

ALLIED ACTIVITY WHILE AT STALAG LUFT I

March 22-23, 1944 -

RAF over - bombs unknown target S.W. of Barth. Reported to have been Hamburg. Flak bursts and bomb flashes (?) visible from Camp. No explosions felt or heard.

April 9, 1944 (Easter Sunday) -

8th AF over during church services. Bomb Rostock (30 miles W.N.W.). Explosions felt here and the rumble heard. I.P. just N.E. of camp.

April 11, 1944 -

8th AF again hits Rostock area. Felt and heard bomb hits. Both 17's and 24's today.

May 2, 1944 -

RAF Mosquito's strafe Barth Airfield. Heavy black smoke seen after attack.

May 13, 1944 -

8th AF over in great strength. Fighter's herald their coming. Estimated 800-1000 bomb thruout N.E. Germany. P-51's strafe Barth Airfield on return. Our neighboring flak school tosses a few bursts. - After they've gone!

May 16, 1944 -

RAF Mosquito's east of camp - surprise FW-190 - and shoots it down. Strafe and leave. Two columns of smoke left in their wake.

May 19, 1944 -

8th AF over in light strength. Target unknown.

May 21, 1944 -

8th AF over in unknown strength. Overcast limits view. P-51's strafe rail junction S. of camp.

June 4, 1944 -

U.S. 5th Army captures Rome.

June 6, 1944 -

Invasion of Continent by Allies on Cherbourg Peninsula!

June 20, 1944 -

8th AF bombs oil targets in Barth area. Five p-51's strafe target S.W. of camp causing large fires. Two B-24's heading north to Sweden. Fires in east and south-east direction from camp.

June 22, 1944 -

Russians open great offensive on No. Central front - 4th anniversary of German's invasion of Russia - drives aimed at No. Poland and East Prussia.

June 24, 1944 -

USAAF Heavy Bombers shuttle raid from England to Russia to give tactical support to Soviets. 19 USAAF wings in raid. Hitting Berlin on trip over.

July 18, 1944 -

8th AF over Barth area in easterly direction. Overcast prevents view. Good show on return, - 17's and 24's in moderate strength escorted by P-38's. Targets were E. and S.E. of camp and 14 separate bomb rumbles were heard. Thot to be Stettin, - P'38's were mixing it up. Rumored an ME-109 crashed S.W. of camp.

July 20, 1944 -

German radio announces an attempt on Hitler's life.

July 21, 1944 -

Hitler spoke to German people at 1:00 A.M. - to "Show he was alright". "The Fuehrer escaped with shock and bruises." Rumors are rampant!

July 23, 1944 -

German radio announces general uprisings in Government. Many high ranking military leaders shot for revolt. Martial law in Berlin. Two divisions on Russian front refuse to fight. Kietel's whereabouts unknown.

August 2, 1944 -

General Rommel injured by strafing attack on west front.

August 4, 1944 -

8th AAF over today in force, wonderful fighter cover. Hit S.E.S. and S.W. of camp. P-51's give good show on return. Strafe Barth Airdrome. One bomber hit by flak. 6 chutes seen on bailout. Best show yet. Jerry more threatening on shooting anyone showing themselves outside barracks.

August 15, 1944 -

Allies make new landings in southern France around Toulon, Marseilles.!

August 16, 1944 -

RAF over in force tonight, seemed to hit Rostock and Stettin. Bomb flashes and light flak seen. The Wheels ousted from quarters and refuge in Room 15. Good show - block 9 search over at 330.

August 24, 1944 -

Paris, Marseilles fall into hands of French Patriot Forces. Coup de Etat gives Rumanian Gov't over to King Michael's Loyalists. New landing at Biarritz.

August 24, 1944 -

8th AAF over today in force, we watched the show from the Mess Hall, (our barracks being fumigated). Seemed to be a division going south, and another to targets over Stettin way. One bomber seen to turn and explode, 4 chutes seen, - heard 50 cal., so they were evidently attacked. Back in our barracks, - bugs - "capoot"!

August 26, 1944 -

Our first night raid since we've had our shutters open at night, - RAF evidently striking south and west of us. - Flashes seen, - and Jerry night fighters heard.

August 27, 1944 -

8th over but not in our area. We were alerted but saw only a few fighter contrails. Maybe a raid - maybe a "recon." or fighter sweep.

September 7, 1944 -

Received first letter from home. From Mother written on July 5.

September 12, 1944 -

Large scale RAF raid. Quite a show East and Southeast. Lots of flares, flak bursts and bomb flashes.

September 13, 1944 -

Air Raid. Saw group of fighters South of camp, - contrail make them visible.

September 18, 1944 -

8th AAF over North of us, - headed towards East front. Confirmed later.

September 25, 1944 -

Two of the "Buzz Boys" cracked up this morning 7:30.

October 6, 1944 -

8th AAF over in moderate strength. Seem to be bombing in squadrons. Hit Stralsund. - No opposition noted.

October 7, 1944 -

8th AAF over again, same target. Ground rockets used. One plane hit, but okay. Good escort, - no opposition.

October 11 and 12, 1944 -

Big days for letters and my first package. Letters from Millie, Mary J. Forman, Mom Byrne, Sylvia Christopher, Mother and Cora Mae. Mammy sent 24 pkg's of Sir Walter. Shared with boys and Crock, Brownie, McPhee, & Spike.

October 17, 1944 -

Mammy comes thru again with 2nd tobacco pkg. and she didn't forget, - Philip Morris. Around noon an air raid and a lone RAF Mosquito strafes airfield, - plainly seen.

