and it moved in from that direction. It looks as if the Goons are going to put up a big defense at Metz. A breakthrough there would be a fine blow.

Last night block 56, and John Kernighan in particular, put on Hasty Raisin Brew. It put Hellzapoppin to shame. The cast numbered over 130. It was a hit.

We have the record player for the day. The boys are playing great groups of Strauss, so it's into the sack and listen. These songs certainly bring back memories of Joe and Margie.

November 20 - Tuesday

The activity in the west continues on a scale "larger than any military engagement up the present time", to quote the German O.K.W. news. A real breakthrough may develop yet and end this thing this year. (Then, too it may not).

Have begun an informal study of sociology in reading two of VF Calverton's modern library books, The Making of Man and The Making of Society. The M of M is in the reference library, so it will be available, but I may have trouble securing M of S regularly. Calverton is evidently rather radical in his thinking, but nevertheless, has compiled two good anthologies in these two books. In his introduction to the making of man, he describes our inability to view social sciences purely objectively as a result of "cultural compulsives" or the factors within our own (economic-social) society that make us accept or reject whichever explanation of social phenomena that best fits our own ends. He says it is impossible to get entirely away from cultural compulsives. At best, we can only

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recognize their existence and be as objective as we can in light of this recognition. He points out that naturally every person is affected by the cultural compulsives on the society which supports him (or of which he is a part). Wonder what the cultural compulsives of a

November 25 - Sunday

For the past five days O.K.W. has put forth the news of our real efforts in the west. If the boys can sustain the drive to the Rhine from Koln to Strasburg, we're in. If the offensive bogs down this time, our hopes for a victory this winter will be slim.

This week has been spent in the library and has been very enjoyable. Have arrived at a peace of mind that is good to have at the present time. We are fortunate, in a way, to be POW's and be able to view things objectively during such chaotic times.

November 30 - Thursday

Thanksgiving Day just ending and we are stuffed to say the least. Ernie and Wells cooked up great batches of the food we have been saving plus most of the remaining delicacies from the personal parcels. Jeff came thru with two deserts, and we put it all away.

PeeWee just figured the weight of the total meal to be approximately 81 pounds.

Tomorrow we will go back to being hungry.

Spirits have been high until this evening. Now they are low again. Ernie says ay now, PeeWee says Dec. 14. I don't say.

For the first time in months I have been thinking about finances. Despite the fact that I will have many months pay coming, this type of thinking always depresses the hell out of me.

Am certain that I should draw allowances for Sis Bettie, but plan on asking Col. Spivey's opinion on this soon. It will make \$81.00 a month difference retroactive to my date of commission. What grieves me is the thought of the reduced bus terminal rent and the rising cost of living at home. If we made a mistake there I certainly should just be able to accept it as such, but it still remains to worry the hell out of me. I was surely an inexperienced hand then.

Had a good thought on Thanksgiving this morning. After being in this goddamned country this long we think that American really should set aside six days to be thankful; three for the Atlantic and three for the Pacific Ocean.

December 4 - Monday

Well, Dec. the Third has come and gone with no significant change in the situation so my days of sweating the news are over. The Allied attack in the west continues and the Jerry's are slowly backing (or across) the Rhine. Our boys may still break thru all at once or this may settle down to a grim inch by inch advance. Russia seems to be bringing the Hungarian battle to a successful end. If they would only start to move in the Warsaw sector the picture would brighten considerably. It looks as if Uncle Joe is determined to let the Allies do their part in the west to make up for his splendid work in the east and in the Balkans. He certainly has his thumb on that part of the world now. He will be in the driver's seat at the peace pow-wow as far as Central and Eastern Europe are concerned.

In fiction, I finished *River of Glory*, and am enjoying *In Bed We Cry*. Have decided to give Mr. Adler Scream, as advanced in *How to Read a Book*, a try. Was pleased to find out that while I read very slowly I have been reading correctly as his standards go. Am going to do

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a little work on the classics. Finished Book 1 of Aristotle's *Politics* today. There is talk about splitting the combine up. Hope they do!

December 7 - Thursday

So the war, for the United States, is three years old today. It was rather ironic that this morning mail brought the letters from Sis Bettie which included pictures of the two of us taken during my last civilian days. The two factors have caused me to do a great deal of reminiscing. It seems to me that I have been in the army all my life and in the clink the biggest part of that time. But viewed objectively, I really should not complain for I have accrued many benefits despite the war. I am alive, a great deal more so than I was in the fall of 1941. I have matured a little mentally, and have knocked off a few years from a physical standpoint. (This latter statement seems to be proved by a look at the "before and after" characteristics of today's pictures.) And last but not least I have acquired a few chips, and a respect for the same. So all's not lost, and the war may end someday.

Today's pictures also included one of Papa made from a negative I found years ago. It is a good print and is a very welcome addition to my group. Also, now have likenesses of Flo and Helen to bring back memories.

The combine is to stay intact. Certain differences of opinion were aired out between PeeWee and Goat so things may be more peaceful.

December 10 - Sunday

Well, the week is closing with the combine in a fair humor. Hope it stays that way for it seems foolish for men who have gone thru what we have to let a few personalities get the best of them. It looks as though we will probably get full parcels Christmas week, which would be a fine present indeed.

The YMCA, in its typical useless style, just sent in a fine set of parallel bars weighing some six hundred pounds. Have stuck to my guns on not expressing opinion on the war since Dec.

3rd.

The Russians are doing well in Hungary. They have almost encircled Budapest and are on the shores of Lake Platten. The Allies are still making slow steady progress thru the defenses in the west. Jerry says today that our forces are regrouping around Aachen for a heavier attack in that area. The air war is gaining in intensity. There seems to be a shift back to long range strategic bombing with the same type of objectives we had 15 months ago. (It seems damn strange that, these Jerrys do so well without the stuff we were supposed to have destroyed in the spring and summer of 1943.)

Red Kernochan, after manifesting many of the same symptoms that Taber had, was taken to the hospital for observation. Hope the rest will mend him on this side of the bend.

