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PRISONER OF THE GERMANS

By Chaplain Mark R. Moore

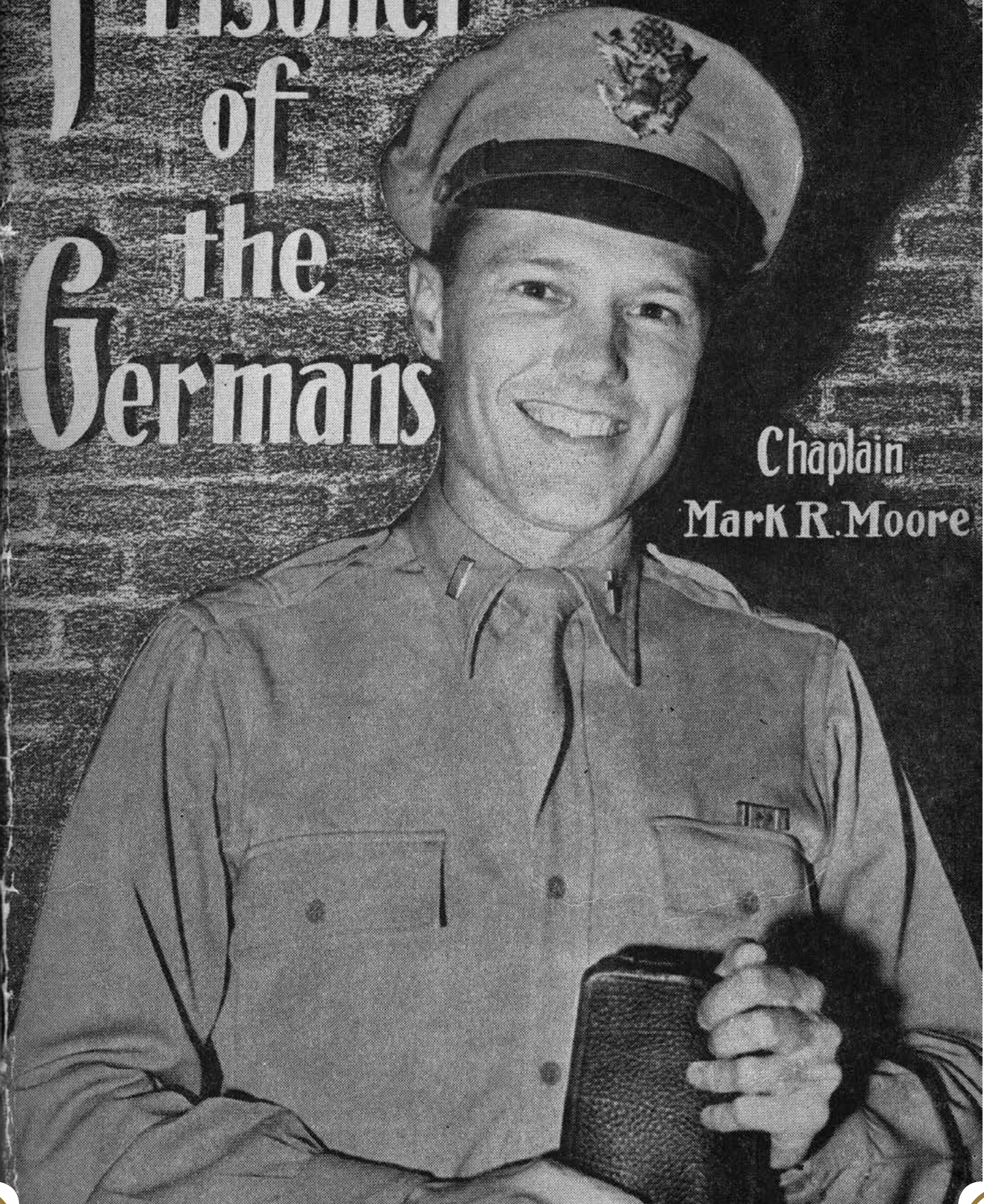


Printed in the U.S.A.
1945

BEACON HILL PRESS
Kansas City, Missouri

Prisoner of the Germans

Chaplain
Mark R. Moore



WAR HERO

PRISONER OF THE GERMANS

WORLD WAR II

FOREWORD

Several have suggested that I have printed in book form some of my Army and Nazi Prison Camp experiences. Reverend W. L. French, my former District Superintendent; Doctor I. C. Mathis, Dallas District Superintendent; and my present Superintendent, Reverend Hadley Hall, were among the first to suggest it.

I have told the experiences as they occurred to me. I trust that as you read you will more fully understand the conditions under which your sons, husbands, sweethearts, brothers, and friends have lived in order that we may enjoy the comforts, blessings and liberties of a safer world. I pray that these experiences will help you to come to know Jesus Christ in a richer relationship than ever before. He was and is my Refuge, my Strength, my Redeemer, my Companion. It is through Him that I live and have my being.

Often I was tempted to believe that there were but few people praying for me. However, when I returned to the States I was overwhelmed by the number who wrote, called, or told me of spending hours in prayer on my behalf. I know God hears and answers prayer.

I praise Him for allowing me to return to my family and church. I wish to thank each one who shared our burdens. May God richly bless you. I also desire that you join me in prayer for those whose loved ones have paid the supreme price in this world conflict. I knew Jesus Christ as Savior and Sanctifier before I left for overseas, but I've come to know Him as one who can keep in all places and under the most trying conditions. He gives peace, joy, and poise that surpasses all understanding.

ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

I was assigned to the 106th Division Artillery in June, 1944, while the division was stationed at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. It took several months to complete our training and after the usual packing and crating, we moved to an eastern camp for overseas assignment. We crossed the Atlantic in November on the U. S. S. Wakefield. Although the sea was rough for several days and many of the men were extremely seasick, it was an enjoyable voyage. The ship's chaplain, Alfred Murray, made it possible for us to have services daily. These services were well attended and I believe much good was accomplished.

Upon our arrival in England, we were sent to a camp, we began to get our equipment. I marvel at the way the army can equip so many men on foreign soil. We were short a few items and it seemed that other things would not come through in time, yet each man received individual attention and care. For instance, as chaplain, I had to have a jeep, and a trailer. In addition, we had to find my organ, field desk, chaplain's flag, Bibles, literature, individual stove for cooking, communion kit, and other necessities which had been packed in the states and sent on ahead. To further supply us, a Post Exchange had been set up for the 2,500 troops at our camp with watches, candy, drinks, soap, tooth brushes, gum, shaving cream and other items. It made me an American soldier, feel that my government was interested in me and was doing all in her power to give me the best equipment and supplies.

We were at our English camp through Thanksgiving and our general, General Leo McMahon, had at the chaplain's request, given a two-hour holiday. With all the men busy as could be, this was considerate on his part and the men appreciated it very much. We had Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish services for the men and they were well attended. We were on foreign soil and were not practicing now. We were facing the real thing and when men come face to face with the battles of life they realize that God is the best One to whom a person can turn. General McMahon paid the two chaplains of the Artillery a very high compliment at a banquet held at this English Camp. He was announcing to about 150 officers the plan for the Thanksgiving services and of the two-hour holiday when he mentioned that in our extra long stay in the staging area and also in the time we were in England, that the morals and morale of the men were high. He said, in effect, that the efforts of the chaplains had no doubt played a large part and that he would back the chaplains one hundred per cent in their program for the men.

A PROMISE FROM GOD'S WORD

Late in the evening on November 25, 1944, I made my way to the quaint old English chapel on our post. The moon was high, the murky fog had lifted and after a walk around the camp, I was feeling fine. I entered the chapel and although we had the black-out blinds up, I did not bother to turn on the lights. Earlier in the evening I had made a fire in the little barrel-like stove and believe it or not, it was still burning. The men who have been stationed in England, and who have had to use those small grateless stoves, can sympathize with me when I say that it was a real problem to get coal to ignite. This particular night, I just dropped a few sticks of wood in and added a few lumps of coal. Then I knelt at the altar for prayer.

