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Personal Account of Air War

Co-Pilot

777<sup>th</sup> Squadron

464<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (H)

We left the good old U.S.A. on March 3, 1944.

The Liberty ship, the "S.S. Walter Reed", started moving down the bay at Hampton Roads about 4:00 P.M. It seemed to take ages to clear the bay and get out into open sea where we were to join our convoy bound for we knew not where. Finally, moving slowly at about 4 knots, the tankers and other ships of the convoy took up their positions and we were on our way. There were about 75 in all.

The quarters for the officers, which was to be our home for those 28 never-to-be-forgotten days, were quite adequate. The rooms were small and housed from 9-12 officers; but the bunks had springs and mattresses and sheets and pillow slips were changed twice weekly. We had plates, cups, etc. to eat from, the hold in which to move about, play cards or read and the deck for exercise, sunning, etc.

We realized how nice we were provided for when we went down into the hold where the enlisted men were quartered. There, some 450 men slept in bunks 6 high and had only a very small space in which to move about. The bunks were only canvas stretched with ropes in an iron frame and their food was eaten from mess kits. The shortage of hot water made the proper washing of the latter very difficult. However, they took it quite well and little trouble was encountered.

The food was quite good--consisting of two meals and evening lunch. We bought candy bars and cakes at the canteen about twice weekly. This made up for the lack of food some of the men may have noticed.

Our thoughts were divided between the new life we were leading, apprehension on the subject of submarines or air attack during the long journey across the Atlantic and what awaited us after arriving at our destination.

However, all thoughts were interrupted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day by bad weather and a rough sea. The ship started rolling from side to side, gently at first, then increasing in intensity, seemingly trying to see how far over on its side it could roll and still return upright. Steel doors between holds banging open and shut, dishes rattling, the noise of a coke bottle rolling about with the roll of the ship on the rough steel deck and coming to a sudden halt against a bulkhead with a loud report, the rush of water alongside the ship, the deep, continuous throbbing of the engines--these, accompanied by the feeling of being slid first to the foot of your bunk, then the head, were the sounds which reached our ears as we tried to sleep at night. I, along

with the majority of the others, became seasick, although I could eat and lay on my bunk immediately after in order to keep it in the stomach. Many a tin helmet was used for a purpose other than for what it was designed.

I remember one amusing incident in particular. We had just finished our noonday meal and empty cups and plates were on the table yet. The ship's roll started to increase, and as it did, the dishes started moving. They made about two trips the full length of the table and finally ended up in a pile on the floor. No one tried to stop the dishes as each was trying to keep from being thrown about himself.

We were told we would soon be in tropical waters, but not more than 5 or 6 days were encountered when we could sun ourselves on the deck. The days when we could do this were very welcome and we enjoyed them to the fullest extent. A few even managed to get quite sunburned.

Another incident that was quite breath-taking at the time as seen from the grandstand seat on the deck of our ship was when two ships ran together. This, incidentally, brings up another point I omitted, which is our escort of corvettes and destroyers. These were continually steaming back and forth in front and back of our convoy, up and down on the sides and through the lanes of the convoy itself. This incident started when one ship, apparently out of control, turned 90 degrees and started crossing through the lanes of ships.

It crossed in front of one ship and headed straight for another. We held our breath as it got nearer since we couldn't be sure it would hit due to the deception of distance on the ocean. Just before it was about to hit, the other ship slowed and was nearly stopped. The ship out of control was hit amidships by the bow of the other. They hit quite hard, then the first ship swung around alongside the other and drifted slowly astern to the rear. The other immediately continued with the convoy as the first dropped farther behind the Convoy.

It surprised us to see a corvette and a destroyer turn and start for this ship immediately upon starting across the lanes of the ships. The destroyer in particular seemed to move with amazing speed and in no time was alongside the ship as it drifted behind.

We never knew what the trouble was, but the amazing spectacle of seeing two ships together on the sea caused considerable excitement at the time. After about 30 minutes three of the crippled ship started moving again and rejoined the convoy.

Much of our time was spent in talking over old times back in the States with our friends. The rest was taken up by eating, sleeping, playing cards and reading. Many amusing incidents were brought about by the playing of some "corny"

recordings of Spike Jones & His City Slickers, the worst of which were "Jungle Town" and "The Great Speckled Bird." Incidentally, the latter came to be my nickname, due to an individual who had a nickname for everyone he met. His name was Morgan D. Vaughan. He was a likable fellow in spite of his uninterrupted flow of words and his loud moaning and groaning when he lost a few cents in a "penny Auntie" poker game.

After the first spell of bad weather which started on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, not much other bad weather was encountered. One thing I noticed was that a wind from either port, or left, or starboard, or right, would cause the ship to roll side to side while a headwind or one from the rear caused the ship to pitch. The latter was more prevalent after the first bad spell and did not cause sea sickness. One minute you were down in the trough of a huge wave and the next you were riding the crest of the one following. I fairly itched to bring out my camera and take a picture of these large waves; but knew I wouldn't be allowed due to security reasons.