Finished *In Bed We Cry* (Ilka Chase). It was a very entertaining book. Finished *How to Read a Book* and think I got quite a bit out of it. His main points were: the best of the world's thinking has been recorded in a surprising few books which are the great books of all times. Thru these the great minds in history have carried on a long and interesting conversation with each other. If a man can read properly, and will do so, he can enter into this conversation and thus avail himself of the best possible liberal education. In the past few decades, thru the influence of the progressive educators, our school systems have neglected the three R's, especially in regard to teaching the American children to read correctly. Hence, our school systems, even thru 4 year colleges, are turning our men and women who are not liberally educated. He advocates as a remedy for this that: First, one school system be improved upon; second, that adults educate themselves by reading

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the proper books in the proper manner. His rules for reading, briefly, are these: 1) classify the book you are reading and apply the correct method to it. If it is expository, read it intensely for the understanding it contains. If it is fiction, lyrical, or any imaginative type, read it for the emotional value it contains. 2) In expository books, read them three times. In the first reading, grasp the structure. State the unity of the book in a brief form, see the book as a whole, and see the book as it is broken up into its parts. In

the second reading, come to terms with the author by understanding his important words, phrases, and ideas as he uses them. In other words, put your mind as nearly in tune with the author's mind as possible so you may understand his point of view. In the third reading, view the author's ideas critically. Either agree, disagree, or suspend judgment. Whichever stand you take be prepared to know why you do so and be able to defend your position. Do not take a stand just because of your own prejudice. 3) In imaginative reading avoid looking for a meaning or philosophy in each story, don't break down the story into an outline as in the case with expository books, don't criticize a story on a basis of truth, don't read all imaginative literature the same.

This has been quite a long discourse on one book, but this guy has some good ideas and since I may routine to read a good deal when I get out of here these may come in handy.

Of course, his idea on good reading is just the application of good sense to this subject, but he presents them in a clear way. His analogy about the big conversation down thru the ages particularly struck my fancy. I made the above digest from memory and after only reading his book once so already I am off on the wrong track it would seem.

December 12 - Tuesday

Yesterday the largest group of fighters we have ever seen in the air at one time passed overhead going due east. They were single engine fighters flying at altitudes must have been well over 100 in formation. They must have been Luftwaffe because there was no alarm. The Jerrys say there is a hell of a battle again racing in the Aachen sector.

December 19 - Tuesday

Twitchell has started a course in advanced philosophy. I have just come from the first lecture and judging from the introduction it is going to be quite a course. Its purpose is to lay the foundation for an understanding of modern thoughts. I may have an opportunity here to make good use of some of Adler's suggestions.

Reports from the Vorlagar say that John Kerchochan had to be put away in the cooler at 8C. Also, that Corriocelli hit the bend and was taken to Lamsdorf. It looks as if we might lose quite a number of the boys this winter if this rate keeps up.

O.K.W. yesterday announced a big counter offensive in the Luxemburg sector on the 16th.

The news brought forth much speculation as to the possibilities of a parallel to the 1918 offensive just prior to the armistice. But, few men here hold much hope for that at this time.

The General has announced that full parcels will be issued Christmas week. The bulk of them will be the special Christmas boxes so we should have a fine dinner. The arrival of 6 personal parcels in the combine in the past 10 days has put us in good shape for the holidays. Never before have I realized what the food side of the Christmas season could mean.

Wiley and I are running a 32 man party bridge tournament in the block. It was a hell of a job figuring up the playing combinations.

There is much gambling in cigarettes going on in the north end of the block and I have been up to my ears in it. Am slightly in the hole.

There seems to be a great increase in trading activity in the past few weeks. Quite a few boys are trying to accumulate "O" bar fortunes. Along this line, Major Hall offered Bob Miller a credit of \$50.00 per bar on his part of Miller's war debt. I think, and naturally, Bob thinks, this is a very fair deal. Bob has given him 10 and has a line on getting the other 10 soon.

Miller's speculation in the field may have been a big factor in sending the current cash price from \$5.00 to \$12.50 per bar.

The Health Kids are still active and I feel fine. My old gut is gone. I will be a big fool (and probably will be one to let it get back like it was before.

Dreams have been bad lately. Night before last I woke the whole south end up with a big noise like a dog barking. I must have one of the damnedest active subconscious minds in captivity.

December 21 - Thursday

A festive spirit seemed to permeate the camp today. This was probably due to the arrival of the first batch of Christmas parcels. These boxes seem to be quite good and will make up about 7/10 of the full ration we are to receive for the next 7 days. They contain pressed turkey, honey, pudding, jam, plus cash playing cards, chess sets, and pictures. They reflect fairly good judgment on the part of the Red Cross.

Quite a supply of shoes and clothing also came in. I acquired a new pair of shoes which is quite an item at the present time.

Some citizen in the south camp received 2 ½ tons, yes tons, of chocolate bars. The shipment came from England and was handled thru the YMCA. He gave every man in this area a half a bar today. This being strictly cash; Mike, Shorty, Ace, Ulstrum, and I had a freeze out game for our share. Mike won. I won Joe Chenault's.

Twitchell's class met for the second time today. We are starting out with the rationalists. Descartes and the Cartesian school are being developed first.

The German offensive on the west seems to be of first rank importance, not so much from a standpoint of ground gained, but rather representing a hell of a batch of strength left in their forces. Viewed objectively, a good set back might, in the long run, be good for the American public. It might open their eyes to the existence of another power in the world.

And if what we hear of life in the States these days is true such an eye-opener is in order.

Those of us that have been shot at (and hit) by the Goons know damn well that they are no push over. The men on the west front know it better still. But, the folks back home still must have some vague idea of the overwhelming supremacy of America's might. I think General Ike will have a few well chosen words to speak in the States on this score when this thing is over.

The fact that O.K.W. news is very bleak and that camp morale is high in spite of this is a good indication that most of the men have now conditioned their thinking to another period of "indefinite duration".

Christmas Day - Monday

It looks as though the Jerrys may be stopped in their offensive. If our forces are able to swing into a counter blow it may be a decisive one.

Old pot is so stuffed I am in misery. Three big meals today almost put my contracted stomach out of business. Miller stayed up all night last night so that we could start off this morning with a fine breakfast before dawn. I assisted.

This year everyone seemed to be in better spirits than last. We did not think so much about being away from home.

The Red Cross Christmas food parcels were excellent.

The Old Man came by to wish Wiley, Wells, and I a merry Christmas. The General was with him.

To bed to try to rest the pot.

December 29 - Friday

The German offensive seems to be slowing down a bit. They have won back an area about 40 miles wide and 40 miles deep. It looks as though the Meuse will be the stopping

Rumor has it that the General has said that within three weeks our morale will be at it's highest. His optimism has been so unfounded in the past that it is beginning to sound a sour note. Anyway, that is only rumor.