When I looked up, I could see the pulpit to my right and the cross on the altar which the Catholics used for mass. By the dim light which flickered across the altar where I knelt, I could barely see to read my Bible. I opened it to the Psalms and read several of them. After a time I was attracted to a portion of the sixty-sixth Psalm and especially to the twelfth verse: "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place." I stopped reading and looked for a long time at what I had read. Could it be that God was giving me a promise that He would bring me through as He had brought His servant through years before? As I studied the verse it seemed to fit me and I began to make it my own promise from God. In fact, I turned to the fly-leaf of my New Testament and Psalms and wrote there "Psalms 66, Verses 10-12, promise given me November 25, 1944, at Chapel Altar, Gloucester, England." I held that promise close to my heart that night, and in the days that followed, I found great comfort in it.

I did not understand all the meaning then. I thought that the portion, "Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads" had reference to men getting higher

positions than those we would have. Not once did I think of it as being overrun by the Germans, or that bombers would fly over and drop their bombs on us. There was one word that seemed to light up and that was the word "out." "Thou broughtest us out." I thought, "Could it be possible that I would see the 'fire' of the front line and then pass back over that great body of 'water' and enter again into 'that wealthy place'--America?" I promised God then and there that I would trust Him to bring it to pass. Later, I reread the Psalm in prison camp and found that since God had promised what He would do for me there was something for me to do in return. I used that portion of scripture often in my services with the men and challenged them to return to the States and do for God what the psalmist said he did. It is with that thought in mind that I give Him the praise and glory for all that He has done for me.

MOVING TO THE CONTINENT

We moved in a convoy south to Weymouth and after "sweating it out" for a time were in line to board an LST. The Red Cross was on hand with doughnuts and coffee and we enjoyed them. Some of the men ate more doughnuts than I did, but they had to go over the dozen mark to do it.

Once onboard the ship, we went to our respective places. My bunk was in the hold with the men and junior officers, while most of the officers were topside in the "officers' country." We were comfortable and none of us complained.

The channel was rough. One day Chaplain William H. Taylor and I were conducting a service in the hold with about fifty sailors and fifty-five soldiers. The LST was not equipped for large numbers and the cramped quarters where we had to have service compelled all the men to have to stand. As I was praying, the ship gave a lunge and when I opened my eyes I saw fifty sailors standing and fifty-five soldiers sprawled

on the deck. I think I did more to win the sailors by maintaining my equilibrium than by anything I said.

TAKING UP POSITIONS

We lay in Le Havre harbor for several days before getting the signal to move on into the Seine River. We were all amazed at the wreckage we saw along the way. We stood topside in order not to miss a thing. A gravity began to settle over us. The realization that we were about there began to penetrate our thinking. We disembarked at Rouen and moved across France. We spent but a few days in the rain and mud of France before moving into Belgium to relieve the Second Division. For several days we studied the positions we were to take over. Chaplain Taylor and I went with the Second Division Artillery chaplains so we would know where they had been having services. It was during this period that we really came to know we had an enemy. All during one service, we felt the impact of enemy shells dropping nearby. It was thrilling in a way; however, the thrills were the type that you would rather do without.

The Second Division soon pulled out to other positions and left us on our own. Our battalions were in Germany while our headquarters were in St. Vith, Belgium. Along with a number of the staff members, we were quartered in an old hotel in St. Vith. Chaplain Taylor and I had a room to ourselves. Our assistants bunked with the battery about a block away. Our mess was conveniently located next door to the battery. The chow was good and our rooms were usually warm so we were comfortable in spite of the snow and cold.

The people of St. Vith had at one time been part of the German state and then later a part of Belgium and at the moment they seemed to be friendly. After the breakthrough it was proved that much of the friendliness was not genuine. However, it can be said of the Belgian people as a whole that they were nicer to our men than to any other group. They did not

wave at you with the one hand and hold the other out for gifts, but rather they wanted to be the givers. The people around St. Vith were not pure Belgians and were not to be fully trusted, as we later learned.

CHAPLAIN ACTIVITIES

Several days were spent with the battalions visiting the men and making arrangements for services. It fell my lot to go to the location of the 589th Battalion, the 590th Battalion and the 592nd Battalion, which were between Auw and Blaiolf, Germany. They were within a mile or two of each other while the 591st Battalion was several miles to the south of us at Hockenfield. In addition to these, we had several other units attached and we spent some time trying to find and serve them.

BEGINNING OF BATTLE OF THE BULGE

On Saturday morning, December 16, we had planned to go to the rear echelon to see the Divisional Chaplain (Lt. Col.) William Veazie. We pulled out just as the Germans opened fire on St. Vith. Our business with the chaplain was transacted in short order. When we arrived back at St. Vith at noon, we found the town had taken a shelling and the excitement was high. After dinner the general said the Battalion was under fire, so Taylor and I decided to go forward. I ran to my room to get my bed roll and a few things. Taylor said that we would be back that night, so there was no need to take the bed roll. I was glad later that I didn't take it, because through the months that followed I had hopes that some American was using it instead of a German.

I usually carried my New Testament with me, but had left it in my room that morning. However, when I saw it, I was prompted to take it along. I had fixed it up while in the States so that it and it alone would serve my purpose. I also had cut out pages 211 to 222 from our church

Manual which contained all the rituals of the church and pasted them in the back. I had a number of Calls to Worship and Helps for Bible Study pasted in it, to say nothing of the outlines and notes. After I was taken prisoner, the only paper I had on which to keep a diary was the backs of these.

UP TO THE FRONT

Arden T. Schofield, my assistant, had the jeep ready and we were soon off to the front. Chaplain Taylor had been to the 591st Battalion and knew the way and since they were in a seemingly more dangerous position, he being the senior chaplain, chose that and sent me to the other three. We had to stop several times because of bursting shells and to make sure the way was still open. At one stop I met Captain Cagle of the 589th Service Battery on the cut off around Purple Heart crossing and he said the way was still clear. Purple Heart Corner was a curve, a curve and a stretch that the enemy had under observation and shelled often. So many men were wounded there that we nicknamed it "Purple Heart Corner." It was one place where I did not have to tell "Scho" to speed up. He wanted to get over that stretch just as much as I did. The next time I met Capt. Cagle was in a prison camp and he told me of the stand made by that part of his battery. Nineteen men held the company position against many attacking Germans and in so doing, they killed thirty-three and wounded many others without losing a man. I had spent a lot of time with these men and learned to like and understand them and it made me feel good to know that during that battle they thought of me. Cagle said the men kept saying, "I wish Chaplain Moore were here. Do you think he will come?" They did so well, I don't think they needed me. I was the one needing them.

Many were the times that I looked at Scho and asked him if he could get his carbine out if we were fired upon. Often when we were stopped I had him go

through the procedure to make sure he could. That carbine may not have been able to stop a German tank, but when I didn't have the sign of a gun, it did lend its shining moral support. Only a chaplain or a medic can understand my feeling of being under fire and near the enemy and yet without any means of offering resistance. It wasn't too much fun to think of being fired upon and nothing to do but duck. As we rode on to the battalion, that afternoon of the sixteenth, I thought of how we would either speed up if fired upon or if too much fire how we would jump out and scramble into a ditch. I even asked Scho what he would do and told him to be ready to act if the occasion called for it.

We were not long in coming back to the company position of the 590th Battalion after leaving "Purple Heart Corner." I went in and asked about the situation and found that the Germans were closing in.

They told me I could not get through to the other two battalions--the 592nd and 589th. Later they were ordered to move the alternate positions and 592nd did, but only about one-half of the 589th got through.

OUR FIRST CASUALTIES

I spent most of my time at the Aid Station. A number of men were brought in--some from the 422nd Infantry Regiment and one or two Germans, but most were from A Battery of the 590th Battalion. A call came in that A Battery was being hit hard and several were wounded, including Capt. Pitts, the Battery Commander. Lt. James Youzoh, our medic and his driver went out to bring back the wounded; when he returned, he brought the sad news that Capt. Pitts died. Friday, the day before, I had been with Capt. Pitts and he had decided upon a place for services. We went into an old church and found an organ. He said he would like to hear it so I had Scho play it for him. We examined it first, however, to be sure it was not mined. After Scho finished, Pitts told of his enjoyable

visit with his sister. She was a Red Cross worker and had found it possible to spend a few hours with him a day or two before.

PRISONER OF THE GERMANS

After the shelling, Lt. Col. C. E. Lackey, Nashville, Tennessee, the Battalion Commander, said it would be permissible for me to go and bring back the body of Capt. Pitts for Christian burial. Scho and I went up and some of the captain's men helped us and we brought his remains back to the Aid Station.