October 21, 1944 -

Letter from Mother, her #15, dated Sept. 12! 40 days, wonderful time. Smitty received word of birth of daughter Karen Leslie - Sept. 1 - 44.

December 19, 1944 -

Lecture on airborne landings of Sept. 19-27 at Arnheim, by Lt. Col. MacCardie 1st Brit. Air. Very good.

January 10, 1945 -

Today - shaved my head, for the hell of it. As did "Ping-Pong Williams", "Dr. Cyclops", "Dorsman", "Moitle the Toitle", "Bach", "Lothar", White, "Skin Man", "Riedel", "Q-Ball Wescott", "Mad Monk", "Kirchblum", & "Comanche" Powell, very unsightly, - but the realization of a life-long desire!

January 17, 1945 -

Warsaw finally falls! Whole East front on the move. Russians on big drive.

February 8, 1945 -

1500 Enlisted men in from Stalg IV, evacuated, Memel, Koenigsburg, Danzig to Keedy. Not in very good shape. None of our boys. Russians on Oder River front. RAF over tonight for about three hours. Bomb flashes observed over Stettin way.

February 15, 1945 -

News that Budapest has officially fallen.

February 17, 1945 -

News of the Navy shelling Japan. 1500 Carrier sorties. Abe's pancakes today, a hellova place for 29th birthday!

February 24, 1945 -

For the past week no lights, water only spasmodically. K.P. today, & good news, - some food in!

February 27, 1945 -

Air Raid for vicinity. An "intruder" buzzed around over camp area, opened up with a burst west of us, but close. Scared hell out of us all. Possibly a train. Allies past Duren, - in Siegfried line, hope it's an M.E.

March 4, 1945 -

Saw an example of Volkstrum today, billeted across the road. 65 yr. old average. Pitiful, comical too, poor old beggars. Should be at home warming their feet!

March 6, 1945 -

One year "down" today. Food is critical, stew once a day, and only once in two days if spuds don't come in. Heard German news in English on Tanoy installed 3-3-45. Air alert, RAF overhead, - shots at airport, - Intruder evidently followed night-fighter in! Ginger-bread & lemon-dressing Bonanza. - Courtesy Raffle-White. - Chuck.

March 7, 1945 -

American 1st, Bradley, cross the Rhine at Remagen - 25 So. of Cologne! 1st to cross since Napoleon. Learned R-2.

March 11, 1945 -

Wm. Castle died of Leukemia, - our first American death in the camp - 12th-8th over in greatest force ever, over 2 hours, - overcast, couldn't see. 2000 hit Swingemunde 70 M. N.E. by E.

Sunday, March 18, 1945 -

During air-raid E. F. Wyman - 0735964, shot thru temple, while starting to church. Possibly my friend from No. Berwick, N.H.

March 24, 1945 -

West wall breaking Patton crosses at Oppenheim - 13 mi. from Frankfurt. Montgomery opens up at Rees & Wesel, Paratroopers across. Remagen Bridgehead 31 miles long, 10 mi. deep. G.I. room. 21st day of stew this month!

March 27, 1945 -

Morale has had a mighty lift yesterday and today. 3 car-loads of parcels came in. The first in over 6 weeks. - Will give us a lift from this malnutrition diet of stew. News has been good with Patton to the Main, Remagen Bridgehead 41 miles long, - Montgomery's paratroops joined and bridgehead 30 miles long.

March 30, 1945 -

All news has been good these past three days. R.C. parcels have been received up to 40,000. 1200 personal parcels in. Mess Hall back on 2 meals per day. American food. However, no more fuel in barracks. Montgomery last heard of E. of Essen, - news blackout. Remagen broken out N.E. E. & S.E. to S. of Kassel, Patton across Main and headed for Nuremberg, Patch linking with Patton at Aschoffenburg, & also driving S.E., - news sensational! Morale at peak! Rec'd cigarette parcel 6 P.M.!

April 1, 1945 -

Easter Sunday. Everyone is gorging himself on a phantasmagoria of food. It's too much & too rich for many! Pies, cakes, whips, spreads, sweet drink, - truly astonishing, - the changeover from starvation diet to manna. Latest R.C. Parcel tally 100,000#. - Rumor - 4000 more personals in, 30 letters. - What a change! Mike Spodar played Easter Parade at morning roll call. Chuck and I had a Bonanza breakfast of creamed spam & eggs, hashed browned potatoes, pate gravy, toast and spreads, coffee! A wonderful feeling creeps over my stomach. Padre Douglas conducted an excellent service this morning. News continues to be sensational. They're rolling!

April 3, 1945 -

The ice is broken! Received my first personal which is evidently a Jan. parcel, and a bonanza one it was. Two undershirts, tooth powder, 3 handkerchiefs, tooth brush, ruler, pencil, leads, razor blades, 4 gum, vitamins, cinnamon, cloves, onion flakes, celery, mint flakes, tea balls, 1/4# Nescafe, exlax, hard candy, bisquick, corn meal mix, ginger bread mix, tapioca, lime jello, one of the nicest received in the room. Maybe Cecil helped. Also the G had Max Schmeling in camp today, looks good. Heard 15 minutes of notable commentary tonight. A banner day.