Finally came the day we were to pass through The Strait of Gibraltar and into the Mediterranean. Our destination, by the way, which had been revealed to us some days before this by the first Mate, was a port on the East Coast of Italy. We had guessed that it was Italy but had not known for sure until then.

It was good to see land again, but I found nothing inspiring about "The Rock of Gibraltar" as we slowly crept by. Some eager individuals, by the way, were up at midnight to get the first glimpse of land and only saw a few blinking lights. I was content to go up and have a look at my usual rising hour about 8:00 am.

We all had a bit of a scare the second day in the Mediterranean when we saw an aircraft so high we could only see a vapor trail come from the North, turn directly over the convoy and go back as fast as it came. We never knew whether it was friendly or enemy. However, we wondered again what was in store for us when they ordered us all below decks. It turned out to be only practice for the gun crews on the ships. The appearance of barrage balloons here and there in the convoy brought home to us the fact that we were now more in danger of enemy air attack than ever before.

We rounded the Southern tip of Italy and headed in NW. I don't know exactly when all the ships left the convoy, but we went into Bari, Italy. We stayed in Bari for a short while, then left all alone and went on North, probably docking at Cerginola. We loaded into trucks to go to our base. We lived in large tents like some bases in U.S.A. with no heat. They were still working on the two runways about two miles long each. These runways were made of steel mesh all locked together.

While the runways were being completed, we were sent to North Africa, near Tunis in Tunisia. Because most of the members of the air crews flew across the Atlantic in the B-24s, they arrived quite a while before we on the Liberty ship did.

Being a co-pilot, I was replaced by a Squadron Officer, and quite a few others were replaced as well. We were told when we arrived that the air crews flew southeast to Natal, in the northeast corner of Brazil, and perhaps landed in the Azores for fuel, and then maybe on to Tunis.

The airfield at Tunis was quite primitive, and we lived in large tents. The one thing I remember most vividly was the method the flight crews rigged up for a heating system for the tents. They obtained 30-gallon drums and put 100 octane gasoline in them. A small copper tube was connected to the drum, ran under the edge of the tent to the center where it went into another drum. They pinched the end to get only a tiny flow of gas. They worked well if you didn't get too much gas in the barrel at any one time. Several of these stoves blew up.

Shortly after arriving in Africa, we started flying practice missions in the area, some even out over the Mediterranean Sea. Something happened to one of our planes and it went down in the Mediterranean Sea. So, we were given the task of flying over the area and looking for survivors. We had to fly low, around 2 or 3 hundred feet high in order to see anything. Even after seeing something, it took some area to turn a B-24 around for another look. We never saw anything that looked like a survivor.

Another thing that happened while we were in Africa was when one plane either blew a tire, or hit a big hole or something, and as a result one of the main landing gear was twisted and would not retract. So, the pilot was told to give the crew the option of bailing out over the airfield or ride it down to a landing.

One or two of the crew bailed out, the rest stayed in the plane, as the pilot just flew around to burn up most of the gasoline. After an hour or so the pilot was ready to attempt a landing. The B-24 main gear were quite long to reach the ground since the body or fuselage was quite large.

The pilot came in with only one gear down and it rolled along on the bad gear almost until it came to a stop. Finally, the pilot couldn't keep the opposite wing off the ground, and it drug along on the dirt, making a small turn, but came to a stop with no fire. I had never seen anything like this before.

Another amusing incident I recall, happened sometime after we moved back to Italy from Africa. It was a nice sunny day, but for some reason we were not flying. Anyway, all of a sudden, this P-38, the twin-engine fighter we liked to see flying escort on our bombing missions, came flying over our tent area, called

buzzing, and looked so low he almost hit the tents. We heard in a roundabout way that our executive officer, a Lt. Colonel was going to chew his butt out. So, after the pilot landed the executive officer went to chew his butt. However, when the pilot stepped out of the fighter, he turned out to be a full Colonel. So, our executive officer didn't get to chew him out after all. We all enjoyed this but our executive officer.

We took off in the early morning hours of July 16, 1944, on what we thought to be an ordinary trip to the Vienna area. We started to have a little trouble with one supercharger shortly after takeoff, but we didn't consider it enough to warrant turning back. We had only 5 flights whereas we usually had 6. A flight is made up of 6 or 7 planes. We were in the 5<sup>th</sup>, when was echeloned to the left and below the 4<sup>th</sup>.

To explain further, the #1 flight had the two planes with bomb sights, #2 was to the right and above #1, #3 was to left and below #1. Then #4 was behind #1 and below, #5 to the right of #4 and #6 to the left of #4. This was so you didn't get in turbulence of another plane.