The cold weather continues. Many days during the past two weeks have seen the temperature go below zero. The ice rink on the west side of the cookhouse is in full operation. I carried water for it last night after losing in the card cut. The prediction that this is to be an extremely cold winter has been true thus far. The old sun hugs that south horizon very closely. Eight o'clock (camp time) in the morning is still pitch dark these days.

Reading and studying have fallen off during this week, but will be taken up again right after the first. Being around the combine so much during the "holidays" has again emphasized the value of the reference. Have been on the vegetable detail, after swapping with Goat, and have been tied down.

Last night Young and I tried the club convention in bridge and it worked well. It differs from straight Culbertson only in bids of 3 ½ honor count (or more). With 3 ½ or better; you open, 1 club. Your opponent answers directly in honor count, but 1 diamond, 1 ½ one heart, etc.

Second round suits are bid. Working with Norman on slams it is very effective.

Mail is coming thru in poor shape. I have hit one of the periods when the letters that do come thru are slightly irritating. There is a hell of a gulf between the way we think and opinions back home on many things. Maybe it's just that after so many months in here you just don't give a damn about so many of the things that used to seem important, and vice versa. For instance, I have never thought of food before being here and I will never forget it after being out. I used to worry like hell about many things in the family that will never bother me in the future. Sis Bettie's happiness is going to be my prime interest. Now is a good time to write her a New Year's letter.

We saw The Male Animal this afternoon. Fine film.

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December 30 - Saturday

Five rubbers with PeeWee and Mc at 3 to 2 for 4 ounces of sugar. Young for a partner. We won the damn thing, but it was close. Luck took care of me. (Bridge scores follow)

January 5, 1945 - Friday

Last night there was a real flap on. Evidently, some citizen hit the wire. We had a one o'clock appel and then a picture parade. On the second time up, we cracked out this evening's dessert and ate it. Still am not certain what went on.

The holidays left us in a slump as far as morale is concerned.

The news from the west front is not too good. The Allies seem to have halted the Jerry offensive, but it seems probable that it will take our forces some little time to regroup and gain back the initiative. The three big wigs should have their meeting soon, maybe this month. If this happens then my guess for our next drive will be in March.

On the east, the Russians are steadily pounding away in Hungary. Budapest has about had it. Vienna should soon be figuring in the big picture. Russia has certainly seen to it that their troops will be in control of the Balkans when the pow-wow starts. Maybe that will be a good thing despite the howl the Allies will doubtless put up.

It seems hopeless to look for any solution to the political situation in SE Europe based on any present day concepts. Maybe if each of these groups became Soviets in the USSR they could live in peace together. This may be a good solution to tide Europe over until the time comes when we emerge from the "Dark Ages".

Since Christmas I seem to have been more aware of our constant hunger than ever before. I certainly never intend to fail to appreciate food again.

Went on sick call this morning to find out what ails my feet. Doc said wider shoes would help and said he would put thru an order for a pair. Old dogs swell up every night.

January 8 - Monday

Today we started yet another system in our combine life. Each man takes over a permanent job. I do the supper dishes along with Miller and Davis. It may work, but I have doubts. At least it may lessen the controversy over food and the ratio to be set aside.

Mail is still non-existent.

Rickless has invited me to play in an invitation chess tournament in which specified openings are to be used.

Do not look for any significant war news until after the meeting.

January 11 - Thursday

Despite sloppy weather this has been a good day, mainly, because I received a parcel. It was mailed on Sept. 6 and was the one intended for Christmas for it contained several little greetings from Sis Bettie. It contained 2 chocolate bars, 2 fine decks of cards, dried apples, and dried peaches, rice, Bisquick, pencils, candy, insignia and a swell fruit cake from the Byrds. It could not have come at a much better time because the cooks say the larder is next to nil. We have finished off all the December stuff.

The past two days we have been short on bread. We had already cut out the night piece to try to build up a reserve. Then, Tuesday word comes in that there may be a kitchen shortage so we counted out 24 slices per man and let each man use his as he saw fit. I was cutting down to 4 slices per day, but today a ration came in so most of us will go back to five slices.

Colonel Spivey came in the barracks last night for a "fireside chat". He said, among other things, we have enough Red Cross parcels to last, on ½ rations, until the middle of March; that shipments of parcels are coming in very slow because the Jerry transportation is shot to hell; that we are lucky as hell to have what we do have by comparison to the lot of ground men captured on the west front who are being given very little care by the Jerrys; that the Red Cross policy of caring for the worst cases first would doubtless mean that most of their resources would be turned to the west front; that salt was forthcoming; that he thought there would be no bread shortage; that Goon rations would never be increased; and that he thought we would get out of here next summer.

Kernochan is back in the barracks, apparently little the worse for wear. He had quite an experience and is very lucky to be back here at all, bend or no bend. He must have been in bad shape because they had him in a German insane asylum. He certainly likes to gab about the affair.

Connelly gave me a short crew haircut last night. They say I look like a college freshman.

The chess bug is in full swing. Bentley has it bad and has come over for the past two days for five games. Bridge for sugar is still the big pastime. My balance sheet is about even.

Tuesday I went over to 34 for two chess games with Gieger. We split the games and had a very pleasant afternoon.

Still no mail.

January 15 - Monday

Last night we had our first night air raid in some months. It brought back memories of last winter when we were blacked out while Berlin caught hell.

O.K.W. announces that three days ago the long expected winter offensive has opened up on the east front. Joe's boys hit their hardest blow NE of Krakow, where they bit off quite a salient. There is also great activity in East Prussia. Since the mopping up is still on in Budapest, this means that the whole east front is under attack. In the west, the Allies, that is the Americans, have almost regained what they lost on the Jerry's Christmas offensive. So, all in all, things are looking up. If the big wigs will just get their noggins together this month, we may see the end this spring.

It looks as though Stalin may have waited so long to start a drive in order to build up such a force that he will ultimately be able to enter the Reich with his armies intact. A big army will surely strengthen his hand in the post-war game. For all the trust the powers to be have for each other, it may be well for us to have a strong hand also.

Still no mail from home.

Had a whole head full of nightmares last night about Margaret being ill.
January 16 - Tuesday

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The drive is on the east front is on a tremendous scale. The Russians are hitting out across the rest of Poland in the same fashion that has characterized their other thrusts, taking up to 20 miles in a day. Today the map took a hell of a jump with the deepest penetration just over a 100 miles east of Breslen.

We had a 30 minute air raid this afternoon. The bombs sounded very close.

It seems odd but the big flap over the new offensive has failed to have its customary effect on me. Maybe that is a good sign. Somehow it just seems hard to visualize this thing ever coming to an end.

