

A WARTIME LOG





Mary Johnson Corcoran and Jane Johnson Kill 2009



WWII DIARY

Pvt. Donald Duane Johnson

1st Edition

**Edited by Daughters
Mary Johnson Corcoran
and
Jane Johnson Kill**

European Theater
A WARTIME LOG

A REMEMBRANCE
FROM HOME
THROUGH THE AMERICAN Y.M.C.A.

*Branch 87
2nd Section*

This Book

*American
Compound*

*Was given me Sunday
Jan 20, 1945 at Stalag 7A.
at Moosburg Germany by
the International Red Cross
Committee. Operations were
through Geneva, Switzerland.*

Published by
THE WAR PRISONERS' AID OF THE Y. M. C. A.
37 Quai Wilson
GENEVA — SWITZERLAND

Liberty means more to me now
 after seeing the inside of Germany
 than ever before.  Hope I live to
 be as good an American as
 what I've promised myself I would
 be while being prisoner here. Good
 N. S. A, I'll kiss its earth when we land.

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

Pvt. Don Johnson
 A.S.N. 39621745 Co. H
 88th Division, 351 Reg. 2 Bat.
 U.S. Army Stalag No. 140614
 Bexen Ks. 8 B

Was a member of the American 5th
 Army in Italy and was captured near
 Bologna Italy on Oct. 24, 1944.

 Y.M.C.A.

in Switzerland

Was Prisoner of Germany from Oct. 24, 1944
 to May 1, 1945 a total of 40 days.
 40th P.M.

My first letter

My first pkg. from Home

Recaptured by 3rd Army 317 Bg. 80 Air. Co. C. 2 Plak

General Patton's Army

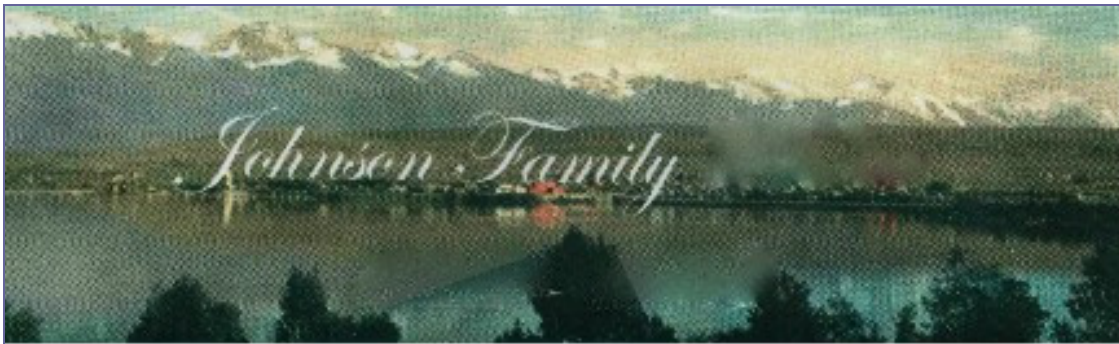
The Diary of a WW II P.O.W.
Pvt, Donald Duane Johnson (1915-1993)
Captured October 24, 1944 at Vedriano, Italy with the 351st Regiment,
88th Division, Company G, 2nd Battalion, U.S. Army
Recaptured May 1, 1945 by 3rd Army, 319th Regiment, 80th Division,
Company E, 2nd Platoon
General Patton's Army



Wife Catherine, daughter Mary, son Donald Joseph



Don Leaves From Polson, Montana



View of Flathead Lake, Polson, and the Mission Range of the Rocky Mountains in Western Montana



Top Left:
Parents' Wedding
Detroit Lakes,
Minnesota



Top Right:
Home in Minnesota
with Children:
Betty, Terri, Mary
(Me), Don, Jane

Collage



Top Left: Dad Back
From the War in
1945 at Polson, MT

Top Right: Polson,
Montana Home

Middle: Buick
Stationwagon and
Boat

Bottom Left: Dad's
Third Store in
Polson, Montana

Bottom Right: The
Photo Dad Carried
With Him During
the War.



Tom Kemmetmueller put this display together for Dad and Mom.



This flag was draped over Dad's coffin.



Dad in Uniform 1944

Row 1: (top) Bronze Star, Purple Heart , European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 3 Battle Stars (means he was in 3 major battles), WWII Campaign Medal, Good Conduct.

Row 2: Prisoner of War WWII Medal given Nov 11, 1988--*Betty was there to watch him and all the other living veterans from this area receive them.*

Row 3: Knife given him in the prison camp by a Russian, American Dog Tag, Blue 88th Infantry Division Insignia (*first draftee division to enter combat in WWII - entered Rome on 4 June 1944 - by 2 May 1945 there were 15,173 soldiers either killed, wounded or missing*), ID at Post Office in San Francisco after coming home from war and before being mustered out--Sept and Oct 1945.

Row 4: Sacred Heart and Cross carried all through the war, Lighter found at Nuremberg depot, 2 Combat Infantryman Badges (blue with rifle), Prisoner of War Dog Tag, European Theater (ETO)



Photo From a Magazine That Dad Sent to Mom During the War

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PART I

My father, who was in the U.S. Army 351st Infantry Regiment, fought in the Italian Campaign during World War II from August 12, 1944 to October 24, 1944 when his unit was surrendered to the Germans. The following typed pages were copied from my father's diary by my sister, Jane Johnson Kill, and were edited by me, Mary Johnson Corcoran. The letters were copied by my daughter, Carol Corcoran Lynam. I corrected spellings and grammatical errors, but otherwise everything was recorded as it was written in the original diary and letters. My father added the following introduction later.

INTRODUCTION

We were pioneers by the standards we had been living before we came to Polson, Montana. This area was known as the Flathead Valley and was the reservation for the Confederated tribes of Kootenai and Salish Indians. We lived on the reservation that had been recently opened up to white settlement.

I had the managerial training of the F. W. Woolworth Company, which was the best in the variety store business at that time. I utilized every bit of knowledge I had gained into organizing a profitable, modern store. I loved the country and could see many opportunities for myself, my wife, and the family we were about to raise.

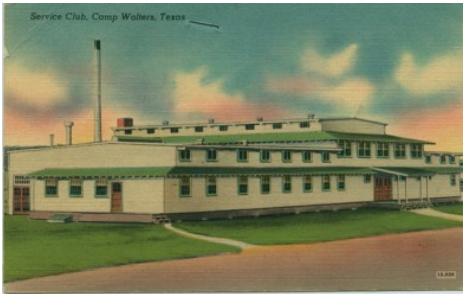
In January of 1944, I was inducted into the U.S. Army at Fort Douglas, Salt Lake City, Utah. All my dreams were crashing as I left my wife, child, and business to fight for my country. It was hard to leave the world I was happy with and the ones I loved.

After my preparation for entrance into the army at Fort Douglas, I was sent to take my training at Camp Wolters, Texas. I was to serve in training as a replacement for the overseas army. After an 18-week training period I would immediately be sent to the front lines as a replacement. I had good training, and it built me up physically so I was able to withstand the rigors of front-line duty, which was mainly to live without the comforts of home. My wife, Catherine, kept the letters coming to me, advising me on the status of our business and of our daughter, Mary. My daughter was one year old, at the age that a Dad can really enjoy his child. I missed that, but it was always a topic in our letter writing episodes.

Don and Group of Army Recruits

Camp Wolters, Texas

1944



When I finished my training at Camp Wolters (*June 28, 1944*), I was notified that I would next go to Fort Meade, Maryland, where it would be decided in which battle zone I was to serve. (*Audie Murphy received his basic training in 1942 at Camp Wolters and then Ft. Meade.*)

While at Fort Meade, my buddies and I filled each day with training and also experimented with trying to get out of the daily routine of army life. We made several trips to Washington, D.C., to visit the government buildings. On our first visit we were prepared to see four or five places, but after we had gone through one (the Archives Building), we decided it would take more trips as that had taken us all day.

One day we missed the bus and had to hire a taxi to take us back to camp. We didn't have very much money, and we really needed to get back to camp by 6:00 a.m. It was already midnight. We couldn't make the 50 miles by walking and found out that there were very few people around that we could talk to at that time of the morning. The taxi driver listened to a hard luck story that would have made any man cry. Here we were going overseas and probably would never come back, and he could take us home for \$5.00 and he would have contributed to the cause. Eugene Reiner and Neil Paris were the two other principals in this engagement. We finally broke down the taxi driver and got back to the camp on time. The reason we were so broke was that we had gone to a nightclub and had eaten at a table and had drinks on the side. Of course the bill was not presented to us until we were about ready to leave. It didn't seem like we were spending a lot of money, but it was a time bomb. About five of us had to raise \$60.00. It cleaned us out. How we could raise another \$5.00 after that is beyond me.

Another day we bought a bottle of cheap whiskey, borrowed some napkins from a restaurant, and set up a picnic by spreading out our napkins like a tablecloth with paper cups for our whiskey. It looked very much like a picnic. We just talked and had a lot of fun right in front of the Capitol steps.

One Sunday another friend and I got on K. P. Gene Reiner didn't make it, so he was going to let us know how bad he felt that we had. All he would have to do was sleep and shine his shoes, etc. We decided something must be done to make him think we got a better deal than he got. During our one-hour break, we got into our dress uniforms and piled into a Jeep that one of the GIs had to take back to the Motor Pool. We took a swing past the barracks to tell Reiner that they had given us the afternoon off and that we were headed into town. Eugene looked pretty sad when we told him our story. Then we proceeded to the Motor Pool with the Jeep. We really did go to a lot of trouble to pull off this joke as we had to go back and change into our fatigues and go right back to work. Anyway, we felt like we had done justice to Reiner for lording KP duty over us.

A fellow GI named Manelli was the 'Camp Casanova'. I was always ready to tell of his exploits with the weaker sex and was, in his own opinion, "God's gift to women", etc.. He slept in the cot next to me back at Camp Wolters, Texas, and was the subject of our jokes there. First, when we all arrived at Fort Meade, he had some trouble that had really upset him. He told us, "Gosh, I'm in trouble. I bought this new gabardine outfit and garrison cap to look real good on my furlough. When I came into camp, I should have been wearing my regulation uniform because an officer saluted me and I saluted him back, and then he noticed how I was not an officer and he took my name and number." One day we tied the springs of his bed with string, so when he came in late at night the strings would break and he would fall through. Another day, he was resting and fell asleep with his uniform on. Someone put a match in the sole of his shoe and another came along and lit the match. I think he hit the ceiling. But he was always our good friend.

The following is the saga of my 22 months in the U.S. Army as a Private and a Prisoner of War as told by me to my daughter Mary, written in a diary I had won in a lottery on Sunday, January 20, 1945 at Stalag 7-A, Moosburg, Germany through the International Red Cross Committee (operations through Geneva, Switzerland).

Sunday, January 20, 1945

Just came back from Mass at 10:00 a.m. and found out I had won this book. Only three men got books in our barracks, so I was awfully lucky. 180 men to a barracks.

Monday, January 21, 1945

This is the first day I started to work in this book. Barracks is cold and it is so hard to sit still and do much work at this time. No men will work today, so I have all day. Found ten lice on my undershirt and picked them off by hand. I itch pretty bad.

I will begin this diary with the day I left Polson, Montana, my home, after my leave from basic training at Camp Wolters, Texas, June 28, 1944.

I had to leave for Fort Meade, Maryland to be shipped overseas. Mommie and I got up early in the morning to go to Missoula, Montana to see me off. We decided Mary should stay with the sitter as it was kind of chilly. I had a lump in my throat as we drove off to the depot and felt like crying as I thought that I wouldn't see her for a long time.

Below is the picture of Catherine and Mary that Don carried in his helmet throughout the war. The pencil drawing on page 23 was drawn using this photograph. The photograph was also included in a display on families at the Minnesota Historical Society in St. Paul in the 1990s. The museum asked if we still had the teddy bear that I am holding. We no longer have that teddy bear, but my mother said that her father always gave teddy bears to me and to my brother and sisters.



At Missoula, Mommie bought a new dress and I didn't get a chance to see it on her, but I would have liked to. Mommie left on the bus for Polson at 3:30 p.m. and I stayed until 6:00 p.m. before my train came.

Got to Baltimore and went from there to camp. On the trip we stopped at Chicago and met several buddies I had taken basic training with. We were so glad we got to see each other, so we decided we'd get drunk. We did, but still made the rest of the trip all right. I was pretty lonesome and could remember the tears in Mommie's eyes as she left Missoula for Polson.

Spent about two weeks there and went into Washington, D.C.; quite often during the days we could get passes into town. Then we were shipped to Camp Patrick Henry and stayed there until we shipped out on July 27, 1944.

Tuesday, July 4, 1944

Dearest Darling Mommie & Mary,

I sure wish you were with me today. If I could have you hang on my arm I would really get more kick out of seeing these places. This place has all original paintings under National Guard. We went through Archives Building that has so many original Documents of Famous Men, etc. Saw Constitution of U.S. & Declaration of War, etc. Signatures of all famous men on documents: Napoleon Bonaparte and Lincoln, Washington. Saw so many I can't remember them all. Washington is a beautiful city. Right around this building is the large F.B.I. Building and Standard Oil Co. & many more I don't know the names of.

I got a pass this morning and don't have to be back at camp until 5 o'clock in the morning. Pretty swell don't you think? Didn't know we were going to get them until about one o'clock and it is a little after 10 now. I can't get along without you, Honey. Every place I go and everything I do, I just keep thinking of you all the time. I sure wish the war would end soon. As it is now, I don't know when I'll see you again. Whatever happens, don't forget I think you're the swellest girl in the world. Mary's my best girl. She'll get to know me better when I can spend more time with her.

Let me know if you have any good news for me, Honey. Keep hoping the war will end soon so I can come home. Lots of love & kisses & hugs from your lonesome Daddy. I miss you an awful lot. More than you know.

Love, Daddy

July 26, 1944

We rode to Newport News, Virginia by train and then got on the ship, the U.S.S. Bliss, which turned out to be the flagship of a convoy of 39 ships. As we passed through the loading room of the ship, a small band was playing some patriotic numbers, and we had our overseas bags and full field packs we had to carry. We were really sweating and the Red Cross gave us ice-cold lemonade, which really tasted good.

A few minutes after, we were on the gangplank. As I passed the edge of the building, I kissed the door and said an Our Father and hoped that I would get safely back. Some marines on the boat saw this and said, "Good deal", as I found out later. We stayed there for two days about a rod from the building, but couldn't get off as we were pretty well guarded.

I kept thinking about when I called Mommie from Camp Patrick Henry. I couldn't tell her where I was, and I heard her cry over the phone. I thought about the good news she told me...we were going to have another baby. I had a lump in my throat as then I realized I was really leaving the country and wondered what would happen before I would get back.

It was awfully hot down in our compartment, so I decided to sleep on deck. Our company was advance guards on the ship, so the next day we took over our assignments and each 20 hours from then on until we landed, we walked post for two hours. Eugene Reiner and Neil Paris came on the next day so things weren't quite so lonesome.

Five hundred men slept in each compartment (about 50 feet square). The men slept on racks, one above the other, so six men would sleep in a stack. **Spent 18 days on the boat.** We felt rough weather as we came out of Chesapeake Bay and got a little seasick as the boat rocked up and down. A lot of the fellows got sick, but I was very fortunate. I stayed well the whole trip. The ocean is the prettiest blue you ever laid eyes on. Started seeing porpoises about six feet long the second day out. Also saw a couple of whales and flying fish.

We had a nice trip across the ocean. Total number of men on the ship was 5,000. The GIs made some entertainment so we had a lot of fellows sing. As we neared the Strait of Gibraltar, we had a few alerts for submarine attacks, but things went by just the same. We wore life belts around our waists all the time since we left the States. We were told when we would pass the Rock of Gibraltar which was supposed to be at midnight one evening. We all stayed up on deck that night, and the time came and passed but no rock. Found out the next day that we could have seen it if it had been clear. We did notice lights in the distance though.

We passed along the northern coast of Africa and could see Algiers, Tangier, and Casablanca, but we were three or four miles out so couldn't see anything plain. Passed along the Coast of Sicily at night and couldn't see that either.

The next morning about 9:00 a.m. we were nearing Naples, Italy at which time we were told this was our destination. Off to our left about one-half mile was the Isle of Capri. Beautiful island. Americans used this island when attacking Naples to put up their big guns and shell Naples. Lots of

small boats fishing as we passed by. That afternoon I saw Naples, and it sure looked good from a distance, even if it was foreign soil. We were getting tired of seeing water every day.

Off to our left was a convoy of ships heading out from Naples, and we all figured it must be going back to the States. How we would have liked to have gotten on it! Found out a few days later that it was a part of the convoy that made the invasion on southern France. (*7 Allied divisions withdrawn from Italy were: U.S. 3rd, 36th, 45th plus 4 French Expeditionary Corps* Time Life Books, The Italian Campaign, published in 1978, p. 180)

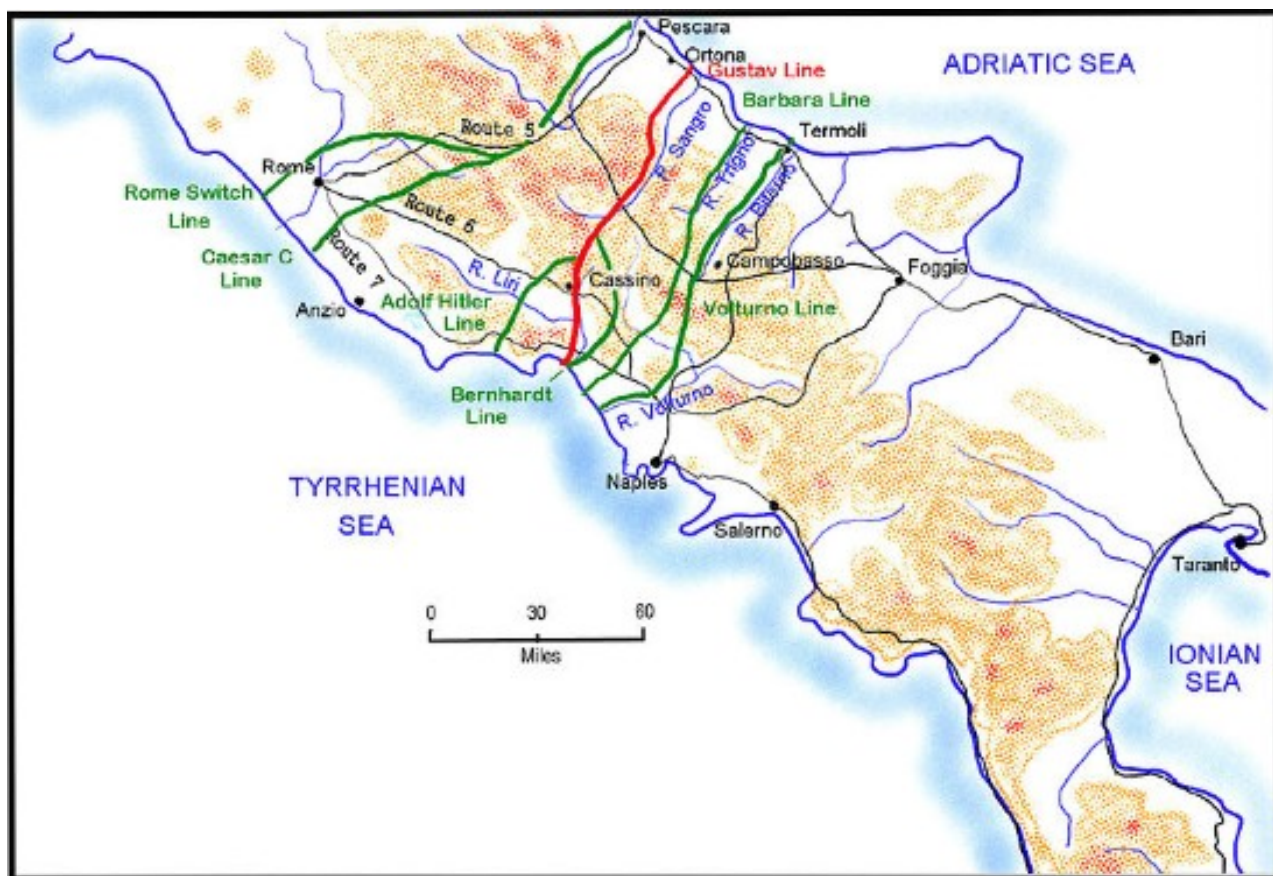
As we neared shore, we found the port full of ships from all over the world. When we came to anchor close to shore, we could really tell the city was all in ruins. Little sailing boats had been coming out for miles before we landed, and we would throw cigarettes and money. Now when we landed we did the same. The children and men came out along the docks, and we threw lots of food to them.

August 12, 1944 (Date of Arrival is listed on the Discharge Document)

Mount Vesuvius was off to our right and in back of the city. Smoke was coming out the top of the mountain. Got off the boat the next day, and as we passed along the ruined city, we had our first taste of seeing a starving bunch of people. They begged and tried to steal even out of our pockets as we marched down the street. We had to have the fellow in back of us help watch as we were so heavily loaded we couldn't feel their hands if they were trying to get in our pockets. We had some biscuits in our rations that some GIs threw on the ground, and old men and women would pick it up and eat it. Little girls about Mary's age were sitting along the streets wanting anything you could give them.

The city still had barbed-wire entanglements the Jerries had built during their defense of the city. Naples is quite a large city, but runs narrow for the whole distance around the harbor. We saw very few cars, and the streets were narrow. Venereal disease signs everywhere. Also malaria signs. People were still digging in ruins for their belongings.

We got on box cars of an Italian train and got to Caserta, Italy about 5:00 p.m.. On the way we bought wine called *vino* from the people. Italians stood along tracks and begged for cigarettes and food. We had a lot of C-rations and would throw a can or so when we saw a person we would want to get it.



Map From Wikipedia of the Volturno River north of Naples

At Caserta (*northeast of Naples*) we were loaded on GI trucks and taken to the **24th Replacement Depot** at Purple Heart Valley on the Volturno River, called this as so many casualties had happened in this valley. (I received the Purple Heart Medal for having fought here.) This valley was supposed to have been owned by Count Cerano. Our main headquarters were in the buildings, which were barns built all of concrete. They had twelve silos and about eight barns. Most of them were pretty well shot up, but Americans had Italians fixing them so they could be used for offices. This farm was supposed to have been a dairy farm.

Gene, Neil, and I were all attached to 560th Replacement Company and Gene and I slept in the same tent, so we had a chance to get out beds together.

The tents were four-cornered and came to a peak at the top. For the first week we had to sleep on the ground. Food was not so good for that week, but the second week we got cots and the food was better. Every week we had a chance to buy rations from the P.X. (Post Exchange), which consisted of being able to spend about 80 Lire (Italian currency). Each Lire was equal to one cent in American

money. This money was made by the U.S., and our money was turned in so Germany couldn't get a hold of American money. Later we found out that for an American dollar the Italians would give us a dollar and a half or 2 dollars.

In our ration, we got six candy bars, three cans of beer, three packs of gum, one bar of soap, one carton of cigarettes, one can of pipe tobacco, one package of razor blades, and some other odd articles. Cigarettes were very scarce, and I had to get a pipe and smoke my butts from cigarettes in it. I wrote Mommie right away and asked her to send some extra cigarettes, but none of the packages she sent me ever arrived.



Wikipedia: M1 Garand Rifle used in WWII by the U.S. Army

Lots of my buddies started to get shipped out for the front, but I signed up for a job for plans and training and was put on the job about a week later. It consisted of throwing about 30 concussion grenades and 250 rounds of M1 ammunition each night. Had about 100 plants of dynamite. The troops were supposed to come down a field to a river bank and 105s (cannon) and 80 MM mortar and various German weapons would fire over their heads. Reiner and I were riflemen. When this was done we were all through for the whole day. This amounted to about one and a half hours of work; and during the day when all the fellows had to line up for drill and marches, we could lay on our cots and sleep. In the evenings that the job didn't have to be done, we would go to a movie at our open-air theater (when it didn't rain). While we were here, the camp commander had a better theater built in a kind of little valley so we could sit on the ground and see the picture as the rise was just about right. They dedicated this as the "McNair Bowl", after General McNair, who was killed in the southern France invasion.

We also had a chance to see Joe Lewis box at this place. (*Joe Lewis's September 1944 Exhibitions in Naples lists fights with George Culbertson, Van Parks, Johnny Ralph, Archie Smith. His Arlington Cemetery Biography says he traveled more than 21,000 miles and staged 96 boxing*

exhibitions before two million soldiers.) It was raining the evening he came and he wasn't going to give any exhibition, but after he saw so many of us standing in the rain waiting to see him, he went on with the show.

Practically every Sunday, I went to Naples or Santa Maria or Caserta and spent the day. I would go to church in the town every time I went. When I stayed at Campania, I had gone to church there also. I never missed very often, and I would say prayers all through my time over here.

Angel of God, my guardian Dear, to whom his love commits me here. Forever this day be at my side to light and guard to rule and guide. From stainful sin, oh keep me free, and in this hour watch over me. Oh, Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer Thee my prayers, works, and sufferings of this day. For all Thy intentions of Thy Sacred Heart, and in communion with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world...3 Hail Marys to help us through married life, 1 Our Father and 1 Hail Mary that the war will be over real soon so we can go back to our families and friends, 3 Hail Marys that Mommie will have our child OK and that both of them will come out of it well and healthy, 1 Act of Contrition.

I said these prayers each day while overseas. On very few days did I forget before I went to sleep. I lost the little St. Christopher Medal I had on my dog tags but have the My Salvation Medal with me every place I've gone and through combat. I hope to be wearing it when I get back to the States. "Oh happy thought!" (351st Military History notes that on July 27, 1944 Archbishop Spellman visited the troops and requested the names and addresses of all the soldiers whom he met so that he might convey best wishes to their families when he returned to the U.S.. I recall my father going to see the then Cardinal Spellman when he came to St. Ignatius, Montana in the 1950s.)

Monday, September 18, 1944

Dearest Darling Mommie & Mary,

Well, Honey, guess you know it's my birthday today, but it's just another day here. No one here to come around and surprise me like you do. Honey. I do know I've got a great big hug and a kiss for you, but as long as you aren't here to collect it, guess I'll have to save it for you. I visited Naples with another fellow by the name of Pete Zoroski, and we sure had a nice time. I'm writing this letter early in the morning so it can go with the morning's mail as I didn't write yesterday seeing I had the day off. I wanted to visit Pompeii. We bought tickets and missed the excursion trip so guess maybe we'll take the trip some other time over there. We have moved to a different outfit so you can write to the new address you find on the envelope. Don't know how long I'll be assigned; but, then again, none of us have any idea what we're going to do or not. The fellow in charge of our group mentioned our names should go through for Cadre, which means permanent personnel in the camp; but don't get your hopes up to high about anything as, if you do, I'm sure something will happen to disappoint us. Just keep on praying like I am that the war will end. I hope it does some good. I'm sure getting awful lonesome for you. Honey, so take good care of yourself. Thanks for the three nice letters I got from you last Saturday. Were they ever nice, too.

I've got a pencil sketch of you and Mary and will send it as soon as I can. A GI drew it. Read, and I'm going to read them over again today. I got a pretty nice letter from Renn. I'll read it again

and tell you the most important things he said. I do know he mentioned we should wait awhile as many things can happen and we may have some luck. And, also, if they have to hire someone else, they probably will start a new store after the war is over. But it may be a long time, if I don't have a job to come back to, before I get out of the army. No one knows how we are going to be let out, but think everything I told you before I came into the army will come true. The war news sounds pretty good. Let's hope it keeps up; and if the war is over, that's the thing we need to worry about most of all. It sure made me feel good to think you liked that picture so much and what it meant to you. I hope I can come back soon and tell you the words you want me to say in the picture. Honey. You're the only girl for me besides Mary, Honey. Hope I get those cigarettes soon. Honey, but suppose they'll take a long time just like it took us to come across. Take good care of yourself and Mary, Honey, and keep your chin up. Everything probably will turn out swell, and when I get home this will be just a memory. Hope you and Mary are getting along okay. I still think you kids are the swellest two gals in the world. Lots of love, kisses, & hugs. Daddy



I was moved over to 555th Company, which is a detail company, and the chow really was good. Got just about all we could eat every day. Now being a prisoner and remembering the days when that was true and all the good meals Mommie used to make for me, I sure miss them and think of them every day and pray it won't be long before these damn Jerries will fold up.