Most of the afternoon was spent in the Aid Station helping as best we could. We held lights, carried the wounded, helped give blood plasma, and had prayer with every soldier. Some were seriously wounded; some died and others were more fortunate. About five o'clock I decided to return to St. Vith, but was talked out of it. Again we got in the jeep and started but this time Captain Irving Chapnick of New York City, Headquarters Battery 590th, came and said he and his men would appreciate it if I would stay there that night. I didn't have my bed roll, but when they said they would fix a place for Scho and me, we stayed. Capt. Luzzie, of Chicago, a member of the staff, fixed me up with a sack which belonged to Capt. Lamb, a liaison officer, who was up with the infantry. It may have been just as well that I stayed for the Germans cut off the road a few hours later and then ambushed the Division Artillery Staff as they pulled out. Lt. Martin was killed in the skirmish. When we were at Camp Myles Standish, Martin and I led all the staff members around the two and one-half miles commando course. Each time we were neck and neck as we came in but I was lucky enough to be a step or two ahead when we finished. He was a good soldier. He did commendable work and all of us thought well of him. Jerry paratroopers got him. We heard that several others were killed, but those rumors were false for which we were thankful.

A SLEEPLESS NIGHT

We didn't sleep much that Saturday night. We were alerted and had to be ready to move in five minutes. We packed everything and then just waited. We hated to leave the company post as it was a big, well-built stone building. The manager of the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas, Texas, had been there with the 2nd Division Artillery and had a sign made which he hung out on the front. It said "The Adolphus Hotel of Dallas, Texas, and Germany." It didn't grace the Adolphus, but it did make me feel a little nearer home.

This old inn which nestled in the Ardennes Forest out on a small German road was our fortress and we felt somewhat secure in it. We were ordered back but the road was cut off by the Germans by the time we were to move and we were in a fix. Our heavy guns that could do so much damage at a reasonable range were only burdens to bear as the Heinies began to close in on us. We began to realize that the enemy was to the left and to the right as well as to the rear. We could see signs of Jerry all around.

What to do was left up to the colonel. His decision meant a lot and we all knew it. If we had had enough small arms, we could have fought it out but artillerymen are not infantrymen, and are not fully equipped for that type of warfare. Col. Lackey proved to be more than even his closest friends would have suggested a few days before. He made his decisions in all calmness and confidence. Finally he said, "Men, we are surrounded, we will go forward."

JOINING THE DOUGHBOYS

Early Sunday morning we began to move forward to join the 422nd and 423rd Infantry Regiment. I was with the medics. As we started to leave Lt. Youzoh said someone would have to stay with the wounded. We would have carried them but some were seriously wounded and we did not have transportation. I

noticed all the medics were grave-faced. I asked what was wrong and they told me of the decision. I wanted to know who was to stay. When I found that every last medic had volunteered, even though they knew the Germans would overrun them in a few hours, my heart swelled up within me with pride to be associated with such men. They couldn't all stay so Youzoh took the highest ranking noncom. I found him and was going to say a number of things to him, but my eyes filled with tears. All I said was, "Sarg, may God bless and keep you. I know you'll take good care of the men." I gripped his hand and we were off.

The Germans sent out a few planes to strafe us but thanks to our own Air Forces we were saved. On one occasion I looked back down the column and saw a Jerry coming in low and about that time a P-47 was on his tail. They went down a valley and in a second or two the P-47 shot up toward the heavens and was followed by a burst of smoke coming from a burning Jerry. Other Germans had to hit the silk as their planes tumbled to the earth.

DIGGING IN ON SCHNEE NIFEL RIDGE

The Ardennes Forest is not one continuous forest as one might think, but rather a lot of smaller groves of well-arranged pines. The section where we were located was called Schnee Nifel Ridge and parts of it extended into the Seigfried lines. Several of the pillboxes were used as "command posts" or "aid stations." It was a very hilly section and the valley always kept one in suspense.

Sunday evening, after locating between the two infantry regiments, Scho and I dug in for the night. We did not spare the energy. We were afraid we would be shelled during the night so we made a real covering. We cut several logs and placed them over our fox-hole. We then put brush on top of the logs to make

the top hold dirt. After that, we piled all the dirt back on top of both brush and logs. All the time we had to endure falling and melting snow. It seemed it would melt to get us wet and then snow again to replace the diminishing supply. It was rough for us but worse for the G.I.'s in the outposts. Often the medics brought a man back who had stood in ice water until his feet were frozen. He had to stay in his fox-hole as it was the only place he had and it was often filled with water.

We saw a number of German prisoners brought back. Our military police hauled them in by the dozens. They were all ages and types. Some looked like kids while others looked like old men and some looked like good soldiers.

ATTEMPTS TO BREAK OUT

We knew we were cut off and were looking for our tanks to come through to us. We felt that just as soon as they broke through we would be all right again. But the hours ran into a day and then two. Monday, besides fighting and waiting for the tanks, we started back to Schonberg. We were about in the center of the two infantries as we moved back. Our men set up their guns several times and then we would have to pull out again. The excitement ran high when the word came to us that German tanks were closing in on us. A call for anti-tank weapons came through and we all made way for them to move up. When in a few minutes the word came back that the tanks were friendly we felt relieved.

The men couldn't take the roads so we had to hit the valley and try crossing a small stream and get back to Schonberg. All night we moved to the sound of burp and machine gun fire. Flares went off every now and then. We didn't have to ask any longer, "Will we ever see combat?" for we were in the very center. About 10:00 A.M. Tuesday, as we were going to chow, Jerry opened up on us. We had moved into the bed of a valley and the enemy had all the high ground about

us. We were caught in a blasting barrage which had a demolishing effect. We were "zeroed in" and they cut loose with 88's, artillery, burp guns, and in fact everything they could use. One old boy expressed it when he said, "They threw everything, including the kitchen sink, at us." Another officer, who had seen two years of combat, told me that he saw more fire power that morning than during any other period of his overseas experience.

All I know is that Scho, another fellow, and I did our best to dig in. We had a little valley by the jeep so we just cleaned it out. We would work until they started firing again and then we would hit the dirt. After the shelling we would dig some more. I was carrying some splints for the medics so we piled them beside our hole and felt better protected. One shell hit so close we felt some rocks strike our helmets so during the lull that followed we ran through the grove of trees where Jerry had been shelling. Sure enough his next round landed where we had been.

TRAPPED

It was not long until we heard some of the men dismantling their guns and destroying vehicles. We called down and asked what was going on. The word came up that we were surrendering. I had heard one lecture on the technique of surrendering but I had never once thought of surrendering and the first words I said were, "No! We can't do that!" But after we made our way to the clearing surely enough we were doing just that. I turned to Scho, who was very nervous and said, "Let's make a break for it." It looked like we could make it across several hundred yards and into another grove of trees, but he didn't want to. I insisted, but he said, "Chaplain, we will get shot. The Krauts will kill us." About that time I looked down and saw about 600 of our men with their hands up in the air or behind their head and several thoughts came to me. I knew God had called me into the work of the chaplaincy--I had felt

that keenly. Even though it meant giving up my church and leaving my wife and baby I felt I must do it. I did all that conscious that I was in the center of God's will. Now, while here surrendering, I thought, "Doubtless these men will need a chaplain in the prison camp and it must be that God would have me go."

SURRENDER

I turned to Scho and said, "These men will need a chaplain in prison camp and maybe we had better go with them." He was happy and exclaimed, "I think that is best, chaplain." I then did one of the hardest things that I ever have done. I forced my hand into my pocket and got my white handkerchief and lifted it above my head in surrender. We walked out in full view and turned ourselves over in surrender to a little S. S. Lieutenant. I placed myself at his mercy. He had the opportunity to do with me what he would. Yet in that surrender there was one reservation and that reservation was my Christ. I did not surrender Him! I did not deny Him! I kept Him enthroned within my heart and He stayed by my side! He wanted to be there and I wanted Him more than anything. I can tell you now that in a moment like that He is the Friend worth having. He does not flee. He will not forsake His own. He and I talked together a lot those first days of captivity. In fact, there wasn't a day that passed that we didn't get better acquainted.