As we proceeded on course, one after the other dropped out, turning back for various reasons. Finally, the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> flights had only about 7 planes between them, so they formed into one. This was accomplished shortly before we arrived at the "Initial Point." The Initial Point was chosen some 5 or 6 miles from the target, and a turn was made there, so the Germans didn't know our exact target. I might mention also, that our new position was such that we had two planes behind us.

We turned from the I.P. toward the target and our troubles seem to come one after another, although they didn't seem so serious at the time. Our supercharger still wasn't functioning properly, but the instruments indicated we were getting full power from all 4 engines. However, we were dropping slowly behind. What I didn't realize till after I was told later was that we were all alone, the other planes in our flight having turned back a short while before this.

I still felt no great danger for as I looked around above and to the side of us, I saw the heartwarming sight of our P-38 escort keeping watch for enemy fighters. The pilot decided to drop the bombs in the rear bomb bay, so the Bombardier did so. Shortly after this, fighters were reported in the area.

Either because the enemy fighters decided we were having trouble when we salvaged the two bombs, or because we were behind alone, we were soon to be the center of a heavy attack. Things were happening fast now.

An ME-109 came in from 10 O'clock on our own level. I could see the fire and smoke coming from the guns around the cowling of the engine, but the tracers

were going behind us. I thought of our escort and looked for them. Although only a short time had elapsed from the time I saw the sky full of P-38s, not a one was in sight now. Where they went to, I don't know.

Anyhow, shortly after this lone attack, the tail gunner reported fighters directly behind, coming in. After a few more long seconds of waiting the guns on our plane started rattling in short bursts at first, then steadily. Things from there on are rather jumbled due to the excitement.

One of the first fighters that attacked us hit our No. 2 engine, for an explosion that shook the plane and when I looked an instant later it was gone, and only tattered pieces of cowling were left. Immediately after the explosion the pilot hit the alarm bell and pulled the bomb salvo handle and released the bombs. I was helping the pilot trying to keep the plane level and knew by the feel of it that several control cables were gone. I could hear the bullets tearing through the plane although miraculously none seemed to come directly through the cockpit. I remember seeing one fighter go by under us so close it seemed I could have reached out and touched him.

Then the pilot jerked his thumb to the rear for me to get out. So, without thinking to disconnect my oxygen hose or interphone wired to mike and earphones or sliding my seat back to make it easier to get out of those bucket armor-plated seats (sometimes called coffin seats) I started to crawl out between the two seats. My parachute, by the way, was a back type and already for use.

The parachute and the connections that I failed to unfasten made it difficult to get through between the seats. After nearly collapsing from exertion at high altitude and with the pilot pushing, I finally made it.

I sat down on the seat near the radio to get my breath and take off my flak suit. This piece of equipment also slowed up my exit from my seat beside the pilot, for it weighs nearly 20 pounds. As I sat there, I noticed the engineer in the top turret moving his feet in what I presumed to be preparations for his exit, too. He seemed to be all right, so I glanced up to see if the pilot was coming and saw that he was.

So, I thought I might as well get out. I think it was at that moment too, that I thought just what I was going to do--jump from 20,000 feet with only a parachute to arrest my fall. I don't know whether it was a moment of fear, or just what it was, but it soon left.

I then sat down on the catwalk of the bomb bay, grabbed that little red handle over my heart (I was afraid I might not be able to find it later) and slid off into space. Immediately the wind whistled in my ears, and I was thrown about in

the air this way and that with the hose of my oxygen mask flapping around in front of my face.

I hadn't given it much thought before, but I knew I should delay pulling my rip cord. So, I waited, all the time trying to keep myself on my back so I didn't roll and tumble so much. And strangely enough, one thought I had was that when I was thrown about, I seemed to have a fear of falling, the same as a person would have when looking over the edge of a high cliff or leaning out of the window of a tall building. My fall gradually seemed to become quite steady after a while going down on my back with my legs and arms extending toward the sky--a very peculiar position when you stop to think of it.

I passed through a thin layer of clouds about 18,000 feet and kept looking over my shoulder watching the ground come up to judge when to pull the cord. When I could see the trees start to take shape and come up to meet me more rapidly and also to make sure the chute had plenty of time to open, I pulled with a good jerk.

I heard a sort of flutter behind me and a moment later a tremendous pressure on my chest and legs. My breath seemed to leave me under the pressure. Then, complete silence. Every person who has made a parachute jump will say that is the most peaceful sensation they have ever experienced, and it is just that.

I saw a plane burning on the ground and heard and saw an ME-109 go past me as I floated on down. The ground was soon coming up fast as I had pulled the cord between 5 and 8,000 feet. I could see I was going to hit in some trees. I expected the chute to catch in them, but when it didn't I went on down through and hit with a hard bump, mostly on my left leg. This gave me a bad sprain, which was my only injury outside of a small scratch on my right leg.