April 4, 1945 -

Wakened this morning to a disaster for us here. - The mess hall burned. Seemed to have started from a banked boiler, - we will certainly miss it. The wheels went into motion tho, and by evening we were provided with full R.C. parcel and cooking in room. I'm starting off the cooking, Nick aide-de-camp, - Willie Raffle, Abe, Nick on mess committee. Little Willie a banging out pans. Lucky to save supplies, losses at minimum. Our first meal cold diced spuds, cold spam, pate creamed, hot, - coffee. We're wheeling!

April 5, 1945 -

Boy, luck of luck, today! I hit cigars! Things are really looking up. Everyone busy getting cooking tools lined up, busy as hell, the days are all too short. Spike finally got letter from home yesterday.

Sunday, April 8, 1945 -

Starts our fifth day of cooking in our room and alls going well. Little Willie's banging out pans that are

prima. The food continues good. Appears that total occupation is going to be the ultimate end. Nick is an excellent cook's helper. Yesterday Abe & Petter planted half the garden. 6 rows of carrots, 6 of beets, 3 rows of onions, good eating material. Cooperation is excellent to date, and we're eating well.

Wednesday, April 11, 1945 -

Another banner day. When it rains it pours! Another personal parcel! I think it must be the Oct. 26 parcel. What a bonanza, - 1 box Burry's Pie Crust, 1 box Mince-meat, 1 box Gingerbread Mix, 1 box Devil's Food Mix, 2 boxes jello pudding, stick candy, 9 candy bars (6 Chicken Dinner, 3 Vitamin Bars), Sugar, Razor Blades, Pencil & Leads, 1 styptic pencil, 1 tooth powder, 1 bar soap (cutaneous), 50 Vitamin Pills, P.V.'s, Handkerchiefs, 2 boxes souplets, 2 boxes Boullion, Box of Cinnamon, Nutmeg, Clove, 2 washcloths, 1 Vick's inhaler, - News is still good. Yesterday, news of fall of Konigsburg, also Vienna is in the process, all steady movement, Hannover too. In Bremen. Had bonanza dinner tonight. C-Ration, mashed spuds, cole slaw, p-nut butter cream pie, with strawberry jam whip merangue!

Friday, April 13, 1945 -

Today is a day of mixed news, the tragic and the sad, is the news of the death of our President last night at 8:00 o'clock at his home in Warm Springs Ga. Harry Truman sworn in as President. - Also on the war front, Monty approaching Emden, Bremen, - Simpson shoots out 50 mi. to reach and pass Magedeburg & cross the Elbe. (Big bonanza "Magedeburg Pudding" last night.) Patton bypassing Leipzig & only 60 mi. from Berlin, 100 from Russians, - East front beginning to bulge.

Sunday, April 22, 1945 -

Russians moving now, close to link-up, now N. & S. of Berlin, Allies backed up & breaking over Elbe on 150 mi. front. Leipzig fell on 20th. On outskirts of Bremen & Hamburg. Leipzig pudding yesterday. Airfield So. of us very active, Ju-88's. We can hear heavy guns from the S.E., heavy barrage, must be Stettin bridgehead.

Saturday, April 28, 1945 -

We've seen a lot of German planes around here this past week. A lot of Ju'88's, - some 410's, quite active. This evening a group of close to 20 190's came in to land. Seems as if they're being pushed around a bit. Stettin



gone 25th, Bremen 26th. - Had our "Bremen Pudding" today at noon. Berlin 3/4 gone.

April 30, 1945 -

Germans evacuating across the road, refugees too, 12 wagon-loads. Received orders this morning to dig slit-trenches. Flying boats from Stralsund coming over, heading west. FW190's, Ju88's & others thick around here. Watched 13 Ju's taking off last night, - FW's up last night in force. Russian's last reported 54 mi. S.W. Anklam. Evacuees going to Wismar. Russian's claim to be going "home". Himmler alleged to have offered unconditional surrender. Well - ! Am writing this at 10 P.M. and much has happened since I wrote this morning. The Jerry's started demolition proceedings in the Flak School & Airport south of us. Damned strong blasts, - the concussions playing havoc with windows in the south compound, and a few barracks in the Sgt's area, - Chuck and I saw the tower of flame shoot up about 1000 ft. and then the blast shook us all. Flak School was looted by civilians last night about 4 to 700 parcels taken. The German troops and civilian personnel are packed and leaving, - each person has a Red Cross parcel, - whether looted, given with Zemke's permission, or commandeered by the Jerry, it isn't known, - but it has been wise, if only to temper them. Starting at 7:00 groups of 100 men were taken to the Flak School warehouse to bring back 48# units of the parcels remaining. It was a sight to see the results of the demolition, - Flak "ears" all over the place, - some roofs burning, all windows out, - good job tho, - controlled and militarily methodical. The civilians, (about 150 - mostly women and children), crowding around as we carry out the parcels, - wanting something so badly, and regardless it was hard to see the children wanting, - Pathos, - ! Plenty of it. It's hard not to feel sorry for these folks but, the attitude was so different 1 yr. ago. Made three trips, - Krauts leaving, - Paradoxical as it seems in a holiday mood, - drinking, happy, & festive. We dug our foxholes outside the window, & can get into them from inside the barracks, - thru the floor. Some of the boys got Jerry boots for 1 pk. of cigs. New flying boots. Von Mueller still here despite rumor. What a day, - and it's not over, - At this time demo's still going, - close to N.W.

Tuesday, May 1, 1945 -

It's a struggle of mixed emotions to describe the happenings of last night. The whole camp went lightless at 10:15, and truck started rolling out. - about 12 we noticed our boys in the compound, on guard. At 1:15 Zemke called Sq. C.O.'s and notified them the camp in American hands.