SEARCHED

I have lived with the G. I.'s for some time and I find you cannot get ahead of them. We were turned to noncoms and they were searching us, but the G. I.'s passed the word back that they were taking watches and knives as well as a number of other things. So I slipped my watch up my arm and reached into my pocket to get my knife. That knife had occasioned me a lot of effort. I had walked all over Boston to find it. It was a pre-war Boy Scout knife and I had paid \$2.25 for it. I hated to lose it and I didn't

want the Germans to get it, so I pulled it out and dropped it in the snow and stepped on it. I guess it is rusting in German soil now.

A PRISONER ON THE MARCH

After they reached us, we were marched about ten miles to Blaiolf. There a more thorough searching took place and we were put in a large barn. It had often felt the impact of our artillery shells and the roof looked like a screen. Later they moved the officers to another building for the night. But before daybreak, we were on the march again this time for about thirty-three miles. The guards would tell us just five more kilometers or ten more and then after marching that it was ten more or fifteen more, until we had marched all day and up until nine o'clock that night. It was a long and eventful day. The snow covered most of the ground and the wind blew hard as we would go over a hill into the next little valley.

The towns were for the most part destroyed. We passed through Prum and it was a mere shell of a town. It was in range of our artillery and I think the Air Corps must have helped out because the rail yards had pits all over.

GERMAN CIVILIANS

The people lined the streets as we passed through and it was amusing to try to read the various expressions. It seemed some were sympathetic and yet afraid to say so. Others had blank stares that I had never seen before. You could not tell whether you were hated or welcomed, whether they were glad or sorry. However, there were others whom we did not have to question. I saw many that laughed and reminded me of a conqueror's glee. They even placed their fingers to their throats and drew the hand across. We could easily guess what they meant when we noticed the hatred in their eyes and the hiss in their voices. Their little children did not stand and wave in innocence. They were corrected when an attempt was made, and most of them knew we were the "hated enemy."

S.S. TROOPERS

Those who ventured to do us harm were the S. S. Troops along the way. At one place several stepped out of buildings along the streets of a small town and took from the soldiers the watches that they had managed to get by the first guards. Others took the galoshes from the men who carried them over the shoulders because it was difficult to march in them. Some took other things they desired. I managed to get by them without loss, but when we stopped, Major Irving Tietzl, St. Louis, Missouri, made a complaint; and the Germans, to prove they had the power, made all of us take our galoshes off and leave them for the Germans. Most of the men tried to look at the bright side of it all and since we had seen a lot of their equipment, we thought we would soon be back in American hands and could get more galoshes.

Their tanks which we passed were larger than anything we had seen. We figured they were the Royal Tiger tanks. I marched beside one at one time as it was stopped on the road that we had taken and I had an opportunity to look it over. It was a monster and we knew it packed death with every shell. The other equipment was, from all appearances, inefficient. They served their soldiers soup from hand pushed carts. Their supplies were brought up by horse-drawn wagons. We saw but few trucks and most of these were old. How they continued to give such stubborn resistance was hard to understand outside of the fact that the German was a determined soldier. His persistence regardless of odds, plus the fact that the S. S. Troops were prodding him on, caused us much grief.

A BITE OF FOOD, A DRINK OF WATER

It was during one of the halts on this thirty-three mile march that I realized I was hungry. Most of us hadn't taken time to eat more than two or three meals in four

days of combat and during the two days we had been in Jerry's hands we hadn't had any food, so most of us were hungry. We had stopped along the road for a rest when several Russian, forced laborers passed us. One little fellow had on about three ragged coats and the same number of ragged pants with rags around his feet. He learned we were American and he would put his hands in a hole and pull out an apple or two, then into another hole and another apple. I saw him do this several times and I wished he would "hold out" until he got to me. Surely enough, his hand went into the last hole and came out with three apples and one fell by me. I took it and turned to the medic beside me and asked if a black apple would hurt a person. He did not give me too much satisfaction but I can tell you rotten apples won't hurt you--in fact it was good. As I finished, core, seeds and all, I thought, "I must be really hungry to eat something like that."

The water we had was snow that we caught up in our hands or the melting snow from off the farm yards that ran down the small ditches beside the road. The last few miles of the march was up-grade and when we arrived at Gerolstein at 9:00 P.M., we were tired.

The men were warmed from the march and it was cold. The wind was blowing and the sleet coming down was too much. About three dozen of the men just passed out. A soldier would close his eyes and drop. It had a bad effect on the rest so I twice walked the mile and a half line. Once trying to get them to sing and then when they started to fall out, I tried to get them to stand in little groups and pack as close together as possible. We had tried it and it was warm in the center. About five o'clock in the morning we moved in between two buildings and it was better.

NAZI CHOW

That day they started feeding us. The Germans learned that day that the G. I. could still outsmart them. The fellows were lined up at one corner of a building

and were given a seventh of a loaf of bread and one-seventh of a number three can of fat "bully beef" each. A number of them pushed around the building and back in line until the Kraut had to make extra trips for food. I got my first ration about 3:45 p.m. We were then marched to the boxcars and started on our ride to Bad Orb.

BOXCAR RIDE

At first we thought we were lucky to get on boxcars but found out that was the worst place to be in Germany. By night the R.A.F. would bomb the marshalling yards and by day our fighters would strafe the engine and most of the cars. Over a dozen times our fighters were overhead, but I was never with a group at the time of a strafing. Some of the men that had been through that experience told of hearing the planes dive and then the bullets rip through the cars and set them on fire. The small bombs the planes carried would hit the engine and cause a terrific explosion. I am glad I missed that experience because I had enough without it.

R. A. F. BOMBERS OVERHEAD

We were hit by the Allied heavies and it was while we were on this trip that we were bombed by the R. A. F. The Germans had about 3,500 of us and had pulled us into the marshalling yards at Limburg, Germany. We had been there some time waiting for an engine to return. Of course, we were crowded as usual. They placed forty to sixty-seven men in one boxcar. A sign on the outside read "40 men or 8 horses" and I am sure that 8 horses would have crowded the little cars. They were not the kind of boxcars we have in America. They were much smaller and had only two small wheels at either end. At one time they put thirty-two in one end of a car and placed eight guards in the other end. Barbed wire separated us and it was most uncomfortable. We couldn't lie down very well so most would sit up all night and try to sleep. We had

but little water and I saw many melt the frost which formed on the bolts that came through the car for drinking water. We had very little food from the time we got on the cars from December 21 to December 25. I believe it was two-sevenths of a loaf of bread, about two spoonfuls of dark syrup and water. You can use your imagination and think of our sanitary conditions. It was severely cold and all of us had travelled under much more pleasant conditions.

On the night of December 23 we heard the air-raid alarm and soon the R. A. F. planes were overhead. We heard their flare bombs coming down and then the whole place lit up. One officer in our car was from the Air Corp. He had come to visit his doughboy brother and he was trapped with us. He told us that the British flares had marked the target and we were the target. We knew the bombers would soon be over and drop their bombs. The excitement ran high for a few seconds and then different ones of us began to call out that we were officers and should make some decision as to what to do. We got the door open but decided not to break out. We heard a shot and later found that one fellow broke out and was shot by the guard. We felt we would be just as safe there as out running around.

SCREAMING BOMBS FALL ON US

In about four minutes we heard more planes coming and knew something would soon be happening. We were really "sweating it out." I was face down beside the door of the car and seconds seemed like days. We could hear the whistling, screeching sound of the bombs on their way down. They hit nearby and our car rocked on the tracks. The doors shook and rocks hit the car but most of the bombs had fallen forward and none of the cars were hit. Collier told us that this was a small target and possibly we would have only two waves of planes and, sure enough, we could hear more planes coming.

A lot of people won't believe such things and have an explanation that they just happen that way but here is what took place. I didn't pray for myself, but as I thought of the 3,500 men there at the mercy of the bombers I just thought a prayer. "Now, Lord, it won't be hard for you to just hold your hand over these men and cause the bombs to turn to the one side and to the other. It would save so many lives."

When I returned home I found my wife had written me many letters that were returned so I read them. The one written on December 23, while we were out under the bombers, read something like this: "Kent (our little boy who was at that time just under two years old) and I were at church today and Kent wanted to go to sleep."