Rickless' chess tournament is in full swing. I lost the matches to Dan Gillham and split one and one with Gieger. One game with Dan and one with Gieger were lost thru hasty (bad) moves on my part.

Jack Long is our new combine head.

January 18 - Thursday

Yesterday morale went sky-high, and the spell of pessimism that has hung over the camp since the German offensive in the West has definitely broken. The wild gains by the Russians in bypassing both Warsaw and Krakow, plus the announcement that next week we'd go back to full rations, caused the change.

The Russians have driven deep spearheads into old Poland and have crossed the German frontier in some places. They are just east of Breslau and are closer to that point than we are. The boys are even beginning to speculate about possibilities of our removal, from this area. This seems highly unlikely however, because if the Russians ever get this close to Berlin then Jerry has had it.

Full parcels seem to be the result of a German order. The Kommandant says that there are plenty of parcels in Lubeck and that transportation here only awaits his order. We are only allowed to have a three weeks supply (full parcels) on hand at one time. When our stores drop to that level then we may go back to half rations. Under this plan we are now scheduled to get full boxes for at least two weeks.

The Russian drive has still not given me the boost that past drives have. But full parcels to contemplate from now until Monday, and to eat thereafter, makes me happy as all hell.

Mac and Emmett got 4 letters each yesterday. Hall says there will be a big stack in today.

This may mean that the mail deadlock is also breaking up. All good things seem to come at once.

Mornings in the reference library, chess in the afternoons has been the order this, week. Split two games with Gluch yesterday. He may win the brilliancy prize of the game. He beat me. Rickless and Roddy said it was a fine one.

On full rations the Health Kids may go back into more active work.

January 20 - Saturday

Rumors are flying thick and fast tonight. The big topic is the possibility of our evacuation.

With the Russians now only about 30 miles from Breslau it now seems highly probable that we may move.

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This last drive of the Russians is moving faster than anything we have ever seen before. If Jerry is just moving back to "prepared positions" he damn sure better find these positions soon or Uncle Joe's boys will over run Germany. At 4 o'clock O.K.W. was really singing the blues. They were bleeding about how never before in the history of man had such a mass of men and material been brought into action, and that it was more than even the German army could withstand. This drive could mean the end of the war. However, I hate to think of the implications of the Russians striking the fatal blow while the Allies are being held fast on the west.

Received new shoes yesterday, and this time they fit. Walked the track 5 times in them and my feet feel OK for the trip.

Broke the mail drought today and received 12 letters; 7 from Mama, one each from, Azalea, Mary Lib, Prier, Frances, and Natalie. Everything seems to be good back home. Gladys and Prier are both working for Douglas. Prier got a medical discharge from the army. Azalea's letter was clear, concise, and very well written. It seems so much more mature than the one I got from her last spring that hardly recognized it. Mama says her health is good but I am uneasy about her. She also said my finances were "in good shape" but did not give any details at all. She was to spend Christmas in C. She had had no word from me from June (written here in June) to December.

Our combine got 4 gash British parcels yesterday so for all practical purposes we are now on full rations. It is hard to describe the difference it makes in our outlook. FEELS FINE.

January 22 - Monday

The Russian drive is still going strong and the possibility of our evacuation has gained considerable weight. This morning we had regular SMI show-down inspection with bedroll prepared for a march so the rank is preparing at least for a move. We are to carry approximately three day's Red Cross food, plus 2 blankets and what clothes we can carry.

I still do not think we will move, but am ready. The Russians have reached the old German border just southeast of Breslau. In East Prussia they are hell bent for Danzig. Each day new salients push out from old salients until the map looks like a moving thing.

Today I put on ice skates for the first time in years and did not do bad. I had had them on for a very few minutes in Scotland when Ott and I were bird-dogging a couple of dolls, but at that time I could hardly stand up. Today's minor success is certainly proof that my condition has improved since being here. Will need to be in good shape if the trek comes.

January 24 - Wednesday

We are still in the dark about evacuation with 6 to 5 getting you a bet either way. I personally think we will never be moved, but will stake nothing on such an opinion. Yesterday the air was full of aircraft of every description. Fighters with belly tanks and wing rockets went east and returned sans tanks and rockets. Transports of all types have been going back and forth for days. There must be great confusion in the Breslau area and doubtless much evacuation is going on. Jerry has frozen all food and fuel supplies in this area. Our bread room has been emptied and locked, and our outlook for future issues is dark. It may be that we will see some very slim days from short German rations soon. The coal in camp just hit an all time low with many barracks already entirely out. We have had numerous callers from 39 and when the

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rackets came to 56. Then "times is tough". We have enough to heat with for two days and for a weeks cooking. With the temperature at -11 degrees this morning we are sweating out the issue that is due tomorrow.

Davis just announced that the potatoes in the camp bins would be passed out daily until Jerry brings more. It is a hell of a feeling to be entirely dependent upon a hostile force as we are.

Yesterday my long awaited cigar parcel came in. I gave Wells most of them but kept a box to try to use to acquire a few "0" bars, but doubt if I will have any success. Full boxes are still fine despite the possibility of short Goon food.

January 26 - Friday

Yesterday the Russians reached Steinau which is just 40 miles due east of here. No mention was made of the spearhead today but if it is reinforced and crossing is made of the Oder at that point then we are in and can expect a Russian appel at any time. But, I am still of the belief that the Goons will hold on a line from Danzig to Vienna. This is one time I hope I am wrong. Feeling was very high in camp yesterday but today the war took second notice to the Center-West Hockey game.' We lost 3 to 0 and I collect 12 packages of Old Golds from Midge on the old six to five.

The Jerrys brought in a pony issue of bread yesterday bringing our combine stock up to 14 slices per man starting this morning. It looks as though their issues of everything are going to be in very small lots pretty much on a day by day basis. Coal is coming in now so we will be warm for a while longer.

Wiley got a letter from Parker saying (among other things) that his (Wiley's) captaincy did not go thru. That also explains my first being stopped. Griffith put the nix sign on them when we didn't come back on August 12th. Personally, I think it was a small goddamned trick on his part, but c'est etc. Tonight Ernie and I may write Runyon a card about The Lacework Kid.

If my memory is correct today is my third anniversary as a member of Uncle Sam's army.