Spasmodic small arms fire at airport. Raffle, Smitty, Nick, Fred, Chuck, Mahan and I had coffee at 3 and I finally turned in. Had our first American formation at 12 o'clock, news from B.B.C. Rumor has it that Russian Liason Officer met with Zemke this (false) morning. Russians are 3 miles south of Barth. Major Stiener, Jerry, still here with some of the interpreters. Wing Co. Ferris and Col. Spicer freed after a long stretch of solitary. Am cooking up gingerbread, parcel almost gone. Bennett is busy boy - busy getting news.

P.M. - A Russian advance unit came in - composed of 2 tanks, 2 motorcycles, turned S.W. It certainly seems odd to have the run of the Camp. Water and lights are on tonight, and we're listening to B.B.C., and the American Forces Network in Occupied Europe. The Hit Parade certainly sounds good after 14 months, - strange new tunes and good ones. The paradox of the season occurred while "Don't Fence Me In" was being played, announcement came that the Russians were at the gate - time: 10:16 P.M. Needless to say the demonstration was terrific, wild yelling all over the camp, exuberation unbounded! Fast on the heels of this at 10:30 P.M., the announcer breaks in to tell us that "The German Radio has just announced that Hitler is dead." With a not too surprising unanimity, we all decided to raid the rations for a "super-duper" pudding to end all "Super-Duper" puddings! How's this for contents: 2 boxes prepared cereal, 4 crax, 1# pecans, 2 boxes prunes, 1 box raisens, 2 D-Ration bars, 2 boxes cocoa mix, 1 jello pudding, 1/2 can Baker's Cocoa, 1/2 can P-Nut Butter, 2# sugar, - this patent pudding was brewed in the dishpan - and being served in generous portions, - certainly distended the stomachs of all, - finally to bed and a night of the most peaceful, undisturbed sleep I've had in many months.

May 2, 1945 -

The advance units of the Russian forces rolled in today, - and they're certainly a rough looking lot of renegades, - seem to be terrorists more than soldiers, many conflicting stories have come with them. Col. Zemke is trying to deal and reason with a drunk Russian Colonel who is in command of the advance unit, - he's a rough looking Mongrel, and doesn't like the idea of us remaining behind barbed wire. We're informed by Col. Greening that this Colonel has ordered an evacuation of the camp, to the West toward Rostock, - order to be executed in 6 hours, - this at 2 P.M., - so we start grabbing the bare essentials.

As we're packing the poop comes thru, to stage a demonstration, - to include ripping down fences, guard towers, - in fact anything movable, - needless to say there's enough latent potential, - so we comply with fevor. Seems as if this Colonel wants everyone of us to realize that he is personally responsible for our liberation!

The camp runs riot,--fences down, guard towers broken up, German barracks demolished,--and all of us take walks to the spots at which we've so longingly gazed, from behind the fences.

A great many of us head for the Flak School,--and help ourselves to what we want. The place is packed with all types of military equipment,--seems to have been a quartermaster warehouse. There were ski's, ski poles and parkas, flying boots and other components of flying equipment,--ammo packs, which we salvaged for knapsack carry-alls, uniforms, insigna, books, in fact most anything a man could wish for in the souvenir line. The buildings themselves are beautiful, modern, and expensively decorated, comparable to any of our modern U.S. Post Office buildings. German families, driven from their homes in Barth, have taken squatters rights in some of the rooms,--they are terrified and willingly acquiescent to any demand. Many of the girls beg the Americans to stay with them in their rooms, thinking that by doing so they'll escape atrocities at the hands of the Russians.

It is evident as the evening progresses that the Russian Colonel has been mollified by the demonstration and we'll not be forced to move, but will await evacuation by air. This news was most certainly very welcome. Some of the men return from the village with some grim stories of rape and looting, and though it's not pleasant to admit,--some of our own boys are included. We found the bodies of a family suicide just north of camp, on the point. An old woman, two younger women (about 29 or 30 years), a five year old, and a six month old baby. All shot through the temple, an evident suicide. These people are terrified by the thought of the Russians,--their own propaganda is defeating them. Finally to bed, anxious to know when we'll get moving.

LATER--The main forces that moved in tonight are taking over the town, their methods are ruthless, but these men, by their own tongue are the same who defended Stalingrad, and are repaying the Germans, an "eye for an eye". They are drinking, looting, and tearing up the town in general, if any German balks or opposes them, they shoot. They take what they want,-- and want everything. Many of our boys are with them. As soon as they recognize us, it's a handclasp and a drink, they won't take "No" for an answer. If you don't drink with them they're offended, and that Commissary Vodka is nothing short of grain-alcohol. Our first Camp causality occurred today, an Englishman stumbled onto a land-mine.

May 3, 1945 -

It has been definitely announced that we will be flown out of here, and they say soon. Had my first snort in 14 months this morning. Fred Bennett was over in Zengst last night and brought back a case of BOLS HALB an HALB, it's an Apricot Liqueur, and very good. A water glass full transformed my feet in to a couple of clouds. The effect is short-lived, however, for in a few hours I've got an awful case of the "black thumps"!

Brownie and I took our first walk out through the woods, and over on the peninsula. It's a grand feeling to be able to walk around with no guard,--strictly on your own. We watched a column of Russian troops coming in across the inlet, from the direction of Zengst. One single tank led the column, followed by horse drawn artillery, and a seemingly endless line of horse drawn troop wagons. They rolled in and through Barth for two hours. Mike Kalish brought me some Vodka tonight, and it's really red hot,--pretty good in a Coffee Royale though.