Wednesday, September 20, 1944

Dearest Darling Mommie & Mary,

Well, I didn't get a chance to write you today as it rained most of the day and had to work so that's the reason. I hope you've got nice weather back there so you don't have to be building fires all the time. Renn (business partner) told me you had a 12% increase for the month and a 17% increase for the accumulated months this year. I sure think that's pretty swell and Renn thought that was good, too. Hope you have a nice increase through Christmas and you don't have a tough time of it. Maybe we will know what the army deal is then. Whatever you do don't worry about me even if you don't get mail from me for awhile. I'm afraid something is up again, but that's just personal opinion so don't take it very seriously. If it were true I wouldn't be able to write it anyhow. I sure hope everything does get along okay. I sure miss you and Mary awfully much and I love you. I love you. I love you. I still think you and Mary are the two swellest girls in the world and would sure like the chance to have a date with you kids tonight, We could have toasted cheese sandwiches and beer and go to bed when we're tired. I sure hate to think of you kids batching it. I sure would like to help you out and make you happy again. The time has to come sometime. Each day that goes by is just one day closer to my coming home.

I still say prayers for you & Mary and Junior. Good night, Honey and Mary. Give Mary a kiss for me & a hug. Lots of love, kisses & hugs, Daddy

Reiner and I still stayed together until we went up to the front lines. We always got in the same tent and slept in cots next to each other.

There were many places I would have liked to see in Italy but never had enough passes to get far from camp. A lot of names of churches I visited I can't remember, but they were beautiful. Lots of statues and paintings and many altars in one church, but no church pews. Most of the churches had just regular chairs, which kind of spoiled the looks of the church for me.

Friday, October 6, 1944

Dearest Darling Mommie & Mary,

Well, Darling, I couldn't write you for awhile because I was moving. Can't tell you where I am but am OKay, and don't worry. Just take good care of yourself and Mary until I can come home again. I do love you awfully much. Honey, and Mary, too. Hope you're getting along okay with everything. It's muddy as heck out. I sure hope the weather clears up, but it doesn't look like it. I hope you have nice weather at home. Please let me know what you found out about Junior's arrival--if you can get aid or not. Sure hope it works. I am enclosing a picture of one of the churches. I was in one last Sunday

when I visited Naples. It was taken out of a "Life" magazine, but don't know what date. This cathedral has the largest accumulation of silver in one piece of sculpture work in the world. It is a work that encompasses Mt. Vesuvius before, then, and after the eruption when Pompei was ruined. Also had a lot of single statues of silver. This large work was made of coins donated by people of Naples and by different big men of Rome and rulers, etc. Also have the original sacred heart that they bless people before communion. That was used when they used it for something great that happened and is only taken out of the chapel on December 19 of each year and they claim something great always happens. They showed us a duplicate as they wouldn't open the doors to the chapel. The church is beautiful and has wonderful paintings on the ceilings and walls, etc. Saw a couple other churches, but don't remember the names.

Suppose I won't get letters for a long time. Hope I get a chance to get them if they do come. I owe Ruthie a letter yet so will write her tomorrow if I can. Keep writing me. Honey. I'm sure lonesome and love you awfully much. The war news doesn't sound so good today. Pretty tough I guess. Lots of love, kisses & hugs. I think you're both swell. Daddy

I visited one church in Naples. (I sent a picture home to Mommie after seeing it in a Life magazine. This church (*the Cathedral of Naples or Duomo*) had the largest works of silver in the world and also had a Sacred Heart Chalice that was used during the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. (Of course we could not see the real one as it was locked up, but we saw a replica of it.) The real one is taken out every year on just one day, September 19th, and the people seem to think it does some supernatural thing when it is used. When I was there they thought that probably the war would be over then or real soon afterward. (*The church has a vial of Saint Gennaro's blood that miraculously liquefies on the anniversary of the martyr's death.*)

King Victor Emmanuel's palace was at Caserta, Italy, and it sure covers a lot of territory. The front of the building runs about one-half mile long, and it is about six stories high, two blocks deep, and is one massive building with driveways underneath. In the back of the building was the King's private swimming pool, reserved for officers only of our forces. Down about a mile by the garden was a real large pool we GIs could use.

(Officers had their pick of everything, and we were just meat for the front lines until we got to the front. Then the officers were the ones to turn chicken. The officers really thought a lot of us then, but not before.)

The ruins of Pompeii were only a 15-minute bus ride away from Naples. It is situated along the base of Mount Vesuvius, just at the edge of the city of Naples.

Buildings very seldom run higher than four or five stories. All are made out of concrete blocks and look like they have been standing for centuries.

One thing I noticed here is that kids up to about three years of age never wear pants. They would just have a shirt on and everything else would show. Boys and girls alike. Must have been a custom, as none of them seemed to mind. A real nice looking girl might be leading one of these tots by the hand and would get an awful razzing from the GIs, but I guess most of them didn't know what we were laughing about.

If we were broke, we could sell things to the Italians and get a good price. Soap was worth from 50 cents to 75 cents a bar, and cigarettes were worth 60 cents a package. A set of GI Sun Tans (army summer dress uniforms) was worth about \$15.00. We would find some way of getting these clothes when we needed money really bad. Military police were trying to stop the trading, but we found ways of getting around them also.

As a general rule, at this depot we knew soon we would be sent to the front. I waited for packages from Mommie, which she told me she had sent, but I never received any of them. I got airmail letters as quickly as 9 days from the mailing date on the envelope, so that helped my stay there a lot.

The dairy farm we were at was not far from Monastery Hill (called that by our troops as we lost so many men there because they didn't want to ruin the monastery). The Jerries used the hill as a lookout and could see all our troops' movements for miles. Jerries knew we held churches sacred and would take advantage of this in every small church in Italy. Americans had to level all the churches and practically every building in Italy to drive the Germans out.

At this depot I met a lot of men from many battlefronts, men who had a lot of experience with the different kinds of fighting and narrow escapes at the front. One story was about how the Moroccan Goums fight. (*Goum is a term used for a unit of 200 Moroccan soldiers, who served in auxiliary units attached to the French Army, between 1908 and 1956.*) The Goums are from North Africa, and they have about a regiment of men. These men are used on patrols. They are Negroes with long beards and long hair tied up in a turban like the Arabs. They carry knives as their only weapon as they do their fighting at night and guns are useless to them.

A group of Goums would be sent to kill a bunch of Germans at some certain place, and they would do the job but would take as souvenirs, for themselves, the ears of the men they killed and would let these dry in their tents. On every mission a prize was offered by their tribesmen for the man who made the biggest haul.

These Goums would crawl up on the men while they slept and cut their throats. One story of a Goum was about an officer who wanted a pair of German boots for souvenirs, so a Goum brought back a pair. The officer found the Goum had chopped off the man's legs and left them right in the boots. American soldiers didn't want any of these men around even if they were friends. Kind of a spooky feeling.

A lot of GIs visited brothers and friends that were wounded in hospitals at Naples. Lots of them were blind or had legs and arms missing or had a lung shot out. They would be going back to the States soon.

The nurses and WACs overseas don't get any glory from many GIs, as they don't live a very clean life over here. Maybe a few do, but from what I have seen and heard I don't want Mary to ever think she's doing her patriotic duty to belong to a military organization. It can be nothing but a rotten outfit.

The Red Cross at the depot would give us 5 cigarettes a man during our shortage of cigarettes and once in a while would give a bar of soap, one razor, a package of blades, etc.. Each night, during the real hot weather before we would go to a show, we could take our canteens and have them filled with a lemon drink. It tasted great.

One day a GI was found being put in a boat by a couple of Italians. They found out he had been beaten up and killed. They possibly were going to take him out in the Volturno River and throw the body in. Don't know what happened to the Italians. Lots of GIs got V.D. from the Italian girls. These girls would have small boys (we called them pimps) advertise for them to the GIs on the streets. This went on everywhere. Prophylactic stations had to be set up all over Italy, especially at Naples, as I think V.D. was as high as 60% there.

When we would sneak off the post and go to the farmers around the camp, we would be able to buy *vino* and vegetables and grapes that were really good. All we had to do to get grapes was pull them off the vines. Every farmer had a vineyard and raised the grapes for his wine. They all drank it with their meals, like we do coffee in America.

One Wednesday morning after roll call we got notice that we were to be shipped, so we were put on the alert. Had everything packed for the next morning and the rumor was we were going to southern France. As they were calling roll and loading men on trucks we found out Reiner and myself were supernumeraries. They had enough men, so we were sent back.

One week later we got another notice and got ready the same way. This time we really did go. Each truck took about 30 GIs and all their equipment. Trucks were driven by Negroes and were they ever a reckless bunch. They drove like mad and almost put us over banks a dozen times before we got to Caserta, Italy. From there we got on boxcars, 45 men to each car. The roofs of the cars had holes in them, and it rained during our two-day ride, so we got plenty wet.

For food, we had seven cases of C-Rations so we didn't have to go hungry. I had a lot of extra GI clothes along I didn't need so I sold them between stops at different towns to Italians. One place we stopped was near a big vineyard and a lot of GIs filled helmets with grapes, so that came in handy. The lady who owned them came out and was crying, so each of us chipped in money and one fellow went back and paid her for the grapes. She sure made money on that deal. The Germans took anything they wanted, but we had to pay. Italians, I still hate the people. I found out later, they would help the Germans as long as they could, and we are letting the Italian prisoners in America go free. They should be prisoners until the war ends, or come back and fight for us. They are dirty rats.

October 14, 1944

We found out one morning we had passed through Rome at night so we didn't even have a chance to see the city. Of all the things I wanted to see over here, I would have liked to visit the Vatican City most of all. After our two-day-and-night ride, we came to the end of the railroad and were loaded again on GI trucks and taken to the **8th Replacement Depot—about 35 miles from Florence, Italy. Camp was about 15 miles from Leghorn.** It was raining when we got to camp and it sure was a muddy mess. We had to sleep on the ground in the mud the first night, but the second day we got cots so it wasn't so bad. We got an issue of one package of cigarettes and one small piece of candy a day. Reiner and I still were together and met several other buddies. We didn't do much training at this camp and had a chance to lay around and play cards a lot.

As we were up near the front lines, lots of Italians came near camp to dig in our garbage cans to get something to eat. We would always leave something in our mess kits and as we passed them would dump it in their can instead of the garbage can. Little did we know that someday soon we would be that hungry for food.

List of Soldiers in the 8th Replacement Depot October 14, 1944

Adinolfi, Joseph 32944006; Gomez, Nicolas38561713; **Green, Lloyd17157270**; Hanson, Ernest34895584
Hardy, Gerald42091758; Herman, Abraham32638537; **Hinesley, Joe35094210**; **Johnson, Donald39621745**;
Krolikowski, Edmund36899202; Kucharski, Joseph35926373; Lance, John33832764; Lanier, Loyd34894900
LeValley, Roberts36836899; Little, Robert37581933; Logue, Marvin36891048; Lopotosky, George33916603
Lown, Israel20631957; Lucero, Mauricio38584153; Lombard, George38533651; Marciano, Michael32773769
Maze, Gordon39621858; McCabe, Thomas42052530; McKenna, Paul33767564; Miller, George33732991
Mitchell, James33904341; Moss, John34896009; Nucaro, James32659511; Pallante, Anthony15323397
Pamice, Salvadore42049625; Papinchak, Peter33919544; Parker, Theodore36874145; Pearson, Glen39721469
Reiner, Eugene39621707; Renshaw, George36104694; Rutledge, Hansford33084201; Salomone,
Harry32897455; Saunder, Lester31381815; Scheitrumph, Louis33832923; Sennett, Raymond35778722
Siegel, Albert33919737; Spada, John31416549; Stesko, John32593020; Sweeney, Thomas31425385
Wickro, Clarence37586100; **Widing, Stanley31255497**
Sgt. Lane, Carl6262323; Sgt. Lilly, Thomas32566610; Sgt. VanTubbergen, Harvey36417184

This place was the last replacement depot for us (**8th Replacement Depot**). We stayed there about a week and during that time I sent the last of my money home because if I was killed, Mommie could use the money and I wouldn't need it. In case I would come back off the lines we would get paid anyhow. From here we got on GI trucks and were taken to the **351st Replacement Company for the 88th Division**. Big guns roared over our heads day and night. Mostly at night, so we could hardly sleep. Here we had to start sleeping in foxholes. German shells came in pretty close. We had one fellow get hit on the head with shrapnel from one of their shells. One night, Reiner and I were up near the bridge watching English tanks moving up to the front. One tank went over the side of the bridge; three men were killed. Red Cross ambulances were busy hauling wounded men back to hospitals. Seemed like an endless line. Here we got our first idea of how many men get hit at the front. We stayed at this place three days and were then sent to our division and company. Here Reiner and I were split up. He went to Company B, and **I was put in Company G**. When we got our shipping orders, we were issued two bandoliers of M1 ammunition and two hand grenades. We were loaded on trucks again and hauled to my outfit as casualty replacements. G Company was supposed to come off the line in the evening, so we were first off at the rest area. The company came back for a three-day rest to get replacements and then go back up again. The company had taken an awful beating, so there wasn't much the men wanted to talk about.

Howitzer shells came into the area all night. By this time, I was used to the noise so I could get a little sleep. People had evacuated their farms and the cattle ran loose. Every once in a while one would get killed by a shell and we would have meat to eat. Fragments of shells lay all around us. Had to be pretty careful where we walked as the areas hadn't been swept for land mines and if we had

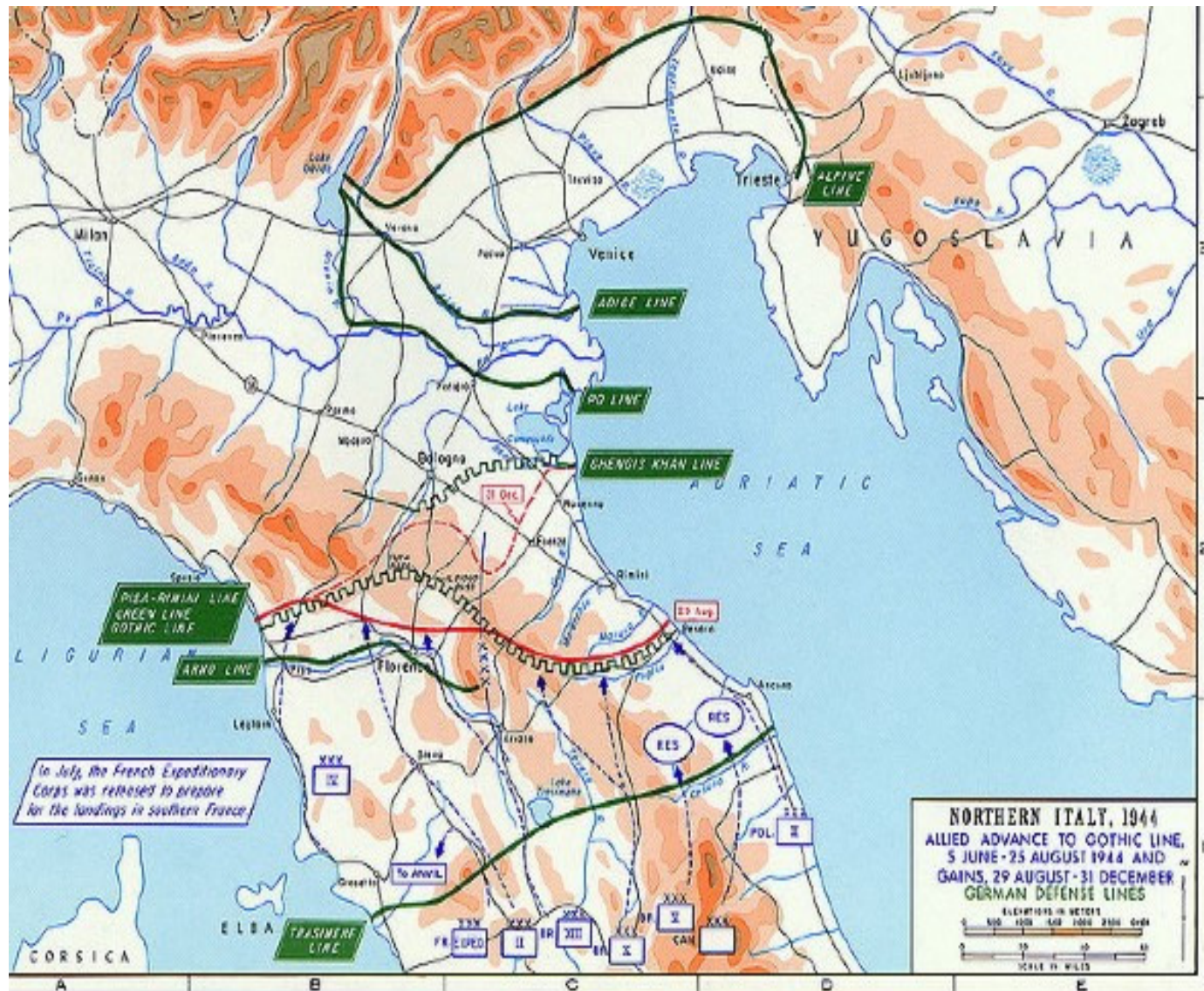
happened to step on one, it would have all been over. I had a chance to go to confession and communion here just before we moved up.

There were lots of German graves around this area and lots of German equipment. Trucks and rifles, hand grenades, and flares were lying all over. Shell holes were everywhere and roads were in bad shape as they had been bombed and shelled a lot. We were now two miles from Mount Grande, one of the last mountains before Bologna, Italy.

Bologna was the objective of the 88th Division, which was supposed to be our objective before we came off the line again. Here I wrote my last letters to Mommie and I felt something was going to happen, so I told her to save a couple of letters as she may not get any for a while. I also wrote to Renn Torbert, my partner, and Robert, my brother, to see that Catherine got taken care of in case I didn't come back. I never dreamed I would be taken prisoner. I thought I might be killed, but mostly I thought I would be wounded—I guess. I wasn't scared like I thought I would be. I was rather inquisitive to see everything through. Once in a while I would say to myself, "I could shoot myself and be wounded so I could go back," but an impulse would come to me that I've got to do something to help win, even if it's just a little so the war would be over.

After three days we moved up a little further, and here we started to find dead Germans on top of the ground and in foxholes. Shells of all types kept pounding away at us from here on—day and night. It started to rain in the morning, and we were put on a half-hour alert to move up when orders came through. We had slept in holes with our shelter half over the top of the hole. Two men in each hole. The fellow that I was unlucky enough to get with was lazy, and I had to do most of the work. Later he learned his lesson.

Now I had been split up from all of my buddies so I was all alone and I felt just a little bit lonely as I hadn't gotten a letter from Mommie for over a week due to my moving up. I still had two of Mommie's letters and read them a couple of times a day. (*The list of soldiers in the 8th Replacement Depot on page 29 shows my father with Eugene Reiner as mentioned in his diary. Note that Lloyd Green is listed with Dad in the 8th Replacement Depot and again in the 351st, 88th, Company G morning report.*)



Center Zipper Line/Gothic Line Red Line/Pisa-Rimini Line Green Short Line/Arno Line

Despite the weakening of his forces, General Alexander made early plans for an assault on the Gothic Line. This involved the transfer of troops from the western or left flank to the right flank in preparation for an attack on the enemy's left. The offensive was opened by the Eighth Army on Aug. 25, 1944, and by August 31st the German front had been pierced on a line 20 miles long to a depth of 4 miles. On the left the Fifth Army, which included some British Commonwealth formations, also attacked vigorously, and by September 13th had broken the enemy front north of Florence. Rimini fell to the Allies on September 21st, and by September 28th the Gothic Line had been forced. This phase of the Italian campaign was an exceptionally fine operation by the Allies, carried out despite dwindling numbers in difficult mountain country well suited to defense. The price, however, was a heavy one--approximately 50,000 casualties. When the offensive was halted at the end of September, the line ran across Italy from east to west for about 150 miles, from north of Rimini to north of Florence and Pisa. (Grolier.com/wwii) Vedriano and Monte Grande are north of the Gothic Line and about 16 miles southeast of Bologna.

Monday, October 23, 1944

Dearest Darling Mommie & Mary,

Wonder how you are and Mary, too, and if everything is going along okay for you. I think it may be a good idea to save this letter as I don't know how many more you'll get. No one knows. If our prayers help, maybe I've got a chance. So far am fine and am sure dreaming of home and you kids. Quite a bit of noise so it's hard to sleep, but if you're tired enough it's okay. I think I'm going to come out of it alright so am not afraid, but there will be times. Reiner is still with me and have another couple of buddies, Hensley and Whitting (Hinesley, Widing p. 29). Sure are a couple of swell fellows. I sure hope I get some mail from you today. Honey, but suppose I won't. It would sure cheer me up.

I'm writing this at noon as we've been on duty all morning. I'll probably be on duty this afternoon so I'll write what I can now. Let me know if you've filled out that form yet for Junior so I know you've done it, and also let me know if you've gotten those \$25.00 money orders I sent you so I can throw away the stubs, I sure hope you're getting along okay with everything at home and that you're both well. Are you having good business at the store now? Are you getting a lot of good merchandise?

It's muddy as the dickens out and sure hard to move around. Does the car still work so you won't have trouble with it this winter? Probably you'll have to have Elmer check it over for you. I'm sure lonesome for you. Honey, and miss you more every day and Mary, too. Take good care of you two, and I think I can take care of myself so don't worry about me.

I've been on duty again this afternoon, and it's raining again and is so dark I can hardly see to write so I'll write more again tomorrow. Honey. I love you both awfully much. Keep writing. Lots of love & kisses & hugs. Daddy I think you're both swell.

We took down our equipment, and all our stuff got soaked. We weren't ordered to move up until night, so we stood around and froze all day long. At 5:00 p.m. we got our orders to go. This night we had the news we were spearheading the drive, and Jerries would be on both sides of us so we should be ready for anything. Our sign and countersign were given to us just before we started out. We walked until about 2:00 a.m.. The fire was too heavy, and we had too many casualties so we were ordered to dig in. This was in a plowed field and all I had to dig with was a small hand pick and my hands. But a person can dig a hole in a hurry when shells are dropping real close.

We got pretty well dug in when we got orders to secure equipment for we were moving up again. Didn't seem to take long—was around 7:00 a.m. and ended up on top of Mount Grande. The noise was terrific as I guess the Jerries had spotted us, so we dug in again.

This time screaming meemies (a six-barreled mortar) and German 88s came in on us. Some GIs couldn't get dug in fast enough and were hit by fragments. Every once in a while after a shell would explode, some fellow would cry out for the medics, so we would know he had been hit. We laid pretty low most of the day and had a lot of close calls. It rained most of the time so our shelter was over half of the top of our foxhole, and now there were so many holes in it, it looked like a flour

sifter from shell fragments. One shell exploded four feet from my hole, and I thought for sure I was done for. I didn't know if I was dead or not. Guess I was stunned. I had two packages of K-rations and ate one that day. We left this place every day and would get pushed back again and again. This happened for six days. Each night we tried to push on. Lots of our boys had to be left, and we would pass them night after night. Before they were left behind, the medics would check their pulse to see if they were dead or not. If they had any chance of living, the litter bearers would carry them out. Many times they lay with wounds all day, and the bearer would find one that had lived through the day. Each day the smell grew worse as the bodies started to bloat up. The smell is like any dead animal. Each day we withdrew at dawn to our place on Mount Grande. We dug a new hole every night. The seventh day at 5:00 p.m., we got orders to move up again. This time, Company G-2 Platoon was to go through the lines and take a hill. The 1st and 3rd Platoon followed up. Company F was to occupy buildings as they were taken. Company E was held in reserve for emergency. We were supposed to have three machine guns and three mortars with our platoon, but they never showed up so we had to go without them. We started out after a terrific barrage from our 105s and mortars. The place we were supposed to take was about three or four miles ahead—a hill about the size of the one south of Polson, Montana. I couldn't see how anything could live on that hill as every inch seemed to be hit during the barrage that lasted about an hour. Then we were on our weary way.

For a while all noise had quit and everything seemed awfully quiet except for an occasional 88 shell or a screaming meemie landing fairly close. We didn't know it then but found out later that the Jerries had pulled out from the first town we had to go through. As we were getting near this village (Vedriano), Number 1 squad was sent ahead to find a connecting road so we wouldn't have to go through town as there were snipers all around. While they were sent ahead, we lay in the ditch alongside the road. I had lain there for a few minutes when I moved my hand in another position. I thought I had my hands in some water and found it was a dead Jerry—I had touched his cold face.

When Number 1 squad came back, we went through the village, for they found the Jerries had evacuated the town (*Vedriano*). As we marched through, Company F took their positions in the buildings. Two men would approach a building, a GI on each side of the door. One GI entered first and the other covered him with a tommy gun or M1 rifle. Most of the buildings were just piles of rubbish from being shelled. In some of the buildings we found Italians, and they didn't seem to want to leave. We didn't bother them, as they usually would be an old couple with no place to go. Lots of them would be standing in their barns in between their cows in case a shell would come through the

building and maybe the fragments would be stopped before they got to them. There were lots of fires all over the area for miles. Every once in a while a flare would go up and the artillery would start in again for about 30 minutes. Our headquarters was by a walkie-talkie (a wireless telephone carried on the back of a GI). Just after we got out of this town, we were marching in staggered formation on each side of the road when a German machine gun called the M.G. 42 opened up on us, killing our first scout and wounding several others. It was awfully dark out at this time and hard to keep track of the man ahead of you. Keeping contact with the GI ahead of you was the only way we kept together. Every once in a while when contact was lost, one man would have to go back and gain contact again. We had just passed a Jerry lying face down in the road about 100 yards away, and the fellow in back of me lost contact so I had to go back. Walking alone past this dead German at night gave me a spooky feeling. As I walked past him, I imagined he moved, but he was really dead for he had been shot right in the center of the forehead. I imagine he was about 18 or 19 years old. Anyhow, he was young and nice looking. I found the other squads about 200 yards back, so everything was OK. We didn't dare lose contact as we were only a company of men and needed every man for this attack. This all happened until about 2 a.m. and from then until daybreak, artillery was continually thrown at us. Not very many men were hit, for we spread our distance between men and every other man was in staggered formation. None of us was awfully scared but we were determined to do our job and make the best of it. Screaming meemies and 88s came at us so heavy we had to leave the road and cut across country for the hill that was our destination. Our company commander (*Captain John F. Lanzendorfer*), who was from Billings, Montana, called it "home plate".

As the dawn came, we were at the foot of "home plate" and started our climb to the top. Our own artillery had been stopped and everything seemed pretty quiet for once. We had captured two German privates at the foot of the hill and sent them back to our lines. Another 50 yards up **we captured two German officers whom I had to guard through the rest of the day**. As we kept climbing, we added more Germans, and by the time we got to the top we had 40 or more captives. It was pretty light now. We started moving on, for there were lots of Germans on the other side and they were unaware of us being there. They didn't know where the shells were coming from and couldn't find holes to hide in. When one was hit, we were close enough to hear him groan.

Since Colonel Crawford's 349th Infantry had just taken Monte Grande and Colonel Fry's 350th had seen considerable action since the heavy fighting on Monte Battaglia earlier in the month, Kendall selected Colonel Champeny's 351st Infantry to lead the attack toward Hill 568. Crossing the line of departure on Monte Grande's forward slope shortly after nightfall, the 351st Infantry's 3d Battalion slipped through the fog and darkness to reach the objective before the enemy awoke to what was happening. By 0730 on the 23d the battalion had rounded up twenty-eight Germans and sent them to the rear as prisoners. Hill 568 was in hand.¹⁷

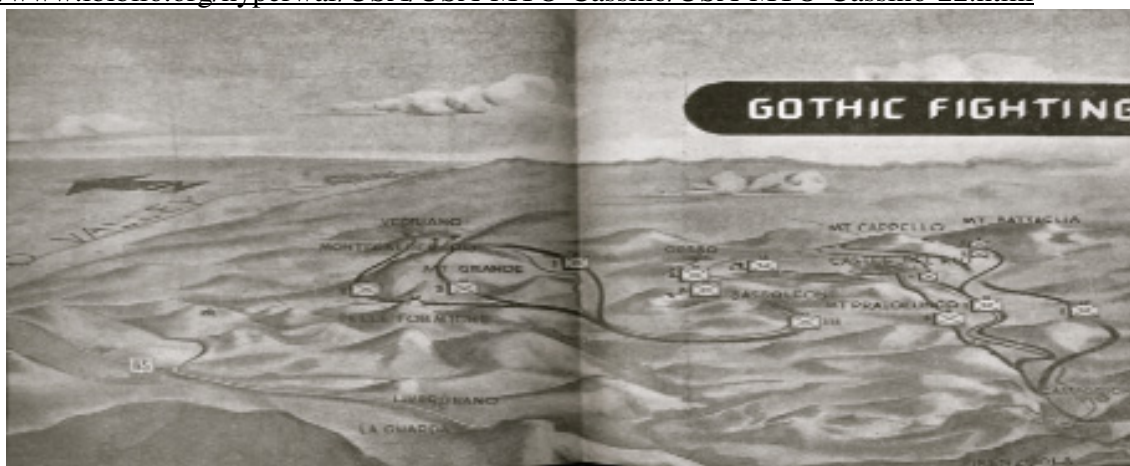
Meanwhile, the fog that had helped the Americans gain Hill 568 concealed the arrival of first units of the 90th Panzer Grenadier Division. Two counterattacks followed, but by 1015 both had been repulsed, and Hill 568 remained in American hands.¹⁸

The unexpected show of enemy strength nevertheless disturbed Colonel Champeny, who decided to continue the attack with a fresh unit, the 2d Battalion, while the 3rd defended Hill 568. That night the 2nd Battalion, in a column of companies with Company G leading, set out for Vedriano, a mile and a half to the northeast. Evading harassing fire from two bypassed enemy strongpoints, the company entered the village early on the 24th. **Forty Germans surrendered, including two officers,** but when the other companies sought to join company G in the village, fire from the now alerted defenders of the two strongpoints stopped them outside.