From henceforth I am a foggie it's a slightly bitter pill to realize that one half of that time has been spent cooped up in this Googoo camp. The taste of this pill is only slightly

sweetened by the knowledge that I have stacked up a few blue chips that would never have reached a stacked position if my freedom of motion had not been curbed. But, all-in-all, these three military years have been the most useful part of my rather useless life. They have improved my health greatly and physically I am much younger than I was that day I waddled out to Spartan to try for the cadets. Then there is no doubting the fact that the war jarred me out of a rut, just as it did millions of other boys, and has offered me the chance to start out fresh when this inning is over and peace comes to bat. I will be thirty or over when peace comes. Somehow that seems old as hell so I best be ready to go and lose no time in wandering about.

O.K.W. reports that the Russians have succeeded in straightening out a lot of kinks in the front and the points on the map that were spearheads yesterday are now part of a solid front. East Prussia is kaput for Joe's boys have reached the Baltic. This will cut off numerous troops and millions of civilians. The air is still full of Goon aircraft of many types. They are flying in weather in which (as Gilliam puts it) the birds are walking.

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Finished the chess tournament today by beating Red Houghbty one fast game. I ended up crowding the cellar with 4 wins and 10 losses. Learned a lot of chess, however. The following was transcribed from a third journal that was used in the march from Sagan to Moosburg, January 27 to February 8, 1945. The text is mostly unreadable.

January 27

The move comes!

2020 - Left reference library to report —

2030 - Orders to leave at 2245.

•2230 - Appel postponed one hour.

0430 - — all available food. Prepared poles. Made a sled.

January 28

0445 - Fall out. Same hurry up and wait. Issued

0700 - Left main gate. March kilometers from camp. Morale __ __as hell.

and wait a few minutes. —

_ First full stop 4

1330 - 1630

_ stood in

in very informal style and _

_ with numbered _

1630 - 1730 - Looked for place for sled out of snowstorm. Some _ in church, some in parson's house, some in

• PeeWee and I spend a very comfortable night in a modern

German schoolhouse. Dorney, Mc and Connelly had a very bad night in the choir loft of a funeral chapel. Had up_ in the parson's house. The balance of the boys sat up most of the night in the church.

January 29

0700 - Fell out, 56 first

... but I couldn't vouch for the title of modern Germany. It was being run by the youngest son of the family who is all that is left from the wars. He is a captain in the Wermach on leave to run the place. The workers were all foreign peasants as is the case all over this country. The family that lived in the quarters nearest our barn were Poles. They supplied us with all the hot water they could heat, but their food supply was very small. Our men were loaded with cigarettes which are very expensive on the black market so there were many deals for bread, onion, and a few spuds. Our boys paid exorbitant prices for the few things they picked up and it was estimated that we left thousands of dollars worth of black market goods.

1700 - PeeWee and I split a can of corned beef for supper. It was rather dark in the cellar so we ate in the sack then rolled over and sent to sleep. Slept fairly warm but PeeWee tossed a lot and had a hell of a nightmare.

January 31

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0515 - Got out of the sack and started to pack in the dark. We got our sleep and packed in good shape.

6630 - Appel

0800 - Not the road, with 56 bringing up the rear. We knew _ but did not have any idea where we were at the end.

0800 - I too marched thru the same at about 3 Km an hour. The pace was to march 30 minutes rest five minutes for lunch we stopped 15 minutes. PW and I ate a can of cheese and two crackers.

1700 - Reached the outskirts of and halted awhile to borrow_ phrase, 'the for a

small enough to put us in".) PW and I split a can of corned beef for supper. We got a glass from a civilian and Schultz almost split a blood vessel.

1900 - Arrived at our home for the night which turned out to be a three story brick factory. bricks to clear a space to bed down for the night. — up, not and not the sack.

February 1 - Thursday

Still no food from the Goons and our supply is mighty low.

0700 - Got up and sweat out _

Ate a piece of good bread for breakfast.

line. Found out that we are to spend the day the factory.

0900 - Found a cold shower room and took a FINE shower and washed out our wearing for underwear.

1am

1230 - Ate a piece of bread with combine spread for lunch.

1400 - Off to wash socks. Spent night in back of stream.

February 2 - Friday

Still in brick factory. Split

between five men. —

if a train to

_. Make a map.

February 3 - Saturday

0545 - Out of sack.

0815-Leaving outskirts of Nuskav. Warm weather _

1045 - Air raid warning -

1100 - Bombs and flack in NE.

1300 - Air raid over. Did not stop.

1430 - Reached outskirts of Spraustein and began sweating out line.

1700 - Reached our barn for the night. black market working fine, these folks are not —

February 6.

0500 - -

after a miserable night.

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1100 - 2 Km NE planned, aircraft overhead. Bombs to right and left.

February 7

1700 - Passed thru main gate of VIIB

0200 - Left bullpen for the louse and shower.

2230 - Left shower and louse for barracks.

2300 - Hit the sack in new

February 9

1745 - Sit up and drink your tea.

The following was transcribed from the remainder of the second Diary. The dates are as originally recorded.

February 8, 1945 - Thursday (Moosburg, Germany)

Twelve days have passed since the last entry was made in this journal. In that time Stalag Luft III has vanished, we have moved clear across Germany on foot and by box car and our way of life has changed completely. At the moment, we are in the hands of the Wermatch at Stalag VIIB near Moosburg, some thirty miles NE of Munich. Living conditions here are bad and there is none of the organization that made for a smooth life at Sagan.

But, we are still alive, for the most part healthy, and have quarters and food, so things are not too bad.

There is quite a story that goes with how we got from Sagan to Moosburg and when we are a little better settled I hope to be able to recount our experiences. Briefly, we spent 8 days and night on the roads and in barns marching from Sagan to Spremberg, then 3 days and nights in box cars from Spremberg to Moosburg. The trip was made in excellent order on the part of the Kriegies, despite the most adverse conditions. It was an interesting thing to note that better than 90% of our men made it OK but that 25% of our guards dropped by the wayside.

We will doubtless get organized down here and soon have things much better, but even at the best we will not approach the lot we had in Sagan. Colonel Spivey and General Vaniman left us in Spremberg to go to Berlin where we thought they were to arrange for a camp for us near Nuremburg. So it seems that our coming here is a big slip up. This

area contains thousands of prisoners of all nationalities, but for the most part they are ground troops. We seemed to have lost the Luftwaffe and in doing so suffered quite a blow. But, rumor has it that this is only a temporary transition and that an air force camp is under construction now for our use. Hope so.