His mother had taught him to say his prayers before going to sleep so he said, "Mommie, Kent say prayers." After he placed his head on her shoulder, he said, "Father, bless and keep my Daddy and bring him home to me and Mommy." I do not know what you believe, but I still believe what I want to about it.

PRISONER OF THE GERMANS 23

Since the bombs fell either to the left or right of us or just ahead of us, I have it figured out like this-- God, who heard the prayer of a two-year-old babe must have felt He could not deny him his request and perhaps the pleas of others.

The only ones killed or wounded were those who broke out. The next day I saw the bodies of eight or twelve men and had the report that thirty-five were wounded. Because the guards would not allow the chaplains to bury the men, the records were left to those in charge.

CHRISTMAS EVE

On December 24 we convinced the guards that it would be to their advantage if they would let the

chaplains talk to the men. So Chaplains Neal, Paul W. Cavanaugh and I went to the eighty boxcars and spoke to the men. We told them of the latest news we had heard and encouraged them to stay in the cars in case of another bombing because the cars offered a little protection. We advised them to have Christmas services and sing Christmas songs. We went from car to car, until three train loads or about 3,500 had been spoken to. During our rounds, the men asked many questions we could not answer such as: "Where are we going? What are they going to do with us? Why don't we get food? Don't they know we feed their prisoners better than this?"

Some groups wanted us to stay for a brief service. It was impossible to do more than talk to them a minute or two and have prayer. It was very cold and we had to hold on to the ice-covered steel bars of the cars and speak through small holes or windows. Many told of the prayer meetings they had the night before and about singing Christmas songs. Later, after we were in camp, we heard even more of such things. The American soldiers had asked God to spare their lives while the bombs were falling and since He had done so, they had a service of Thanksgiving. Many of them may forget God, but I believe many never will.

One soldier from the West told that his buddies knew he had prayed before the bombing so after it was over, they asked him to lead them in a service. He had never done anything like that in his life, but they had asked so he tried. They sang, he read his Bible and talked to them. Then they asked him to pray for water, bread, and an engine. He did so, not knowing that we were doing the same in our car and others in their cars.

WATER

This is what happened. The first thing we knew, the "goon" (that is what we called the guards) came along the cars, opened the doors and set water in. We could hear them at the cars ahead of us, then all of a sudden

they were at our car and we had water. Then we could hear them coming again. Our door opened and we had a seventh of a loaf of bread per man. Soon after, we heard a toylike whistle go peep-peep, a bump, a clang and we had an engine. We were moving, and most of the soldiers were praising God. The train jerked and tugged us along until we finally rolled into Bad Orb. Among other things I was homesick to hear a good strong American train whistle. I had never seen or heard anything like the little engines with the toy whistles we had to endure in Germany.

LIFE IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP

We dropped out of the boxcars onto the side-walks of the little summer resort town of Bad Orb, Germany. The people were out to see the Americans. We could tell they hadn't seen anything like it before. There was a ray of hope for success in their war-worn faces. Little did they know that in a few months our tanks, doughboys, our armies would be marching through their town. The American. Prisoners, in the midst of captivity, cold and hunger, would often say, "Laugh now, you Krauts, it won't be long."

We marched through Bad Orb and after several miles up a high hill on the very top we came to our "home."

Dogs barked as we trudged through the snow and into our quarters. The camp had housed Russians and French, but we were the first Americans to occupy it.

Germany seemed to have three classes of camps. The best were for the American and British, next came the French and Serbs, while the Russians and Poles were last. This was a third-rate camp and most of the men who had to stay there for several months were hospital cases. I lost about thirty pounds from the time I was captured until I left that camp, or about a pound a day. Others lost as much as one-fifth of their weight.

CHRISTMAS DAY AT BAD ORB

Our first day in Bad Orb was Christmas. They knew we were coming and gave us a whole day's food at one time. It was tea, soup, and bread. Each morning we had either ersatz [substitute] tea, or coffee. The tea was awful and the coffee was little better. If you would like to try the coffee, take six acorns and burn them. Boil them in a pint of water for twenty minutes. Serve while lukewarm.

For dinner we usually had a thin soup. Some of the soups were made from carrots, cabbage or potatoes. The best was like a stew. We got "the stew" on Thursday and Sunday. Sometimes it had a bite or two of meat in it. One day some of the men said they saw two horses pulling a wagon to the kitchen. A third horse was in the wagon with hoofs pointing toward the heavens. The next day they saw four hoofs in the corner of the kitchen and we had a little meat in our stew. Horse meat was not too bad--in fact, we all hoped for more of it. Some of the fellows could tell you what cat meat tastes like.

The worst soup was called "green hornet" or "green death." It was made out of everything that was green. It had old cabbage, kohlrabi tops and such like in it. (Kohlrabi is a beet used to feed the cows and was very bitter.) There were little pine needles in the soup and they bothered me more than anything else. We had to bite them in two, or they would gag us as they went down. Each man's bowl of soup had an ample supply of little white worms which were about three-fourths of an inch long. I picked them out the first time, then I realized that they were boiled and the meat was rationed, so I just ate them with the soup. In fact, it was impossible to eat the soup without the worms, and I found that worms won't kill a man. The "green hornet" made a lot of the men sick just to smell it. Some got dysentery, but others were not affected.

PRECIOUS RED CROSS BOXES

After we moved to Hammelburg, the food improved. We had our own cooks, but they had to prepare what Jerry gave, so it wasn't much better. We did have extra soup on several occasions. While there we got two complete Red Cross boxes that greatly helped us. The drawing of Red Cross boxes had many angles. Three parties were involved--the prisoners, the Germans, and the Red Cross authorities. The Red Cross officials tried to get the boxes to us as soon as they could. The Germans took charge of issuing them to us. It was several weeks before the Germans told us we were to write to Geneva and notify them of our need. Thus many days were lost to begin with. Transportation and other hindrances kept us from ever drawing a box that was intended for us.

We were fortunate to draw two boxes that had been sent to the Serbs. The Serbs had a few more boxes than they needed to go around so they diverted them to us. We did not have enough boxes to give each man one, so we divided them. Most of the time it would be one-half box per man. Thus the boxes were secured through the kindness of the Serbs and by permission of the Nazi. (All the food within the box was raised, canned or packed in the U.S.A.) In seventeen weeks we drew two boxes per man.

The Germans were cantankerous in issuing them. They had petty reasons for not giving us the boxes, containers and food. The boxes and cans they kept. They also kept the salt and pepper. They were afraid we would use salt and pepper to throw the dogs off our tracks should we escape.

There were two cans that we were allowed to keep. One contained soluble coffee and the other powdered milk. These cans were opened for us. They said they opened them to see if they contained what was supposed to be in them. The reason they kept the cans was so we would not use the cans to dig out. I believe they didn't want us to build up a food supply

and when the perishable foods were opened we had to use them. I also believe they wanted to show us they were running the "show."

LINE UP FOR BOXES

We drew boxes from the warehouse by room. Our room sent one man for each box we were allowed. Thus if we had forty men and were allowed a half box per man only twenty men went after the boxes. Chaplain Stonesifer and I drew together. He went after the first box and the next time I went for the second. We waited in our room until our turn and went to the warehouse which was outside our quarters. We lined up in front of a counter.

Six Germans stood behind the counter and each had a Serb E.M. as his helper. We divided our group so the same number of men faced each guard. The Serb enlisted man would then get a box and open it for the first American prisoner in line. The German would then open the cans and dump the contents in bowls or cans that we had brought. Needless to say it was a mess. In the bowl would be salmon, oleo, liver pattie, cheese, and sometimes jelly. We carried the one empty box that was issued to us and they threw the cigarettes, raisins, soap, candy, sugar, and other items into it. The next man stepped up and got his food stuff. After each man received his box we were marched back into our block and went to our room. There the fun began. The two men sharing the box would meet to divide it.

We cut everything in half and took turns choosing our portion, item by item. We tried not to eat everything up at one time. However, with a gnawing hunger at our stomachs it took great will power. The never-to-be-forgotten scene of trading took place about the time everyone finished dividing the food. It often started before. There were items that some didn't use and items that others didn't want. So we traded among ourselves. Four lumps of sugar for a K Ration cracker, salmon for

cheese, etc. Some were very good at trading and came out ahead and others lost. It gave us something to do and we got the items we most desired.