I drug my parachute into the trees and hid it after satisfying myself that my ankle wasn't broken. I took my bearings and headed approximately south. I crossed a small creek on a log and walked on through the mosquito-infested woods for a mile or so. My ankle hurt quite a bit, but I limped along on it.

After about two miles I came to a clearing and saw groups of men in a field apparently searching for our crew. I watched them and kept circling them to the left on the edge of the trees. Then soon all left the field and

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This following portion of my diary is being written in December 1994 from memory and may not be too complete but will be the best I can recall at this time.

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Repeating "They soon all left the field and I decided to sit down and rest--my ankle hurt pretty bad. In a minute or two 2 Hungarian Home Guards came up

behind me, made me get up, took my "45" Automatic, and then asked where my parachute was.

They made me walk all the way back to where I had hidden it, pick it up and start carrying it to where they directed me. I walked perhaps another mile and we came to some buildings. People came out and offered me water, but the guards refused to permit it.

They took me to a small building, and I remained there until the next morning. The bed was just boards on a frame and only one blanket. I don't remember receiving any food. One or two other members of the crew came together here.

The next morning, we were loaded in a small wagon or cart and we went down the road.

NOTE --- I failed to mention that our target on this day was in the northeast part of Vienna, Austria. We were apparently over Austria when they hit us, but after landing and trying to decide where I would go, I crossed a small canal on a foot bridge, and learned later that I was in Hungary.

After checking the maps I have, it must have been some 120 KM to Budapest. Anyhow, that's where we ended up, and were put in a prison with criminals. We were given one bowl of soup, mostly water, and one small roll about the size of a cereal bowl, per man per day. There was no toilet, only a pail, and lots of lice and other bugs.

In a very short time, most of us had dysentery, which didn't help our conditions any. After about two days, we were allowed to go outside to a courtyard for exercise for 20 or 30 minutes. This helped our morale some.

We learned about what was going to happen to us in a strange way. The bowls we received our soup in were aluminum and one day we noticed one bowl had writing on the outside, carved by a prisoner, definitely an American, and explained what would take place. The lettering went round and round the outside of the bowl.

This explained that after we are interrogated by German officers, we would be transported to a prisoner-of-war camp, where conditions would be much better. Our total time in this prison must have been about 2 weeks.

After about a week, the men in our room were asked to help carry the small loaves from the bakery to a storage room near our room. As we were carrying this bread, about every 4<sup>th</sup> man would slip into our room and leave the bread he was carrying. We ended up with a good supply of bread.



Naturally, we had air raids, and the sirens went off quite often. Of course, we tried to see what was going on through our one small window. The guards kept trying to keep us from the windows. They had some 88 mm anti-aircraft guns nearby and during a raid, they were shooting them and it sure shook the building.

Finally, after interrogation by German officers, the day came to leave this prison. We were loaded into boxcars, 50 men to a car. I can still see this: as we were rocking along the rails if someone with dysentery had the urge, you just opened the sliding door and let go. It looked real funny, but it wasn't funny for the one involved.

We traveled only at night, because the fighter pilots would shoot at any train that moved. During the day, our car was left in a marshaling yard all by itself. After about 8 or 10 days, we arrived at the Prisoner of War Camp at Sagan, east of Berlin. We were placed in the Royal Air Force compound, since the American Compound was already overcrowded.

This camp was located in what once was pine forest and many stumps still existed in the outer edges of the compound. The general layout of the camp was similar to our military bases in the U.S.A.

The barracks had rooms on each side with a hallway down the middle. I would guess between 8 and 10 rooms to each barracks, with various numbers in each room. After we arrived, our room had 10 men.

Each barracks had a common kitchen, one toilet for use after dark and a larger toilet outside for daytime use. These had pits under them that were pumped out on occasion. These "Honey Wagons" had some unique features. One had a small round chamber at the top of the tank, and when a charge was set off in this chamber, it created a vacuum, and would suck the stuff into the tank. The pits all had to be stirred with long paddles to make the mixture fluid before loading.

At the outer edge of the compound was an area approximately 100' wide, inside the fence where prisoners were not allowed to enter. A small fence about a foot high marked this area. If a football, softball, or something being used went into this area, a prisoner could put a light, white shirt on and retrieve the object with no danger from guards.

Each compound had a kitchen with a large tank used to heat water for soup and coffee and each room sent a man with a container to get the water each morning. In our room, we had coffee and a slice of bread after roll call each morning. Then, after evening roll call, we had our one meal of the day, around 5:00 pm.

We had three men from Australia, three from Britain, two from U.S., one from Rhodesia, S. Africa, and one from Canada. One thing I remember about our evening meal. The Canadian government sent a carton of Lucky Strike cigarettes each week to each prisoner of war. "Spanky" Newman, the Canadian, was always first through eating, so he would get up, get his pack of cigarettes and put one behind the ear of each of us.