That hindrance meant that Company G alone would have to defend Vedriano against almost certain enemy efforts to retake it. The company seemed at first to be quite capable of doing the job, for after repulsing one small counterattack during the forenoon, Company G's commander reported that everything was under control. Yet soon thereafter an intercepted German radio message, expressing concern over Vedriano's loss and noting that the village was a vital point in the German defenses, struck an ominous note.

In early afternoon the regimental executive officer, Colonel Yeager, telephoned Colonel Champeny from the 2d Battalion command post that Company G in Vedriano had just received a German parliamentary. As events unfolded, the Germans claimed to have surrounded Vedriano, but they would allow Company G to withdraw in exchange for the 40 prisoners captured that morning. Colonel Champeny brusquely rejected the offer and began planning to relieve the beleaguered company with his reserve battalion supported by tanks. Companies E and F at the same time continued their efforts to reach Company G. Tactical aircraft also flew over the area to bomb and strafe the enemy's position.

While all that was going on, Company G's radio went off the air. An intercepted German radio message revealed the company's fate. Vedriano had been retaken and 80 Americans captured. <http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-MTO-Cassino/USA-MTO-Cassino-22.html>



History of the 351st Infantry Regiment World War II July 1942 – July 1945 page 40-41

October 24, 1944

My job the rest of the day was guarding the two German officers; our officers wanted them close at hand to get information if they would give any. I had to dig my hole about one and a half feet long with a pick and use my helmet and hands to scoop out the dirt. The Germans, by this time, had spotted our position and started to shell us. A machine gun and a sniper threw in shells awfully close to us so we had to keep low. Every once in awhile, a bullet would hit the top of my foxhole and would throw sand in my face, but I was lucky—they missed. I had the two German officers lie on their backs with their hands above their heads. I had to keep pretty close watch as the Germans were crawling up on us and weren't more than 50 yards away. At about 9:00 a.m. and the rest of the day, we had enough noise so we couldn't hear a fellow 10 yards away, except for short whiles. From now on we would have plenty of casualties. One fellow next to me got shot through his leg; the company commander got shot through his lip; and many fellows were hit by shrapnel. One machine gun must have spotted my hole and a burst of fire could be expected every five minutes. At the church on top of this hill, a sniper was shooting at the bell, so you could hear the shell hit during the time artillery wasn't coming in. In the morning when we came in, no shells had marred the church, but now the church was beginning to crumble and the nice lawn with beautiful statues began to be torn up. About noon our planes came over strafing German troops.

Our planes let out a smoke screen, for our company commander had called our colonel and told him we were trapped and to try and get us help. The colonel called back and said two companies had tried to get to us but were pinned down by Jerries; we would have to fight it out the best way we could. About 2:00 p.m. an Italian woman and her two young daughters came up to us carrying her little baby that was about 8 or 9 months old. The baby had three holes and the medic just put some tape over the holes and had to leave them. The baby was crying awfully hard as I guess it hadn't been wounded very long. The mother and daughters were all crying, too, and had blood all over their dresses. We got them to the church and they went to the basement. The baby was hit so bad I don't think it could have lived.

About 3:00 p.m. one of the Jerry officers got ripped up his one side by one of his own machine guns, and I thought he was kicking his last, but he got up and wanted us to get the medic to him. Our

medic finally got there and our commander took him to the church because he was losing so much blood.

Our company commander never came back as he surrendered us while he was gone. (Captain John Frank Lanzendorfer p. 99) I was glad he did, because if we would have had to stay until dark, like our second-in-command had recommended, chances are we would have all been killed.

The minute we were captured, about 50 Jerries with tommy guns (we call them zipped pistols) lined us up and counted us. We had started out with approximately 165 men and there were only 90 of us left. We had to carry our own wounded and leave behind the ones in real bad shape. Our own artillery came in right after our capture, so the Jerries moved us out in a hurry.

History of the 351st Infantry Regiment: World War II: July 1942-July 1945

Eds., Lieutenant John P. Campbell, Lieutenant Merlin V. Mulcahy

Italy: Published through the 351st Infantry Regimental Information and Education Office, passed by the Fifth Army field Press Censor, n.d., pp. 45-46.

When the 349th Infantry captured the summit of Mount Grande, the last dominating mountain before the Po Valley, the 351st moved up on 22 October to secure the flanks. Through constant rain and ankle-deep mud the Third Battalion fought its way to the top of Montecalderaro on 23 October, while company G of the second Battalion attacked Vedriano with considerable success. Coming around behind the town and hill at Vedriano, the men of Company G surprised and captured the town. The German commanders were quick to recognize the potential danger of this threatening attack, however, and they committed the finest German troops in Italy to stop the Second Battalion.

*As Companies E and F battled heavy resistance on 24 October in an attempt to reach Company G, now surrounded and fighting desperately, the following radio message was intercepted from the 1st Parachute Regiment to the 1st Battalion, 4th Parachute Regiment: **“Attack Vedriano. Vedriano is decisive!”** Men of the First and Third Battalions, themselves locked in battle against desperate German counterattacks, noticed the rattle of small arms fire coming through the mist from Vedriano. In the afternoon the sounds of firing faded away and a short time later another radio message was intercepted: **“Vedriano retaken. Eighty Americans captured.”** Although they were overwhelmed and could not hold Vedriano, the men of Company G [approximately 150 men] had approached closer to the Po Valley than any unit in the Fifth Army – for it was less than five thousand yards to Highway 9, the main lateral road for the German forces facing both the Fifth and Eighth Army. The heroic men of the 351st Infantry Regiment had fought and suffered as long as was humanly possible – had the orders come through to attack, they would have come out of their muddy foxholes and again stormed the German bastions in their characteristic savage manner. But with over two thousand dead and wounded in thirty-one days of fighting, and a critical shortage of replacements and ammunition, the 351st dug in and organized its bloody ground for defense.*

The regiment came down out of the mountains to rest and relax in the picturesque Montecatini Terme, near Pistoia on 31 October 1944. For the third time in less than a year the 351st Infantry had distinguished itself by spearheading Fifth Army drives up the mountainous Italian Peninsula. Those who survived the bloody Gothic fighting could look upon their accomplishments with pride and thanksgiving; but none of us can ever forget those courageous men who sleep beneath white crosses – those who gave their lives that we could carry on to total victory.

List of Soldiers Missing in Co. G, 351st Regiment in Morning Report 29 Oct 1944

Almendares, Jesse18187506; Anderson, Clifton33411079; Batchelor, Edward33525125
Berard, Leo31417155; Blackman, Joseph42026368; Bleakley, Chester 37327407
Boos, Fred31237172; Calazzo, Ralph42100290; Casey, Frank 42063307
Chezem, George D. 35092028 (p.111); Clark, Duane37677564;Cook, Judge34154823
Cox, Robert32141123; D'Amico, John33711408; Decato, James31268606
Del Biondo, Anthony42050091; Denovan, Tom39217372; Desharnais, Marcel32940817
Desoler, Carl31398929; Diamond, Guy34834990; Dommorummo, Henry35925834
Doonan, Robert36901279; Drake, Francis31403521; Durham, James34903994
Durnye, John42015223; East, Charles35779284; Easterlin, William34931858
Emmons, Maurice31178695; Felice, Salvatore31251730; Fulk, Robert36425267
Fummeler, Henry37402389; Gagliano, Charles42031816; Gall, George36691457
Garcia, Alberto38213636; Geoffrion, Roland31347737; Gerberding, Harold37466454
Ghan, Carl37246591; Gomez, Nicolas38561713; Grabich, Ernest42003098
Green, Lloyd17157270 (p. 108) ; Grimes, Collins E.18030688 (p. 68, 112); Gryck, John31126906
Hanson, Ernest34895584; Hardin, Wilbert34581901; Hardy, Gerald42091758
Harman, Abraham32638537; Hinesley, Joe35094210; Hubley, Robert36691433
Johnson, Donald D.39621745; Jonas, Francis31381496; King, Hubert31360004
Krause, Charles37447756; Krause, Leon37237371; Krolkowski, Edmund36899202
Lajoie, Frank31391570; Maginelli, Christy31251622; Marciano, Michael32773769
Marcussen, Clifford36769012; Marszalek, Henry33708133; McGaw, Elmer36549655
Mikita, William36769273; Morrison, James32270770; Morrow, Arnold34818206
Nelron, Lester37586375; Normandeau, Arthur31349991; Ober, Joseph33707384
Occhinegro, Nicholas42023590; O'Neal, Walter34137153; Osman, Haven37327010
Pazuchowski, Henry33708119; Peerbolte, Robert36688474; Pellino, James 31406207
Pendowski, John33805461; Poturica, Anthony42048785; Ramirez, James 39863754
Ramsay, Harry42067149; Roby, Ralph34889131; Romeo, Vance38414395
Rose, Vester34887916; Roundtree, John33919755; Royce, Rodger35926506
Salen, Harry33811442; Sanders, Charlie34832390; Schahl, Robert36902458
Schoening, Jack33764089; Sennik, Walter31142154; Shirley, Wilmer36902559
Sikora, Martin33916607; Smith, Milton31428394; Staggs, Kenneth35883836
Velesquez, David37471869; Vergadula, Frank31251587; Weinberger, Maxwell35708523
Welch, William33544560; Welty, Bert42093850; Wetherell, John 31409032
White, Merle33704349; Williams, Jack34854218; Williamson, Howard33810130
Winschel, Kenny37627196; Wojnarowski, Eugene37627196; Workman, William36774098
Zinter, Sam39217275; Lt 1, Hohenadel, William 0-1301306; Lt 1, Keeler, Robert 0-1290079
Lt 2, Bello, William 0-1302938; Lt 2, Heidt, George 0-519860; Lt 2, Marsteller, Clair 0-1322350
Cpl. Munoz, Tiedolo38279092; Cpl. Oglesbee, Merlyn35618826; Cpl. Padolski, William36553653;
Cpl. Phillips, Harold34717703; Cpl. Pierson, William37208787; Cpl. Young, Lenard38429439
Sgt. Carlson, Robert37301006; **Sgt. Damren, Jerome34465037 (p. 107)**
Sgt. Davis, William T/4 7023780;
Sgt. Duzek, Andrew36641004; Sgt. Freeman, Olan34604832; Sgt. Hegel, Paul36314948;
Sgt. Lynn, Marvin37005477; Sgt. Mattson, Chester19118070; Sgt. Pitts, Paul34604743;
Sgt. Bareln, Benjamin38167405; Sgt. Hamel, Gerard31235505

PART II

***“Taken prisoner October 24, 1944 at Bologna, Italy.
Was an advance patrol on the city (Vedriano) when taken.
Captured on a small hill at edge of city. Small church on
top of hill. Time was 3:30 p.m.. Sweated out 9 hours
of continuous machine gun, sniper, 88 cannon and screaming
meemies (6 barrel, 9 mortar) fire. Our company was
surrounded by Jerries on this hill and were 50 yards from
us when our company commander surrendered us. I said
a lot of ‘Our Fathers’ and ‘Hail Marys’ and thought I would
never live through the day. Had a good fox hole and kept
low during the worst fire. Lot of dead and wounded men near
my hole. German officer shot by his own men. Had to
watch him kick for a long time and couldn’t help him.
Men don’t die easy. It’s a hard death to be shot.”***

Memories of Donald Duane Johnson

Twelve guards marched us back of the lines with zipper pistols. This started a steady march for twelve hours. Trying to keep the wounded along with us was awfully hard, but we did our best. When we got to the first prison we were all tired and the rubber boots we wore made blisters on the tops of our feet and under our arches and toes, so they (*our feet*) were swelled up like balloons. Three men had to fall by the road and we heard shots later, so guess the Jerries finished them up all right. At the prison we were questioned for information. All Jerries at this station could speak English, but most of us gave them very little of the information they wanted.

I had two letters from Mommie in my pocket. I read them over and over again. Then the Jerries took them away. As a matter of fact, the only things I have left are my billfold, a few pictures, a toothbrush, and a razor. They took everything from me. They also took watches and rings off other fellows. The Jerries are no damn good. If I ever pity any of them at any time, I hope they shoot me.

We hadn’t had anything to eat now for two days and most of us were out of cigarettes, although I was lucky and had eight packages. I would smoke my cigarettes half way and five or six guys would smoke the rest, so I was kind of “King”. That night our prison was in a barn where cows were stalled. They took the cows outside and let us lie down in the manure. We were so tired we

didn't mind. The next day they brought a little bench into the barn and a third of a loaf of bread (hard bread that had no rising ingredients like yeast used in the making; it looks like rye bread but tastes a lot worse). Each man was given a little pail of jelly and some Jerry coffee that is so strong it is like drinking muddy water. For dinner we were given soup. We had to put it in our helmets, which were dirty from the day before. Flies were terrible and I was awfully hungry, but eating in the barn turned my stomach so I couldn't eat. I did eat a little the next day though. I had a few cigarettes and had to start making them last.

The noise of the big guns wasn't so loud any more, but we could see flashes in the distance.

We stayed in this barn for two days. The third night it started to rain to beat everything, and they moved us out. First, we had to walk about five miles through the rain and mud. No GI said a word—we were all too hungry. Little did we know then that the hungry days were to be in front of us. We were then loaded on trucks with canvas all around us so we couldn't see out and were hauled to Bologna, Italy to a schoolhouse about 25 miles out in the Po Valley. We had to sleep on the floor there also. The floors were cement so they were pretty cold. The next day lots of Englishmen came in, so we were about 250 men in a room that was about 40 feet square. We had one toilet and had to line up to get a chance to use it.

We all had the "GI shits", which was hard on every one of us. We couldn't wait and some of the fellows had to do it in their pants. We got very little food. The guard in charge could speak English. We spent three days here, and then we were loaded on trucks and taken to Mantua, Italy. Thirty-five men were loaded on one small truck. We couldn't move. We could smell bad odors from the rest of the boys, enough to turn our stomachs. The Jerries liked to see us that way. They seemed to get a kick out of seeing us like this and laughed. When we got to the Po River, the bridges were bombed out, so they had to haul us across on a ferry. This was the first time we saw forced labor. They had Italians fixing and building bridges.

Just across the Po River we came to Mantua and the prison at the far end of town (*German Transit Camp Durchgangslager or Dulag 339*). We stayed there for about four or five days. It was a nice looking Stalag (considering where we had been housed previously), but we had to sweat out our own bomber attacks as they came over continually bombing and strafing. At night the doors were locked so our toilet, which was one half an oil barrel, was carried inside of the building, and every morning it had been used so much that it had overflowed. The smell was terrible. Very little to

eat here also. I had the GI shits so bad I was awfully weak and, on top of that, my back started to pain me. I had an awfully bad time of it. No doctors to care for anyone.

We left here on a boxcar for Germany. One fellow shit in his pants and he wanted so bad to talk to someone, but we couldn't tolerate the smell any better than anyone else, so we had to move away, too.

We were loaded 50 men to a boxcar. That meant we had to spread our legs and someone sat between them. The only time the door was opened was at 4:00 p.m. each day for just enough time to throw in a third of a loaf of bread and a little piece of meat about one and one half inches square. We lived on this portion of food each day for three days and nights. No water, except when we went through the Brenner Pass. It was raining, so we got a photograph one Englishman had with him, made a trough, and pushed it out through the mesh wire near the top of the boxcar about an inch. The toilet was a wood box in the middle of the boxcar and would leak all over the floor. The Jerries would throw our food into the boxcar and aim for the toilet. We were so weak now we wished we were dead so we wouldn't have to go through any more of this. I still had cigarettes, but I didn't want to smoke myself, as the fellows around would just pant for a drag. We tried to pass one cigarette around for all 50 men to smoke. Some Englishmen had a little bit of tea, so they smoked that.

One boy from Scotland had malaria and the next day we asked a Jerry to take him to a hospital, but he slammed the door shut and wouldn't answer us. Days and nights seemed so long and our stomachs starved for food. We didn't even try to sing because we were too weak.

At night there wasn't enough room for all of us to lie down at one time, so some of us would have to sit up all night. I would dream of home and say a lot of prayers.

It was much colder in Germany than in Italy, and we began to feel the cold, as we weren't dressed for it. When we crossed the Brenner Pass, we started to see some of the destruction made by our bombers. Also in the Brenner Pass, some bombs had been dropped, but I guess the Americans must not have wanted the pass blocked or they could have ruined the pass in fifteen minutes and it would have taken years to rebuild. As we were descending from the pass, it was very spectacular with tracks seeming to cling to the rocks and the tunnels, etc.. It is a masterpiece of construction; and now as we came down on the other side of the pass, we began to see some buildings, and no railroad workers, but they seemed to be all women doing the work of men. I guess the men were used for soldiers and women had to keep things going.



Postcard of Brenner Pass

The next morning we arrived at a railroad station and it was real foggy, but workers with hard boots walked past and made loud boot noises. As it became lighter, we could see that most these people were women also. Finally, I noticed a sign on the depot that read *Munchen*. We decided that it must mean Munich. This was true, and also the country was called Deutschland, not Germany, like I had always known. At this depot we backed into the station and things looked very nice. Not many bombing signs. Later we went on again, and after several hours, we got to a station called *Freising* (*Freising is a town 35 km north of Munich known for its beer.*). This was a branch line and the end of the railroad. There was one big factory, but I never did find out what they made there.

November 5, 1944

We were unloaded at this point and had to walk the rest of the way. This was the big prison called Stalag 7A (*Stammlager or base camp*) <http://www.moosburg.org/info/stalag/hatteng.html>. We were told this was one of the biggest POW camps in Germany. We got here on November 5, 1944 and found out it was about thirty-five miles from Munich. We were a mess. All nationalities seemed to be represented here. People from India, Italy, France, Russia, England, Canada, America, Japan, South Africa, New Zealand and others. I believe the Germans wanted everybody as prisoners. Our first night we had to sleep on the ground and got very little more to eat except we got about three potatoes each night and a one pound can of Jerry coffee, which is made from burned grain.

We were searched again here. When chow would come, we were so starved we dove at the food. Jerry would like to see us do that, so one of our sergeants took charge and passed out the food in an orderly manner. Some of the fellows traded off watches and rings of high value for 12 or 15 cigarettes. By this time I had run out, too, but I got by all right. Some fellows craved smoking so bad, they smoked grass, etc.. We were all such a sorry-looking sight. I prayed every night and many times a day that we would come out of this alive.

At this stalag we were put in with the Americans and were glad of that because we were continuously having arguments with the Englishmen. They are nice to talk to a few times, but after that it's hard to get along with them. That seemed to be my experience anyway. I think they thought they could prove something to us.



Wikipedia Note: *Stalag VIIA was a WWII German POW camp located north of the town of Moosburg in southern Bavaria, Germany. 85 acres. At the time of its liberation on 29 April 1945, there were 130,000 prisoners from at least 26 nations on the camp roster. It was the largest prisoner of war camp in Germany. In the main camp over 40,000 were crowded into a space designed for 10,000.*

By now I can say I have smoked grass, tea, and coffee with toilet paper for the wrappers.

We got our first Red Cross parcel at Mantua, Italy, and now we got another as we were despairing—but at most, they have been few and far between. In December, we started to get parcels on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday with six men on a parcel. That helped our living conditions as we had something to smoke and trade. We would trade cigarettes, coffee, chocolate, and tea for bread that our bodies had a hard time adjusting to.

Our job was to go into Munich to work on the railroad. A day would consist of being awakened by 4:00 a.m., fed one cup of burnt grain water (lukewarm), and marched in the dark to Freising to board a boxcar bound for Munich. There was room only for 50 men in the small boxcar, I guess so they could count us more easily. It was a very lonely ride with nothing to eat and we were cold, but we got warm from being so close to each other. When it was dark, we could not even see each other, so if we had a buddy we held hands so we wouldn't get lost in the group. We would all lie down and put our heads in each other's laps. There were always five guards, one for each ten prisoners. We made very little noise for we were hungry and our thoughts were of home and the ones we loved. Would we be bombed by our own planes? The weather was cold and getting ready for snow. We had cut blankets to make socks, leaving not much to cover us at night, so we used our outer coats as blankets and slept with our clothes on.

Munich had not been bombed very much and the people wanted to trade with us. If we had been assigned good guards, we could probably come back to camp with a few loaves of bread. My first trading experience here in Munich was with my combination pen and pencil, which was a German import. The rubber bladder that held the ink had rotted, so I could only use the pencil. I had talked to a fellow prisoner, an Englishman, and he thought a good trade for the pen would be a couple of loaves of bread. The next day while I was working along the tracks tamping ties where tracks were rerouted, four Germans came by wearing long leather coats, taxi hats, and heavy boots. I didn't know enough to be afraid and I flashed the pen to them. They seemed to pay no attention to me. Later that afternoon one of the men came back and gave me four coins and four slips of paper for the pen. I could not read the writing on the paper, so I asked my guard later what I could do with the four coins and four pieces of paper (I thought I had been taken). He said this could buy four loaves of bread. He said he would do it for me for he could get another guard to cover for him, but he wanted me to give him a cigarette in return for the favor. My next problem was how I was going to get the bread into the prison camp. I put the bread in the lining of my coat (heavy outer coat) and this worked. From then on, I always wore

this coat just in case I had another similar problem. I raffled these loaves of bread, each loaf for seven cigarettes. I then had 28 cigarettes—I was rich. If I could make the proper trade now, I should be able to buy a loaf of bread for three cigarettes.

The bombing started in the night in Munich and that meant more for us to do, as it was our job to keep the railroad yard going. Thousands of prisoners would be working the next day to clean up the mess. With all of us working at the job, it was not long until we had trains going through again. We also had to clean up bombed buildings. One day (awful cold) we were cleaning up an office, and I found an apple and a cigarette lighter. I hid the lighter so the guard did not know I had it and ate the apple. The apple sure tasted good even if it was frozen. I don't think I will trade this lighter.



One day as we were getting organized for the workday, a young Russian prisoner nudged me and gave me a knife. It was in bad shape, but it had two blades and a corkscrew. I knew the Germans would not let us have anything like this so I slit the lining of my belt in the back between two buttons and it worked out just fine as a hiding place, even through the continual searchings.

At first we worked every day, but as time progressed the Germans decided that was too much for us and we were only sent to work every other day. The days we were off, another bunch of prisoners would work. This was OK with us as it gave us a chance for a bowl of soup at noon. Otherwise, when we came back to the camp at night we would get our rations for the day, which consisted of three small potatoes (sometimes one was a rock), a slice of hard bread, a cup of burnt grain and hot water (they called it coffee). If we had anything extra, we would mix it in with the “coffee” and it seemed to help our bellies. Two days of the week we would get a ration of meat, which would consist of a piece of bologna about one inch by one inch and a spoon of butter. A couple of times we got an extra ration of sauerkraut but on only a rare occasion. Even once they gave us a hamburger on a Sunday, and that seemed like the best thing that could ever happen to us.

We opened the linings of our coats (outer) and made pockets on the bottoms of the coats so if we would get any food we could stash it there and not have it taken away. I always carried a can buttoned to the shoulder flaps of my coat. I had made a handle out of wire and attached it to the can. Times got tougher as the bombing continued, and the guards became more observant of anything that we might get in trade and would take the food away and eat it themselves. Some of the prisoners would not dare make any trades, and we shared our food with them.

I chose to work almost every day so I could have a chance to make deals. I always had one eye on my work and the other watching for a deal. We learned how to signal a trade and then just pass the person (which would likely be a German working close by). The trade was usually made quickly so as not to be noticed by anyone. There was great rejoicing when we would get back into camp with some extras. We have not gotten a chance to make a trade for several days now, and we are getting hungrier and hungrier.

A barracks of Canadians were across the fence from us, and I made a deal for my field jacket. The Canadian gave me 25 American cigarettes, one loaf of bread and one large turnip for it. Later I bought a GI sweater for a loaf of bread and five cigarettes, so I got by all right. I still always have my big overcoat.

One day the sergeant in charge of our barracks decided we needed some exercise. This lasted only one day because we did not have any extra energy to exert. The sergeant did not go into town to work, so he needed the exercise, but we just could not take it. Corporal or sergeant prisoners were treated like officers and were not required to work. But at the same time, they only saw the compound that we lived in. The non-commissioned officers that were assigned to us usually were translators (*dolmetschers* in German). Our latrine was outside and consisted of a shed with five stools for 700 men. They were porcelain bowls that looked like a funnel but did not work. With all the dysentery, you could imagine the looks of the place. We had to stand up on the toilet or sit in the mess. Finally the sides broke, and we had to use tubs.

It was by now getting close to Christmas and the bombing was getting more severe. At work, when the bombers would come over at noon the Germans would allow us to get under a cement bridge or a bomb shelter (if one was handy). But that day there would be no food (cup of soup), so we had nothing to eat from 4:00 in the morning until about 9:00 that evening. They gave us rations when we got back to camp and that helped us through the night. Bombing continued throughout the night. We

were lucky that the train that carried us to and from work never got bombed. While in air raid shelters, we had a chance to make some deals, and we took advantage of any opportunity.

The native people went through torture during the raids. Some would pray and others would cry. Lots of people wore goggles, for the bombs would land close and send dust and chips floating in the air. It was always a good time for us to amend our lives and promise to live better if we would be lucky enough not to be killed. We Americans were glad to see the bombers coming, even with the pending danger.

Lots of planes got shot down. It's like a duck shoot: some planes came right down, and some trailed down a long way away—firing. They seemed to know about where the targets were going to be, and then they would shoot up the flack. First, they used different colors until they had the right height (signaled in a red dye), and then flack would all be at that height and the planes would have to fly through it. The anti-aircraft guns were strategically placed in positions to form an "L". In this position they could catch any plane from any direction. They had ample warning systems, seeming to know just where the bombing would be. This same gun was used on the battlefield and called an 88.

I cannot believe they have super weapons or super men. I can only appreciate that we do not have a fanatic to have to do our job for. Of course, the German people did not know this either. As a matter of fact, the people did not seem to know of the atrocities that were going on, and they didn't dare to find out. No one questioned the army, the army was not able to question the SS, and then no one was to question Hitler. In that order. Lots of planes did not make it.

The day after the bombings tiles had to be hung back up on the roofs, for when an area was shaken, the tiles would slip off. We used a chain-gang type of operation; tossing tiles to the next man up was the system employed. All the people cooperated and this is how things seemed to keep together.

We now realized that the people did not have very much food to eat, so we could understand why our rations were bad. Meat was unobtainable for most people and their bread was rationed so families just had a hard time, but they kept on because they dared not complain. Children were taught in school to tell their teacher (who was Nazi) if his or her family betrayed or talked against Nazism, keeping the families afraid to object to anything.

As we worked, we kept our eyes on the guards. If they weren't watching close enough, we would duck around a corner and make a trade but would have to make the trade in a hurry as a siren

would go off if one of the prisoners was found missing. The guards knew we were hungry, and I'm sure some of the times they turned their backs intentionally.

Our guards were generally older men from Poland and Czechoslovakia or other German soldiers that had been wounded and could do only limited duty. Some of the guards seemed to be scared of what the other guards might say, so when they were strict we knew they had no choice. Some of the guards would take our trade if they knew we had something. Others would try to be blind to it.

As the time went on there was more snow and more bombing. Now, practically every night the planes came over. One Sunday night around Christmas we had a big raid on the railroad yards in Munich, which is a big place. The next day we had to walk for about 18 kilometers to work, and after we got there, our orders had gotten mixed up so we were paraded through town and got a chance to see the town after a big raid. The city was really smoky with fires in buildings and no attempts to put them out. Water mains had burst and water was running down the street and freezing as though it was a river. As they were removing some of their possessions from their bombed homes, the natives looked at us and cried. Everywhere we looked we saw little children crying. People were hungry and were looking through the wreckage for victims and food, etc.. Some people cursed us calling out, "Crucifix sacrament" (a favorite curse word in Germany), and some would call out, "Hackro sacrament" (which was supposed to be a superior curse word). Some spit at us. We now understood that we were being used to show these people who did this terrible thing. One lady we passed sang, "Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag and Smile" in English. One fellow passed us on a bicycle and said, "Take it easy boys; it won't be long now" in English, then he held up his two fingers giving the victory sign.