FOOD CONSERVATION

Food was precious and we didn't waste a bit. It would have made your heart ache to have seen grown men actually licking the knife in order not to waste a crumb of bread or a bit of oleo. Some even counted out raisin for raisin so one would not get more than the other. When we were getting 700 calories a day less than starvation diet, everything counted.

I have watched men stand for several minutes after the cutting of the bread before choosing their shares. We drew bread in loaves and enough for each man in the room to have a seventh or a ninth of a loaf, depending on whether we had a large or small supply. We had our rooms broken down to squads and we did everything by squads. My squad leader would draw one loaf of bread from the room leader. Then he would have one of us cut the bread. We even took turns cutting it. The man who cut today drew last and then he drew first the next day. We found that if a man was to cut the bread and then draw last he was very careful how he cut the pieces. When a man's turn came, he would step up and look over the pieces and take the one he wanted. If he touched a piece it was his. Many times I have seen a man lean over a piece of bread and compare it with another for some time before making up his mind. Some criticized others for making comparisons but there wasn't a man that didn't do it.

K. P. MUST GO ON

I said we did everything by squads. We had six squads in our room and one day Number One would clean the room and the next day Number Two had the opportunity. Then Number Three and Four and so

on around. Our brooms were made of brush and it was hard to sweep a wooden floor with brush. You can imagine how clean our rooms were. Each night, to add to the details of cleaning, we all used our "Smokey Joes" and the floor had ashes, grass and shavings all over it.

Smokey Joes were small tin-can stoves which the Serbs taught us to make. Some of them were made of three tin cans. One small can inside of a larger one provided the fire box. We made a draft by cutting a hole in the bottom and making grates out of parts of the tin can or wire, if we had been fortunate enough to get wire. The third can was fastened to the two in order to hold the container you desired to heat just above the flame. Some of these stoves were very good and required little fuel while others smoked up the place and never heated.

Fuel was a problem. Several soldiers found window facings would come off. I remember once going to the latrine and hearing something which sounded like nails being withdrawn. I spoke to the officer inside and returned to my room. The next day the facing around the window was gone. Posts which held up the clotheslines disappeared as did many items which didn't give protection from the snow or wind. Others of us had to use small sticks which we picked up when the snow melted. Before that, we took our Red Cross boxes and used them for fuel. The large outside box was made of layers of tar and paper and it made a hot flame. We were given only one such box per man and they did not last long. Sometimes the smoke would be so thick that we could not see across a room thirty-six feet wide. But when we had smoke that meant we had a little extra food and it was worth it. When we had extra food and fuel to cook it, we called it "bashing."

BASHING, A PASTIME

"What have you bashed of your box?" was an expression meaning, "How much of your Red Cross box is gone?" There were different methods of bashing.

Mine was most common for we were the group that ate things just about as fast as we could and still keep it more than a day. We enjoyed it by consuming it fast. Others enjoyed theirs by making it last over a long period and there were a very few who kept some of their food long after the others had eaten theirs. We called them "squirrels."

RECIPES NEW AND DIFFERENT

Neither time nor space would allow me to list all the concoctions or recipes we figured out in the months of prison life. The desire for food was the strongest one among most of the men. The talk, dreams, and thoughts had food as the theme. Can you imagine your stomach gnawing with hunger for five long months? That's the way it was with us. We tried many dishes but regardless of failure or success we always ate it. Whenever the dish happened to be a new one there would be an audience to see the expression of satisfaction or displeasure on the face of the "chef-of-the-moment."

We all learned the art of taking the "goon bread" and making things out of it. "Goon bread" was the Nazi G. I. ration which was 60 percent wheat, 38 percent rye and 5 percent sawdust. The wheat and rye gave food value and the sawdust was filling. It might have been baked months before but regardless of mold we ate every crumb. We used it as the base ingredient of all our cooking. We made pudding, cake, doughnuts and pies out of it. Although we made many things they all tasted the same. We did that to give us something to do.

AT HOME IN PRISON

Those of us who were captured during the last six months of the war had it very rough. We had to go to temporary camps and had no libraries, shower facilities, program of education or entertainment. We received several books after three months but all we could say

for them was that they were made of paper. We got two shower baths in five months but such a limited time was allowed in the shower that we never felt clean.

I never took my clothes off except to take the two showers. The nights were too cold and we had to get up so often that I found it was best to sleep fully clad.

Some of the men who were in old established camps or in Luftwaffe camps can hardly realize that we received so few Red Cross boxes. I had two complete boxes from December 19 to March 30. From March 30 to May 2 each of us received four and one-half boxes.

The reason we had so much difficulty was that we were in new camps and it took a long time for the Krauts to get supplies to us--so they said. A lot of our G. I.'s told of finding boxes and supplies in private houses nearby after the war was over.

THE WILL TO LIVE

Besides "bashing" we spent our time keeping alive. We would shave on certain days of the week. My days were Saturday and Tuesday. I had several blades but used one until it broke and then used another for the greater part of the five months. I shaved in cold water and used soap the "goons" had given us. I sharpened the blade on my boot and then on my hand to keep it in shape. It worked quite well. Once in a while I made up my bed. That is, I shook the blankets and fluffed up the straw in the gunny sack tick. It always slept better for at least one night. I had a G. I. blanket that I had carried with me. One of my comrades couldn't carry it anymore and was going to throw it away so I took it and carried it. I tied the sides and one end together with wire and made a sack out of it. The Krauts issued us two blankets so I took one and tied it the opposite way over the G.I. blanket and the third I folded over the sack and under the straw mattress. I had to start at the head and work down into it, but it was the only way to keep warm.

In some of the rooms discussions on various subjects were held in order to give us something to do. Discussions such as "Your Future Home" by some former builder, "Your Health" by a doctor, "Small Farming" by a farmer, and "Cattle Raising" were a few of the topics. I heard several of these lectures but one of the most interesting was on "Commercial Deep Sea Fishing."

A very common way of spending the evening was singing. The men would huddle around the stove or crawl in their sacks. There were request songs which included "The Lord's Prayer," "Always," and "My Blue Heaven." Among those on which everyone harmonized were "Home on the Range," "Down by the Old Mill Stream," "When Irish Eyes Are Smiling," and "I've Got Six Pence." For the most part the songs sung were old ballads, love songs, folk songs or religious numbers. Very seldom did the men sing suggestive songs and I greatly appreciated that.

With the supply of books that came from the Australians, we received an old phonograph. It had been given by the Y.M.C.A. It was broken and we had to turn the records by hand. We had several records but the one played continually was "Can't You Hear Me Calling, Caroline." "Deep in the Heart of Texas" was played often for Lt. Gale Pittman of San Antonio, Texas, and for me. However, the machine lasted only two days.

"Close that door" were the first words which greeted every man that stuck his head into our room. No man was ever too busy to voice his plea or to bellow his command. It was extremely cold outside and we were alert to conserve what little heat we had. There was "no respect of persons" and I cannot remember a man who was quick enough to escape the volley of voices.

PRISON GOBLINS

Our fears were many. Several men took the flu and we were not given a thing with which to fight disease. Although it was not mentioned, often we were afraid an epidemic would break out. I had managed to get my wound tablets by the guards and so turned them over to the medics, little thinking they meant much but when all such items were collected, we had a supply which doubtless saved several lives. Men would cough, all night long. I was sick about a week and had a deep cough that worried me for a while. The smoke from our Smokey Joes didn't help it much.

Our feet were constantly cold. I had gotten cold when I went to the boxcars and never did thaw out. We were forced to stand out several hours at Bad Orb while they searched for two missing men and my feet and legs got cold up to my knees. Many men dropped out that day and we saw them carried to the medics as lifeless as could be. Every time we had to stay out in the snow for any length of time we had cold feet for hours. I spent six days with my feet so dark and swollen that I had to hold them high to help the circulation.

Other fears were concerning the guards. We couldn't trust them. Two of our officers were shot, each within a few feet of my barracks. The Germans claimed they were guilty of an infraction of their rules.

WATCHING THE PRISON CLOCK

Time presented the greatest fear. When we were first made prisoners we thought that we would be out in about sixty days. The weeks passed and we thought ninety or 100 days would surely bring deliverance. The hundredth day did, but for so short a period! Time went on until I had been under the Jerries nearly five months. The days seemed so long and the

nights so dark but not once did I feel that we would never be freed. The uncertainty of the time tantalized us. It made the waiting hard and the men impatient. Liberation seemed so far away. I found that by living a day at a time and trusting the future to God was the surest and best way of passing the time.