The war has made fine progress during the past 12 days. The Russians are now within 35 KM of Berlin and are apparently bringing up countless new divisions for the final thrust. They have a solid front along the border from Breslau to Stettin, with substantial crossings at Kursten, Steihru, and Neusalz. The Kurstin thrust is a real threat to Berlin. The south part of the west front seems to be under some pressure, but as yet there is no major offensive. The German people seem to be expecting a large scale attack there at any time and they wonder why it has not come sooner. They think the Allies should know that they have thrown most of their strength into a defense of the east. At least that is the story we hear on our march. But, it seems to me if they had done that, the Russians would not have had such remarkable success. In any case, it looks as though a push across the Rhine will do the trick.

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Air raids here seem to cause little worry. We were just able to witness P-38's overhead. We are due for an inspection by the German Kommandant, so enough for now.

February 10 - Saturday

Card to Sis Bettie: For sundry reasons we recently kissed Stalag Lift II good-bye and have taken up new quarters. Our present home is no country club, but it is definitely no Calcutta. The Red Cross functions well, so we have no real complaints.

Am still in fine health and the best of spirits. Would like to be there to give you a Valentine kiss, but you can rest assured I still love you more than anything in the world. Regards to all, Bob.

What I would like to say is that this place stinks, may the war end today. Meant to write more this afternoon but feel a big chill coming on. Will hit the track and put Sis Bettie's principles to work.

February 11 - Sunday

Last night I would have laid plenty of 9 to 5 that I was due for the GI's or worse, but today I feel fine and for that I am more than thankful. This place is miserable enough even if old health is good.

Organization is taking the place of chaos and each day our lot here seems to improve somewhat. The Germans here seem to be greatly impressed by our internal discipline and seem to be willing to let us run our own affairs and also to take over the management of the American EM here. But, all of this will take much time. Ultimately, if the war does not end in the meantime, I think we will have an approximation of conditions at Sagan. Until then we will live like rats. But, if we have it bad, the EM have it much worse. Their conditions; however, is largely due to lack of leadership and their conditions should improve in the same ratio as ours.

Briefly, our present life is this: we live in 12 men combines, 360 men to a barrack, and two barracks to a compound. We have no heat, no facilities for cooking, no library, poor lighting, no hot water, and no means of recreation. The Goons bring in tea in the

morning, soup at noon, and cold cooked potatoes at night. They issue 1/6 of a loaf, 1 pad of margarine, and undetermined amounts of sugar and meat per man per day. We get 1 Red Cross parcel every 2 days. We still eat individually or in pairs, most of the food being cold anyway. What cooking that is done is over mangle lamps or Kriegie blowers. PeeWee and I have a lamp now and it is just a matter of time until he finishes a blower. (I, with emphasis on the "T", cooked a fine "O" bar pudding today.) Only part of our camp has been brought into this main camp area the Goons have said they will take down the dividing fence and make all of our barracks into one compound.

True to the prediction I just made, Ray Brunn just came in and announced the beginning of a library. Other things are bound to follow.

Now, I must go pull DP.

February 12 - Monday

Today the library opened and I was right in there at the ref. desk, so now I have a job.

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The rest of the men came up out of the reception center today, so the fences should come down soon.

The weather is mild but damp as hell. They say spring comes in March here. Let's hope so because it's nix coal for sure.

February 13 - Tuesday

Card to Sis Bettie: "We are now well set up in our new home at VIIA. Our trip to this place makes quite a story which I will tell you in its proper time. Wiley and I teamed up and made a fine device for carrying an extra lot of stuff, but ended up toting most of it. My health program at Luff III paid fine dividends and I am still in good shape. Our block got a big break upon our arrival in getting first crack at showers and quarters, so we got the gravy. Love, B." This was written to clear up a card that Wiley wrote his folks which might lead them to think we were under the weather.

Feel fine. The weather is warm so I washed up all my stuff.

The Russians continue.

O.K.W. news reports do not come into camp so all news is hearsay. Some GO order also makes maps verboten. SS.

February 16 - Friday

The fighter and bombers are overhead and we are confined to the barracks. This place is just one air raid after another. The bombs just went off and it is even money Munich just got a little hell blown out of it.

We are just rounding out our first week here and things seem 100% better than upon our arrival. We still have no facilities for real cooking, but are doing wonders on lamps and blowers. Wiley and I, Dan Gilliam and Cy, and Shorty and Red cooked a big stew last night for our first ground meal. Wiley is now tooled up and has started work on his blower. This should help our food situation quite some

We now get O.K.W. reports so we can again follow the war. The big news to us is that the Russians now have SAGAN. Even a few weeks ago very few men here would have ever read of a free Sagan while we are still POW's.

Am reading Tidewater, a novel about early days in Mississippi No studying yet.

February 19 - Monday

Not a great deal of change in our way of living of late. The fleas are now putting welts on welts and I itch all over. Last night hand bumped into Wiley and our dinner was lost. Much sympathy but small supper.

Weather is still mild which is fine for no coal is forthcoming from the Jerrys.

February 24 - Saturday

Our fair weather left us and today is cold, wet, and miserable. Things in general have continued to improve as far as we are concerned, but we still are living like a flock of pigs.

A communal mess for the block is in the offing. The Russians continue to swing south of Berlin and have occupied most of the area we marched across. They must be pressing Spremberg pretty close. Our old brick factory home and all of our farmer barns now

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belong to Joe. There is some activity on the west but it is not the big move yet. The Air Force has certainly been giving the whole Reich hell. Two days ago 51's went over this area for (several) hours right on the deck. We live in one big air raid after another as Munich gets its just deserts.

February 25 - Sunday

The air blows that the Allies are hitting now and are supposed to be the heaviest in history.

They must be because we are under raid conditions for hours on end. This morning 51's went all over the place and bombs on Munich were the loudest we have ever heard.

This latest drive against Reich communications will probably put us off Red Cross rations. Last night it was announced that we had only 1 weeks supply at half parcel per man. We always said the last days would be tough.

The communal mess is being organized. Ernie is stores keeper, and Long and Cy are on the Board of Trustees.

Am struggling thru Millinan's Cosmic Rays.

The activity in the west looks good. Night before last I dreamed of snakes.

February 26 - Monday

As we learned on the march down here, the whole of Germany seems to be just one big black market with cigarettes as the medium of exchange. This camp offers a fine supply of tobacco so it is a big cog in the system in this area. It is amazing to watch the corruption of guards with respect to getting black market food, fuel, etc. in here. In order to keep a price control we have organized and appointed a committee to do all our trading as a group. Every night they distribute whatever articles they have been able to have heaved over the fence. It amounts to enough fuel to keep all of our blowers going and a smattering of food items. The bread that comes in cash amounts to about 10% of our regular ration. Sometimes it looks as though some of the stuff we buy might have been taken from our own supply. This is just another aspect of what a mixed up war this is.