Munich is a very beautiful city, or I mean was, but now not much of the beauty had been spared. It was at a Munich beer hall that an attempt was made on Hitler's life with a time bomb. We worked in that building cleaning debris. (Wednesday, November 8, 1939, Burgerbrau Beer Cellar)

Munich used to be the capitol of Bavaria before the last war. We passed one day through the King's Palace of Bavaria, and it was certainly a beautiful layout--like castles you read about in books with lots of statues around the gardens and pools.

People here in Germany don't know anything but work, work, work (spoken in German *arbeit*) and cannot bear to see anyone stand around and not work. It might be that we looked so tired that they

were trying to add a little effort to what we should be doing for them. Now the people seem to be giving us the word that they want the war over real soon.

The morning of the big raid, one English plane had been shot down in the railroad yards, and the Jerries were sure to lead us past the dead bodies. We saw three altogether, but the Jerry said afterward that the whole crew was dead and lying close by. The bodies were frozen stiff. One had landed with his leg over a rail and trains had cut it off. He seemed to be an Englishman. The Jerries didn't make any attempt to have the bodies removed. This evidently was a display to us. If they had lived, I'm sure the Jerries would have had them working by now (just kidding, as officers were not forced to work). Parts of the plane were spread over a half-mile radius. Flares had been dropped all over the area. I guess a thousand wouldn't be an exaggeration. Not a train was moving by now, and the rail cars were burned to a crisp. The railroads are electric, so when a wire was cut by fragments of bombs, it would short-circuit the train. Baggage lay all over the area, also mail. Some cars carrying coal were still burning and the black smoke hung low over the area. Not much wind, just cold.

We did pick up some things for the barracks at the stalag, such as knives, pens, some food, some clothes and different items that we thought we could get away with. This was the day I found the cigarette lighter and the apple in an architect's office. I could have traded the cigarette lighter many times for bread, but I didn't want to let it go (hope I have it when I get back home). *(I do have it, and it is displayed among some of the other mementos in a case my wife designed for the items.*

Pictured on page 8)

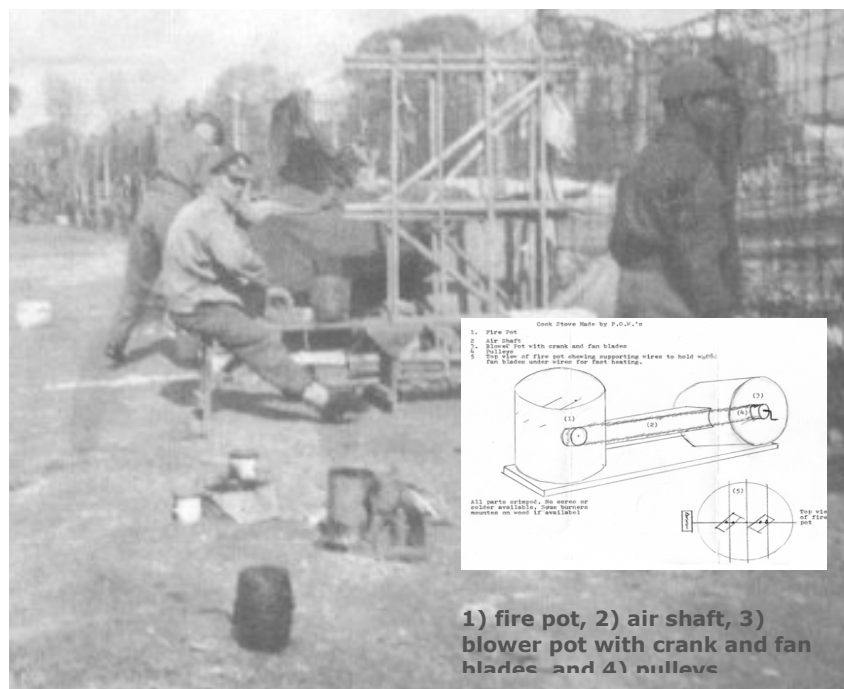
Here in Germany they don't have enough gas for their cars and trucks, so little blocks of wood are used and seem to work out fairly well. In back of the car or behind the cab of the truck they have a tank about two feet wide and four feet high on trucks, and there are some lead leads to the engine. On the trucks they turn a crank backwards and then release a spring and the motor starts up. Sometimes when they are coming to a hill, they stir up the fire a little and up they go. It didn't seem like they generated as much power as our trucks with gas, but it was surprising how well they did work. Some of the cars and trucks used gas. The German word for gas is *benzine*, and there seemed to be quite an annoying smell to it. May be a poor grade.

There were places in the city where the debris was 20 to 30 feet high. It was shocking to see such waste. I hope we all learn something by this terrible thing. Coming back to our barracks after this with our canvas-topped, wooden-soled shoes with blankets stuffed in as socks and clothes wet from the snow, it was dreary for us to see no end.

At the stalag on our days off, we would undress and take our underwear up near a window so we could see and pick off the lice that had accumulated. We would be able to pick off about two dozen each time. The fleas would jump off as soon as they were exposed. The fleas would bother us so badly that at times some of the fellows would holler out at night. We did not have facilities to wash, so when we scratched ourselves, infection would usually follow. Some of our sores were as round as silver dollars. Some would have to be taken to the medical station because they would not clear up. We found out it would help us if we loosened our belts.

We heard a threat that the Black Plague had broken out in the prison and later found out it hadn't. It was a false alarm, but many fellows were bitten by rats and fleas. Both could have been carrying the disease.

The prisoners tried to do drilling exercises to help us raise spirits, but we were too weak. Then we tried to play kitten ball, but had to give that up also as it was too strenuous. We had 360 men to a barracks and there were two lights. They left the lights on all night. Some of the fellows could not sleep so it was a little comforting. We had no wood, not even scraps. We invented little stoves from tin cans and a fan blade to turn so as to create a draft. Then if we could find some paper or straw or a piece of wood from which we could whittle shavings and drop in the can, we found out we could heat a pan of water and in this way we could make our food go further.



<http://camp59survivors.wordpress.com/2008/08/03/the-pow-cook-stove/>

Every morning we would have roll call at 7:00 a.m.. Then we had nothing to do but sit around the rest of the day and dream of the good things we used to be able to do back in the States. Every other day we did have to work, but we were so sick that even working every other day was really getting quite hard for us. I tried to dry out my clothes the best I could so that I could be more comfortable when working. My feet felt like lead weights, my back ached all the time, and I could not seem to get warm.

It was not getting close to Christmas and a friend of mine by the name of Charles Morris (p. 113) and I started to put our food together and also our cigarettes. This way we divided everything 50/50, and we could better follow rationing. By putting our cigarettes together we got ahead, for we could put more punch in our trading. From then on we lived better as we always seemed to have a way of getting extra bread. Charles didn't do much trading (he was afraid of getting caught), and I had no sense. Anyhow, I was doing it for someone and that would give me more punch. I seemed to be luckier this way. We planned out our schemes. Charles was from Arkansas and was an awful quiet type person but was sure a nice fellow to buddy up with. We would have a good time playing checkers together. He would beat me most of the time, but I would have a good time trying anyway.

I got so I could understand German fairly well by their talk and also their motions and expressions. I would just about know what they wanted to tell me and would go through the same role expressing back to them. At this time I met a Frenchman and I started to make some trades with him. It was difficult because it was so dangerous to get close to the fence that surrounds our prison. If the guard spotted us, we could be shot or punished in some way. In another compound was an assortment of prisoners and nationalities like Hungarians, Frenchmen, etc.. We took turns going for chow. One day I took a chance and went over with five men to get the chow at noon. I traded and made my deals and then met the men who had come in the evening chow and walked back in that bunch. It worked. We had to pass through barbed wire gates with a guard at attendance. The second time I got caught and the guard would not let me in until his superior came. They started to drill me to see what I had been doing. About four officers came into the barracks and called me aside for the drilling. The officers could speak English and I told them that I just wanted to trade for food. They said I shouldn't do anything like this and there would have to be a penalty. Finally, they left and mentioned that they would make a decision on the penalty and would let me know. I worried about it for a couple of days but no one came for me, so that was the end of that. The sergeant in charge of our barracks instructed me not to do this again as it could mean real trouble. I knew that anyhow. Before I got caught, I had

traded for a pair of shoes. They were like ski boots but nails in the soles of the shoes started coming through to the inside and I couldn't find anything to fix them with so they would not cut into the bottoms of my feet. A rock would not do it, so I finally put more blanket pieces on the bottom of the shoe and that helped a lot. They then became too tight for me and my feet were colder in them than in my canvas clogs. I did not want to part with them as I could probably use them when the weather warmed up.

Charles and I decided that we didn't have enough blankets to keep us warm so we decided to sleep together. We put our two straw sacks, which are supposed to be mattresses, under us and used both blankets and our overcoats to cover us and we would lie back to back. We seemed to get by all right. We are still going every other day to Munich, which is about 35 miles away. We now get up at 4:30 a.m. and are ready to leave at 5:00 a.m.. That isn't hard to do as we are all dressed when we get up, for we sleep in our clothes and our breakfast of burnt grain water doesn't take long to swallow. We had to walk to Freising to be loaded on the boxcars for our trip to work. We probably would not get to our destination until about 8:00 or 9:00 a.m.. We would start back to camp about 5:00 p.m. and would not get back to the barracks until 9:00, 10:00 or 11:00 p.m. as they seemed to sidetrack the train lots of times and wait. Hungry and tired, we would try to sleep on the train, but someone would have to use the toilet, which was a square box by the door. We all would try to get away from the smell, but we were packed in so solid (50 men to each boxcar) we had to lie in each other's laps. When someone had to go, it was a chore to get to the box and no one could sleep through this commotion.

But we were still alive and that made a difference. We learned not to expect anything better, and if we could keep on struggling, we might make it through the ordeal. It was not quite so bad if we had a ration of soup at noon, but the days we got nothing were hard to take. I wish every day the war would end; it just seems to drag along. With the people here starving for food and homes bombed out, still the Russians and Americans can't even beat them. It sure seems funny to me. Americans have plenty of everything but don't know how to use it. If Jerry had one-quarter of that equipment, I believe we would lose the war.

Our conversations usually run in the line of food and for hours two fellows get together and talk about doughnuts and coffee and eating a nice hamburger with plenty of onions and pickles, a piece of chocolate cake, a good cup of coffee, a nice steak, being able to eat all we want to, different rare things we have been used to eating (an going into detail on the subject), the different kinds of candy, how I never used to eat candy and how I could eat a whole box of bars now without stopping.

A few times we have been treated pretty badly, but then again we are just lucky we aren't dead as most of us came through some pretty narrow escapes when we were at the front lines. The prisoners have had a lot of strange things happen to them. I can mention some of the things now because I have more paper to write on. One soldier got hit with a bullet and was wearing the garment the bullet went through and into his shirt pocket. The bullet stopped half way through a prayer missal he was carrying in his shirt pocket; he had the slug that had been spent. Another's friend had been hit and killed when the bullet was aimed at him first, but he had moved and the friend had moved into his place.

Paper is very scarce and no one is able to keep track of anything. I'm lucky to have this book and am making use of every bit of space I can to keep memoirs.

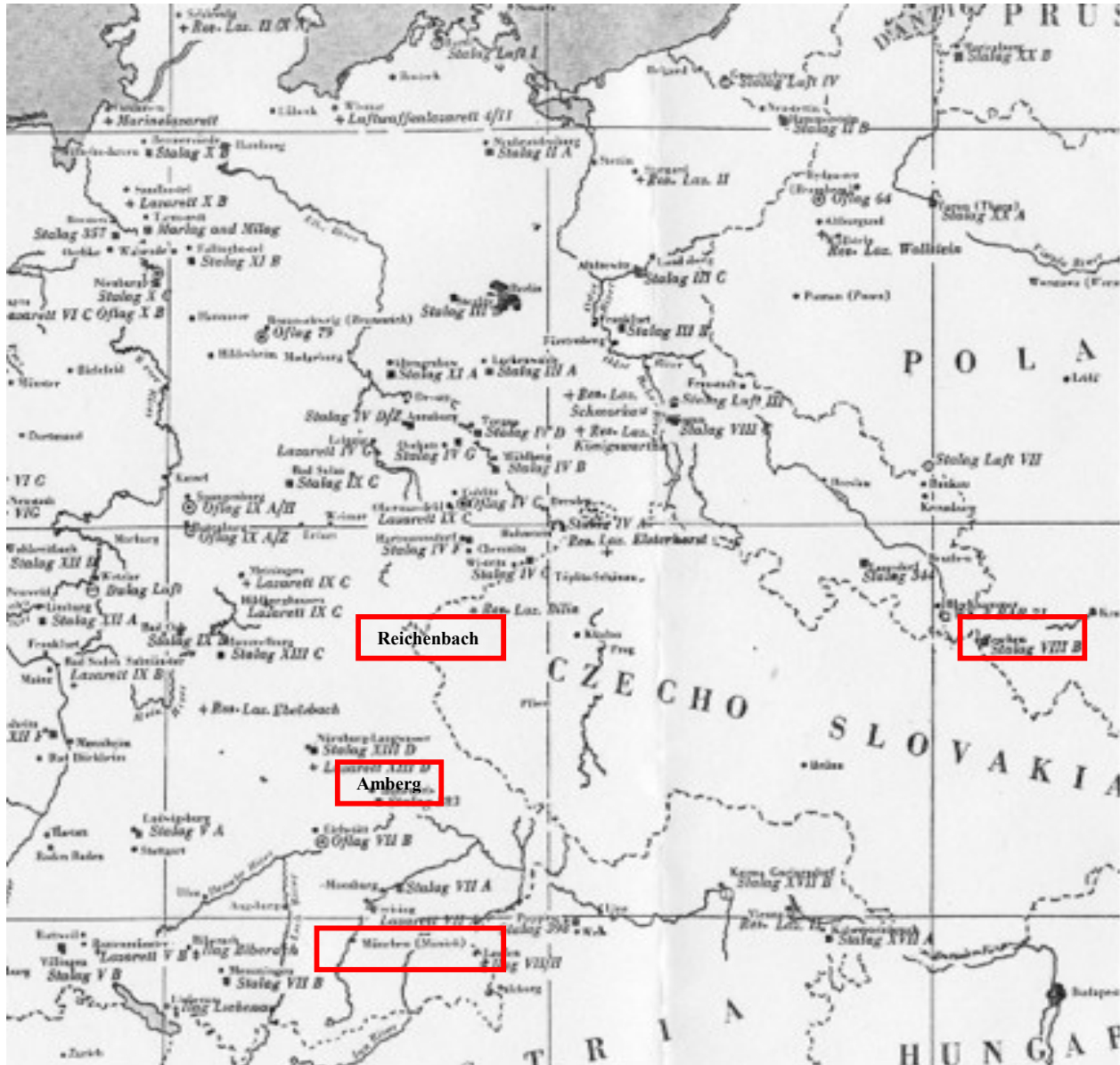
We have tried to keep as clean as we can, which is very hard to do as we have to wash our wool pants in a gallon bucket. First you get the pants wet and then take soap (if you have any) and put directly on the clothes. We would wear only GI long johns until our pants dried. The same with the shirt. In a gallon bucket it was impossible to wash more than one thing at a time. I think we keep ourselves in pretty good shape for what we have to make do with. Thank God.

I had a good trade and several loaves of bread. I was just appreciating the fact that I would have this extra food when I heard dogs barking outside. Four guards with German police dogs were coming into our barracks. Several officers were along also. I knew we were in for a search. There were two buildings in our area, and luckily they started searching the other barracks first. I found some nails and a rock so I tacked the loaves of bread under the table. (Our eating tables in our barracks resembled picnic tables in the States. We had three tables in our part of the barracks.) When the officers came in to search our barracks, they put their briefcases right on top of the table I had the bread under and sat down. My bunk was near the floor and from where I sat, the bread looked so conspicuous. I don't know just what these Germans found, but the officers sitting at the table were writing away. I was afraid that at any time one of the officers would hit his knee onto the bread and knock it down.

They did not find the bread, so that made me very happy. I was glad that I was around for this inspection. If the Germans had found the bread, they would have taken it. By the grapevine, I found out there was a rumor that someone had a gun, and that had prompted the search.

It is getting toward Christmas and the fellows have decided we should have a Christmas cake. All of us would have to contribute as much as we could toward this project. Some had nothing and

others had extras so a beautiful cake was made, and on Christmas Day each of us got a little taste of it. It looked like the most beautiful cake I had ever seen. Through the gloom and cold of our camp this brightened things up a bit for us. I will always remember this cake that was our Christmas. The Germans respect Christmas also, and that is the reason we were allowed the day off for all of us. Lots of snow and cold, and I think we felt the cold more because we were so hungry.



Locations of Stalag VIIA (p. 42), VIII B (p. 63), Amberg (p. 65), and Reichenbach (p. 97)
<http://www.merkki.com/powcampsmap.htm>

PART III

Missing in Action Telegram

Sent Nov 10 1944

CLASS OF SERVICE	WESTERN UNION	1234	SYMBOLS
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol shown at preceding the address.	A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT		DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter R = Radiogram
The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.			
5 SK NX 43 Govt			
Washington DC 1205 PM Nov 10 1944			
Mrs Catherine Johnson Box 554 Polson Mont			
The secretary of war desires me to express his deep regret that your husband Private Donald D Johnson has been reported missing in action since twenty fourth October in Italy, if further details or other information are received you will be promptly notified.			
Dunlop Acting The Adjutant General			
<i>Please send this back to me - Catherine</i>			
THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE			

gat

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

AD 201 Johnson, Donald D.
PC-W MTO 274

11 November 1944

• Mrs. Catherine Johnson
Box #534
Polson, Montana

Dear Mrs. Johnson:

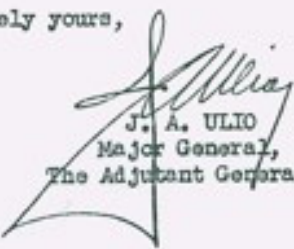
This letter is to confirm my recent telegram in which you were regretfully informed that your husband, Private Donald D. Johnson, 39,621,745, Infantry, has been reported missing in action in Italy since 24 October 1944.

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

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

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

Sincerely yours,


J. A. ULLOA
Major General,
The Adjutant General.

Letter from Catherine to Don's folks after she received the telegram saying he was missing inaction November 10, 1944.

Tuesday, November 14, 1944

Dear Mother, Dad & Dicky,

I just got your letter and I'm so glad you feel that Don is coming back too, because I just know he is. He said before he left that no matter what happened he'd be back, so I know he will. I'm sending you the telegram I got, and you can send it back to me again because I want to keep it. But I talked to different people, and a couple of them have sons that are just home from fighting in Italy for the last two years. They said their sons said that Don was more than likely captured because they would know if he had been killed because of the way the fighting is done over there. So that made me feel much better. Just so he gets good care if he's hurt, but I guess we can only trust in God to bring him through okay. As soon as I hear anymore I'll let you know right away, but it might be a long time. If he's a prisoner it takes quite awhile to get news back. But he'll do all he can to let us know, too, as soon as possible because he'll know we are worrying and waiting. I talked to the head of the Red Cross here. The man was a fishing pal of Don's, and he said it's better if they don't investigate from here because sometimes they aren't captured but are just hiding out and trying to get back to their outfit. Then, if they start investigating from here, that puts the enemy on their trail, too. But if it goes too long and we don't hear, then they start working on it.

How is Dad feeling? I do hope hearing the news didn't make him worse again. I'm still feeling fine and working every day. We're getting busy for Christmas now. Everybody is doing their shopping early. Mary is talking so well now. I do wish we were closer so you could see her. I'm glad you can keep working though. It makes the time go faster. Well, if everyone gets their wish, "Junior" should look like his Daddy. My sister, who's at the hospital working, wrote and said she hoped I had twin boys just like Don. But I'll settle for one, just so it's a boy. I wrote a card to all the kids except Catherine, and I don't know her address. So if she isn't home with you, will you let her know? I had a letter from Ruthie not long ago, and she said Catherine was having an operation and would be down with you; so I figured maybe she was there now. I didn't let Uncle Carl or Aunt Ruth know either, but maybe you'll be writing to them. Well, I must get busy at the counter. Write again when you can and try not to worry too much. I'll let you know as soon as I hear anything more. I was thinking, too, it might be they got the wrong Don Johnson, too. Sometimes that happens. Anyway, it just has to turn out all right. Love to you all, Catherine & Mary

Kriegsgefangenenlager Datum November 23, 1944

Dearest Darling Mommie & Mary,

Am well and am okay. Hope you and Mary are getting along okay and are well, too. Am awfully lonesome and will be glad when I can get back. I hope soon. Send packages of cigarettes, candy & food if possible. I love you both. Hello to friends.

Love, Daddy

Kriegsgefangenenlager Datum: November 26, 1944

Dearest Darling Mommie & Mary,

Sure miss you. Honey, and would like to be with you Thanksgiving Day, but I'll be thinking of the nice dinne I had last year that day. Hope you will, & Mary, too. Love you both awfully much. Keep things going OKay. How's Jr. coming?

Love, Daddy

CLASS OF SERVICE		WESTERN UNION		3294		SYMBOLS	
This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.		A. M. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT				DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram	
The time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.							
13 SK NX 33 Govt							
Washington DC 620 Jan 4 1945							
Mrs Catherine Johnson Box 534 Polson Mont							
Report just received through the international red cross states that your husband Private Donald D Johnson is a prisoner of war of the German Government letter of information follows from provost marshall General							
Dunlop Acting The Adjutant General							
8:0 Pm							
THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE.							



HEADQUARTERS ARMY SERVICE FORCES

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST MARSHAL GENERAL

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



11 January 1945

RE: Pvt. Donald D. Johnson,
United States Prisoner of War #140614,
Stalag 7 A, Germany.

Mrs. Catherine Johnson,
Box Number 534,
Polson, Montana,

Dear Mrs. Johnson:

The Provost Marshal General has directed me to inform you that the above-named prisoner of war has been reported interned at the place indicated.

You may communicate with him by following instructions in the inclosed circular.

One parcel label and two tobacco labels will be forwarded to you every sixty days without application on your part. Labels for the current period will be forwarded under separate cover with the least practicable delay.

Further information will be forwarded as soon as it is received.

Sincerely yours,

Howard F. Bresce

HOWARD F. BRUCE,
Colonel, C.R.P., Director,
Prisoner of War Information Bureau.

Incls.
Mailing Circular
Information Circular

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	<h1 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h1> <p style="font-size: small; margin: 0;">J. A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT</p>	1234	SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
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The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

2 SK NX Govt NL

Washington DC Feb 6 1945

Mrs Donald Johnson
Box 534
Polson Mont

Following enemy propagandabroadcast from Germany has been intercepted quote Darling Mummy and Mary. Am well and not wounded. Please dont worry about me. Take care of yourselves. I am OK, will send address later. Love and kisses, Donnie. Pvt Donald D Johnson 39621745 unquote this broadcast supplements all previous reports stop

Lerch Provost Marshall General

930 Am 7th

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	<h1 style="margin: 0;">WESTERN UNION</h1> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">J. A. N. WILLIAMS PRESIDENT</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT</p>	1234	SYMBOLS DL = Day Letter NT = Overnight Telegram LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
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The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.

3 SK NX Govt NL

Washington DC April 20 1945

Mrs Donald Johnson
Box 354
Polson Mont

An enemy propaganda broadcast from Germany mentioned the name of Pvt Donald D Johnson 39621745 as a prisoner of war stop no personal message was included stop this information supplements previous official report received from international Red Cross advise if name is incorrect stop.

Lerch Provost Marshall General

639 Am 21st

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

The don't have to worry about food any more. Tell all folks in safe etc. I'm GI's, that feed us are so good to us and are giving us food & cigarettles so we have about more than we can eat.

I'm so glad to have this chance to write and am so happy not having Jerry looking us with rifles. We've been marching 17 days ahead of our lines before we were surrounded Jerry kept us to the last.

Hope you as glad as I am.

Love & kisses from
Daddy

May 2, 45

Dearest Darling Mornie & Mary Jo.

I was freed yesterday at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Am waiting shipment back from front. 80th Division freed us. I've never got any mail from you and don't know if you have ever got any of my letters. I'll write and will write again when I can. I have no address so don't send back any mail. I'm putting this letter with another GI's address so the letter will go through. Keep your chin up. Maybe I can get home soon.

Love Daddy
Do not write back as I have no address. I want have a boy or a girl addition to our family. What's its name? I'm awfully anxious to see you.

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.	WESTERN UNION <small>A. N. WILLIAMS</small>	SYMBOLS DL=Day Letter NL=Night Letter LC=Deferred Cable NLT=Cable Night Letter Day Radiogram
The time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination.		
4 SA RA 42 Govt.		
Washington DC 654 Pm June 6 1945		
Mrs Catherine Johnson Box 534 Polson Mont.		
The chief of staff of the army directs me to inform you that your husband Pvt Donald D Johnson is being returned to the United States in the near future and will be given an opportunity to communicate with you upon arrival.		
J A Ulio The Adjutant General		
722 Am 7th		
THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE		

BURTON K. WHEELER, MONT., CHAIRMAN
 ALBEN W. BARKLEY, KY.
 EDWIN C. JOHNSON, COLO.
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 HOMER E. CAPDART, IND.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE COMMERCE

M. W. MITCHELL, CLERK

June 12, 1945

Mrs. Catherine Johnson
 P.O. Box 534
 Polson, Montana

My dear Mrs. Johnson:

I have just been advised by the War Department that your good husband, Donald, has now been liberated as a prisoner of war in Germany. I was delighted to hear this and hope it won't be long before he can come home to you.

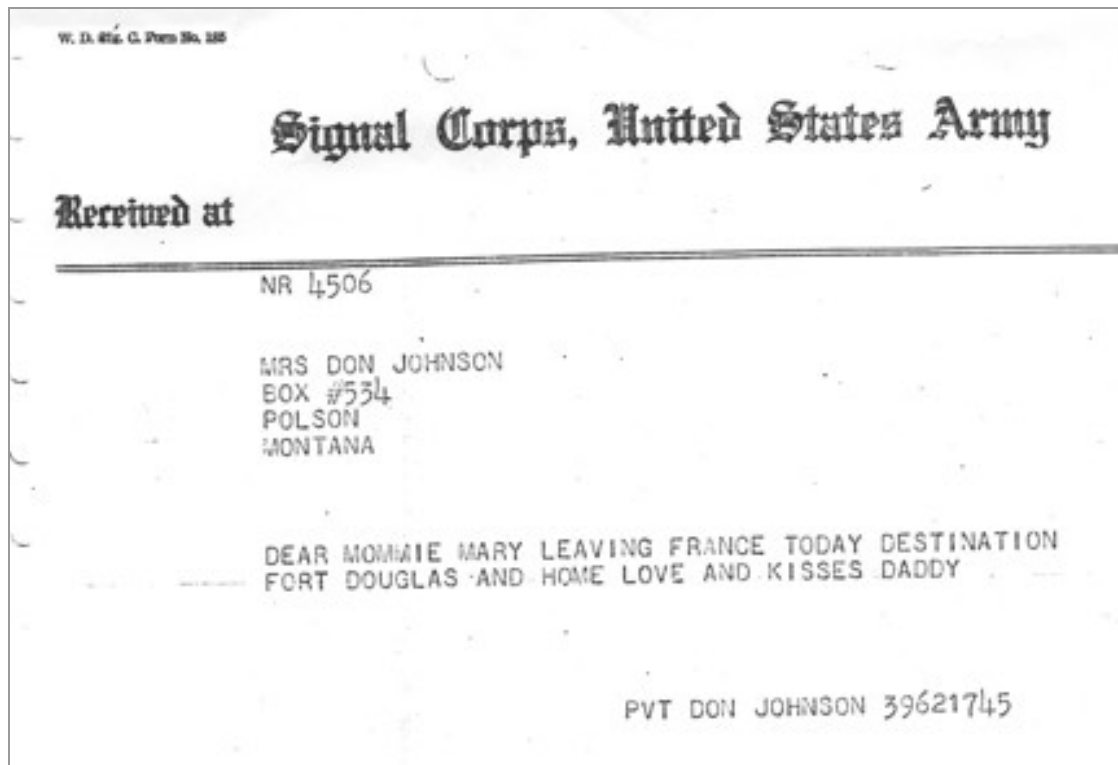
If at any time I can be of service to you, I hope you will let me know.

With my warmest regards and best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,



BK:W



January 27, 1945 (*January and February temperatures -13 degrees F. and 0 degrees F. in March*)

Things kept on the same after Christmas and the routine seemed about the same. Then one day my name was called. I had no idea what was going to happen to me. I had just come back from being allowed to go to a French Catholic Mass on the French quarters of the prison. They told me I was to be sent to another prison. This would be a work camp and would then be called "Kommando".