About a hundred of our boys and a few Russians have the Zengst Peninsula terrorized,--drunk, looting, and raping,--our Field Forces are being sent over to haul them back, a very messy job. They've hauled some in via boat and wheelbarrows,--most of them sick and passed out. They just aren't in the proper physical condition to drink. The local airfield South of us is being cleared,--the Krauts mined the runways, set time and vibrator bombs, and booby traps in the ships. Our men have done a good job of cleaning it up with no accidents.

May 4, 1945 -

Our best news today was an announcement from Zemke that we are in touch with Moscow, and news is being sent to England of our plight. Seems as if we're a Diplomatic problem due to our being in what is now Russian Territory. A Russian C-47 is expected tomorrow with AMGOT officials, and Zemke expects us to be evacuated by Wednesday. The Airfield is cleared now, ready for landings and take-offs. A remarkably intelligent statement was issued by Eisenhower by Radio to P.O.W.'s,--"STAND UP", and what in the Hell does he think we are doing and have been doing these many months? The man is a comedian!

We have our own close contact with Nazi brutality here in this vicinity. The Russians and Americans discovered an underground prison at the Airfield. The lightless, airless holes were filled with thousands of

French, Belgium, Dutch and German political prisoners, men and women, who have practically lost all semblance to human forms. Official statements from our Doctors have given us the following information. Some have been there for up to nine years. Physically they are wrecks, eyes are colorless, skin like parchment, their bones and skin have shrunk to the point of distortion. They are ridden with disease, mostly T.B., cancer and typhus, and have been left to wallow in their own filth. Men can be distinguished from the women only by the genitals, the women's breasts being dried up completely. Their teeth are gone, nails gone, hair gone, and nostrils in some cases holes only. Some are shackled and stacked in tiers. They were forced to work, and have been existing on turnips and ersatz coffee. When the Medics tried to feed some of them, they died within the hours,--it's unbelievable, doesn't seem possible but is there nevertheless. Most are beyond hopes of recuperation. There is also a forced labor camp over by the woods, Jews, who are also in pretty bad shape. I'm damned glad these Krauts are getting it just as they are, this is the clincher on past hates,--they've brought it on themselves, so let 'em have it!

At 2130 BCC announced the surrender of all German Forces in N.W. Germany, Holland, the Frisians and Heleogoland, to be Official for "cease firing" at 8:00 A.M., May 5, British double daylight savings time. Surrendered to Montgomery at Luneburg Heath. Good meal tonight, Scalloped spuds, Asparagus, (from adjoining field) Cheese Rarebit, Fried Spam and Coffee,--- and Good! To bed with good music again. Brownie and I have really been talking things over. Had George Marple with us from Wheeling who used to go with Bobbie Snedekar.

May 5, 1945 -

The surrender of the N.W. Sector was official this morning, this leaves only the Czeck Protectorate and Garrison's holding out. At 1535 comes our most welcome news to date,--Three Americans in a Jeep have pulled into Camp! From the excitement you'd think that not a man in the Camp had ever seen a Jeep or an American. These men have informed us that C-47's, B-17's, and B-24's are being assembled to come in and take us out.

Major General Borisov, and Marshall Rokitofski are in Camp,--and they with Col. Zemke are enjoying a wild celebration,--with toast after toast being drunk. At 1700 Lt. Col. Moss rolls into Camp, his visit being a

result of the contact made by Major Nielander and the Britisher who set out for our lines two days ago. His classic statement was: "You are now Officially Found." As might be imagined, the Camp is now at fever pitch, - the least little thing stirs up excitement. At 1130 B.B.C. gave an order for all P.O.W.s to "stay put", that we would be evacuated as soon as possible.

Dannemiller has been over and wants to take off for Wismar. I've tried to discourage him, but to no avail. Abel and Nielander have three bicycles, and claim to have a guard fixed, but it hardly seem worth the gamble after waiting so long, for it can only mean the difference of a few days in getting home. Think I'll sweat it out a bit longer here. The German Armies in Austria surrendered today, also the notorious 11th German Panzer Division on the Czeck border.

Atrocities concerning the concentration camps in this area are being brought to light hour by hour. Many of them are dying, for there's no medical attention possible at this moment. Many are being found dead in the shackles,--probably more humane anyhow, for they could never hope to be normal again. They've found more bombs on the Airport and are removing them. Many of the boys are taking off for Wismar, and many more talking about it, despite threats of Court-Martial on return to the States. Discipline is not good in this category. I want very much to get home, but have waited this long, so will wait a little longer.

May 6, 1945 -

Today makes 14 months since our descent into Krautland, and it's been the slowest time I've ever spent. Things are a bit calmer today, there's a tendency to settle a bit and find things to do. We have water all day now; they've finally cut into the main power line for the pumps, so we can keep things much cleaner now. After a late rising, Brownie and I spent most of the day walking the peninsula. Bob's get-away must have been successful last night, but what a night to have to lie out, and then travel; one hellova thunderstorm last evening. We watched a lot of the boys leaving via boat, across the inlet by Zengst. This way they can skirt the guard, and head west for Wismar. Several who started out two days ago are back. The Russians have been ordered to herd them back, and in many cases take their shoes to prevent them going further.