We had a theater in our compound. Sometime before I arrived in camp, some country, I think it was Brazil, sent food packages in plywood boxes. These were used by POWs to make seats for a theater. I don't recall seeing movies, but we did hear the latest hit tunes like on the "Hit Parade," which was on radio on Saturday Night in the U.S.

I was laying on my sack about 9:00 P.M. on the night of January 27, 1945, when Robert Kurtz, one of the three Americans in our room, came rushing into the room and announced that we were leaving Sagan in one hour. I could tell by the look on his face it was not idle rumor and that what we had dreaded had come to pass.

We had been told about a week before of the possibility of a move from Sagan and on foot, too. Also, about 48 hours before, the Germans had authorized the making of large packs. Still, we didn't think we would go because the Russians were moving so fast, we thought we could never get out ahead of them. However, it has come to pass, so we had to get ready to march in a short while. Immediately we started packing the minimum of things to take, eating bread and jam, cooked barley cheese and prunes, and drinking coffee rich with sugar and milk. In the end we had about 5 hours to get ready. I ate so many sweets I was sick to my stomach. We took time to build sleds to carry our stuff on, as there was plenty of snow on the ground, and one of the Englishmen and I put our things together on our small sled. One Red Cross parcel was given to each of us as we went out of the Camp. Jan. 28--Finally leave Camp at Sagan at 0300.

Our direction of travel was southwest, and our immediate destination was Gorlitz, a march of 75 kilometers (which is approximately 69 miles). The going was quite easy as the road was well packed, and we had loaded our insides with sweet food and had on a lot of clothing.

About 3:00 pm we arrived at the town of Friewaldau. We got out some food and ate and made coffee from the hot water which the different German women, young boys and girls were giving out to us. Their friendliness surprised us all as we hadn't expected anything like it from the German people. They almost seemed to go out of their way to help us.

The next thing we knew the Senior British Officer announced that we were to be put up all night in the town and that each man was to find his own place to stay. So, in a few minutes hundreds of Kreiges, or prisoners, were scattered all over the town trying to find a place to sleep all night. The temperature was dropping and reached the vicinity of  $-13^{\circ}$  F. We were all getting very cold because we were mostly just standing around awaiting orders. Finally, about 5:00 pm we were ordered to march on about 7 KM and put up for the night. So, we moved on.

On reaching the outskirts, we saw another group of Kreiges laying on the ground along the road, burning clothing or whatever they could find to try and keep warm. We learned later it was the West Compound at Sagan.

We arrived in the vicinity of the barns we were to sleep in — I say in the vicinity because the four of us who were together were nearly at the end of about a mile and a half long column of men. The first of the line were moving into the barns while we stood on the road, moved a few feet at a time, and tried to keep from freezing to death. This kept on for about two hours as the 1500 men were slowly put into barns. During that time, I think I was the coldest and the nearest to freezing to death that I have ever been in my life.

However, we finally got there and found a place to sleep with a little straw on a concrete floor. The people living there even gave us hot water for coffee and hot cooked potatoes. This gave us a nice meal before going to bed. As the temperature was well below zero, about all I did was pound my feet together to try and keep them warm. I slept very little but did rest.

Jan. 29 — The next morning, after more hot water and potatoes, we started out again. It snowed on and off all day, but we kept warm marching. About 5:00 pm we arrived at Muskau where we were to put up for the night. The place we were sent to was a glass factory which was warm, had lights and running cold water. After the march, the heat was a godsend. We got straw for a bed and slept warm and quite comfortable for the first time since leaving Sagan. The heat of the factory came from a large circular oven in the middle of the room in which a very hot natural gas fire burned. All we had to do to heat water or cook was to place our pot near one of the doors and it would be done in 15 minutes. So, all we did the next day and a half was eat warm food and rest. It was just what we needed. This took us up to Wednesday noon, January 31.

On Wednesday morning the Germans gave each man a half loaf of bread and some margarine. Then all the Americans were separated from the RAF and joined the West Compound of Sagan to continue our journey. It was warmer now, although cloudy, and the snow was starting to melt. We started at noon but took a lot of time fooling around getting in the right order. We marched 12 KM by

dark and were put up in a barn in small groups. There was plenty of hay so we slept well. We stayed there till 4:00 pm the next day, when we were told we were going on another 8 or 9 KM.

The snow was nearly gone, but we took the sled anyhow. It was soon left behind, as there wasn't enough snow for its use, and we carried what we had left. We arrived at Sprenberg, the railhead, about 7:00 pm and were crowded into a building with a concrete floor. Here they served us good thick soup later that evening and again the next morning.