(Arbeitskommando called Kommando are small camps attached to main Stalags where prisoners of war are put to work.) This camp that I was now in was #8b (*Stalag VIIIB at Teschen, Poland did coalmining.*). I felt pretty lonely, for I was leaving every face that I had gotten used to and also Chuck (both of us were pretty sad). We decided to divide up belongings. We had seven loaves of bread. We sold some of them for cigarettes and soap (Swan) to an Englishman and then ate really good as I was to be moved the next day.

We ate the bread and spent the rest of the day taking each other's addresses and playing checkers. Because I was the only man to leave from the barracks, all the fellows were inquisitive to find out what I had done in civilian life as they thought I really had a deal going for me. At 7:00 a.m. I

went to the compound leader's office and reported. I had a Red Cross box and decided to take about two-thirds of it: 1 1/2 kilograms of bread, 21/2 packages of cigarette papers, 6 bars of Swan soap, 1 chocolate bar, a pan for cooking and 1 milk can to use for chow. I had a lot of lice on me and also the rest of the fellows were covered with them, so Jerry had us deloused and let us take a good hot shower. We stayed at the same camp until Wednesday at noon and were then moved to another compound, where we were to stay for a time. It was pretty cold out and Jerry gave us each a blanket and a bowl and a spoon. Rations were one cup of the stuff they called coffee (burnt grain and awful). Dinner was a butter can of soup made of cabbage leaves, turnips and I guess a little sand was added in for weight because I would get sand in my teeth every time I ate the stuff. Supper was 5 small potatoes, 1 tablespoon of sugar, 60 grams of cheese (500 grams to the pound is a close estimate).

I buddied up with a fellow by the name of Edwards (p. 115). His job in civilian life was a federal importer of farm products. We knew we would be too cold sleeping alone, so we decided to sleep together and we did sleep fairly comfortably. Our light was a carbide light brought in each evening at dark and could be lit until 10:00 p.m. When any lights were lit, all shutters on the windows were closed.

We traded cigarettes for bread from a bunch of Russian soldiers just off the front lines. They were a starved-looking bunch of men: some had arms and legs off and two of the men were totally blind. Some had bullet holes for which Jerry let them have a little toilet paper to use as bandages. Clothes were fair. We were fortunate we're from America as our Red Cross parcels helped us over the really rough spots, but the Russians had to live on their regular rations. The Russians liked us and would like to hang around our barracks. We taught one to toast bread and gave him some tea with milk and sugar. That boy got spoiled, came back the next day for more. The beds we slept on were the usual, made of wood, and they had mattresses that were three layers high with a kind of burlap sack of wood excelsior. Our mattress was full of lice from many GIs who had been there before us.

There was one little stove in the center of the barracks but no wood. We would burn a little cardboard and that was our only heat. It took only a couple of minutes to burn up all the cardboard we had, and then we were back again to the cold. There is three inches of snow, with icicles hanging from the roof. No insulation.

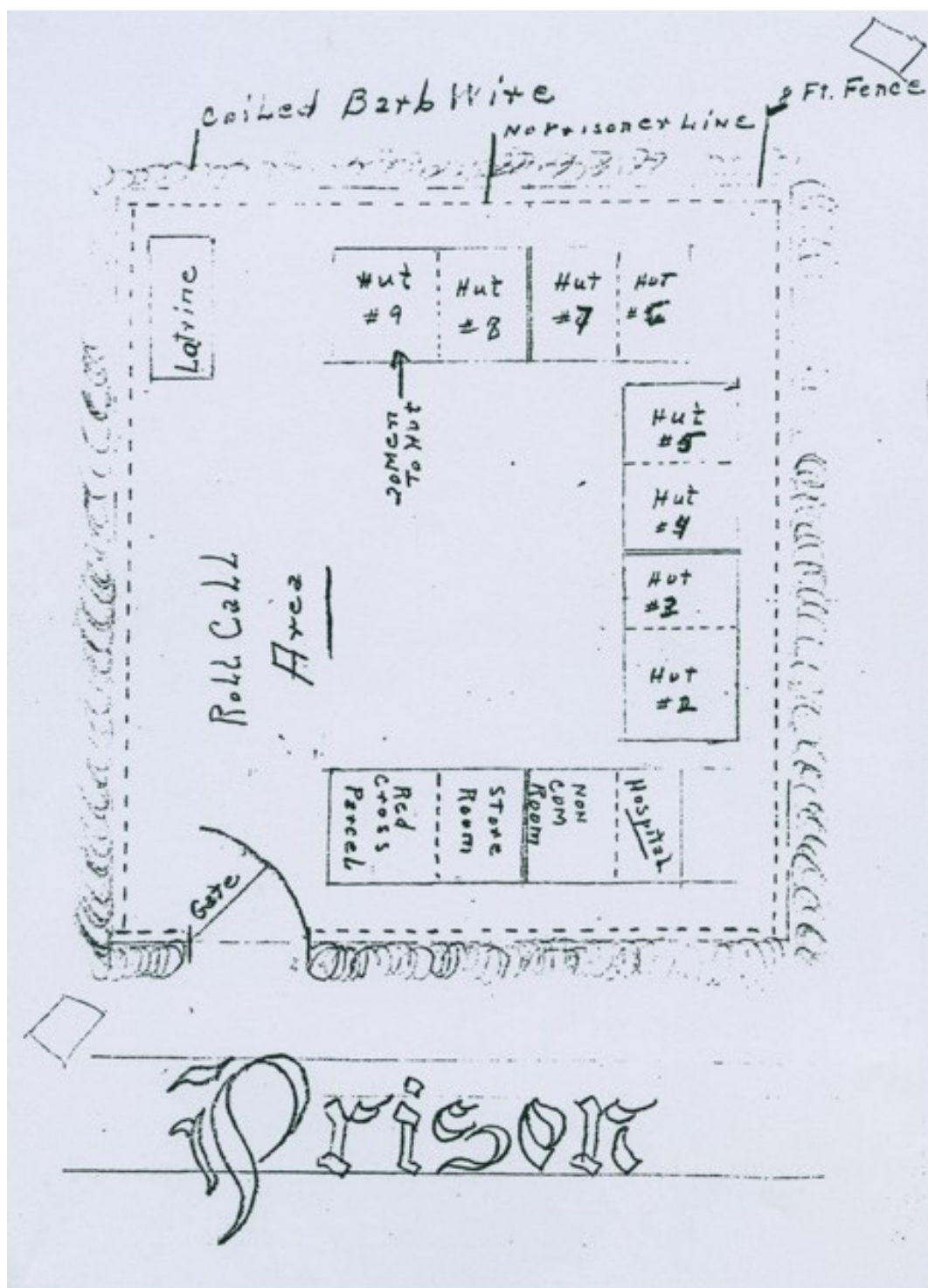
We left this barracks on Wednesday and started out of the stalag. We were searched (it seemed as though we were searched every time we turned around) and got on a boxcar about 4:00 p.m. for a three-day journey. The boxcar was about 20 feet long and this time 47 men were in the car, so you can

imagine what sleeping is like. Only half of us could lie down at a time. Our seats consisted of sitting on the cold floor and that also was our bed. The sanitary conditions are about the same as we had when on the train that first brought us to Germany. A box on the floor by the door for a latrine was made to leak so it would not get full. Our clothes smell pretty bad after we have to sit and lie on this same floor. We were in this boxcar for three days in this position and could get no exercise and see no daylight except once a day when rations were allowed us. Usually bread (quarter of a stalag loaf of bread a day and about 40 grams of butter, which was about the size of a pat of butter you get in a restaurant), a piece of bologna and a cup of burnt grain water (coffee). Oh! May these dam hungry days soon end.

We arrived at Amberg, Germany, on Friday and got to camp at noon (*The camp is built on rising ground near the new Bavarian barracks on the outskirts of Amberg. Capacity 5,000 Many prisoners go out to work in surrounding country.*). We had to walk about 10 kilometers, which is equal to about six American miles. Camp is at Rohrbach, a little town by the side of the road. It is about 200 feet wide and 200 feet long, had three rows of barracks and a latrine. This camp is all new and we are the first occupants. We are near a creek and on the other side of the creek is an old mill house that will be used for the kitchen and guard's quarters. Each barracks is divided into three sections of places for 20 or 25 men in each section. One stove is in the center of each section, along with two tables and seven stands of bunks, which will have three beds each. Everything seems new and clean, which is different from where we came from. Now we are about 175 Americans, so this ought to be quite an improvement. If we will only get some food.

Our barrack's rations are one cup of barley coffee for breakfast, 1 1/2 cups of barley soup for dinner, and about six small potatoes and 60 grams of butter or meat a day. On Sundays we will get a weekly allowance of sugar and marmalade which is about half of a teacup. Our new place here is like heaven compared to our old prison.

DIAGRAM OF PRISON CAMP - AMBERG, GERMANY



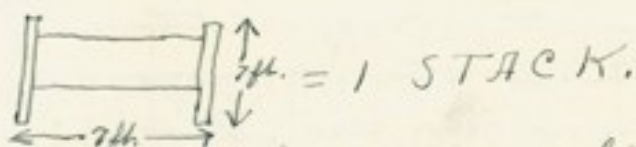
Amberg, Germany east of Nuernburg on the Vils River built a POW camp outside the city. Capacity 5,000. (3rd Bavarian Army Corps)

Description of Bush Hut

67

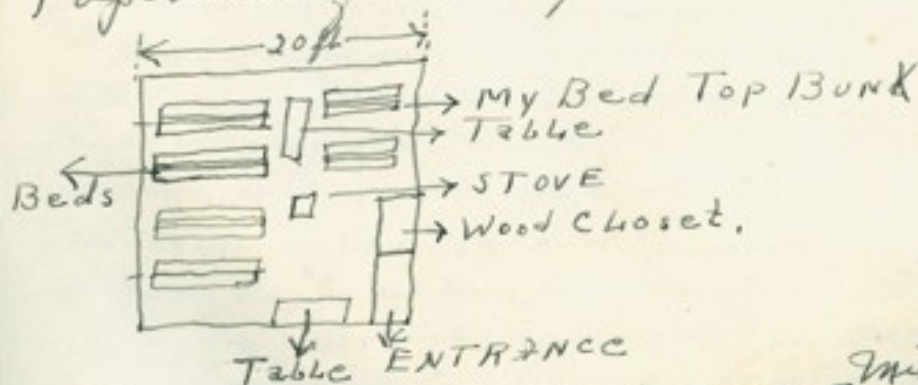
Had 22 men in Lach Hut and elected one fellow as hut leader. This boy took charge of food given us by Jory and saw that each one of us got our equal share.

There was 11 stacks of bunks and each stack contained 2 bunks such as this!



Bottom of bed was wood slats instead of springs and Mattress consisted of a large gunny sack filled with packing excelsior. Had two blankets.

Top view of hut as follows:



Eating utensils consisted of 1 bowl and 1 table spoon. We had bread knives but we had to always buy them hid as we were supposed to have any. Broom was a bundle of willows with a stick in the center such as:



February 3. 1945

Today is Mary's birthday and she will be two years old. I thought of home, Mother and Mary many times. I wonder if Mary has her little friends from the neighborhood in for her party. I would sure like to see her as I'll bet she's dressed up now like a little doll. Mother always kept her dressed so nice and at her party she would have a valentine theme. That would make the party more colorful.

We went to work at 8:00 a.m. and finished at 5:00 p.m. Our guards here seem to be pretty good so far. Hope that continues. We are supposed to be building a narrow-gauge railroad into an English officers' camp (Hohenfels). The project is one week old now. Ed and I cook our spuds with a little milk powder to make them taste a little better.

February 4. 1945 (Sunday)

No work today. We had a chance to wash and shave and sit around by the fire. I've spent about three hours catching up in this book, and several of the fellows are playing hearts and talking over some of their army experiences. Grimes, who was our squad leader on the front lines, is with us now. All the men here seem to be from the Italian front and none from the French front.

Amberg is someplace between Munich and Berlin. I hear Regensburg is also near. Today we are waiting for an issue of Red Cross parcels. They promised there would be one parcel per man every two weeks. The Jerries hold our parcels, and we can draw only a certain amount each day. They are taking no chances on any of us escaping.

This camp is in a valley surrounded by a fast river, which would be very uncomfortable to try to cross except over a bridge. Our shoes are made of wooden soles with big cleats on the bottoms and a canvas top. Snow, when soft, sticks to the soles so we can hardly walk.

Yesterday our guard was pretty easy on us, and I found out from talking to him that he had worked for Woolworth Co. here in Germany and is 43 years old and has three children. He says the war is brought on by capitalists, and he wishes it would end soon. Also that Hitler had promised every family in Germany a car. Taxes were placed on everybody for this program. This amount became astronomical, and I wouldn't be surprised if this was not used to finance the war here in Germany. Myself, I am awfully lonesome and hungry, but I would just as soon take this and see that the Jerries get what they deserve. When they can't even feed us so we can work and still expect us to work, I can imagine they need a little training on how a civilized country should treat their prisoners.

I'm awfully lonesome for Mommie and Mary and the store. When will our new little baby be born? I hope Mommie and Mary are both well. I think our new baby will be born March 20. I'll see

how close I guess when I get home. (*Don, Jr. was born March 26, 1945.*) About 300 yards away I can see about a dozen little boys and girls playing some kind of a game on some ice like curling in America.

I guess I won't have much chance to get to church any more as long as we are here. It's a good thing that last Sunday I had a chance to go to confession and communion at the stalag. I hope someone prays for me back home.

I have Mommie's and Mary's picture above my bed so I can see it quite often. I've carried that picture all through combat and hope I can take it back to the States with me.

I went to work today and was very hungry. Had a lot of laughs with Ed, as our guard tried to blame me for sabotage. I broke a shovel and a pick handle, and he saw me using a shovel that was dented on the side and said I had banged it on a rock. The other guards are all right and know we can't work very hard because we don't get enough to eat.

February 5, 1945

The spring run off must have started, as we were flooded out of our camp today. The river overflowed its banks, and we had to go to a barn through knee-deep water. The water was awfully cold, and now I cannot get my feet warm or dry. I've tried putting them down in the hay, but they just stay cold. About noon we moved back to our barracks, hungry and cold. Ed made a good pudding out of G.I. bread. We tried to buy some bread from our guards, but they wanted four cigarettes for a ration that was only worth two so we didn't buy it. I hope we don't have to move tonight because of the flood. We'll probably be all right if it doesn't rain again. But it is awfully chilly, and we are trying to dry our clothes.

February 7, 1945

This morning I got half of a G.I. loaf of bread (2 kilograms) for seven cigarettes, and it sure helped our bread situation. I got sick this morning, had to get taken back to the prison this afternoon by a guard. I was too sick to work. I think I've got the flu.

February 8, 1945

I've been in bed today quite sick. Jerry came in and felt my forehead to be sure I was sick and not just trying to get out of work. The water is awfully bad here as we drink water from the river, and it's just like mud and tastes the same. It comes down the valley through farmyards.

Lots of the men are getting sick, probably from the water or from getting wet. I forgot to mention that I killed two trout in the river yesterday, and we ate them last night. I was too sick to enjoy

them, but Ed said they were awfully good. The trout had got stranded in a hole by the flood.

The weather seems to be pretty nice except it is quite damp here. Snow is practically gone. Heard a rumor that the Russians were at Berlin. Gee, I hope they take it and the Yanks start pushing so the war could be over soon. I wonder if we will have to go into combat in the Pacific when this is over. We hardly think so because of our physical condition. I hope I can go home to Mother and Mary, and I'll be the happiest man in the world.

Our guards here are old men about 50 or 60 years old, and most of them are good to us. The Jerry sergeants are the ones who make it tough. They seem to be always blowing their tops about something. We don't work hard; just keep our shovels and picks moving when an officer comes up. A Jerry non-commissioned officer has as much authority over here as a commissioned officer has in the States. The uniforms the old guards wear look awfully sloppy and make me think when I see them that they aren't the super race after all. I am sure that was their idea when they started this war.

February 9, 1945

They took me to another shed, which is supposed to be a hospital today. I think they think I have something that might affect the rest of the men and then they might lose some of the momentum on the railroad. It seems as though I am feeling a little bit better today or I would just about give up. I'm pretty weak and just have to gain some strength. None of us will be strong until we get to the G.I.s again. The hospital is about 15 feet square with 4 windows and 6 bunks (2-men bunks). The place is cold and has no stove. Our doctor is a medic who used to be a litter bearer at the front lines and doesn't know the first thing about medicine. We have no medicine so it really doesn't make much difference. I wish I could move back to my own place as Ed has taken good care of me, and now I just have to sweat it out by myself. When they moved me into this shed, I'm sure they thought I might be contagious. They said take these two pills and then take off some of your clothes as you will start to sweat. I took the pills and I started to get colder. Finally I had to put my clothes back on as I started getting the chills. Now it really looks hopeless.

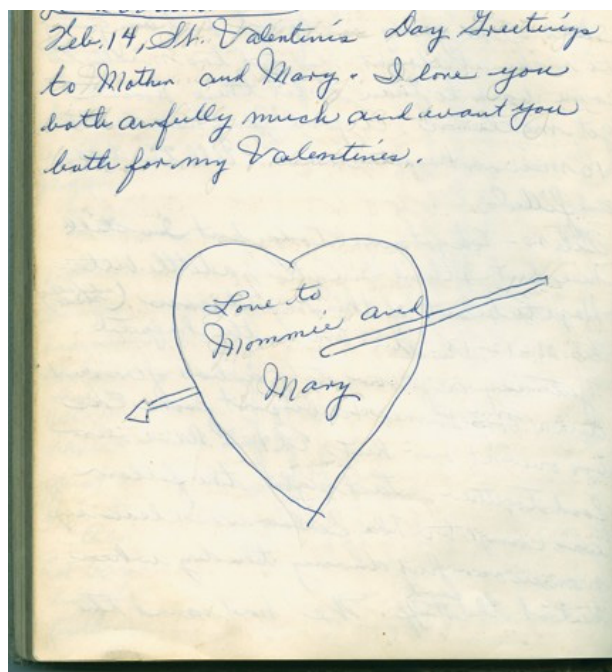
February 10, 1945

I am still in the hospital. Today Ed came in from the job sick and has his bunk right above me. Hope we both get over this. I was so weak when I got up to go to the latrine I thought I wouldn't make it. I had to slip on my shoes and wrap my blanket around me so I could walk about 50 yards outside in the cold. I know I shouldn't even get out in the cold but there is nothing else I can do. I would just like to have a chance to get even with these Jerries before I get back to the States. The going is tough, but

I'm going to make it all right. I have got too much to come back to, to let these Krauts get me down. A good Jerry is a dead one. Ten men in the hospital now. All the beds are filled. The body heat is helping all of us, as it sure was cold when I was here alone. Ed got well today but I'm still here. I think I am getting a little better. I sure hope to get out of this shed soon.

February 11. 12. 13. 1945

Am still in the shed. Yesterday a fellow stole a box of crackers and some prunes and a biscuit from Ed's and my box of goods at our hut. He must have found out about it. I'm not very far away, but I can't go back there to take care of anything. They had been trying to find out who did it, and all the barracks are mad about it as I kind of think they are feeling sorry for me. I have been crying a little as things seem so bad and the salt from the tears stings my face. It seems my face is cracked and dry, also from the fever. Together with lice, ticks, and hunger, being sick is a little hard to take. Ed just came in and informed me that last night the fellow was caught. The fellow was a clean-up man in our hut during the day when he took the foodstuff. We had saved the food for a bread pudding and we got most of the stuff back, so guess we will have the pudding after all.



February 14. 1945

St. Valentine's Day greetings to Mother and Mary. I love you both awfully much and want you both for my Valentines. The R.A.F. bombers brought some valentines for Germany about 2:00 or 3:00 a.m.. this morning. They came over and it could have been a thousand planes as they kept coming over

for an hour in waves. Don't know what city they hit but we could hear the rumble. Hope the Americans have started their spring offensive and hope they do a good job so they get us out of here.

Every night in Germany when a light is lit in a house all shutters on windows of the houses must be closed so no light can be seen. Germany really blacks out every night.

February 15, 1945

Today American planes came over again. Thirty—rumors that the Russians are close to Berlin also. I think I'll be out of the hospital today as I'm feeling pretty good now. Hope everything turns out all right.

Today our Jerry sergeant leaves for the front lines. Guess he's going to the Russian front. I hope he gets captured so he knows how a prisoner's life is. They seem to be taking all available men from 16 to 60 years old. I don't see how they can hold out much longer. If they do, we're going to starve more than ever because Germany just doesn't have the food.

February 17, 1945

I'm well and out of the hospital. I got on light duty so didn't have to work on the railroad. I peeled spuds in the kitchen. I don't like that job because just the smell of food makes me hungry. I took a bath and washed my underwear and I sure feel good now. Tonight Ed and I made a pudding for tomorrow which is Sunday. We are not having nice weather.

February 18, 1945 (Sunday)

Wish I could go to Mass today. We ate some of our pudding this morning and it sure was good. I'll make some when I get home to show Mommie and Mary I can really cook. It's a nice day today. I have spring fever. I would like to take Mommie and Mary for a nice long ride today and be with them all day long.

February 25, 1945 (Sunday)

Couldn't write much last week as we were tired each night coming in from work and by the time Ed and I ate I was too tired and also our little carbide lights are so dim you can hardly see.

I've been on a wood commando (*had to cut trees 3" below the ground and put dirt over the top*) all week and walking up and down hills has been hard with such little food to eat. I get so tired my knees want to buckle under me. The time seems to drag along. We had three air raids near here last week, but haven't been able to find out where they bombed. Small bombers were used and about 100 would come over at one time. Tuesday, one fighter bomber was shot down and we could see one fellow in a parachute coming from the plane. I imagine he landed safely but he'll be a prisoner--poor

fellow. Our morale is high when we see the bombers come over. It makes us realize the Allies are still working over Germany. I spent every day last week hungry. The railroad is coming along slowly but surely. We don't work too hard because most of us are too weak to stand it. Trading is poor because the guards watch us too closely now. We heard news yesterday that Turkey had entered the war against Germany with 36 divisions. Hope it's true. One said to us the other day the Western Wall of Germany had been broken, so he thought the American offensive had started. The guards are told to lie to us, so we can't tell for sure if it's true or not. The guards that we have are cripples and old men, but they are sending them to the front next week and the German Pioneers will be our guards. (*Pioneers are soldiers that are disabled but are skilled men on some particular job like a surveyor.*) One of the Pioneers in charge of us we call "Pickle", as that is the German word for pick ax. We also call him "Arbeit Louie" because the German word for work is *arbeit*, and we hear those words so much from him we call him that name. We also call him "Weasel" because his actions are similar to the American weasel. He is the crabbiest fellow we've seen so far and guess, according to our interpreter, he's up for a court martial for hitting a GI. But I doubt that anything will be done about it, as one of the officers last week told the guards to hit us with their rifles if we didn't work.

It snowed a little last week, but today it's really swell out and I am just kind of loafing. I have to mend a pair of socks that are just about shot. They have so many holes but since we won't get any more, I have to keep patching. We are cutting pieces of our blankets again to use as patches and the blankets are getting smaller.

Ed and I made another pudding last night so we are really enjoying it today after starving all week, saving for this pudding. Wish I was home. Wish I could go to church. I'm pretty lonesome. I wonder if our child that should be born next month will be a boy or a girl and if Mommie and Mary are all right as I haven't heard from them since the first of October, which is five months now. I'll bet she is just as anxious as me to get some news. About all I can write is that I'm okay. If I write anything out of line they tear up the letters, and you don't know if they are mailed or not.

February 26, 1945

Got some flour today and went on sick call and got some sodium bicarbonate tablets for stomach cramps (*we used these tablets as a yeast to rise our breads, etc.*). Sodium bicarbonate makes the pancakes rise a little so as to be more palatable. We also used a little powdered milk, sugar and salt, and when done it tasted to us like candy. No air raids today. Lots of rumors about the U.S. giving the Germans warnings that all railroads would be bombed and for all civilians and POWs to keep off

the railroads. Hope the big push is on.

February 28, 1945

I was lucky and traded soap for potatoes and eggs today and three cigarettes worth of salt (*about a shaker full*). A guard is going to trade some soap (*two bars*) for bread for Ed and me, and we should get about two kilos of bread for the soap. We give the guard about three cigarettes a day and think he'll do favors for us like that. I hope. I'm still on wood commando, and this week we have a good guard so it isn't so tough. Next week we'll probably have a bad guard like last week. We're going to make pancakes again tonight. We got some cards today so I can write to you, Mommie, on Sunday. They give us a card just about two times a month so I can't write much, and if you write something that the censor doesn't think should be in the letter, they burn it. So I try and write the right things so you'll hear from me anyhow. It has been nice weather and hope it heats up. No snow here now.

Now, I must tell you that the woods where we get the wood is assigned to us by a forest ranger. Every part of the tree is to be used, so when the wood is removed it is not possible to know that a tree has been taken. They accomplish this by first the ranger marking the tree to be cut. The tree must be cut off 3 inches below the ground so sufficient dirt can be scraped over the trunk so it will not be visible. Women of the community in nearby villages have permission to recover all branches for their household use. They are there all day long, and going to the bathroom is no problem as they just go behind a tree, and usually the trees aren't very wide. The men just turn their backs and let it go for the wet job. To us it is embarrassing, but to them they make nothing of it at all. I suppose if you have to work like a man you should be able to act like one.

March 4, 1945

This morning we had pancakes made by the cooks. Each one of us chipped in with a cigarette and a teaspoon full of powdered milk. Each of us got six pancakes. On this commando we have our own G.I. cooks and the Jerries give us just so many rations, but the flour for these cakes was bought on the black market from the French and carried into the camp at night. Our cooks started frying the cakes at 3:00 a.m. so they would be done before the Jerries got around. I really think the guards knew of this and let the cooks get by with it as they knew how hungry we have been.

Ed and I made another pudding today. We used two boxes of biscuits (7 oz. box) to one loaf of G.I. bread which is about two pounds, one box of sugar (8 oz.), one box of raisins (15 oz.). Meat from the inside of prune stones (1 box makes a heaping two tablespoons full), about five tablespoons (heaping) of powdered milk, and four oz. of cocoa. This recipe will give you a hell of a good farting

session because Ed and I blew all day long. Couldn't stand to be near each other. I thought his smelled worse, but he insisted mine were worse. We were feeling good so some jokes were told. One fellow just asked us if we knew a good definition for rough stitching. No one knew, so he said it's sewing up a cow's ass with barbed wire.

We cook in cans and never get much chance to have a good place to wash them out so most of the time the cans are just rinsed out in cold water. We get the G.I. shits every once in a while from the cans. If we live through this we should either have a cast-iron stomach or a ruined stomach.

We mix so much water with our food to make it go farther that we all have to get up about three or four times every night. We have no trouble keeping a fire at night as when we get up, each time we check the fire, so it stays warm in the hut all night. On Sunday we have roll call at 11:00 a.m. so we have a chance to sleep awhile one day of the week. During the week, roll call is at 6:45 a.m. and we leave the prison for work at 7:00 a.m.

Yesterday at noon one man fell out about two minutes late for roll call, and the Jerry sergeant hit him on the back of the head with his hand and kicked him. Right after I got to work, a rail fell on my leg, but I'm sure it isn't broken. I was off work for the afternoon, and I get off tomorrow also. It has been snowing out all day so it will be a nice day to spend in the barracks.

We have an old German in uniform that comes and takes our light at 9:00 p.m., and he has worked up a racket. We give him a cigarette and he lets us keep the light and he picks it up later. I think he's about 65 or 70 years old but spry as a fox. We call him "Lamp Light" and he just beams. I don't think he knows just what that means but is giving us the benefit of the doubt. Every night when he locks us in, we all say "Good night, Pop" to him and he really gets a thrill out of it. He grins from ear to ear.

March 11, 1945 (Sunday)

This week went by all right, and I have been on wood command again. Five men altogether and we've been going to a small town down the road by the name of Dietldorf and cutting about 4-inch pines. Monday and Tuesday of this coming week I believe we'll be there. As we were going through this village, I befriended a fellow who was a Frenchman by the name of Paul Pantalion and have his address and will write to him from the States. He speaks the American language. This fellow promised to smuggle food in to me. Guess I'm pretty lucky. Paul works at an elevator and can smuggle in flour for cigarettes. I'm keeping some of the sales slips so they can be viewed to show how our monetary system works here.