We watched the German Farmers salvaging their boats today,-- the Commander of the area has ordered them to fish to help keep themselves alive. The paradox;--while thus diverted, the Russians are driving off their livestock. We can estimate about 700 head of cattle, and 200 head of horses

being liberated. In addition to that, the compasses have been stolen from the boats, so the Germans can't even navigate out of the inlet. These Krauts are really getting a bruising. Col. Wilson told Brownie that all contacts have been made with our Headquarters, and they are fully informed of our position, conditions, etc. I realize full well that they are busy, but I wish to hell they'd get us out of here.

May 7, 1945 -

The place is settling down a bit now, and we're getting the room more comfortable. We've built a patio outside the window and are now eating outside,--very snazy, and relieves the crowded situation in the room. We've "liberated" brooms, tureens, washstands, stoves, lumber, canvas, lights, fresh linen, in fact the place is becoming liveable, our perverse thought being, that is we get it really comfortable, the Army, true to form, will move us out! The rumor of a Russian Movie prompted us to go over to the South compound, where we saw pictures of the Jalta Conference. The un-retouched photography of the Russians certainly showed Roosevelt as a very sick man, unposed shots taken while he was relaxed. Also a propaganda film on the storming of a city, a port city which appeared to be Odessa. A Russian band is here, and we're to be given a show this afternoon.

A British Lt. Col. informed us today that Air Transport couldn't be pinned down on a date, but that they assured us that we would be moved in "a few days."

Saw the Russian equivalent of a U.S.O. Show, and it was very good. Of course, boiled cabbage is good if you're hungry, but we all enjoyed it. The Russian men's chorus was excellent, and the six men dancers out Hollywooded. Hollywood, in their Native Russian Dance. An incident which brought a roar from the crowd, was the appearance of this enormous flute player who came on stage with the band,--with a Tommy Gun slung carelessly over his shoulder, as if to denote that no one would leave this show,-- or else! There were three gals along who had their weight placed in just the right places according to Western standards, who as far as we know did some very nice dancing. One did an interpretive Asiatic dance that would have brought a curtain call at Minski's.

Donetz has unconditionally surrendered today for all the German Forces,--however tomorrow is officially V.E. Day, so I guess I win the Kriegspot of \$150. \$25 each from Abe-Wed., Whitey-Thurs., Smitty-Fri., Leo-Sat., Willie-Sun., and Stuber-Mon., exactly one week since our "official" liberation by the Russians.

May 8, 1945 -

Today officially Victory in Europe Day, or "V-E Day". Mahan, Whitey, and Riedel rose at dawn today, and unsuccessfully tried to rout me from the sack. They went up to where the Beef Cows were to bring us back some of that "lactile fluid of the bovine species." These cattle were some of those rounded up by the Russians, and were handed over to us by the Russians in order that we might have some fresh meat. They offered us at the same time a hundred head of hogs, but Zemke refused for the reason of danger of disease in them. The boys brought us back our first fresh milk,--and we had it on our cereal and in our coffee this morning, and it was truly like ambrosia! They also brought back about 30# of fish that they got from the nets in the inlet,--Sea Carp. Chuck and Freddie cleaned them, Smitty officiated at the pan, and they were truly delicious! Freddie made up the chips, and I put together a Tarter Sauce with milk, vinegar, dill pickle and onion, so that was our supper tonight.

We're still getting the stall from visiting Officers. The old cry, "Hold on a few days," is getting damned tiresome. These last ones were two Medical Majors, in to inspect the Camp,--reported the medical and sanitation situation as good. Well,--every person has a right to his opinion!

Spike, Brownie and I spent the morning down on the grass hummocks on the inlet, the sun was very good. Heard Churchill's address today, with additional poop from the BBC. Our celebration demonstration is consisting tonight of flares, hundreds of them, confiscated from the Airdrome, as well as a huge bonfire in the center of the compound, made up of wood from the shutters of the barracks, and the guard towers.

Visiting parties are now going down to the Airdrome and back through the town. The town is apparently cleaned, stripped of souvenirs, and the boys going in for souvenirs are spoiling the Krauts by bartering instead of taking. They are even beginning to quibble on prices.

May 9, 1945 -

Today has been rather routine, everyone seems to have accepted a rather resigned attitude, they've told us to "Stand By" so much, that it's lost it's meaning. That and, "Everything is being done for your immediate evacuation!" Zemke announced today that in a conference with General Borisov, the General assured him that



we should move within four days. Spike and I spent some time in the sun down by the inlet. Met Donley again, formerly Bombardier on Wong's Crew in the Loney Group, didn't leave the States until October of '44.

Had our first fresh meat today and it certainly was good. Had mashed spuds, gravy, coleslaw, C-ration and steak tonight, quite a change, we couldn't realize why our jaws were sore until we realized that we hadn't had any chewing meat for many a month.

Stuber spent the day in town today, eating and drinking with a German family. It p's me off no end, especially in this case, for he was so rabid in his invective not more than ten days ago, and now is fraternizing for some worthless little damned trinkets! The same people spit on us from their second story windows when we came in here over a year ago! They're cracking down on the boys taking off, "chewing out" all they round up, and throwing them in the cooler. Zemke announced today that 750 men have taken off, and that they were in for a Dishonorable Discharge, all of which I think is a bunch of rot. Sure hope Bob is okay and got through; I didn't approve of his going, but certainly hope he made it. Like to have him here now to be in on the gabfests Brownie and I are having.