Feb. 2 — After a short march the next morning and much waiting, we got in boxcars, 50 men to a car. We were given 4/5 of a Red Cross parcel, half a loaf of bread, and a little margarine per man and some tins of meat spread. This was Friday and we got to Nurnberg, our destination, about 4:00 pm Sunday, Feb. 4, 1945.

Here at Nurnberg was to start what is probably the worst experience of our lives, perhaps second to Budapest. After a lot of confusion and moving from one barracks to another, I finally got settled with my former pilot, Lt. E.B. Elrod. Conditions in the camp were very poor from the start. There were fleas, lice, etc. in the mattresses, very little coal for heat, only cold water, with two taps for 145 men and were outside, nothing to cook in, had to eat out of tin cans and only the clothes on our backs.

At first we had part of our Red Cross parcels to eat as well as what the Germans gave us. They gave us lots of potatoes, 1/6 loaf of bread per man per day, soup twice a day, some sugar, salt and cheese and a little jam. But, within four weeks the German ration was cut little by little until we were getting only about two potatoes per day, 1/7 loaf of bread five days a week and hard tack the other two, thinner soup, no sugar, salt or jam and only a little cheese.

Now that I'm up to date, I'm going to attempt a sort of day-to-day diary.

March 11 — Germans admit bridge head over Rhine at Remagen.

March 13 — Red Cross Representative here. No hope for change of conditions from him. Says parcels on way here.

March 14 - Split up combine, stay with Elrod. Others think he's been dishonest. Three trucks from Switzerland bring 3600 parcels. Getting half issue. Glad to get them.

March 16 — On duty at headquarters. More parcels in by truck. Getting full issue next week.

March 17 - Busy cooking. RAF bombs Nurnberg with heavy bombers. Have a big meal. Nurnberg bombed again.

March 28 — Tell us to get packed, ready to march. Do so. Lot of flap. Make iron rations. Don't move.

March 29 — Allies making large gains. No move.

March 30 — Excitement subsiding. Still no move. Don't think we'll move.

March 31 — Allies still driving. 1200 men come in.

April 1 - Saw eleven P-47's flying over at about 1000 feet. Got 2/3 issue of (British) parcels and the rest in American. Are told we leave at 9:00 am tomorrow. Do a lot of eating, cooking and getting ready.

April 3 —Get ready early. Leave Nurnberg at 11:00 am and headed southeast. Stay all night after walking 20 KM.

April 4— Leave at 8:00 am. Move slow. Stopped at 11:00 am during bombing of Nurnberg. Eat, get bread and bacon by trading. Move onto Newmarkt. Get soup at 4:30 pm. Move to edge of town and stay in woods till 2100. Cook meal. Starts raining. Move on at 2100 in rain.

April 5 — Walk in rain till 0300. Go through Berching and stop short distance on other side. Wet and cold. The Hauptmann leaves and guards are posted to keep us from going into town. Finally, Colonel Alkire comes back from next town. Move on at 0500. Arrive at Plankstetten at 0700 and put up in large barn. Jack Verran trades for eggs and bread. Get cooked potatoes, bread, soup and hot water from people who own barn. Eat good.

April 6 — Decide to stay in barn and wait for Americans to come. Get all the cooked potatoes and bread we can. Boil our eggs. Sleep in hole in hay on second floor. Not much room.

April 7 — Eat a lot of food. Get more bread and eggs. Storing food and water in hole. Make hole in hay in barn on 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. All men able to march go on.

April 8 —Walked to Berching and met German girl who spoke English. Gave us can opener, bread, eggs and fat. Hope to get news from her. Getting a lot of food stored in hole.

April 9 — Walked to small town over the hill and bartered for eggs, bread and milk. Get about a gallon of cream. Take bucket back at night. Dog bothers us.

April 10 — Did a little trading for eggs and bread in morning. Jack and I figure Allies will be here by April 24. Fixed hot dinner at German woman's home and baked a cake. The rest of the boys leave at 1600. Stay in hole. Come out at dusk and cook meal upstairs in Polish worker's quarters. Meet 4 other fellows who are staying behind too. Walk in field behind barn till 2400. Go to bed.

April 11 - Sleep till 11:00 am. Eat breakfast. Eat snacks, sleep and talk all day. Come out at 2030. Dogs bark. Verran goes behind barn and is seen by German girl getting eggs. She brings brother and dogs. Search for us. Dogs don't find us. Go to Polish quarters at 2130. Have cooked potatoes, meat and tea with the other fellows. Walk till 0100.

April 12 - Sleep late. Someone leaves bread and note in barn. Eat snack. Go out at 2100. Cross creek to go to Polish quarters. Everyone excited. Say Germans are coming to live in barn, also bringing Russian prisoners. I carry all our stuff out in field. Go back up. Eat eggs, bread and potatoes, drink tea. Verran and I walk to Berching to see German girl and find door locked. Fall in ditch and get feet wet. Get back at 0100. Decide to stay in barn. Starts raining. Get everything back in barn. Fill in front of hole and dig farther back. Bed at 0400.