Cigarettes are the basic commodity and would even work to buy your freedom, but no one here

is interested in anything of that nature as it would be too difficult to deal with getting out of the country because rivers only need to be guarded at the bridges. Anyone getting wet would get pneumonia and I'm sure the cigarettes would be easily taken away and then the person would be liable to be shot or tortured, and we have enough problems already. Also with rumors that the war will be ending soon, it's best that we just try to survive. Our rations have been cut as of today. We were cut from four men to a loaf of bread to eight men to a loaf. Yesterday it went to five men on the loaf so I guess we won't starve. Our potato and butter ration was cut a lot also. We now get three potatoes about two inches in diameter and one tablespoon of butter a day.

Today we are supposed to get paid, but the money isn't any good for anything so I don't see what they pay us for. I wish they would keep the money and give us more eats. I met three Englishmen last week and got their addresses and plan to write them also when the war is over. They were from an English non-commissioned camp, and they looked weak and hungry also. They said they hadn't had a Red Cross parcel since Christmas. They were out hunting wood for their prison. It must have been some work camp because there is no big prison except at Hohenfels. Today we got the news that "Pickle" was moved from here because he flashed his bayonet at too many fellows. Some day he probably will get it stuck in his neck because we've been getting pretty hungry and rough and can't stand that kind of stuff. They threatened to shoot and rifle-butted us so much we don't even pay any attention to rifles anymore. Pickle was the fellow in charge of the railroad we are working on. Hope we get a better man. Really, this man probably knows a lot of what he needs to know about engineering but has no patience with us as workers, and he just goes out of his mind trying to get anything done with a group like us. Our language barrier was bad and he wouldn't take time to have an interpreter so that we would know what he was talking about.

Rumors are that the Americans have started their offensive and have by-passed Cologne, Germany, and are spearheading with tanks. The guards seem to be glad the Americans are pushing. I guess they must be pretty scared of the Russians. Some guards seem to think August or September may be the month. Pray God it's over this summer because if we're here another winter we're done for, as there will be no food at all.

Sure wish I would get a package with cigarettes and letters from Mommie. The weather has been swell, a little bit of snow, but it hasn't been real cold. I wonder if Mommie has our new child by now and if it will be a boy or a girl. Gee, I'd like to know. I sure miss both Mommie and Mary an awful lot. Hope I can come home soon.

I didn't work last Monday, so I washed all my clothes and look like a regular G.I.. I have my shoes polished (the ones with nails in the soles that I can't wear) and got a fresh bath.

Ed and I have a lot of cigarettes and are sure making use of them now with our trading. I buy flour (2-lb. can) for 18 cigarettes and sell the flour (which is called "Mallo") for 15 cigarettes a pound. This allows for times when it is taken away from us. I try to get by with between two and four cigarettes a day and Ed does the same so we get ahead that way. Yesterday I traded about two ounces of tea for a 2 1/2-kilo loaf of civilian bread. It tastes like sponge cake to us. In America you wouldn't even eat the bread, but it tastes like candy to us. We've spent most of the day talking about what we are going to do when we get back to America. Anyone that lives in the U.S. should be proud and happy they don't have to live like these people.

Men and women use the same toilet in public buildings. It's nothing for a fellow (German) to stand and pee in front of a half dozen women and think nothing of it. That makes me hate this country more. Usually most houses don't have toilets and they use their yard. In town I expect there is a difference, but I am acquainted with the countryside and small villages (like small farms).

Today was payday. I was sick 14 days so my pay was 15 marks for the days I worked. If we are sick we don't get paid. Salary is one mark a day. The money is not going to be any good anyway, so it's justification for the prisoners in the U.S. to get paid and their money will really be worth a fortune back here when the war is over. Ed and I just had some ham and three eggs and ate them scrambled on a piece of toast. It sure tasted good. We work from 7:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. during the week, and so far get Sundays off. Wish I could go to church but no chance. Rumors are the Russians are 180 kilometers from here. We are located pretty close to Nuremberg and hear and feel the bombs. Every day the Allies are strafing and bombing them continuously.

March 18, 1945 (Sunday)

Today I got the signature of the lamp lighter (Johann Jolmaiger) on page 101 of this diary. This is the fellow I just wrote about, but again, he takes care of our lights. He's an old fellow about 70 years old and we call him "Pop". He gets a big kick out of it because he grins from ear to ear. He takes great pride in his job, and when he comes in the stalag with the carbide lights, by his strut and stride you would think he was a general coming in the place. We get a little longer light because he likes our bribing with cigarettes.

rumors are the allies are strafing and bombing them continuously.

Johann Gohwaeiger

Sunday March 18

This is the signature of the German guard that takes care of our lights. He's an old fellow about 70 years old and we all call him Pops. He gets a big kick out of it because he gives from ear to ear. He takes great pride in his job and when he comes in the staling with the carbide lights by seeing him strut you would think he was a general coming in the place.

Today two English Chaplains came to our camp, one Protestant and one Catholic so I got a chance to go to confession and communion. Gee it sure seemed nice. We had our services in tent #4. The chaplains had a list of news to cheer us up and talked to all of us after mass. They mentioned that the war couldn't last much longer and that the Red Cross in U. S. had donated 50 trucks to haul parcels from Switzerland and the trucks are on their way here. They are all out of parcels now so we're just praying

Today, two English chaplains came to our camp on bicycles, one Protestant and one Catholic, so I got a chance to go to confession and communion. Gee, it sure seemed nice. We had our services in hut #4. The chaplains had a bit of news to cheer us up and talked to all of us after Mass. They mentioned that the war couldn't last much longer and that the Red Cross in the U.S. had donated 50 trucks to haul parcels from Switzerland, and the trucks were on their way here. We are all out of parcels now so we're just praying for them to come in. What Jerry gives us to eat is starvation rations. All of Germany is just eating enough to get along on. The front-line soldiers get a little more but they all are really low on food. I get a chance to get news from some French prisoners and one of the fellows, Paul Pantalion, gets the news to me. The first and third armies are supposed to have crossed the Rhine River and the seventh army is supposed to have tried to cross but as yet they haven't succeeded. Also, the Russians are supposed to be in Berlin. It looks like the offensive has started on both fronts.

I am still on the wood commando detail, so I have got about 60 pounds of flour, about 30 pounds of spuds, 4 boxes of saccharin, 3 two-kilo loaves of bread, and one dozen eggs on hand for Ed and myself. We have all our cigarettes invested. I buy the flour for the same price as quoted before (buy for 9 and sell for 15 cigarettes a pound). I pay about 10 cigarettes for 100 saccharin tablets, 6 eggs for 20 cigarettes, 1 bar of soap for 3 eggs, 2 bars of soap for 2 1/2-kilo loaves of bread, 1 bar of soap for 1 box of saccharin, 20 cigarettes for half a kilo of salt, 50 cigarettes for 1 kilo of sugar, 1 loaf of bread for a can of soluble coffee, 1 chocolate bar (4 ounces) for 1 loaf of bread, etc.

Children in Germany under 5 years of age have never tasted chocolate. Tea and coffee, soap, cigarettes and chocolate are things Germany just doesn't have anymore. We get these things in our parcels, so we trade for other food. Saturday afternoon I had 6 kilos of flour and 3 kilo-loaves of bread, 10 pounds of potatoes, 15 eggs and 2 boxes of saccharin to get into camp with. Our guard helped me get some brush over my shoulders. I put eggs and potatoes in the pockets of my overcoat and the three loaves of bread under my coat, and I carried my coat in my arms. If we are caught with anything on us, it's taken away from us as we're not allowed to trade with civilians. The guards let us get by whenever possible just as long as an officer isn't around. The soldiers here in Germany are so afraid of officers they almost tremble.

The guards are awfully scared of our bombers. One guard with us the other day ... (it's so dark I can't see, I'll write later). Later...saw our bombers coming over us and wanted us to going to the woods as we were out in the meadow, but we assured him there was no danger, for their objective was

railroads. The guards have an awful job with us because we are not supposed to trade and they want us to give them a cigarette now and then so they almost have to let us go ahead. If they don't let us deal or trade, we don't give them anything.

March 20, 1945 (Tuesday)

Well, I'm off the wood commando this week, but we have a lot of flour, saccharin and bread on hand so we have food for a while. We are also getting low on parcels. This Friday we will have six men on a parcel, and we have been getting one parcel per man for two weeks. I got off work today at 3:00 p.m. for working about 15 minutes unloading a truck last night. The usual quitting hour is 5:00 p.m. I'm still waiting to hear from Mommie and Mary. War news or rumors from the Frenchmen are that they look for the war to be over in April. Gee, it sure would be nice but I can't believe it, or we could not stand it. But to dream of good eats, and enough of it, and sleeping on a bed instead of sleeping on boards sure would be nice, and clean clothes also. I made pancakes when I got in at 3:00 so Ed and I had pancakes and coffee for supper and tonight we'll make a stew out of potatoes and a little piece of meat we have and three onions about one-half inch in diameter; then we'll add some flour and some salt. Our stove is only about two feet square for 22 men so we always have to wait our turn and do all our cooking in cans. The last week or so Ed and I have added a little weight. Hope we don't have to go hungry anymore. It is pretty tough to go to bed hungry. We have done it plenty so we know how. It is my mother's birthday today, March 20.

I sure hope everything is well at home and that everyone is getting along fine. Is our child born yet? Is it a boy or a girl? What is its name? Is Mommie okay? Does she miss me as much as I miss her? Is Mary okay? What will she look like when I get back and how will she act? Are Dad and Mother and Dickey all right? Will I get a parcel soon from home? Every mail call and no mail for me. Will I ever get a letter or will it be lost? How is the store getting along; is it sold? Will I have to find a job when I get back? These are the things I think of each day that goes by. Also, when will the war be over? Can it last much longer? The guards seem to want the war over pretty bad also. They have a hard life and don't get much to eat either. It soon will be Easter and Mother's Day and no letters even to write. The only paper I have now is in this book. Not any more. Hope no child of mine will ever have to go through times like this. The will to get back home is all that keeps us going. *(This segment from the diary was used in a Minnesota Historical Society display.)*

Johnson Family Picture 1930



Top Left: Alvin, Robert, Arnold Middle: **Donald (my father)**, Catherine Front: Anna, Ruthie, David, John August
Youngest son, Richard or Dickey, was not born until July 12, 1931.



Richard abt 1945

MY FOLKS BACK HOME

Lord, keep my parents safe from fear
At home, while I am over here
I pray that you will let them know
I wear their hearts where 'er I go.
Let war and death be in their lives,
A thing of hero's paradise.
May they not feel the Naked Rain,
Nor guess the actual hurt of pain.
Do blind their hearts to thirst and cold,
For, Lord, they are so sweet and old.
Tell them I stride with rigorous breath,
They need not know the weight of death.
Nor need they sense the truth of strife,
They have so little left of life.
Lord, bless tonight the ancient beds
Where wakeful toss the dear old heads.
And tell them not to worry for
I'm coming back some day from war.
Do comfort them and pleasing thee,
Keep them alive,
Dear Lord, for me.
Copied from Diary Page 1

March 22. 1945 (Thursday)

Yesterday was the first day of spring and a real nice day. I tried to stay off work in the afternoon, and I guess ten other fellows tried the same thing. Jerry came around checking up, and I jumped out of the back window as Jerry came in the front door. A couple of fellows went over to the hospital and jumped in bed but they got caught. The nine men that got caught had to work until 8:00 p.m. I was just lucky. Guess I won't stay in today. I'm writing this at 6:30 a.m., and we go to work in fifteen minutes. I sure have got spring fever today.

March 25, 1945 (Sunday)

{Tomorrow will be the birthday of my son, but I will not know it until the war is over and I get back to the States.} It's sure a beautiful day today, but we are out of Red Cross parcels so most of the men are pretty hungry. The railroad is coming along fine. I hope the war is over before we get it done. I'm working with a pick and a shovel again. Lots of civilians from around the community have been out looking at our job. Lots of young girls, too. I guess they are anxious to see what we Americans look like. We talk through the fence to them, and they giggle like little kids. We can understand German fairly well and know how to express ourselves very well. But the Germans have a hard time understanding the American language.

Ed and I took our blankets out and aired them out really good. Our mattress is made of a gunnysack with excelsior for padding and, after fluffing it up real good, it is fairly soft for a couple of days.

I took a sponge bath. We call it a whore bath. We have about 30 pounds of flour on hand so are living pretty good yet. We ought to live pretty good until our parcels come in again. We would starve to death if we didn't have the parcels to live on. Rumors are 10,000 paratroopers have landed on this side of the Rhine River and Frankfurt has been taken.

We have bought a Victrola for 1,000 cigarettes. Each one of us chipped in five fags apiece of 200 men so now we are listening to American music. Really swell. The Germans are really working us and every once in a while a pistol is pulled on a G.I., but so far none of us has been shot. Some day one of us will though, as most of us are so run down in health we can't work and that seems to be no excuse to the Jerries. We saw three P-38 's (*U.S. fighter plane*) over us today and how we wished we could climb up and get a ride.

March 27, 1945 (Tuesday)

Today we got rumors the Americans were only 110 kilometers from here, which is only about 70 miles, and they are making another push, which might get them here in a couple of days. We are so happy we hardly know what to do. Today we didn't work and all we did was clean up the shovels and tools. More news was that we are getting parcels in today and will get a parcel per week per man. That is awfully hard to believe, but I guess we'll get it. Jerry suggested we make a Red Cross flag for our camp. Also mentioned we may have to evacuate. It just depends on the Jerries' orders. Lots of our guards and Pioneers are leaving today. I guess they are leaving for the front. There are so many rumors it's hard to know which ones to believe. If Americans do come in, Ed and I have our shoes already

shined and our clothes pretty clean so we're all set. Pray God that they get here soon. I'll kiss the first G.I. I see and also the first G.I. truck. Wonder if news is big in the States. I bet it is. Just got news we wouldn't be working again tomorrow as the Pioneers in charge of our job have to leave for the front so I guess we'll just have to lie around for awhile.

March 28, 1945 (Wednesday)

Today we worked after all, and it has been raining. I saw the guard wasn't looking so I took off at 2:30 p.m. There is a little village back of our work so I took some trading stock and tried to trade with the villagers. I think they were afraid of me and I wasn't able to make any kind of deal. I figured on getting back to my regular gang just at quitting time so I could get into the prison with the bunch. It didn't work that way. First the guard noticed I was gone and pulled the plug out of the end of his rifle and went on a hunt for me. The quitting time was stepped up so the men had already started for the prison. I caught up with them and nothing seemed to be said, but after I was in our barracks the fellows told me what had happened and they had been afraid for my life because they were excited and mad. They (Germans) didn't say anything to me. If things were not as they are, I would have been in real trouble, but I think they feared our troops were coming and decided to cool it. Rumors are Americans are supposed to be about 70 kilometers from here. Doesn't sound right, but I hope it's true. Ed said that he wouldn't have given two cents for my life, for when the guards took off looking for me and pulling the plugs from the barrels of their rifles, they looked like they were on a rabbit hunt with their rifles at port arms and spread out going through the woods. I really thought I could get by with it, but it did not work. Funniest thing though, they are real chummy with me and you wouldn't know anything happened.

March 30, 1945 (Friday)

Rumors are the Americans are only 50 kilometers away from Regensburg and also Nuremberg. Now I am more convinced than ever this kind of news saved me, but we are desperate for food because the Red Cross parcels are not getting to us. We are all out of cigarettes as we traded all of ours. We do have lots of bread and spuds though. I suppose we'll have to trade some food for cigarettes the way it looks. When we are without cigarettes, we are lonesome and get down in the dumps. We are working now again but only have a few guards and Pioneers left to guard us.

April 1, 1945 (Easter Sunday)

Well, I'm glad that not very many in our family have had to go through an Easter Sunday like this, but to show you how happy we are, we haven't had a Red Cross parcel for two weeks now. Ed and

I can't even eat our own food, as it would hurt us too much to see the other men watch us eating and they have none. If we divide, we will be in trouble as we do not have enough extra to go around to 22 men. All the men have not smoked a cigarette in five days now and with the little rations they give us and working, we are in trouble. We have no strength at all. The parcels are not going to show up so there will be no Easter eggs for us. Last year on Easter I was on K.P. at Camp Wolters in Texas.

We are on a starvation diet now, and it doesn't look good for any change as I suppose transportation and the mess the country is in means there is no way in or out. The other day I saw some of the fellows in another barracks come in, and they had blood on their clothes. I found out a shepherd crossed the tracks next to some of the prisoners and one of his sheep lagged behind. Four of the men killed and cut it up with a pocket knife. Those men are having mutton tonight. Wish I had some of it. A rabbit that weighed around 8 pounds was bought for 60 cigarettes (I sure don't see how they had that many to pay but somehow strange things happen). Anyhow, we are so short on food some fellows have been eating snails and cooking up dandelions. It is giving them a bad case of the runs though, as it seems to physic them.

This prison is at a village called Rohrbach, and another one like this is at Schmidmuehlen and then there is a camp that holds about 8,000 men up the line aways called Hohenfels. That is an English prison camp for officers and also for Frenchmen. I've met some of the fellows from there and have their addresses.

I've got an ulcerated tooth and have had it a couple of days. I have to wait until Tuesday before I can have it taken care of. My teeth are all getting in pretty bad shape. The same with all of us as we aren't getting the right kinds of foods, I guess.

April 2, 1945 (Monday)

Today is a holiday in Germany, so we have the day off. I'm awfully lonesome and hungry as our parcels haven't come in yet and no one seems to know for sure just when they'll get here. I sure wish they'd come in today. I haven't had a smoke in six days except a drag off one once.

The sun is out nice and bright, and it would be a nice day to take Mary and Mother out for a nice ride in the country. Instead, all I see is the barbed wire and guards. The chaplains from Hohenfels just came down and brought some baseball equipment and some new rumors. They said the war should be over in a couple of weeks, and most likely it would be over before the parcels would come in. They also mentioned the boys at Hohenfels were already packed, so when Americans come they can take off. Right now the lines may be close, but I have a hard time trying to convince myself that

they are close enough to get excited about. But I do feel a lot better just to hear it even if it isn't true. We all sure miss those parcels awfully much but would like to see the war over, too. I believe right now we are missing the parcels the most.

I went to Mass today and confession and communion so I performed my Easter duty, but I didn't fast long before church. Guess we don't need to fast as that is about all we have been doing since we've been prisoners. I hope the chaplain's news is somewhere near right.

Ed is making pancakes now and we don't have anything to make them rise, so we're using tooth powder. I really don't think these ideas will work out very well in civilian life. The Americans are supposed to be at Wurzburg, which is supposed to be halfway between Frankfurt and Nuremberg and we're only a short distance from Nuremberg so we're all praying it won't be long for us.

April 3. 1945 (Tuesday)

No parcels yet so we all feel pretty low. I didn't work today because of my ulcerated tooth, so I got pancakes baked for supper. I used 1 1/2 pounds of flour and 3/4-tablespoon salt and 1/2-tablespoon of Dr. William's Tooth Powder. They tasted all right to me but don't know if they would taste very good to anyone back in the U.S. On this recipe I was not able to get any sodium bicarbonate tablets so the tooth powder was used. We got letter forms issued to us today so I wrote a letter and a card to Mommie and Mary and a card to Mother and Dad. I hope I beat the letter home though. I figured out I haven't had a letter from anyone for one-half year now. That's quite a long time. That we may get parcels soon is the rumor now. News is that the Americans are still coming. Ill sure say a big prayer every night that they don't lose any time. It's really beautiful spring weather out. I've sure got spring fever and am hungry as usual. You'll see that is all we've known and it's our main worry to see if we can get something extra to eat so we don't have to go to bed quite so hungry.

April 4. 1945 (Wednesday)

By now we have smoked coffee, tea, breadcrumbs, leaves, grass, paper, but we found something new. We have been smoking potato peelings and wood today. We are all eating dandelion leaves boiled. We first cook them and then we add a little salt. Tastes like spinach. We also are eating snails and soon we should be coming into the mushroom season. We're Americans that aren't supposed to be able to take any of this kind of life, but the Jerry is learning many things from us, including toasting of bread.

April 8, 1945 (Sunday)

Wednesday evening we got our parcels and none of us even went to bed. We stayed up all night eating and cooking. The cigarettes sure were swell and the next day, Thursday, we were sure tired but we weren't hungry for once. We were as glad as if the war was over for us. Jerry won't give us any light anymore but last night he did. I suppose they are afraid of lights, being close to the front lines, if that is possible. But it is strange not to have any lights at all. Our stove is so small we have to take turns cooking. Trading really went on the rest of the week. Jerry is getting a little more free with the food. Guess it must be because the lines are getting closer.

According to the latest news the Americans are supposed to be in Nuremberg. Last night we thought we heard guns in the distance. We had many raids by bombers Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The Americans strafed a road about one-half mile from us on Friday, but we imagine it must have been a convoy. Guns are being moved into the hills around us and civilians are building a roadblock for tanks one-half mile from us. They tried to have us help them, but we refused and the Jerry sergeant drew his pistol on us and gave us two minutes to start working. We did start but were soon stopped by the top sergeant, as we aren't supposed to be used for that kind of work according to the Geneva Convention. But the Jerries don't go according to that anyhow.

Today someone was shot at by one of our guards, but they are questioning him now and I will write more about it as soon as I find out. They say it was a Russian that is on forced labor. A German girl he was with told the guard something and the guard started shooting. The fellow was about 200 yards away but they got him. Americans may be here in a few days and rumors are we will be marched back farther into Germany. I hope not. We are all saying prayers we get retaken by our own troops. None of us knows anything for sure.

Germany is about done as far as we can find out.

22 New Same Art Amberg. 3

Marvin M. Hosen 3530 Piggott Ave, East St. Louis, Ill
 Wm C. Burgin Route #1 Fletcher, N. Carolina
 Kenneth J. Gravin Box 574 - Upper Lake, N. York
 Homero Guerra Box 461 Rio Grande, Texas
 Ruben L. Patzer Stockton Calif, Box 142 Livingston Calif.
 Kenneth H. Hood Crooksville, Ohio
 Pandy Giannacopis 2 Auburn St. Woburn, Mass
 Jack Shaffer 229 Hughes St. Berwick, Pa.
 Hubert Robinson Jonesville S. Carolina Box 97
 Robert Hoverman 38 Cliff Ave, Herapatad S. Isl. N.Y.
 Herbert Anderson 20199 Westland Drive Detroit, Mich
 James H. Benson 206 S. 11th St. ^{Hadsden} Ala.
 Royal Oyer Maynard - Tenn. ^{Hadsden} Rt. #2
 Lee Montoya Velarde N. Mex.
 Everett Mann Van Lear, Ky.
 Fred Heim 57 Philip Place, Irvington N. Jersey
 Robert Alpert 7855 - 79th Lane Glendale S. Isl. N.Y.
 Collins E. Guines 3508 S. Harwood St. Dallas, Texas
 Francis T. Harmon 117 Park St. Rockland Maine
 Donald L. McDutach High St. Adams N. York
 Alfred R. Injop 204 Cogshall St. Holly Michigan
 Don Johnson

Jerry Sargent

George Louis Torne

Mergastatin, Niedersachsen Obergren Germany

April 9. 1945 (Monday)

The weather is real nice today, so I imagine our troops ought to be able to make miles. I hope. Just a few minutes ago, about 50 bombers came over and now I can feel the earth shake, so they are bombing not very far from here. They came over in bunches of seven planes. I have an awful toothache but can't get to a dentist. My jaw hurts real bad. That fellow they caught yesterday was a Jerry that had gone AWOL from around Nuremberg and had been attached to the Medical Corps. He was barefoot and his feet were so flat he couldn't wear shoes. I guess he was trying to get to his home, but he didn't make it. The Jerries are getting a little jittery day by day. We have a lot of food now so I only hope we don't have to evacuate this place. We have no trenches dug so in case we're bombed we have no place for cover—we could all be killed. It is possible they recognize our barbed wire and buildings as a prison, but we are not sure. I hope our own men don't drop any bombs here. Saturday evening we got spuds in and we were to unload them, so we all wore our big overcoats and we had our pockets and our shirts loaded so we looked like stuffed pigs. Also had spuds down our pant legs. As long as the guards can't see the spuds, they are doing their job. The guards just laughed like everything when we came through the gate; some of them made signs at us how big our stomachs looked. They caught me with a loaf of bread and took my stalag number but found out I hadn't stolen it so they gave it back to me. I bought it for a package of cigarettes from the driver of the bread truck. Ed and I have seven Red Cross boxes of spuds, so we should be able to eat well in case we have to stay here. Americans should be here in a couple of days.

April 10. 1945 (Tuesday)

Got a chance to have my teeth fixed today. We walked to Hohenfels where the English non-commissioned officer camp is located. I had two teeth filled by a German dentist and have an appointment to go back to him on Friday. Had to walk about 20 kilometers or 10 American miles. Germans are building roadblocks in every little village and using Russian soldiers to build them. "Prisoner" in German is "Gefangen". Saw many Jerry patrols on bicycles, so the lines can't be very far behind. Saw lots of trucks loaded with ammunition and supplies going in the direction of the front. Saw lots of planes. Sirens have been screaming here in Germany all day for the last four or five days. People seem to be quite friendly, especially the older people, but people around 20 to 30 years of age don't seem to like us very well. It doesn't make much difference to us now. The older people all say hello to us. There were three of us that went and the guard told us he was from Aachen and that he doesn't know what has happened to his folks and three sisters. This guard lost his right eye and was

wounded in his leg, arm, and in his head. Used to be a very good looking man but looks different as the eye looks awful bad.

Our discussions now are how we are going to be retaken. Is Jerry going to evacuate us back farther into Germany or is he going to leave us here until Americans come and free us? Anyway we look at it, we are going either way. Evacuation, we may be strafed by our own planes and staying here we may be killed by German SS troops, which are the backbone of the German army. That is the outfit that keeps the Jerry soldiers at the front or they would all quit. The guards we have now are getting awfully lax and don't seem to care much about anything. Now we are getting plenty of food, so we are living pretty well for the first time since I was captured.

April 11. 1945 {Wednesday}

Hohenfels is a fair-sized village built in a very narrow valley with high rocky cliffs on each side of the town. Houses are very close together and made of concrete. I walked down the center of town to get to the dentist and in the narrow parts of town Russian or Polish soldiers that are in German uniform (traitors to Russia and Poland) were building roadblocks. Roadblocks are made of large pine poles about 24 inches in diameter. There are about 24 poles on each side of the narrow road, driven down about 10 feet and rising into the air about 10 feet. Logs will be stretched across the road when the need arises and the road will be mined. Hohenfels was a German military base also.

April 12. 1945 (Thursday)

Ed bought a chicken yesterday for 50 cigarettes, so we cleaned and fired it last night and boy was it ever good. Used lots of margarine and dipped the chicken in flour before frying it. Also, Ed made gravy for it. News is that the Americans stopped pushing in our sector and that the Americans' delay could mean that we will be here for another couple of months. Our morale is not quite so high now.

I'm still working on the railroad, but we aren't working quite so hard for a lot of our guards have gone to the front. Lots of bombers come over every day now and are bombing Amberg and Regensburg quite often. Lots of smoke came up in the air from Regensburg yesterday after the bombing, so I imagine they had lots of damage.

April 13. 1945 (Friday)

I heard rumors today that Roosevelt was dead, and I made another trip to Hohenfels to get my teeth fixed. I bought a loaf of bread from the Jerry dentist for 10 cigarettes, and I have to go back next Monday so made a deal for another loaf. Also, he had a pretty nice looking German girl working for

him so I made a deal with her—one loaf of bread for one bar of American soap. It's a long walk up there and back, but I'm glad to have my teeth fixed, so I don't lose them (*Dad had to have all of his teeth pulled*). We didn't get much news. Jerry is all excited that Roosevelt is dead. I suppose he thinks that will make a difference to the war. We are all willing to sweat out unconditional surrender as Jerry deserves every bit of that and their country shouldn't be able to have any power or she'll just start preparing for another war. I thought it was all propaganda, but have found out Germany is nothing but a war nation and always will be unless she is stripped of all military power and guarded.

Roosevelt knew this country when he made the statement "unconditional surrender". He will be long remembered as one of the greatest presidents we have had in the U.S. and died April 13, 1945. To be obstinate to the Jerries that fed us this information, we told them it would not make much difference except that our vice-president, Truman, was a Jew and probably they would be in big trouble, and this really quieted them down. This was quite a surprise to them. Of course we don't know the heritage of Truman, but we said this just to take the steam out of them. It did the trick.

Frenchmen have evacuated Dieteldorf and my friend Paul Pentalion escaped and is somewhere around camp as I got a card from him. Wish I could go with him.

April 15, 1945 (Sunday)

I washed all my clothes today and am going to take a bath tonight. Lots of civilians have come by our camp today and seem awfully friendly. There's been lots of bombing off in the distance but we have only heard one bunch of planes near here. News is that Germany is just about cut in half by the Americans and the Russians. Also, Americans are nearing Nuremburg. Troops, half tracks, and armored cars and big guns have been moving up all day. We are now hearing the large guns at the front, but they are far in the distance. News is that we cannot be evacuated to Moosburg as Americans have cut the road and our only chance to evacuate this area would be to go to Hohenfels and get recaptured with the English non-coms. I hope it's real soon, but we can't tell. The noise we hear may be bombs but sounds too steady. Tomorrow I go to Hohenfels to the dentist again.