The action in west seems to be reaching an important scale. The air war continues at a terrific pace.

March 1 - Thursday

The west front must be in full swing. We are sweating out the outcome of this drive as never before.

Tonight the Goons opened a gate to the compound next door so we got to see the rest of the center camp men. Dorney is thin as a rail. Their living conditions are even worse than ours. Saturday we go off Red Cross rations, for how long we do not know. The Red Cross man was here yesterday and said he was on his way to Berlin to get O.K.W. to approve a plan to make Moosburg the central distribution point for all southern Germany. The supplies are to be carried in a fleet of 25 trucks. This must mean that this time Jerry's rail system is on the rocks. Knowing the German red tape, it will take months to put such a plan in operation.

March 7 - Wednesday

The offensive in the west definitely the big drive. It is certain that the Allies intend to clear all of the territory west of the Rhine. The question now is: Will they stop on the west bank? If this is a non-stop drive it may all be over in six weeks.

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Our Red Cross food is gone. We have been on Jerry's rations three days. Naturally, I am hungry. It looks as though our daily fare will be: one cup of soup, six slices of bread, 4 potatoes, and an occasional piece of cheese or meat. Wiley and I have been eating the potatoes with the jackets on and last night we fried up other peelings. Very tasty. Red Cross parcel will probably not come in unless they get the trucking plan in operation.

Goon food has been cut and doubtless will be cut more. C'est le guerre.

There has been a big shake up in camp organization with Col. Smith heading both compounds. There was much moving between barracks but by some stroke of luck we remained in place.

The problem of my weird dreams still continues. Several nights ago there was an awful affair in which Bill killed a couple of citizens. Also, food has begun to enter into the damn things. Old affairs are always present.

Last night I waded thru Carlyle's essay on Biography. Too dry for this place. Libraries of the two compounds have been consolidated. Ed Norton and I ran the morning shift Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

The March weather is cold, damp, and uncomfortable.

"At ease, the soup is in!"

March 9 - Friday

Despite the fact we are on Goon rations and living conditions are still miserable, this night we are happy. The war may end at that. Red Cross parcels for 2 weeks at half rations are in. Things are looking up.

Cash verse "the inquisition torture rack has nothing on a Kriegie sack; sans straw on boards my frame I string and cry, oh death, where is thy sting?"

March 11 - Sunday

Last night we had the flap of all flaps. The EM got a rumor that the war was over and promptly went wild. Glad that I did not catch the fever.

Finished Voltaire's Zadig, a fine story.

It is appalling to notice the weight I have lost. Old legs and arms look like match sticks. Will lay even money I do not top 130. I feel fine but seem continually tired, I felt during my lean years.

Translations from Jerry papers show that the Nazi party is really bleeding. The mystery is how they are able to make the people keep on giving and fighting. They admit the futility of trying to stop the drives on either front.

PeeWee has hot coffee.

March 14 - Wednesday

The sun is out and it looks as though spring has come to Moosburg, at least temporarily. The Kriegies are out sunning themselves - yes, en masse. We crawled out of our sacks like a group of insects from under a rock, and some of the boys resembled such creatures.

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The Allies are nearly solid on the west bank of the Rhine with a bridgehead on the right bank of Ramech (south of Bohn). The BH seems to have been a target of opportunity and not a major objective but the An. Thicans are capitalizing on it. Two divisions have already made the crossing and thus giving them time to build defenses on the east side of the river. Jerry also expects an increase in Soviet activity any hour.

We are fast consuming a British RX box.

March 15 - Thursday

Have inaugurated policy of eating my entire bread ration at one sitting, thus acquiring a full stomach once a day. Just finished one and feel fine. Poop just says full parcels start Monday and my joy knows no bounds. Old waistline measures just under 28 inches and I judge my true weight at 125 lbs. Jerry rations will doubtless soon be cut so we won't get fat.

Aircraft of the 51 variety now go over without alarms. The news is looking up.

Finished The Life of Nietzsche.

March 16 - Friday

Twenty-sixes are overhead so we are cooped up on a beautiful day. Hope the boys do all the good.

An oatmeal bash this morning was fine.

Young and I just finished a discussion of our old topic: "What can we do best to make a post-war living?" He says I would be best fitted to meet the public but poor on management. He's right about the management.

Tomorrow Pat is 34.

March 20 - Tuesday

Yesterday the heavies from Italy went over here for about three solid hours. They were flying in ten ship squadrons. 38's were flying top cover, but the sky was entirely empty of Jerry fighters. It looked like a milk run for our boys. Four ME's had been buzzing us all morning so there were conspicuous by their absence during the alarm. They were back again this morning with more buzzing so we have decided that they must hurry to get in their flight time between Allied raids.

Full parcels were scheduled to begin yesterday, but up until this afternoon continued to be issue. We think the error may be straightened out soon. Wiley and I are cashing a Christmas box.

The biography of John Donne I just read was not good. Am enjoying An Introduction to Poetry.

March 25 - Sunday

History is fast being made on all fronts. We sweat out the end by the week. The big vogue in camp now is: Can a man eat one Red Cross box in 8 hours? Two have gone down trying. Downing made a fair show today. I won 2 oz. of chocolate and 2 oz. of sugar. We are on full boxes but Jerry rations have been deeply cut.

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March 26 - Monday

The stuff is so hot these days that the boys can just barely hold it.

This afternoon a guard shot (and killed) a British soldier working on our fence. The Goons are strange people.

April 1 - Sunday

Happy Easter and with the war shaping up as it is I mean Happy Easter. This past week has brought such great advances in the west that the flap has been continuous. The Germans are being liquidated for sure this time. They are making a feeble attempt to sell the story to us that they are letting the bars down in the west so that ultimately the Allies can join them in fighting the Russians.

Patton has been the glamour boy in this latest offensive and is a great favorite among the gafangers.

Yesterday 51's were strafing Moosburg. We had ringside seats and saw them make four fine passes on a target just over the wire.

We had an unhappy incident in the barracks Thursday morning. Juntilla was found unconscious in his bunk from loss of blood. He either inflicted a cut on himself during the night or cut himself accidentally in his sleep. He may recover.

Seven of us got up a one week pool for the Armistice at \$100.00 each. My day is next Saturday. Have now posted the (20) man pool list. On that one each time a man's day passed he bids his chances good-bye. My next day is May 7.