April 13 - Sleep till 1100. Mr. Plank's son comes up and talks to us. Says Germans are coming to work farm and will bring us bread and water. Says Allies will be here in a week. Tells us area is blacked out - that Roosevelt died of blood clot. Get our hole completely fixed up. Germans move in at 1700. Put trucks in barn ground floor. Plank brings loaf of bread. Don't go out.

April 14 - Sleep till noon. Keep quiet all day. Martin Plank doesn't come up. Get ready to go out at 2300. Find doors locked. Tom, the tank driver, wants to leave, so we let him out window with blanket rope. Rope breaks about half way down and he falls, to the ground. Gets up and runs. Glad to get rid of him as he doesn't get along with us. Exercise. Evacuees and troops on road. Go to bed at 0100.

April 15 — Hear artillery or bombing quite a bit closer all morning. Martin tells us the Allies are 12 KM south of Nurnberg on the road going past here. Good news. Going to bring us food. Go out back door of barn. Get water. Stay out till 0100. Get lot of exercise.

April 16 — Hear louder artillery. Martin brings warm milk, meat and eggs at 10:30. Can sure use the food. Allies are 15 KM south of Nurnberg. Five large guns 5 KM from here firing. Clear sky in pm. Lot of air activity. Verran goes to Polish people. They give him lot of bread, eggs and hot coffee. Getting more tomorrow. Moonlight and chilly.

April 17 — Martin brings bread. Says spearhead southeast of us on way to Regensburg. Not so much artillery this am. Go out at 2200. Have trouble with door. Go to Polish people. Get bread, broth and coffee. Martin brings warm milk at 2300. Walk till 0100.

April 18 - Sleep till 1400. Not much activity. German soldiers leave barn at 1800. Glad to see them go. Go to Polish people. Get coffee, bacon, cheese and a little bread. Can't give us any more bread. Walk till 0100.

April 19 - Sleep till 1400. Martin comes up. Going to bring bread. Brings large loaf and 9 eggs. Very good. Go to Polish people. Eat hot cooked spuds and drink coffee. Take bread, spuds, broth and coffee with us. Walk up past first town. Check and find neatly folded blank paper. Bed at 0130.

April 20 - Sleep till 1445. Bad cold and headache. Hear lot of planes going over all morning. Go up to Berching to see German girl. See her O.K. Eat bread and eggs and drink coffee. Really good. Going to meet her Sunday. Leave at 2300. Bob leaves. Find potatoes, bread and coffee on bridge. German soldiers in barn. Walk around thinking of place to stay. Go to small village and find barn. Get in straw at daybreak.

April 21 - Stay in barn all day. Cold and windy. Nearly freeze. Come out at 2030. Go to Polish people. Eat potatoes, bread and broth and drink coffee. Stay and talk to Lithuanians till 2230. Can't get in barn. Walk around in Plankstetten looking for a barn. Finally go to same barn and get in after hearing someone yell and something in barn. Cold and raining.

April 22 — Stay in barn till 2100. Back to Plank's barn. Soldier and horse in barn. Hear noise. Go to Polish people. Soldiers in there too. Finally walk right in barn. Sleep O.K.

April 23 — Soldiers come upstairs and sleep just outside our den. Lot of machine gun, rifle and artillery fire all day. Closer. Sleep quietly. Wagon leaves and Caterpillar pulls in car. Mechanic works til 2030. Don't go out.

April 24 — Soldiers leave early in morning. Sleep till 1030. Barn quiet. Germans have gun set up on bridge about ½ mile from here. Fire it several times. Cold, air activity. Hear machine gun fire at 1530. Don't know what it is. Think it's Germans. See tank and halftrack coming over ridge and down into valley. Fire machine guns all around. Decide they are Americans. The tanks pull up at R.R. station. We know they are Americans then. Grab our stuff and white flag and go out. (Go to the Major.) Get in halftrack and head for the headquarters of the 14<sup>th</sup> Armored Division at Hilpoltstein.

Honey, from this minute on, I'm on my way home and may it be a short trip. Our guess is to be in the U.S. on May 21, my 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in the Army. Sure is good to be with Americans again. Get watch, medals, etc. from German prisoners at Plankstetten. Get to headquarters and get a meal of eggs, white bread, coffee with cream and sugar. Really is a treat to eat a good meal.

April 25 — Leave at 0400 on supply truck. Get to Neustadt at 0800. Eat breakfast. Go out to airfield about 15 KM northwest of Nurnberg at 0900. Airfield at Herzogenaurach. Get a good shower and delousing and different clean clothes. Hope to get a plane to France. Army C-4's come and go in a continual chain but none are going our way, so we don't get to leave. C Rations sure good.