We got orders to evacuate this camp at 10:00 tonight so we are cramming everything into parcel boxes to carry. Guards say Americans are coming fast. We are excited and glad as heck. We may go to Hohenfels but don't know for sure. Boys are boiling spuds and frying pancakes and have the stove so hot we can hardly stay in the hut. Orders are to go to bed and be ready to move any time, get plenty of rest as we may walk a long way. Some GIs have to give away lots of food as they have lots stored up.

April 16, 1945 (Monday)

We are still here and the Jerry sergeant who is in charge of our camp came down and said if it's possible he wants to have us here to get recaptured by our own troops. Artillery fire is getting closer and Jerry guards are getting more nervous and we are all excited. We are still on the alert and rumors are that we will be surrounded in a short time. We are cut off from the south, so we cannot evacuate to Moosburg. GIs are giving extra clothes away to Jerry civilians and guards. People are going back and forth on the road two blocks away from camp like ants on an anthill. Troops are withdrawing. Right now we see three straggler troops of Jerries coming past and they are barefoot. Guess they have walked an awfully long way. They all carry large packs. Ed and I have had to give away a parcel box of flour and six parcels of spuds. People are coming up to our camp, and GIs are throwing their clothes to them. We are all excited and are all packed and ready to move out soon. So far it sounds like my prayers have been answered, but there are millions of people that have been praying for the same thing, even people in Germany. I wonder how things are going to turn out. Germany is a mess thanks to Hitler and his children. News is that we are surrounded. I hope it's true. It is about 6:00 p.m. and it kind of looks as though we may move out tonight. If we do, it will be tough on us.

April 17, 1945 (Tuesday)

We are still here and 100 GIs from Schmidmuehlen came in about midnight last night and slept on the floor of the barracks. Now we have to wait for the Englishmen to come down from Hohenfels before we move from here. Americans really bombed awfully close to here last night. We could see flares close to here last night. We could see the flashes very plainly. The lines must be real close but we haven't heard much artillery this morning. The Englishmen were supposed to move yesterday but are refusing to move until Jerry comes into the prison with guns and makes them go. We don't have to move from here until they come as we are under the same jurisdiction as they are. A highway is about one-half mile away from this prison and four American planes have been strafing and bombing troops on retreat along this road.

We have made a big POW sign on the ground of toilet tissue and flour so they can see it from the air, so maybe we are safe. Lots of us would get hurt if they strafed us. If we have to move out of here we'll be strafed just like Jerry troops, so we are praying we can stay here until the end and get recaptured by our own troops. We are all packed and ready to go in a few minutes' notice, if the need arises. We have plenty to eat now, and, as a matter of fact, I have a little potbelly on me. Kind of looks like I'm pregnant. Our extra food rations will be pulled on a wagon. All Jerry troops have wagons

along. Wouldn't it look funny to see our troops coming down the road pulling a wagon?

When the Jerry troops march along, they sing and it does sound nice. It just gives them a little swing to their step. The only thing is that they are marching in the wrong direction. Away from the front lines so they will not be able to do much for Germany. Not marching in that direction. Hope we stay here again tonight. We are just lying around and taking it easy. German women and children are coming up to our prison and begging for soap and clothes and the GIs are throwing it by arm-loads to them as in case we do move we can't carry it with us. We believe the Jerry guards don't want to move any more than we do. Jerry girls came up to the fence last night, and some GIs got close enough so they could put their arms around the girls. They were wanting chocolate and soap and would get close to the fence so the GIs could put their arms out and hold the hands of some of the German girls. The guards must have looked the other way. I wrote about one-half dozen cards the other day, and I see they were burned yesterday so I guess you won't get any mail until I am in GI hands. The Lord only knows if we will get out of this safe and sound. I still have lots of lice on me and I keep my clothes clean also. Not like they were back at Stalag 7A.

We would sure be glad to see a G.I. tank roll down the road right now. We see American Red Cross trucks and other vehicles the Jerries use because their equipment is almost *kaput* or finished. I can hardly make myself believe the Americans are so close to us.

We were just in the way as our planes strafed a roadblock about one-half mile from here and lots of shells glanced in close to us but none of us got hit. Two GIs jumped in the toilet but I don't blame them at all. They were wet up to their stomachs. All we could do was lie flat on the ground and pray. We are fenced in so we just have to take what comes. We are laughing at the two fellows now, but it wasn't so funny a few minutes ago.

April 18, 1945 (Wednesday)

We are being evacuated and walked all night last night, carrying our food and belongings with us. Passed a wagonload of Russians (starving) so weak they couldn't walk from lack of food. We tossed them some prunes and bread and they clawed to get it like animals. Found out some Russians were strafed yesterday and the ones that were wounded were shot by the Jerries, so they wouldn't have to bother with them. Their bodies were thrown in the river. The Jerries that are with us as guards are pretty good to us and are awfully tired.

None of us knows where we are going, but we are heading toward Regensburg. It is now 3:00 p.m. and we've slept most of the morning. This is a convent that has put us up for the day in their barn

with the cattle. The nuns have given us some food. I am using my long-armed shirt as a knapsack. I tied the neck opening and tied sleeves to the bottom of the shirt for arm loops. Even if food is scarce, we must keep up. Some of the items we have to give away. We were so hot and sweaty that it has been hard for us to get much sleep, and the flies and lice are working overtime. As soon as it gets dark, we will be shoving off again as the Americans are strafing anything that moves, so our only chance is at night

Englishmen from Hohenfels have been passing us all morning. As they pass they are begging for food and water. They are awfully tired. Guess the Jerries want to get us all across the Danube River. No one will ever know who hasn't been a prisoner in this war. The torture and hardship we have seen, not only to ourselves, has been great. Torture and hunger are on everyone's faces. Lord, give us strength so we can keep up this march or we'll probably be shot. We are trying and are successful so far in being able to keep up. There are rumors that we are surrounded but it's hard to believe. I hope so. We are spending this day in a seminary run by Catholic sisters, and they are very good to us. They have been giving out hot water all day to us and the Englishmen as they pass. Our feet are sore and blistered. Our feet are so sore and hurt so badly we can only crawl around, and we know that tonight we will be on the march again.

The church is real large and was built in 1700. I do not know the name of the village. Planes are looking us over, so we may be bombed or strafed any minute now. Some food the Jerries have with us is loaded on wagons, and it is pulled by men. People are evacuating in a steady stream now. They use bicycles and feet and anything that will roll.

April 19, 1945 (Thursday)

We were just planning on eating our noon meal, but we had to leave immediately and took along what we could. We walked all the way to Regensburg and two villages on the other side, so we made about 36 kilometers. We walked with only four breaks. Ed and I are each carrying about 30 pounds on our backs. We got to this village some time during the middle of the night. We were so tired and sore we couldn't make it any farther last night. We are staying in a barn and really slept very well as we were very tired. Regensburg has been bombed pretty badly. The buildings and streets are quite a mess. Someday I hope to see my family again, but now it is just a struggle to live. These people are having such a hard time of it also, and they have been the ones that are hurt. None of the makers of war.

We passed many roadblocks, so I guess the Americans aren't far behind. The Englishmen were

along with us, but every once in a while they stopped for a brew of tea. The road is just filled with prisoners on the road. Guess we are heading towards Moosburg and Munich. From Regensburg the sign said Munich was 133 kilometers. We don't know how long it will take for us to get there, but hope we stay here a couple of days.

April 20, 1945 (Friday)

We are doctoring our feet and just sitting around, too stiff and tired to move very much. We don't know how long we will stay here. Wish it was until the end of the war. I said lots of prayers yesterday that I would make the trip. We aren't in as good a condition as we were during our basic training, and these hikes are harder on us. This place seems to be filled with Jerry soldiers so we are probably near the front.

The Jerry soldiers and civilians come and talk to us and lots of them say we're better than the Russians. Guess they must not like the Russians, as they don't give the prisoners as good a treatment as we do in the States.

April 29, 1945 (Saturday)

We have been living in barns and on the march since April 17. All the time our army has been only 10 miles or so away, but Jerry has been marching us away all the time. (*They were marched north from Amberg to Reichenbach about 115 miles.*) We march at night and sleep in the day. We print POW on the roof of the barns so our own planes won't bomb us. Planes recognize us and waggle their wings at us. Three hundred Americans and one thousand Englishmen are in our bunch. We have had tough times as we have to carry our own food along with us for Jerry doesn't have much food left. Ed and I have about 60 pounds, so that makes about 30 pounds apiece to carry. Each night we have marched about six or eight hours. We have marched as far as 35 kilometers at one time. Red Cross trucks have given us parcels so the children in the towns have been getting chocolate from us and go crazy for it. People seem so glad to see us as a whole, but some hate us. At Kaufering we met the girl who has been broadcasting propaganda to our troops. In Italy we called her "Berlin Sally". She got quite a lot of attention from the GIs until we found out who she was. She spoke American so well. But after we found out who she was, nobody paid any attention to her. She didn't like it at all. No Kaufering has been taken by the GIs, and I hope she is a prisoner. Kaufering is a propaganda center.

Today there seems to be trouble here in Bavaria. The guards say the war is over here, that Bavaria has pulled away from the rest of Germany, that they are to guard us from the SS troops. We know nothing for sure, but guess we stay at this farm until the end of the war for us. Announcement

was just given that food will be scarce. That we may not get any more until the GIs come. We are all glad and our guards are, too. Ed and I have food to last us a week or so. Americans should catch us soon.

Dear Catherine, Mary Dee, and Donald Joseph,

4/30/45

I am sure that you have heard the news over the radio yesterday and today about the 7th Army releasing 11,000 American war prisoners at Stalag 7A where Donald no doubt is held. I hope and pray that he is well and among them and will soon be home again. Marie's husband, Gordon Randall, is with the 7th Army in the Infantry so he might have been along to release them. Sure hope they all get home safe. Wonder how you are feeling since the baby came and how is the baby. I have not heard from Anna & August for sometime, but she said she did not know what they would do if Kaiser shuts down the yards, but she supposed that they would have to go back to Minnesota. They both seem to dread the thought of having to be there when cold weather sets in. Wonder what kind of a place Ruth & Howard have. If they could fix up a place there for them as I do not think they have the severe winters in Shoshone that they have in Detroit Lakes. Also Anna worries about going back because she says she won't be able to earn their living back in Detroit Lakes and she is so glad that she has been able to earn their living there in Richmond. I do feel very sorry for them and I wish I could do something for them.... If we could get the gas we would like to take Anna, August, & Dickey if they decide to go back and go by way of Ruth & Howard also thru Polson as they would like to see you & the children and also Donald if he is back by that time. They have worried so much about him and felt so bad that I felt so sorry for them. August asked me to tell Donald that he did not think he would get to see him again and he cried and so did Anna. I did not say that to Donald in my letters however because I did not want to worry him. Must now stop. With lots of love to you all from Ruth & Bill



Anna, August, Dickey with Don's family and sister in California in 1945
Dickey was hauling ice for refrigeration. Children: Mary, Don, LeAnna

Part IV

May 1, 1945 (Tuesday)

I was liberated at 4:00 p.m. and the first GI I saw was Paul Wood, Box 157, East Helena, Montana. Bavaria did not give up and GIs had resistance all the way, not as heavy as in Italy, for the Jerries pulled out as fast as they could. It has been a free-for-all at the farm we are at. GIs are using guns to shoot chickens to cook and fry. One private and also a lieutenant were chasing a chicken. The lieutenant told the private the chicken would be his; the private said, "The best man wins." So there was a scrambling with bayonets around the chicken yard. A pig was killed so we have pork. We found a case of eggs in the house and 24 bottles of wine. This farm has really been looted. We have food so we just have to live. I got a German Mauser rifle and hope I can get it back to the States. (*I did.*) This rifle belongs to a man who guarded me when I went to Hohenfels to have my teeth fixed and learned that Roosevelt had died that day. I busted off the wood stock and just took the barrel and action of the Mauser rifle so I could have a new gun made out of it when I returned home. Also was given a camera and the fountain pen I am writing with. Ed and I couldn't sleep last night. We expect to have to stay here a day or two. We have now taken over the house, and GIs are using the people's bed. It is now snowing outdoors.

This GI from Montana had a lot of loot. One thing was a crucifix. He didn't want to carry it home, so I took off the crucifix and sign from the wood and carried it with me. Taken from the church in Oberreichenbach, Germany.

May 11, 1945 (Friday)

During our wait at Reichenbach for transportation, we had to occupy our time with something, so we went out to civilians and borrowed their cars, motorcycles and bicycles and would ride around the countryside in them. GIs gave us plenty of chow, so we lived O.K.. The first white American bread we ate tasted like Angel Food cake.

Yesterday we left Reichenbach by GI trucks to Engelstadt and from there we were transported by transport planes to Reims, France. Lots of men are here, and we have taken a shower and have clean clothes. We may have a chance to go to a seaport from here. It's awfully nice to be a free man. I'm still swearing out taking my German loot home with me. They might take my German Luger and German Mauser. I hope not.

German prisoners work on K.P. here. We are living in tents. We are staying not too far from where peace was signed with Germany. Signed at Reims, France.

I was upset over the idea that I had to take care of my food that I had stored in a little box since Germany. I left the box while I went down to eat, and when I came back I noticed that ants had gotten in to the box and food. I was horrified. After realizing that I was a free man and could eat any time I wanted and didn't need to eat the food in the box, I had a feeling of relief. I also went to the chow line and they were serving one-half chicken! And if I wanted seconds I could go back for the other half. On the way back to the tents I had eaten so much, I had to vomit up all the food.

May 12, 1945 (Saturday)

Left Reims by C-47 plane and after we were in the air I saw the Reims Cathedral. From the plane it looked like the largest building in the city. Landed at LeHavre and was taken to Camp Ramp in France, also known as Camp Lucky Strike. On our way here we passed many old German fortifications and mine fields that have just been staked off. Guess Americans will let Jerries dig them up themselves now that the war is over here. We went past Dieppe, where the Commando attack was made on the French post. Lots of barbed wire entanglements and trenches and caves used by the Germans. It's nice to see the Germans work. The Americans have been policing up the area here. We just lie around and wait until we get sent home, I guess. Plenty of chow. Sent Mommie and Mary a telegram that I have been liberated. Thousands of POW's coming in every minute of day and night.

The closer I get to home, the more anxious I am getting. I hope we move out from here soon.

May 21, 1945 (Monday)

Am still at Camp R.A.M.P. (*R.A.M.P. means Repatriated American Military Personnel*) and should leave here tomorrow. It's sure nice to be free again. I've seen a lot of shows and are they ever nice to see after missing them for so long. I'll sure be happy when I land in the USA. I guess when I get back I'll be ready for shipment to C.B.I. (*means China, Burma, India*). I hate to think of it, but after all that really is our war. Guess I can take it. I suppose when war was over with Germany there were lots of celebrations in the States. We took it very easy and didn't feel like celebrating because the war isn't over until Japan is defeated. Boys are dying every day and night there, so there is no cause for celebration. I've tried to figure out what I want to do during my furlough when I get home and have decided that anything that Mommie decides is what I want to do as she is the real hero in this war. Women like her and children like ours are what soldiers are dying for. To save them from a ruthless way of living. These countries work women like men. In most cases, women do the hard work and

men lie around. For instance, one day two Polish girls and one ox were pulling a plow and a man was steering the plow. Women cut wood, one on each end of a crosscut saw, and men probably trim off the limbs of the tree with an ax. We used to tell these women that in America women, as a rule, had just housework to do and they wouldn't believe us. These countries over here are so far behind times they'll never catch up to us I'm afraid.

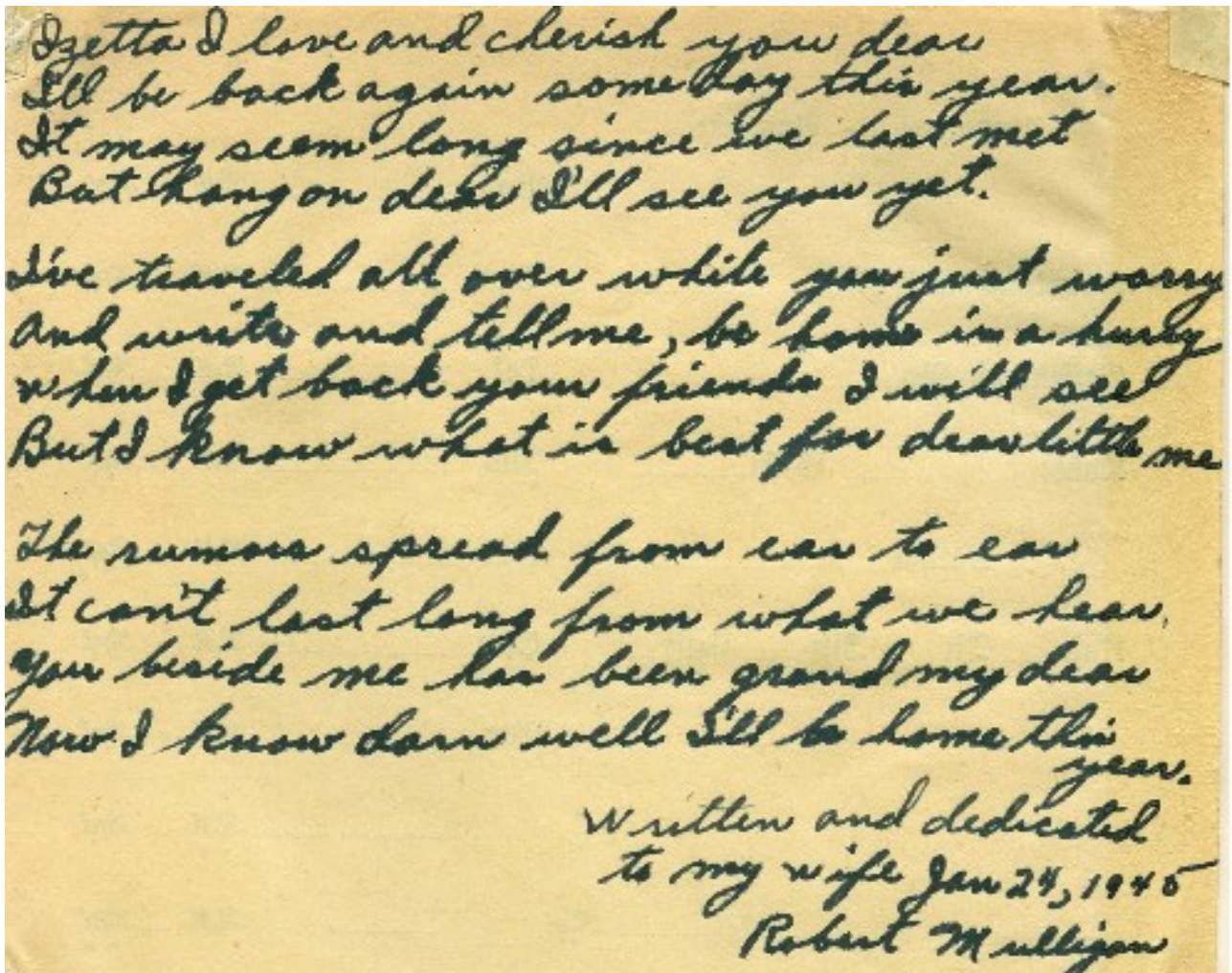
Left Camp R.A.M.P. the 21st of May and went to Camp at LaHavre, France. Left there May 24 for England. Stayed at South Hampton, England, until Sunday, May 27. Landed in Brooklyn, New York, on June 11. On our way to the USA we had fair weather most of the way, but around Iceland we had bad weather for about three days. Waves were quite high. We have been eating four meals a day, and all we do is sleep. The captain of our ship died June 9 and we have him in our refrigerator on our ship now. We had about 100 ships in our convoy but left them yesterday because of our dead officer. Our flag is at half-mast and we are way ahead of the convoy. Tomorrow we land in USA and I am on K.P. Darn it. The trip has seemed awfully long to us as it has taken us 18 days on the sea. Now my next big moment is to see that good old Statue of Liberty waving for us to come in.

I'm getting fat as the dickens but food looks so awfully good to me. It's hard to turn down. Met a lot of buddies from the front lines and prison camps on the boat, and we've had the best time kidding each other about our furloughs. Seems as though we married men are the topic. Especially some men that have been over here for two and three years. The hint is that some may have an extra 12 points now that they probably don't know about. We've seen about six whales so far and lots of porpoises. Not much else but water. Our course has been zigzag all the way as some German submarines have not surrendered. From what I understand, it take 10 minutes for a sub to train her sights on a ship, so every seven minutes we change our course.

The pastime for most of the fellows is shooting dice and playing poker, so I've kept my time busy reading and sleeping as I find no interest in either game.

Captain Lanzendorfer (*Captain John Frank Lanzendorfer b. Jan. 19, 1911 in Colorado d. Nov 13, 1989 in Sunnyside, Yakima, Washington*) is on the ship with me. He is the officer who surrendered me to the Jerries and is from Lewistown, Montana. He and I are the only ones from our outfit aboard. Gee, I wish I was home. G.I. Joe returns!

PART V



Dzetta I love and cherish you dear
I'll be back again some day this year.
It may seem long since we last met
But hang on dear I'll see you yet.
I've traveled all over while you just worry
and write and tell me, be home in a hurry
when I get back your friends I will see
But I know what is best for dear little me
The rumors spread from ear to ear
It can't last long from what we hear,
you beside me has been grand my dear
Now I know darn well I'll be home this
year.
Written and dedicated
to my wife Jan 24, 1945
Robert Mulligan

This poem was written by one of my father's buddies from Stalag 7A, who copied it for him before he left Europe. This must have expressed how Dad felt about getting home.

When I got to LaHavre, France, I wanted to have some money to buy French perfume for Mom. So I went down to some night clubs and talked with some of the Frenchmen. In the nightclub I went into I saw a bunch of ordinary workers and talked to them in broken German, trying to explain that I wanted to sell the cigarettes I had. Finally, a fellow turned around and said, "Can you speak any English? I am a merchant marine." I was so embarrassed with my broken German that I made a hasty retreat.

Then we came to the New York harbor and docked alongside a pier. As we were coming into

the harbor, boats with bands were playing to celebrate our return. It was really a celebration: flying flags and singing the national anthem. We pulled into the pier. Workers came out to greet us. Finally realizing that we hadn't seen any women, the women decided that they would put on a little show for us. Behind doors of a warehouse (they raised the doors up thigh high) they showed their legs and thighs. Sure got applause. We could not get off the boat until trucks arrived to convoy us to Fort Mead, Maryland. This took several hours and it was almost impossible for us to wait.

When we arrived at Fort Mead, Maryland, the first thing I did was get a haircut. I had gotten haircuts in Germany for one cigarette in payment. Then I started back to the barracks and decided to try to get a hold of Catherine. I didn't know if she would be in Montana or Minnesota. I thought I would first try Montana. I had my doubts that she would have stayed there. I called and there she was. When she answered, I said, "How is our baby? What did you name it?" She said "Don?" I thought she was talking to me, but she told me that we had a son and she had named him Don. **I HAVE A SON!** Celebration was in order. We were to leave by train to Fort Douglas, Utah. (There was no liquor at Fort Mead.) We got on the train and had a few drinks of whiskey to start the celebration. We spread all of our belongings out in the aisles of the train because we thought we would be on this train all the way to Fort Douglas. There was no place to put any extra things so they went in the aisles. When we got to Chicago, Illinois, we had a two to three hour wait. They said to leave if we wanted but to be back in two or three hours. One of the POWs wanted to stay on the train as he was certain something would happen to him and he wouldn't get home right away. He didn't want to take a chance. The rest of us headed for the nearest tavern, celebrated, and bought a bottle of whiskey to take back to the train for reinforcements. We were going to drink to Don and our liberation. When we returned to the train, there was a commotion. Sirens and an ambulance were pulling up to the side of the rail car. We learned we were to change trains, so we were wanting to get our possessions. We got on the train and were walking down the narrow passageway (only one person wide) and the men in the train were bound and determined to get out and we were bound and determined to get on at the same time. As we had had a fair number of drinks, we wouldn't give way. There was a fight. Crawling over men and baggage, we finally got our gear and tried to find our friend who had stayed on the train for safety's sake. We learned that someone had thrown a bottle of coca-cola through the window of the train where our friend was sitting, and the broken glass cut him on an artery. He was taken to the hospital for repair. Good thing we had gone to get drunk!

When we got to the new train, it was built of strictly army bunks for transportation with a

smoking car attached. We got situated and one of the fellows was loud spoken, and he was challenging everybody to a fight. No one wanted to take him on. That night when we were ready to sleep, he was still challenging. The next morning I noticed his bed sheets were bloody. I asked one of his buddies, and they said that someone finally took him up on the fight. Later in the day, I went into the smoker and he was sitting with big dark glasses on and he had decided that he would take up residence in the smoker the rest of the way to Utah. His name was Decker and he was from Whitefish, Montana.

Arrived at Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City, Utah. I was informed that I would report to Santa Barbara, California, for reassignment into the U.S. Army. They said I was still a Prisoner of War and that I was just on sick leave.

I took another train to Missoula, Montana, and then by bus to Polson. I had 60 days to rest up (recuperation period).



The Donald Johnson Family 1945

I reported at Santa Barbara and was interviewed for coming back into service. They valued the merchandise that was left in my barracks bag based on the idea that any of the merchandise over three years old was not worth anything because of depreciation. Also I was not to get any longevity pay because of the time I had off. They called it vacation instead of sick leave. No extra pay was allowed us at all. The pay was around \$150.00 that I had coming for the time I was in the prison camp. I was released on the point system, honorable discharge after I worked one month at the Army Post Office in San Francisco earning the balance of the points needed for discharge for I was unable to perform active military duty with the medical problems I sustained as a POW.



Dad's Post Office ID

At the time of discharge, when I was being treated for my teeth and physical condition, I was being told by the officers that it wasn't necessary for me to report my physical condition, that when I got back home I would be able to have it taken care of. This was wrong advice that I do this, so it took me five years to get everything established. No veterans' hospitals would do anything for me, as they didn't know how to handle the situation. An officer at Fort Missoula, Montana, started me on the proper processing of my claims for injuries. Because of no previous hospital records, he finally got my claims through.