NAZI AGENTS CONFER WITH CHAPLAINS

While at Bad Orb the chaplains were called one at a time into the office of a Nazi agent. He did not question us for military information. I believe the Nazis realized the war was lost for them but he wanted to sow seeds of distrust in our minds relative to our Allies and to try to justify their cause. He offered me a cigarette when I first went in and I, having never smoked and not planning to do so, refused.

He asked me what I thought of religion in Germany and if I could explain Christ's attitude about war?

He asked, "Do you think that Christ would approve your bombers dropping bombs on women and children?"

I reminded him of the Blitz and of his V-1 and V-2 bombs, and said that Christ did not approve killing in any country. I told him that ours was a nasty but necessary job and we wanted it over as soon as possible.

He wanted to know why we were allied with Russia, and I asked why they were allied with Japan?

He said that Japan made them a good ally; then continued to tell me all kinds of things about Russia and of Germany's relations with her.

I told him that Russia had made us a good ally. I am sure he knew that, for Russia had destroyed much of Germany's power and might.

A CHAPLAIN AT WORK IN PRISON

The work of the chaplain did not stop when he became a prisoner. It increased rather than lessened our responsibilities and opportunities for doing spiritual work. There were seven Protestant and two Catholic chaplains in Hammelburg.

We started out with 500 officers in this camp and before the end of March we had 1,500. You can see that we were compelled several times to change our plans. We had four types of services. Sunday Worship, Evening Devotions, Morning Devotions, and Bible Study. I know God gave us extra strength to conduct these services for without Him we would have failed.

1. The Sunday Worship services had to be written out and submitted to the German officer. He sent someone to these services or came himself for censorship. I assisted in one of the Sunday morning services every Sunday and took turns bringing the messages with the others. We saw good results from these services and the men seemed to appreciate them.
2. The Evening Devotions were held without the Germans' permission. We went to the rooms and sang songs, read the Bible, brought a message and had prayer. In these services, I became better acquainted with the men and felt their needs more keenly. One month I had eight rooms to which I went for services. Some nights I would hold two services. The men in some of the rooms were indifferent. Some would play cards and bash their food while others gathered for service.

The men in Barracks 12, Room 8, were most considerate of me. At first they didn't know the songs so I took a few of the sheets the Germans had given me to write sermons on and gave them to the fellows and they copied songs from my New Testament until we had five copies or books with 16 songs in them.

We learned those songs so well that we had some of the best singing I have ever heard. They were songs like "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me," "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Onward, Christian Soldiers." The favorites were "Love Lifted Me," "I Come to the Garden Alone," and "How Firm a Foundation." The officers in this room would stop cooking or whatever they were doing when I came in and would join in the worship. When I left they would call out, "Come again, Chaplain."

I always went away blessed. I imagine I got more out of it than they did. I would like to give their names here but I had other rooms like that and it would be impossible to give the names of all. It was so cold at times that the services were held with many of the men in their sacks. Only eternity will reveal the good accomplished.

3. The Morning Devotions were started to help the chaplains in their inner lives. We were giving out in the services and felt we needed a time of inspiration for ourselves. Chaplain Ralph E. Maness, of Springfield, Missouri, was put in charge but after several services was sent to Stalag XII-A and I was appointed to his place. The men heard of the services and asked to attend. We let them come and before long we were having 75 to 100 and on up to 125. To attend, one had to run the risk of being caught in a cold building during air-raid alarms. I remember one time we were caught and had to stay there for several hours. If you get some idea of the price the men had to pay to attend the services, you can see that they really wanted to worship.

FRIENDS GET TOGETHER

4. The Bible Study groups started because some of the young officers wanted to give themselves to the ministry. One day word came to me that there was an Air Corps officer who had been moved into camp and who had gone to Baylor University at Waco, Texas. Since I had attended Baylor and lived in Waco, I went to his barracks to see him. He was Lt. Bob Moore

from Longview, Texas. I found he was very happy to see someone from home. Bob had taught music near Temple, Texas, and was choir leader at the First Baptist Church there. He told me about his experiences and that he felt God would have him devote his full time to the ministry. Since Chaplain Maness was a Baptist, I took Moore to see him. They started studying the Bible and in a few days Lt. Hobson Sinclair of Bowling Green, Kentucky, joined the group.

The class was turned over to me when Chaplain Maness left. Captain Harold Balwin of Hot Springs, Arkansas, and several others joined us and we had an attendance of from five to seven each day. We met from four to five o'clock daily. We had many hardships. When we met in the rooms, the others were playing cards or otherwise engaged and we had to talk above the noise. Sometimes it was difficult to pray freely while others were looking on. We went out in the sun on days when it was not too cold. We studied Paul's letters to Timothy. I tried to tell them what was expected of a preacher and showed them the need for the saving and sanctifying power of Jesus Christ.

NEW OFFICERS, NEW HOPE, NEW LIFE

March brought warmer weather and also a number of other officers and men to our camp from another camp in the north. We had a spring house-cleaning and everyone began to feel better. Among the number that had been marched from North Poland in front of the advancing Russians was a man from Waco, Texas, by the name of Roger Cannon. When I was pastor in Waco, his sisters who were members of our Sunday school, told us about their brother who was missing in action that day. I stopped to see their mother, and had prayer with her. I met Lt. Batt from Waxahachie, Texas, and he was telling me about this Warrant Officer from Waco. I went to meet him and as he came down the steps I recognized him from a picture and the first thing

I asked was, "You are not Roger Cannon, who lived on Novelty Street in Waco, are you?" He said he was and then I told him about the time I had last seen his folks. That was an unusual experience, stopping to comfort his mother and later becoming a fellow prisoner with him. He had been a prisoner much longer than I and he knew a lot more about it. He helped me out several times. I heard he was killed in a tank battle that followed our meeting and I was very concerned about carrying the bad news back to his mother, but was glad when I met him again at Moosburg and found that he was very much alive.

TYPICAL PERIOD OF PRISON LIFE

I made notes on the back of pictures, sermon outlines, etc. The following is an example: March 10, "I have charge of Morning Devotions, also services for three rooms of officers and three rooms of enlisted men. Beautiful weather these last two days. Change in spirit of camp.

March 11: Col. Goode took over as C.O. of camp. Exacts discipline.

March 13: Warm, got a haircut. Lewis cut it with scissors. Changed beds to near the window. Past week I have used Psalms 42, 46, 69, 70, and 71. My thoughts have been "God is alive." He will provide for all our needs. Many are very doubtful and pessimistic.

March 14: We hear we may draw an unexpected Red Cross box tomorrow.

Yes, God does provide. Praise Him.

March 16: Washed jacket.

March 18: Good service. Over 500 out. Good meal, Red Cross box is gone. Rumors about good war news.

March 20: No extra food but good thick pea soup. I got thirds.

March 21: After Sunday's service I am still hearing many good reports. Dozens have told me what help they have received. Never had such a response. Praise God for His blessings.

March 27: Have had a rough time. Good news. Beautiful day. Nothing unusual (P.S. April 3) on March 27 at 3:45 I held service under fire of our tanks. Liberation. Marched out. 11:00 returned to camp. 3:30 a.m.

March 28: Started marching across Germany.

PRISON FARE

I would like to expound on every word that I recorded so that you might realize how the Americans lived while in prison but that will be impossible. Every word has a lot of meaning to me. For example, on March 20 I wrote "I got thirds." That meant I got a little extra food. I also wrote on that day "no extra food" and that had reference to food over and above the daily ration we had been getting. Our C.O. had taken a few cases to the German medic and he said we did need more food and they promised it but on this day we got word we would not get the extra food.