April 26 — Up at 0700. Eat breakfast. C-47s start coming in at 0810. Shave and clean up. Lay around till middle of afternoon. Finally get on plane at 1615. Leave at 1620. Fly over Paris on way. Land at Le Havre at 1920. Eat big meal and Red Cross doughnuts. Get bus to Camp Lucky Strike about 45 miles away. Find a regular mud hole. Put us in a large tent to sleep on G.I. cots. Sleep good.

April 27 — Get a typhus shot and fill out some papers. Guess we won't get to leave tomorrow. Move to another area. Decide we might as well go to Paris.

April 28 — Get everything done to be ready to go to shipping area. Pack our things, borrow 300 Francs from Capt. Reagan and leave for Paris on trucks at 1900. Get sandwiches. Catch ride out to 110<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital. No rides. Decide to stay. Get food and sleep in ward. Good beds.

April 29 — Have fresh eggs for breakfast and catch ride to Paris at 0800. Stop at Rouen for coffee and doughnuts. Get to Paris at 1230. Run all over hunting for hotels, etc. Finally get put in hotel Nioliere and get partial payments of \$100.00 and \$80.00. Take shower and go to bed early.

April 30 — Get good meal free at Hotel on St. Augustine. Use subway. Get two PX rations and draw some QM equipment including a carbine. Go to night club section at Pigalle and have a few drinks. Back to Hotel at 2330. Have coffee and doughnuts.

May 1 — Eat breakfast and try to get on plane in Le Havre. Jack doesn't get on bus with bag. I go on to field. Can't get planes. Back to Paris at 1230. Jack has truck to Le Havre. Go to warehouse. Major gives us another PX ration with Coke. Enlisted man gives us case of C rations at warehouse. Eat. Leave Paris on semi-trailer at 1730. Rough ride in back. Get to Rouen at 2100. Get truck to Lucky Strike. Get to camp about 2330. Go to bed.

May 2 — Move to shipping area. Don't leave. Nothing to do. Go with nurses into town. Back at 2330.

May 3 — Nothing to do. Go to U.S.O. show with nurses. Eat C rations. Bed at 2330.

May 4 — Get ready to leave. Hear we're shipping tonight. Don't leave. See Elrod, Lou, Red Avery, Brewer, Haynes, Krazinsky, Kopecky, Chief Masterson



and the rest of the men. Men coming in fast from Mooseburg. Don't leave. Move again.

May 5 — Get orders to leave at 1200. Eat at 1000. Jack and I separated. Trucks leave Lucky Strike at 1200. Get to Le Havre at 1500. Get on small boat. Have poor quarters at first. Then get room with 8 men. Good setup. Eat 1<sup>st</sup> meal at 1800. Have ham. Really good meal. Leave port at Le Havre at 2000.

May 6 — Foggy. Not moving. Move on at 1200. Get to Southampton, England at 1800. Hear we'll be here two days. Duty Officer 1600 to 2100. Tired.

May 7 — Sleep all morning. Hear V-E day announced. Whistles blowing in harbor.

May 8 — Sleep most of day. Anchor out of harbor and wait for convoy. Duty Officer 1600 to 2000.

May 9 — Get under way in morning. Ship rolling and pitching in evening. Half sick. Get PX ration. Duty 8-12 pm.

May 10 — Feeling better. Quit smoking. Read and sleep. Duty 8-12 pm.

May 11 — Eat and sleep and read. Fairly nice sailing. Duty 2400-0400.

May 12 — Eat and sleep and read. Fairly nice sailing. Duty 0400-0800.

May 13 — Eat and sleep and read. Movie. Duty 0400-0800.

May 14 — Eat and sleep and read. Movie. Duty 0800-1200.

May 15 — Eat and sleep and read.

May 16 — Eat and sleep and read. Weather turns nice.

May 17 — Eat and sleep and read. Weather still nice.

May 18 — Eat and sleep and read. Weather bad, sea rough.

May 19 — Foggy in morning. Pm getting ship ready to dock. Get into New York harbor at 0600. See Statue of Liberty. Boat with band loaded with women and covered with flags meets us. Get into dock but won't let us off till 0700 tomorrow.

May 20 — Get off ship at 0930 and get on ferry. Get off at Penn station at 1030. Get on train and arrive at Camp Kilmer, N.J. at 1130. Get processing in afternoon.

May 21 — Buy clothes, draw \$50.00. Leave on train at 1300. Get into Pa. at 1500. Eat in kitchen car.

May 22 — In Ohio in am. Stop in Cincinnati for an hour at 1200.

May 23 — In St. Louis during night. Eat breakfast. Leave at 1000. K.C. at 1700.

Arrive Leavenworth, KS 1900. Call home. Clothes are there. Every one  
O.K