May 10, 1945 -

Things were settled enough today that they started giving orders for inspections. Spicer is now the Camp C.O., Zemke being made Commander for the area East of the Elbe, for evacuation of Allied Personnel. Brownie and I walked down to see the slaughtering of the beef, and while down there a fire broke out in the pine thicket so we were forced to fight fire for about two hours. It was truly the hardest work I've done for many a day. Rumors are still rife on leaving,--but spirits are low, for nothing at all seems to be happening. The boys in Room 14 gave us a fine bunch of liver, which we had for supper, it was really wonderful, and everyone gorged themselves on the stuff.

May 11, 1945 -

Good sunny day today, things are still the same and its so hard to wait. Am the confirmed example of a sun worshipper, for there is little else to do. We had more fresh meat today, and it seemed even better than yesterday. They finally have our Russian passports ready, so that shouldn't hold us up. A bulletin that came around this evening stated that we may start evacuation tomorrow,-- a week ago that news would have thrown the Camp in a furor,-- but now we must see to believe,--we've been faked so much

that we're sceptics. Zemke later addressed us and gave us the straight poop, planes are to come down tomorrow and they'll fly us to an embarkation port in France. Everyone received it pretty calmly. Wounded and Hospital personnel goes first, then the British, South Compound, North 1, North 2, and North 3, lastly Headquarters and the AWOL's. Steak again tonight! If my teeth hold out this stuff can probably grow to be a habit with me again.

May 12, 1945 -

This morning we started preparing for an inspection, shoes shined, room G.I.'d; really getting sharpened up,-- and at 1015 they call assembly. At which time Col. Greening informed us that, "B-17's over which we have no control, force us to call off the inspection!" So at last it's official, and they're really coming. Wing-Co. Ferris bids us goodbye, as did Padre Douglass.

At 1500 on the nose in comes one C-47 and two B-17's, bringing the staff and a Brig. General. At four o'clock on the nose, 36 triangle A Forts start coming in at 10 minute intervals,--and do they look good! We watch the hospital staff move down followed by the Limies, who are the first contingent to move. A rain storm is moving in, which can ball up the works, but at least we now know that we're moving, so the wait is no strain. We move out tomorrow! Capt. Holmes wakened Whitey, Willie, Westcott and myself at 4 o'clock to inform us we were to fill in on the South Compound. We're already packed and it doesn't take us long to get moving. Away at last!

May 13, 1945 -

RHEIMS, FRANCE. Exactly 14 months ago today I walked into Stalag Luft 1, today I damned well left via a different mode of transport. Got started this morning at 6 o'clock for Barth Airdrome, as fill-in on the South Compound Headquarters Squadron. It's a good deal, as we rode with the baggage, by Russian conveyance, directly to the Airport. At 7:45 the Big Ole Birds started hitting the runway, there being a whole Group we followed the English and hauled out at 9:40. Something is radically wrong for this reflects efficiency. Willie, Whitey, Phil and myself grabbed off the nose position, and never has the "bomb aimer's" position looked so good. As chance would have it this ship is from my old Group, the 92nd, piloted by a North Adams, Mass. boy name of Pughese, a Class 44-E man. Our Navigator Geo. Jacobs, a Brooklynite with six missions.

We went down the Baltic Coast to North of Rostock, and saw the sea-plane base at Warnemunde blown all to hell. Then over Wismar, also thoroughly clobbered,--South of

Hamberg,--North of Hannover, and over Dortmund. Then down for a thousand foot sightseeing tour of the utter and completely devastated Ruhr Valley. I mean totally demolished,--everything was hit, nothing seemingly untouched,--never had I expected to see such complete destruction. On down over Essen, Duisburg, Dusseldorf, Hamborn, and across the frontier into France. We headed for and hit St. Quentin, which is North East of Paris, we were unloaded and put in a big G.I. truck, and off we go for Rheims.

The artillery has certainly wrecked the towns in this area,--the people all give us a big smile however, and a friendly wave of the hand. Absence may have made my vision more acute, but regardless, some of these French gals we see are certainly swell looking bits of baggage!

We're unloaded at an Airport 5 miles South of Rhiems, and have our first American G.I. chow,--good? like ambrosia! Spaghetti and meat with tomato sauce, meatloaf, carrots, potatoes, cake and coffee,--and the prima piece,--white bread! It tasted and looked like cake. Kraut prisoners working here and to quote, "Arbeiten bisse-Essen sehr gut!" Work good, eat very good, they seem only too happy to forget Schickelgruber. We're supposed to get typhus shots and move out by train to Le Harve at 12 o'clock. There to be directed to the boats on arrival,--but this sounds like a "snow" job to me.

May 14, 1945 -

We moved to the trains at Rheims and boarded at 12:30 A.M., was so sleepy that I went dead to the world sitting up. The train moved out at 3:30, and by 7:00 A.M. we were at Chaleaux for Breakfast. The kitchen was set up in a freight house, and they gave us boned chicken, peas, carrots and hot chocolate, and of course that white bread for dessert. A perculiar fare for breakfast, but none was wasted. We ate in tents set up along the platform, so everything has been arranged very well. We pulled into the R.R. yards at Amiens for about an hour, and it didn't take long for trading to start, cigarettes being 50 Francs, soap, 30 Francs, soluble coffee at 50 F.. Wilk gave us a bottle of sour red wine, and it wasn't bad with a loaf of bread Phil bartered for. We started selling cigs to get a bottle of champagne for 300 F., but by the time we'd obtained the cash the stock was sold out. The kids do all the buying, and they literally have fistfuls of Franc notes, and damned shrewd traders they are too. Whitey got clipped 3 packs for a bottle of watered cider which was so foul that we threw it away.