Calander

69

October 1944

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November 1944

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
29	30	31					27	28	29	30			

Dec. 1944

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1 ^x	2 ^x
3 ^x	4 ^x	5 ^x	6 ^x	7 ^x	8 ^x	9 ^x
10 ^x	11 ^x	12 ^x	13 ^x	14 ^x	15 ^x	16 ^x
17 ^x	18 ^x	19 ^x	20 ^x	21 ^x	22 ^x	23 ^x
24 ^x	25 ^x	26 ^x	27 ^x	28 ^x	29 ^x	30 ^x
31 ^x						

January 1945

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	
					1	2			1	2	3	4	5	6
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31				
31														

February 1945

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

March 1945

S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3					1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28				25	26	27	28	29	30	31

April 1945

S M T W T F S
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
 29 30

May 1945

S M T W T F S S M T W T F S
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 . . . 1 2 3 4 5
 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 6 7 8 9 10 11 12
 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 20 21 22 23 24 25 26
 29 30 27 28 29 30 31

Get name over is over in Bavaria. evacuation
 O - means days with no place to live except in
 X - Prisoner days

Contents of Parcels

70 English Parcel Contents			
1 Can Yorkshire Pudding	8 oz	1 Can Corned Beef	12 oz
1 Can Powdered Eggs	2 oz	1 Can Butter	8 oz
1 Can Oats	4 oz	1 Can Jam	12 oz
1 Can Cheese	2 oz	1 Can Meat Roll	4 oz
2 Cans Biscuits	24 each	1 Can Salmon	8 oz
1 Pack Tea	4 oz	1 Can Oxtail	16 oz
1 Chocolate Bar	5 oz	1 Can Celery	6 oz
1 Can Bacon	12 oz	1 Can Condensed Milk	12 oz

American Parcel Contents 71			
1 Can Corned Beef	12 oz	1 Box Sugar	8 oz
1 Can Pork Sausage	10 oz	1 Can Powdered Milk	16 oz
2 Box Cheese	8 oz	1 Box Vitamin Tablets	7 Tablets
1 Box Raisins	16 oz	1 Can Meat Spread	6 oz
1 Can Margarine	8 oz	Chocolate Bar	2 or 4 bars
1 Can Jam or Butter	6 oz	Sunshine Soap	2 bars
1 Can Salmon or Tuna fish	8 oz	Cigarettes	5 Pkgs.
1 Can Soluble Coffee	2 or 4 oz	1 Box Crackers	12 crackers

Argentine Bulk Contents	
→ 1 or 5 lbs.	
Corned Mutton or Beef	Tea
Beef Steaks	Sugar
Meat & Vegetable Cakes	Sea Salt Powder
Jam or Honey	Crackers
Chocolate Bar	Cheese
Soap	Butter
Powdered Eggs	Corned Milk

Canadian Parcel Contents			
1 Can Corned Beef	12 oz	1 Bag Sugar	8 oz
1 Can Kaen Porkloaf	10 oz	1 Bag Instant Coffee	4 oz
1 Can Salmon	8 oz	1 Box Cheese	4 oz
1 Can Sardines	2 oz	1 Can Jam	12-16 oz
1 Box Raisins	8 oz	1 Can Butter	16 oz
1 Box Preserves	4 oz	1 Bag Salted Peppercorns	1 oz
1 Box Biscuits (11-15)	12 oz	1 Bar Soap	
1 Can Powdered Milk	16 oz	50 Cigarettes with each Parcel	
1 Bar chocolate	5 oz		

English Invalid Parcel Contents	
1 Can Cocoa / 1 can tea	1 Can Sterilized Milk
1 choc. Bar 2gals Sugar	3 Cans Yeast
2 Cans Rolled Oats	1 Can Ovaltine
2 Cans Powdered Eggs	1 Can Rice Pudding
1 Can Powdered Milk	3 Cans Baking Powder
1 Can Condensed Milk	1 Can Boveril

Red Cross Personal Parcel Contents

1 pr. Pajamas	2 Bath Towels
1 cake Toilet Soap	1 Set Hosiery
1 cake Shave Soap	4 Pkg. Razor blades (5 to ea. - 20 pkg)
1 Ctn. Cigarettes	2 Cakes Laundry Soap
1 Box. Kleenex (20 pkgs)	1 Tooth Powder (Williams)
1 Roll Toilet Paper	1 Bottle Cascara Tablets (100)
1 Plastic Razor	1 Shave Brush
4 Handkerchiefs	1 b. Adhesive Compresses
1 Plastic Can. for Toothbrush	1 Sewing Kit
1 Pkg. Pipe Cleaners	1 Bottle Vitamin Tablets (100)
2 Pkg. Smoking Tobacco	1 Toothbrush
1 P. S. Shippers	1 Pipe
1 Linen	1 Hairbrush
1 Pr Wool & 2 pr. Cotton socks	2 prs. Shoe Laces
1 pocket Comb	

Canadian Parcel Contents

1 Can Corned Beef - 12 oz	1 Bar Chocolate	5 oz
1 can Ham (Pork) 10 1/2 oz	1 Bag Sugar	8 oz
1 can Salmon 8 oz	1 Bag Tea or Coffee	4 oz
1 can Sardines 4 oz	1 Bx Cheese	4 oz
1 Box Raisins 8 oz	1 Can Jam	12-16 oz
1 Box Prunes 4 oz	1 Can Butter	16 oz
1 Box Biscuits (11-15) 12 oz	1 Bag Salt & Pepper	1 oz
1 Can Powdered Milk 16 oz	1 Bar Soap	
50 only Cigarettes packed separate		

American Christmas Parcel Contents

1 game	1 B x Dates	16 oz
1 Pipe	1 Can Vienna Sausage	4 oz
1 Pack Prince Albert Tobacco (30)	1 Can Smoked Ham	4 oz
3 Pack Cigarettes	4 Pkg. chewing gum	
1 Face Cloth	1 Can Butter	4 oz
1 Can Plum Pudding 16 oz	1 Can cheese	4 oz
1 Can Bond Turkey 8 oz	1 Can cherries	4 oz
1 B x Bonillion Cakes 8 oz	1 Can Jam	6 oz
1 Can Mixed Candies 12 oz	1 Can Honey spread	8 oz
1 Can Mixed nuts 16 oz	2 Fruit Bars	
	1 Box Tea	4 oz
Made by B. Brock & Sons		

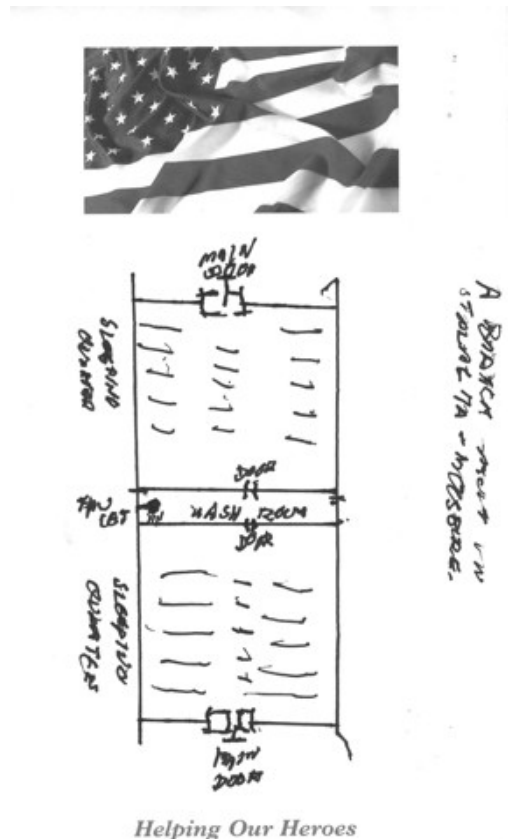
Company G Soldiers

Jerome (Jerry) Henry Damren, Sgt. 5th Army 88th Division 351st Infantry Regiment Company G 2nd Platoon, a Duke University 49th alumni, is a retired school administrator and lives in West Lebanon, New Hampshire. In Naples, Italy, I was assigned to the 351st Regiment, Company G. We moved to Rome and continued on a northerly route up the peninsula of Italy. The Po Valley was our goal. As we arrived in that area, the Americans gained control of Vedriano, which was a key stronghold. The Germans brought in reinforcements, and another battle for this territory began. During this fierce battle, Company G was surrounded and fighting desperately. A German radio message was intercepted, telling their troops: "Attack Vedriano. Vedriano is decisive!" This was followed by: "Vedriano retaken. Eighty Americans are captured." Company G, with approximately 150 soldiers, had approached closer to the Po Valley than any unit in the Fifth Army. The area was close to the main lateral road for the German forces. Eighty members of Company G were captured on October 24, 1944. (POW ID#140932) General George Patton liberated us on April 29, 1945, at Stalag VII-A in Moosburg, Germany. The German propaganda gave the 88th Division the nickname "Blue Devils" because this outfit fought with tenacious resistance.

Beverly Damren wrote:

Some things I remember him telling me about:

- being strafed walking along a road
- being interrogated in prison camp (yelled at and the officer took out his pistol and placed it on his desk when Jerome repeatedly gave only his name and serial number
- standing at attention for roll call until all were accounted for; air raids when the doors were secured and the dogs were let loose and the latrines were across the way;
- sitting in a foxhole at Anzio with the Germans constantly shelling the area and seeing a hospital ship loaded with injured bombed and sunk
- hearing that Glenn Miller was lost over the channel and that President Roosevelt died (Germans allowed bad news)
- burning down the barracks when they thought the troops were close and then it snowed in April
- letter he got in the prison camp from his mother telling of his father's death that was received about six months after his father had died



Helping Our Heroes

Jerry Damren's Drawing of the Barracks in Stalag 7A

Lloyd Louis Green b. June 19, 1924 in Bismark, ND d. Aug 2, 1997 in San Diego, CA. His company surrendered 80 men at Vedriano, Italy, Mt. Grande, Italy, October 24, 1944. He was released from the POW camp May 5, 1945. Prisoner ID# 140643. Discharged from the service Dec. 6, 1946. Private First Class. Received Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge.

Robert A. Hubley from Worth, Illinois joined the 88th Division north of Naples. His company took the hill and town of Vedriano, captured 40 Germans, but almost immediately were counterattacked and taken prisoner on October 24, 1944. Transported by train through Brenner Pass to Stalag 7A. Prisoners put to work in Munich to repair railroad yards and clean up city after bombings. Moved to Sherborg (Cherbourg) and Sabarhof, Vilsberg (France) and worked in towns and on farms until liberated May 7 by Patton's Armed Division. Discharged Nov. 27, 1945.

Autobiography by **Harold J. Siddall** from Crete to Stalag 7A

<http://www.naval-history.net/WW2MemoirAndSo08.htm>)

In 1941, French P.O.W.s took down our particulars, and upon mine I placed a thumb-print. I was given an aluminum, rectangular identity disc, to be worn around the neck, on which was stamped 'Stalag VIIA:5850'. Stamped in two places so that, should I die whilst in captivity, one half of the aluminum disc would be sent to the International Red Cross in Geneva. Presumably the other half would be buried with me.



The POW Dog Tag for Harold Siddall



The POW Dog Tag for my father was Stalag VIIA Nr 140614



The U.S. Army Dog Tag for my father: Donald D. Johnson 39621745 T44 A C

Minnesota Historical Society Entry

Donald D. Johnson:

An Inventory of His Papers at the Minnesota Historical Society

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Creator: Johnson, Donald Duane
Title: Donald D. Johnson papers.
Dates: 1944-1945
Abstract: A diary kept by a World War II prisoner of war in Germany and letters he wrote home to his wife and child.
Quantity: 1 folder, containing 2 volumes.
Location: P1963

SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE PAPERS

The papers consist of two volumes: the first, a typed transcription of a diary (Jan. 20-May 21, 1945) kept by Donald D. Johnson describing his army experiences during World War II, particularly during the period he was a prisoner of war in Germany; the second, a collection of typed transcriptions and photocopies of correspondence which supplement the diary.

Johnson won the blank diary volume in a lottery held by the International Red Cross

Committee for prisoners. The diary begins with Johnson's reminiscences of the 12 months prior to his capture including his induction at Fort Douglas, Salt Lake City, Utah (Jan. 1944); his basic training at Camp Wolters, Texas; a brief stay at Fort Meade, Maryland prior to shipping out; his voyage to Naples, Italy (July-Aug. 1944); and camp life in Italy while waiting to move to the front. He describes the two-day trip to the front, where he was assigned to Company G of the 351st Infantry Regiment, and his participation in the company's battle for the town of Vedriano. Company G captured the town but was unable to hold it and 80 men, including Johnson, were taken prisoner (Oct. 24, 1944).

The remainder of the diary describes Johnson's experiences as a prisoner of war. Entries discuss his transport by boxcar to Stalag 7-A, which was located 35 miles from Munich, Germany; the daily routine and deprivations of prison life (in extensive detail), which included a constant shortage of food, heat, clothing, and sanitation; the prisoners' forced labor on the railroad in Munich; the bartering and smuggling Johnson and others engaged in to secure food; Allied bombing raids; and Johnson's observations on the war's impact on the living conditions and attitudes of the German civilians.

Entries following Johnson's transfer to a camp near Amberg, Germany (Jan. 27, 1945) discuss his improved living conditions, the camp guards, his thoughts of home and his wife's pregnancy, his work on a woodcutting detail, an illness he suffered (Feb. 7-15, 1945) and the condition of the camp hospital, the advancement of the allies and the German retreat (April 1945), the evacuation of the camp (April 18, 1945), Johnson's liberation (May 1, 1945), and his return to the United States (May 11-June, 1945).

The volume of correspondence is comprised almost entirely of letters Johnson sent home during the war to his wife and child. The letters focus primarily on personal matters such as Johnson's loneliness, his concern for his wife's health during her pregnancy, and his uneasiness about the management and finances of their variety store. There is some description of Johnson's activity in Italy and living conditions in camp, but for the most part the letters contain less detail on these matters than the diary. The letters Johnson sent during his internment were less frequent and quite brief, basically assuring his wife that he was well, and asking that she send packages of cigarettes, candy and food. Johnson's letters conclude with those he sent after his liberation during his anxious wait to return home.

There is also a small section of photocopied letters and telegrams from the military to Johnson's wife informing her that her husband was missing in action, and of his internment and subsequent liberation; a copy of Johnson's evacuation orders; and copies of a small number of Johnson's original letters.

OTHER FINDING AIDS

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

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Preferred Citation: Donald D. Johnson papers. Minnesota Historical Society

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Processed by Frank Hennessy, February 2000

CATALOG HEADINGS

This collection is indexed under the following headings in the catalog of the Minnesota Historical Society. Researchers desiring materials about related topics, persons or places should search the catalog using these headings.

Topics:

World War 1939-1945 – Prisoners and prisons, German
 World War 1939-1945 – Campaigns – Italy
 Prisoners of war – United States
 Prisoners of war – Germany
 Prisoners of war – Health and hygiene – Germany

Organizations:

United States. Army. Infantry Regiment, 351st. 88th Division, Company G.

Places:

Munich (Germany) – History – Bombardment, 1945

Document Types:

Diaries.

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Alphabetized lists of the soldiers listed in Dad's diary

POW Soldiers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>
Alpert, Robert	7855 79th Lane	Glendale	NY
Henry R. Alpert SSN 398225385 b. 13 Apr 1907 NY d. 13 Sep 1996 CA Mother: Baker			
Anderson, Ernest	Rt. 1	Houston	MN
Andrews, Herbert F.	20199 Westland Dr.	Detroit	MI
b. 1924 Indiana, Enlists 12 Mar 1943 Kalamazoo, MI, 15065 Delaware St., Detroit 48239-1101			
Balfe, Peter	453 St. Kilda Rd., Flat 21, Kia Ora, Melbourne, Australia		
Bessette, George	812 Eastern Ave.	Schenectady	NY
Biel, Ralph	2 Pinchurst Ave.	New York City	NY
Blackman, Joseph	Box 102	Deposit	NY
Bohou, John G.	Box 423	Hillsville	VA
Burgin, Nel (Staff)		Dallas	NC
Burgin, Sgt. William Cecil	Rt. 1	Fletcher	NC
b. 28 Aug 1919 Henderson NC, d. 16 Sep 1952 Asheville NC, Re-enlisted as Sergeant U.S. Army			
Hawaii, Electrical Machinery			
Burns, William	154 9 th Ave.	New York City	NY
Capozzol, Nicholas J.	394 N. Long Beach Ave.	Freeport	NY
Carney, James	41 High St.	Hampstead	NY
Castonguoy, James L.	Box 22	Milltown	MT
Chezem, George D.	R. R. 3	Rockville	IN
b. 21 Nov 1918 Vigo, Indiana d. Feb 1983 Rockville, Parke, Indiana, USA			

POW Soldiers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>
Chilton, Earl	High St.	Draper	NC
Connor, John	1991 N. New Hampshire	Los Angeles	CA
Cooper, Floyd, I. (2 nd GI)	604 Lafayette St.	Jamestown	NY
Cox, Elveston		Coalwood	W.VA
Dappollone, Thomas J.	2408 S. Wood Stop St.	Philadelphia	PA
Davidowsky, Constantine	73 Granite St.	Brooklyn	NY
Decker, Clyde A.	Box 774	Whitefish	MT
Denson, James H.	206 S. 11th St.	Gadsden	AL
b. 8 Nov 1907 Alabama d. 20 August 1975 Fresno, CA			
Dilley, Laurence V.		Webster City	IA
Donovan, Ivan W.	275 S. East St.	Idaho Falls	ID
Douglas, William F.	R.R. 1	West Union	OH
Dyer, Hoyal D.	Rt. 2	Knoxville	TN
b. 31 Jan 1924 d. 21 Jul 1999 4305 Samuel Ln., Knoxville, 37938			
Eckel, William C.	Rt. 1	Rickman	TN
Fox, Glenn F.	22 Morley Place	Buffalo	NY
Fox, Henry	316 Oak St.	Clayton	NM
Gardener, Carlyle		Bear River City	UT
Geiszler, Ben	Box 31	Gackle	ND
Gianacoplis, Pandy	2 Auburn St.	Woburn	MA
b. 17 Oct 1918 Massachusetts d. 17 Mar 1999 Chelmsford, Middlesex, Massachusetts 01824			
Glarmau, Edward H.	Box 1248	Marysville	CA
Gravlin, Kenneth F.	30 Lakeview Ave. , Box 574	Tupper Lake	NY
b. 17 Sep 1920 Massachusetts d. Jan 1971			
Grimes, Collins Edward	3508 S. Harwood St.	Dallas	TX
b. 10 Mar 1924 Dallas TX Married Marjorie V. Collinsworth in 1972 d. 25 May 1987 Dallas TX			
Guerra, Homero	308 W. 4th St., Box 461	Rio Grande City TX	
b. 12 Aug 1924 Texas d. 31 Jul 2005 Starr Co., Texas			
Hanson, Carl V.	Box 14	Carleton	MN
Hargrave, Richard	343 State St.	Alton	IL
Harmon, Francis L.	117 Park St.	Rockland	ME
Hayes, Donald R.	c/o Frank Cunningham 6745 Parkland Ave.	Cincinnati	OH
Hedgecoth, Charles	Box 494	St. Charles	VA
Heim, Fred	57 Philip Place	Irvington	NJ
b. 7 May 1922 New Jersey d. 27 May 1994 Berkeley Heights, Union, New Jersey			
Holly, Joseph V.	Rt. 2	Irving	KS
Horn, Marvin F.	3530 Piggott Ave.	E. St. Louis	IL
b. 15 Mar 1924 Illinois d. 24 Dec 1992 Belleville, Illinois			
Hovermann, Robert G.	38 Cliff Ave.	Hempstead	NY
b. 12 Oct 1914 New York d. 22 Feb 1976 New York			
Jackson, Robert C.		Morrisville	NY
Jasiewicz, Walter	20 Birch St.	Manchester	NH

POW Soldiers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>
Johnson, Donald Duane	608 First St. West	Polson	MT
b. 18 Sep 1915 Detroit Lakes, Minnesota d. 22 May 1993 VA Hospital, Minneapolis, Hennepin MN			
Kassinger, Lonnie		Livermore	KY
Keating, Terry (Driver)	213 W. Woolman	Butte	MT
Keele, Vaughn		Sparks	NV
Kesaneew, Roy E.	Box 3	Mullan	ID
Klein, John E.	182 E. Maine St.	Glen Lyon	PA
Kurth, Charles R. H.	1012 Harding Drive	Toledo	OH
Lakey, John A.	Rt. 2	Bath	PA
Lewis, Ned R.	615 Bowman Ave.	East Alton	IL
Malechi, Chester M.	1853 Dickens St.	Chicago	IL
Mandel, William	Rt. 2, Box 99	Alice	TX
Mann, Everett S.		Van Lear	KY
b. 24 May 1922 Talcott, Summers, West Virginia d. 3 Oct 2006 Titusville, Brevard, Florida			
McCarthy, Frank A.	17 Cook St.	Charleston	MA
McIntosh, Donald L.	High St. (Box 84)	Adams	NY
b. 29 June 1924 Adams, New York d. 16 Jul 1984 Star Lake, St. Lawrence Co., New York			
Montoya, Lee	Valarde	Rio Arriba	NM
b. 1922 New Mexico			
Morris, Charles (Co. B, 1st Battalion, 504 th)	900 West 4 th St.	Hope	AK
Mossali, John	1 Edward Wilson Sq.	Summerville	MA
Mulligen, Robert T.	371 S. Cleveland	Bradley	IL
Mullis, Jack W.	903 Sixth St.	Eastman	GA
Oconnor, William S.	20 Fernwood Ave.	Mt. Lebanon	PA
Okerman, Gregory	116 Buchanan St.	Topeka	KS
Patzer, Reuben L.	Box 142	Livingston	CA
b. 12 Jul 1925 California d. 2 Nov 1988 Santa Clara, California			
Peterson, Eugene M.	350 Stanton Roger Ave.	Salt Lake City	UT
Phemister, Leonard L.	General Delivery	Haskell	TX
Pierce, Leroy K.		Morning Sun	IA
Piercy, Russell L.	66 Tully Brook Rd.	Wellesley	MA
Prete, Caesar R.	4028 71 st St.	New York City	NY
Pruelt, Samuel	1368 Euclid St. N.W.	Washington 9	D.C.
Rafferty, M.F.		Grampian	PA
Robinson, Gerald F.	R. R. 2	Rexburg	ID
Robinson, Hubert	Box 97	Jonesville	SC
b. 25 Feb 1917 South Carolina d. 29 Jun 2008 Spartanburg, South Carolina			
Rusiecki, Sgt. Anthony	462 Filmore St. N.E.	Minneapolis	MN
Ruspini, Albert J.	Box 34, 76 Fernald Rd.	Parkridge	NJ
Russo, William	40 Tweed St.	Cranston	RI
Sanderson, George (1 st GI Seen)	Hillside Farm	Shirley	MA
Seibels, Kelly	648 Idle Wild Circle	Birmingham	AL

POW Soldiers

<u>Name</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>
Shaffer, Jack	229 Hughes St.	Berwick	PA
Shaub, Jonnie	1910 9 th Ave.	Scottsbluff	NB
Shedd, Allan M.	28 Chestnut St.	Turners Falls	MA
Smart, Leland N.		Bronson	MI
Smith, Dale	220 5 th Ave.	Helena	MT
Sprague, Edwin		Bay Port	MI
Stallings, William		Lenox	TN
Sullivan, John F.	1933 Blackrock Ave.	Bronx	NY
Swan, Robert W.	312 Sherwood Rd.	Philadelphia	PA
Topolovec, William	Rt. 1, Box 81	Helper City	UT
Totero, Charles A.	676 Gramatan Ave.	Mt. Vernon	NY
Tripp, Alfred R.	204 Cogshell St.	Holly	MI
b. 6 Aug 1919 Michigan d. 6 Dec 1976 Flint, Genesee, Michigan (Residence Holly, Michigan)			
Vancourt, Clifford E.	2625 16 th Ave.	Gulfport	MA
Waite, Elmer M.	307 Cabot St.	Beverly	MA
Waller, Charles M.	Box 63	Eden	ID
Wiggins, Robert	201 N. Durand	Jackson	MI
Wilson, Norman	6019 Worchester Ave.	Chicago	IL
Wood, Kenneth F.		Crooksville	OH
b. 5 April 1919 Ohio d. 15 April 1989 Coshocton, Ohio phone 740-342-5084			
Wood, Paul (Gave Camera)	Box 157	East Helena	MT
Zory, Paul J.	103 Herriman St.	Syracuse	NY

***Highlighted the 22 Men Listed in the Same Hut in Amberg, Germany**

Soldiers Met on Boat

<u>Name</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>
Baxter, Glenn	R.F.D. 1	Hixon	TN
Grabau, Elden A.	Rt. 1, Box 96	Spring Valley	MN
Higgenbotham, James E.	1608-A Baugh Ave. E.	St. Louis	IL
Howell, Alfred	310 Milton Ave.	Brownwood	TX
Julian, Paul		Moline	KS
Lanzendorfer, Cpt. John F.		Billings	MT
Lewis, Ned R.	615 Bowman Ave.	East Alton	IL
Ned will send ammunition for German guns. He works for Western Cartridge Co.			
Pufall, Edward J.	401 14 th Ave. E.	Ashland	WI
Weir, Norris	11170 Baraga St.	Dearborn	MI

Soldiers Listed Across From Page 1

<u>Name</u>	<u>Street Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>
Branton, Kenneth	Sunnybrook	Alberta	Canada
Clark, Sgt. C.	#2754412 1 st Battalion	Black Watch	Scotland
Clausen, Gene	3 Bethel Terrace Ellacombe	Torquay	England
Dunbar, H.A.	5 Bruton St., Mayfair	London West	England
Edwards, Lenwood	Box 16	Pikeville	NC
Grutladauria, Joe	412 Mortimer St.	Dunmore	PA
Harrison, M.F.		Church City	ID
Henson, Jack	Box 826	Sylva	NC
Hinsley, Joe		Rossville	IN
LaDancer, Harvey	318 Cathedral Place	St. Paul	MN
Lichfinger, Josef	i 11 Koefering	Regensburg	Germany
Morris, Charles	900 West 4 th St.	Hope	AK
Rooke, A.	Athabasca	Alberta	Canada
Tomosoiu, Joan	Conv Vaolu-Pasi	Jud-Buza	Romania
Vilsmier, Erich	Kafering B1	Regensburg18	Germany
Wolff, John M.	1416 10 th Ave. N.	Grand Forks	ND
Workman, William F.	383 W. Brooks St.	Galesburg	IL
Wright, Guy		Kolin	M

Note that George Chezem is listed in Dad's diary and also in the Company G Morning Report. Collin Grimes is listed in the Amberg Hut and in the Company G Morning Report.

Captain John Frank Lanzendorfer, who surrendered Company G to the Germans on October 24, 1944, was born 19 Jan 1911 in Colorado, lived in Billings, MT in 1930, died 13 Nov 1989 in Yakima, Washington.

**Burial: Fort Snelling National Cemetery, 7601 34th Ave., So. Minneapolis, Minnesota
Section S about 7 rows up along the road access to Site 2289.**



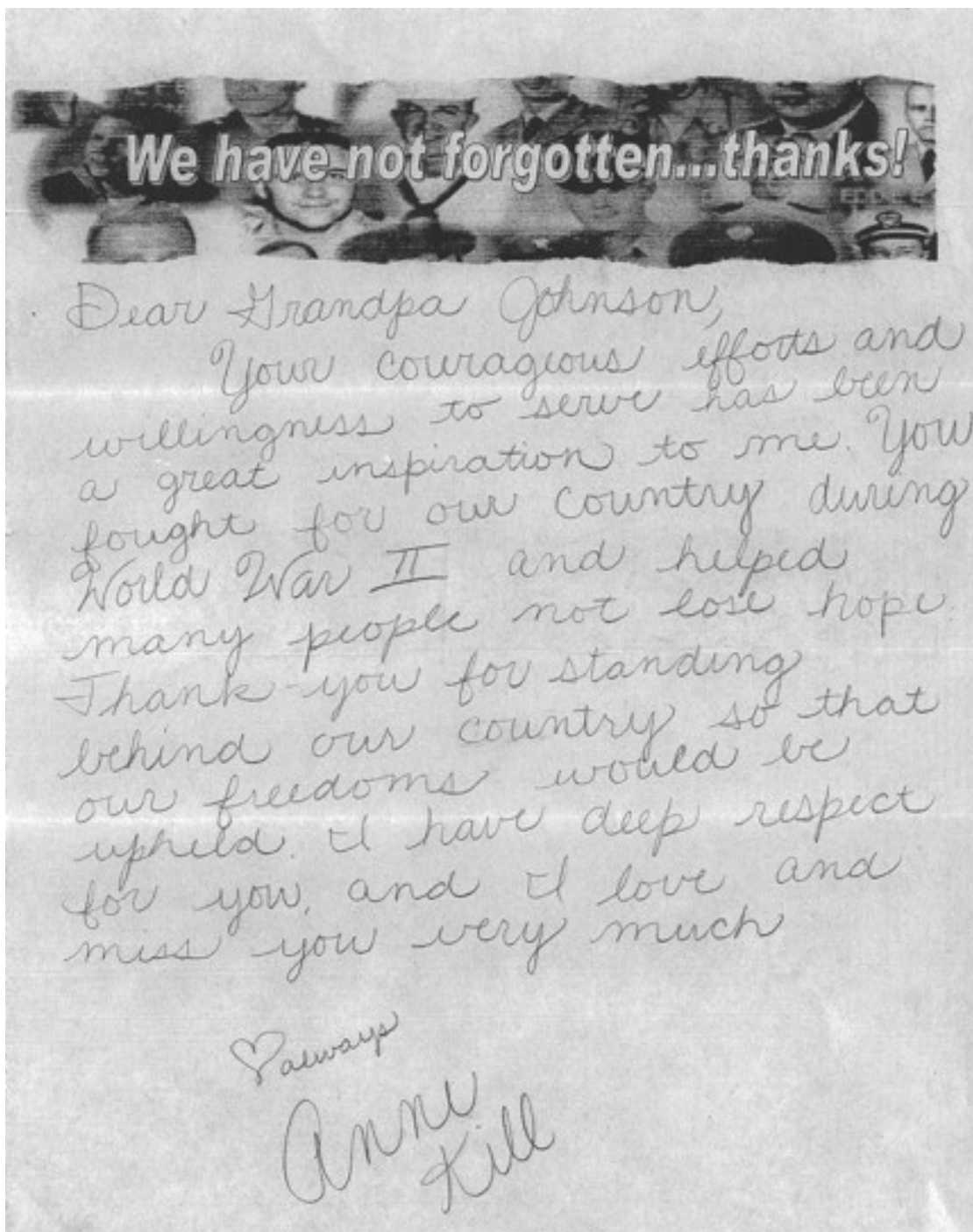
Daughters Betty Kemmetmueller and Mary Corcoran 2009. Pictures by John Corcoran



Donald with his parents and brother in San Francisco about September 1945



Catherine and Donald 1989



Letter by Granddaughter Anne Kill November 2002