A food point poker game is currently affording me much pleasure.

April 8 - Sunday

It is now fairly evident that Jerry will never capitulate and that the Allies must occupy every town in the Reich. Our boys are well on their way to doing just that. They are systematically moving east, bringing up their flanks as they go. Leipzig will probably be the next major point to fall.

The men from Murenburg have been moved to this area. Tents have been put up on our appel grounds and we expect them in the compound today. Betting stands at even money that Jerry will try to move us once more, but God alone knows where.

The food point poker game goes on. Sam, Ernie, and I build a bank by raffling off a parcel for another fellow. We cleared 1000 cigarettes; converted them into 10 "d" bars; invested the chocolate; drew out 15 bars; played four days; and now need another bank.

Our issue this week was an Indian parcel made up of mainly rice and fish. Very tasty.

April 10 - Tuesday

This place is now beginning to resemble the Black Hole of Calcutta. Yesterday the entire south camp, 2000 strong, moved into our enclosure. This makes a total of 4000 men in an area of less than 4 acres. There are all types and (kinds) here. Including a few Scotchmen in kilts and Hindus in turbans. Have had reunions with dozens of men I know way back.

Some have changed a great deal. Rumors are in full swing about what may be our lot. I personally think we will sweat out the end right here and that ultimately every prisoner that Jerry wants to hang onto will be dumped in this area. But, that too is just a Kriegie guess.

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There is plenty of Red Cross food on hand out but with the future so uncertain General had advised us to go on half rations again.

This horrible condition begins tomorrow. With Jerry rations undergoing cuts every few days this time it will hurt more than ever. The conditions prevailing here now are doubtless typical of what is going on throughout Germany. It is so ridiculous that it is humorous.

April 18 - Wednesday

The battle for Berlin is on. Tank units are racing all over northern and central Germany. We are resigned to being hostages and are sweating out a move into the Alps at any moment.

The "international settlement"

on. At every turn some ridiculous sight may be seen. Now you not only have to queue up to get into the — but also to get out again. The loss of the president is a great one.

Friday

The Luftwaffe has taken us back into their fold. Popeye and most of the old Sagan guards came in this morning. Naturally, appeal was a long one, what with the Wehrmach using the estimation method lately. They opened the gate to the other compound and this is now officially an officer lager. The odds on our moving rise and fall every hour. The end cant be far in the future.

Constructive thinking is difficult due to the constant flap that now prevails.

I have the GI's and am on 24 hours of liquids.

April 24 - Tuesday

The big moving flap is on. If the Goons keep us here another week we may be liberated. Last night my guts felt as though I was giving birth to a tiger cub but today they feel better.

Tulsa boys still continue to turn up. My sack is beginning to resemble the Tulsa J.C.'s. Have not scored on the mail. Am so out of touch with home that I feel like a stranger to the family.

This place now more than ever looks like an international convention of bums. How the officers of the Allied nations could have reached such depths of filth is hard to understand.

Now seems a good time to make a small bag to carry a dixie in.

April 27 - Friday

The whole picture has changed for the better in the past three days. Thru some miracle, POW's have become of interest to the Allied big wigs. They issued warnings to Jerry not to move us and wonder of wonders Jerry paid attention to them. As a result, we are still here and Patton and the boys are expected any moment. The Goon guards are being replaced by Allied Kriegies at three this afternoon. We are so close to being free that it scares me.

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For some reason I have been given the job of Adv. for the 3rd Battalion of Allied enlisted men. There are to be seven battalions of slightly over 1000 men each. Dan, Cy, Pertle, Val Preoa, and Stan also have jobs. It may mean we will stay behind when our boys leave.

April 28 - Saturday

The Allies have not arrived yet. The delay may be due to the Bavarian uprising and peace demonstrations. We are hoping they will be here tomorrow. Have been busy as hell with my Battalion Adv. job. The EM are well organized.

Monday we each get one full parcel.

April 29 - Sunday

The boys have arrived and the battle is on. There is assorted gunfire on all sides of the camp. An L-1 circling overhead to spot artillery shots. This may be the day. The 14th Armored division pulled up at the gate.

WE ARE FREE MEN!

May 8 - Monday

We are on the landing strip at Landschut sweating out the C-47's to take us to Le Havre. We thought the army would never get us out of VIIA after liberation and now we wonder if they will ever get us out of Germany. There are only 6 officers left to take care of the 11th Battalion of EM. Our job has been one headache after another. But it has been a fine experience for me. If we get them all on the planes, I will be very pleased.

The war ended yesterday, but I am not clear yet on the official time. If the 7th of May is the day then I win the \$1000.00 pool.

The damn Limies are trying to horn in ahead of our boys so here I go again.

May 9

We made it out of Germany! The evacuation by air from Landschut was made in good order. There was a five ship crack up, but miracle of miracles, no one was killed. The sight of the burning planes as we left Germany brought back the mental picture of our entering the god forsaken country 623 days before. Germany presents a much different appearance than it did in August of '43.

Now we are at an airfield 15 Km out of Heims. Gen. Ike's HQ is in town and it was there the Armistice was signed day before yesterday. I never thought I would spend VE Day this close to the hub of things and cold sober.

May 17 - Thursday

So we flew from Rheims to Le Havre thence by GI truck to this camp, Lucky Strike, some 50 miles up the coast. Practically all the R.A.M.P. from Germany are now in this area and it is a madhouse. It is so mixed up that I took off three days, went to Paris, and came back without being missed. Am now all thru with the processing red tape and sweating out shipping orders.

The trip to Paris was definitely it. That town is just one big party. We were strictly AWOL and traveling without orders, but as R.A.M.P.'s were received with open arms and made welcome. We went into the Seine HQ and drew a 4000 franc partial payment. For me that

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was just enough for one night in the Bar Tabarin and the Pigalle section. Oh, Babeee!
The old YB-40 gang should have a party there.

Last night the long lost John O. Booker, Dangerous Dan McGrew and sundry other citizens dropped in. What a story they have!

May 25 - Friday

June 4th.

Word just came over the PA system that an ETA for our convoy in New York Harbor was We are on the good ship Lejeune. Boarded at Le Harve four days ago, left South Hampton yesterday. Have made no entries because for some strange reason I just plain don't give a big damn about anything.

June 3 - Sunday

Due to dock at New York today!

11:30 entered N.Y. harbor. 19:30 left ship.

23:00 arrived at Camp Kilmer — What a day!

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