The country through which we are traveling is much like southern Ohio country. It's beautiful, and is hard to realize that so few months ago, hard fighting was going on through here. All the little towns show the affect of artillery action. We stop at 4:00 P.M. at Sequereaux for our dinner of Macaroni and cheese, peas, corn, apple-sauce and bread. The mess is attended by colored troops and is set up in an old barn which is as clean as a pin. Rumor is persistent that we'll debark tomorrow, if so it's quicker than I ever thought possible. It's hard to realize at 6 o'clock today that we're so many miles along and yet only 33 hours out of Barth, Germany.

We arrived at Camp Lucky Strike, which is just outside of LeHarve, after another truck ride from the station, and discover that it's a processing center, so the quick trip is coming to a grinding halt.

At 1:00 A.M. we were issued what seemed to be a sheet and a blanket, and directed to a tent. We had no light whatsoever, and in this darkness attempted to bed ourselves down. Our trouble began when we discovered our "sheet and blanket" were sleeping bag cover and liner. Never having seen the damned things, and with the darkness adding to the confusion, our efforts went for naught, so we finally ended up sleeping fully clothed in a tangle of zippers, rope and cloth.

May 15, 1945 -

Spent the day settling down, and in finding out that the time spent here is normally from 7-10 days. It's very crowded, there being 60,000 men here. It seems this Camp wasn't ready for the War to be over! The German Prisoners are used here for all dirty details, and to add to the indignity,--colored troops are assigned to guard them. They have them policing areas, digging latrines, K.P., and any other kind of work that's considered a chore. Went up to the Red Cross Area in the evening and found Frazier and Baldwin. We certainly had a real gabfest, bringing up to date what had happened to each of us since we parted company at Dulag Luft. I also ran into Swede Rowan, a room-mate of mine at Maxwell Field. Swede went down in a P-47 on his second tour, his 63rd sortie. Saw Nielander who told me Bob was in the hospital. Went to see him and found he'd been brought from the Airport in an ambulance. Seems as if they had to lie low in the rain that first night, and what with celebrations and his already weakened, he'd contracted pueumonia. He's doing well though, they used penicillan on him immediately and stopped the infection. Into the sack early after a good chicken dinner.

May 16, 1945 -

Still nothing more today, just eating and taking it easy. Met Trask today, and he reports Gates okay, but think he's moved out. None of them know anything of Ryno, he was among those sent to Mooseburg.

Spent the afternoon sunbathing, and went up to check on the rest of the boys from our room. When I found them I found Brownie with them. His packet was reforming, so I skipped mine and joined his, so we'll be together on the orders and on the boat. Saw McLaughlin today, who was a Cadet with me at Albuquerque, he looked pretty bad. He was with a French Major in the Underground in France, and was caught by the Gestapo in civilian clothing. Was taken to Buchenwald to be tried for a spy, and at the last minute received reprieve and transfer to Stalag 3 at Sagen. His friend the Major was shot. It's no wonder he looked like hell and had aged a lot.

May 17 and 18, 1945 -

Things are steaming along at snails pace in the same old snafued manner,--there are just too many in this camp, (now 40,000) more coming in and it's supposed to be cleared of RAMPS (Returned Allied Military Personnel) by June 1st. Our straightest poop for today is that the convoy for the 21st is practically filled, so we're to go on or about the 31st. So we're stuck for at least that long, and will be the last of the 1st priority to leave and get home. Dorsman got news today from a Colonel of his brother's P-47 Group, that his brother has been M.I.A. since March, and also that his Father is very ill. So upon an emergency request, they're allowing him to ship immediately. Ryno finally pulled in, so that sets up all our crew, except, of course, Cooper. Bob turned up in the packet next to ours, so it looks as if we'll all get to ship home together.

The country side is truly beautiful around here, we walked over to a very picturesque village today, and had a bottle of pretty good red wine. Farmers are all very busy planting, and some truck gardens are producing already. Cabbage maturing, lettuce, onions, and radishes galore. Only a few surface evidences here of the war. Met another Albuquerque classmate last night, who had seen Tom Wajda. Also ran into Nichols, Filorimo's Navigator, who we presumed had finished his tour and gone home. The food continues to be excellent in this section of camp. Had wonderful Southern Style fried chicken last night.

May 19 to June 9, 1945 -

These days were spent in the most part beating in time anyway possible. Brownie, Bob, Bumsted, and myself took off for Paris, strictly AWOL, strictly from boredom. We turned ourselves in at the Opera House as POW's just arriving from Germany. We were registered, issued clothing, billeted for one night, and put on travel orders for shipment to Camp Lucky Strike the next day. Needless to say we weren't about to go back to Lucky Strike for awhile, but we were forced to find other quarters. We drew a partial pay of 175.00 and took off for a Hotel in Wagram, which promised to put us up. We ate at transient Officers Mess at St. Augustine, so all in all we didn't get along too badly. After six days we were all tired, and caught a ride back to LeHarve. Bob and Spencer and I spent several good days in FeCamp with a Polish USO Show, and finally started on our truck ride to the boat on the 9th of June.

When we stopped for a rest along the way, I managed to sprain an ankle in jumping from the truck. It appeared to be broken, so a Jeep expressed me into LeHarve. An aid station gave me first aid, and sent me to the Hospital for an X-Ray which showed no breaks, but a very bad sprain. Upon my insistence, they put me in an Ambulance and delivered me to the Hermitage to the Sick Bay. The trip home was pleasant despite the bad ankle, and after 10 days hospitalization at Camp Shanks, I was Buckhannon bound.

\*\*\*\*\*