OUR RATION BOARD

Our food was cooked in the kitchen and a detail from our room went after it and brought it back to the room in a large tub vat. I was on detail several times and it was a job to carry the vat just one block. Once the food was in our room, we had one man to dish it out. Each man lined up in his place and carried his bowl by the vat and received one cup of soup. There would always be another half cup each so we went around twice. There were times even after that when

there would be a little left so rather than try to give everyone a third helping we had voted to give another cupful as long as it held out. One day five men would get thirds or perhaps no one would. The next time there were thirds we started where we had left off. We hoped for thirds on a day when the soup was thick. This day it was soy bean soup and rather thick so I felt blessed to get thirds on that day. We always had a problem with the soup. There were not many solids and what few potatoes or carrots or peas were in the soup would go to the bottom. So we selected one man to stir the soup while the other dished it out and to further insure more equal distribution, the squad which was served first one day would be served last the next day.

DAY OF LIBERATION

On March 27 I had written, "Nothing unusual," and when I wrote again on April 3, I had to change it. Then, I wrote, "I held service under tank fire. Liberation and marched out." It happened like this. We had been hearing artillery shells for a week or more in the distance and then it sounded like tank fire. In fact, we had a lot of debate on the subject.

On March 27, the German General in charge told us we would have to leave camp March 28 at 5:00 a.m., but many doubted that he would march so many of us out like that. However, we started to get ready. Our service was called off for the day and men were packing and making ready for the march. What to carry and what to leave behind were big decisions and we went from room to room finding what the next group were going to do. Since Roger Cannon from Waco had marched several weeks he knew and I went to ask him. He helped me out by giving me several pointers.

I found that the Catholics were going to have Mass and several men said they wanted at least a prayer service so I went to the Senior Chaplain and the Colonel and got permission to hold the service

which had been called off. Both services were at 3:45 p.m. Student preachers helped me announce it. As we gathered for the service, we noticed the Jerries running back and forth on the hill. We saw a number of ambulances moving back and German civilians running everywhere. We had a rumor that our tanks might get to us before the guards marched us out. Men stood on the highest ground in order to see what was taking place. Hope was written on every face. Tank fire sounded almost like it was over the hill. We remarked to one another, "Doesn't that sound like music?" "Am I hearing things?" "Can you believe what you hear?" But it was time to start services, so I went inside and others gathered. Chaplain Paul W. Cavanaugh was to conduct Mass in a room beside ours. The Catholic men were already in and service was about to start.

I believe we had 250 to 300 Protestant men for our service and I had asked Chaplain Stonesifer to help me. Just as I stood up to begin, I noticed a flash to my right at the windows and an explosion. The windows shook and every man hit the floor. Since we didn't have a pulpit I had placed a pool table in front of the room and was standing behind it. When the explosion occurred I started under it but those in front had gotten there first and I found shelter under the organ. In a moment I looked up and saw Chaplain Matthews, a six-foot-four-inch chaplain from Minneapolis, Minnesota, standing there. I had been told that he was the bravest chaplain on the line and he had been in combat for some time, so I crawled out and stood beside him. I asked him what he thought we ought to do and he said to go ahead with the service. So I said, "Men, you may know more about shells than I do but I think we are just about as safe here as anywhere so we will go on with the service." I suggested that everyone get down and away from the windows and to the safest places possible. There was a bit of laughter at our situation but a lot of seriousness, too.

Afterwards, I questioned whether this room was the safest place for we could hear the shells whistle over and we too caught the sound of small arms fire. I led in the singing of two or three songs and Richard I. Purvis of Oakland, California, was at the organ, and he is one of the best. He had toured the country several times giving religious and classical concerts.

To my left was Chaplain Stonesifer and I called on him to lead in prayer. Half way through that prayer we had another explosion close by and this time I made it first under the pool table. When I looked out Stonesifer had dropped on his knees and had not missed a word. He was still going strong, in fact, I think he had gained momentum. When he finished we got up and I spoke to the men for a few minutes. I had planned to give a message on "I Am the Bread of Life" but in the midst of fire and death I started talking about a Savior who could save in the face of death. I talked about Jesus Christ who could give peace in war, hope in despair, life in death, and I asked how many would like to pay the price to have that peace, hope and life. I told them the price was confession of sins, forsaking of sins and believing on Jesus Christ as Savior. Several accepted the invitation and let me pray with them. Chaplain Matthews dismissed our service.

When we got outside the guards had put up everything they had that was white so the tanks would not shell the camp too much. We heard that the camp was surrounded and that the Americans would soon be in. The Catholic service was over and I made my way through the crowd to Chaplain Cavanaugh and told him what had taken place. He said it was wonderful and we made the announcement to his men before they went out. I went back into the room where we had had services and since we were ordered not to leave the building the men were still there and Chaplain Koskamp, at their insistence, was leading them in a prayer of thanksgiving. A number of the men too were praying.

TANKS CLOSING IN

We were permitted to go to our rooms in small numbers, provided we ran nearby the buildings. Stoney and I went to our room and completed our packing because we wanted to march out with our own men. We talked of eating K and C rations, of being back in American hands and of the glorious liberation that was taking place. Small pieces of bread that we had saved seemed insignificant now that our own forces were near at hand. We began to think things were not so bad after all. It had been only one hundred days since most of us were taken prisoners. However, it looked like Jerry would never leave. We kept asking ourselves: "Will the tanks come on in? Will there be a long battle over us? How many will be killed? Will we make it?"

Stoney and I finally finished packing and were ready to leave at a moment's notice. I looked out the window and saw the bullets passing. The tracers could be seen and others could be heard. We hoped that it would not be long. We realized the buildings were well built and the walls might withstand tank fire but we were afraid the shells would come through the windows.

OUR FATHER

During the battle, Stoney and I got under our bunk and down on the floor. We felt that should glass shatter we would have the wooden slats of the bed to protect us. Down under that bed with bullets whistling around us, Stoney said, "Moore, let's have a word of prayer together." I agreed and I gripped his hand and he mine. We started, "Our Father, which art in heaven--" I have prayed that prayer many times before but with the sound of bullets in my ears and with the knowledge of death at hand, I could pray it with much more meaning. While we prayed there was something that came over me and I felt something like electricity going up and down my spine and through my hand

into his. I was possessed of calm and peace. It seemed like Someone had come under the bed with us. It was a calm and peace that only the presence of Jesus can give. I praised Him for His nearness and for the assurance that "all things work together for good to them that love God."

OLD GLORY WAVES AGAIN

I heard some of my comrades calling and as I looked out of the door I saw a scene that I shall never forget. There in formation was the German General and his Adjutant with a white flag of surrender. He was turning the camp over to the Americans. Beside them I saw our Colonel and our Adjutant and they had something I had not seen for some time. It had been saved for just such an occasion. There, held high in her rightful place, we beheld Old Glory waving in the breeze. The Serbs who had been prisoners had broken into our block and were gathering around. Some of our officers, too, were there. I watched one Serb as he ran forward, dropped on his knees before the American flag and reaching up took it in his hand and reverently placed the corner of the flag to his lips while tears of joy flowed from his eyes. Others expressed their relief in shouts and laughter.

Our spirit hit a high peak that night. We had not been so happy in months. We had been prisoners--now we were free. The future which had been so dark and uncertain was bright once again. We were with our troops. I felt like everything was all right. We had a few questions which were still unanswered but they were for the moment very unimportant.

Questions as to methods of moving us back, when our first big meal would be and what the Army would do with us? We were talking happily of the future, of predictions which various ones had made and who guessed the closest to and who farthest from the date of liberation.

It was an hour of rejoicing. I felt like I wanted to tell the world of my freedom. I wanted to shout, cry, and laugh all at the same time. Really, it is hard to explain how I felt. But whatever feeling I had, it was good.

We received our orders to get ready and then to move out. Others had started and we fell in line by rooms and barracks to start the march out of camp. When I came to the barbed wire which had held me in so long, I put my foot on it and gave a little spring as I put my whole weight on it. I was hoping to push it down and out of my life forever.

OUT UNDER THE STARS-INTO FREEDOM

The tanks had set a barracks on fire as well as two large hay stacks. These fires lit up the camp and hill side until it looked like day, so by the "pillar of fire" we moved out and up the hill. I walked beside Chaplain Stonesifer, and we talked freely about what we would do.

Suddenly, I noticed to my left and forward a few steps the body of an American soldier. It appeared that he had dropped from a tank with his rifle in hand and started to knock out a machine gun position when he was hit. He fell head forward down the hill. There he was lifeless and motionless. In my mind's eye I can still see his rifle, steel helmet, combat jacket, O. D. clothes, boots and hand grenades. He was my fellow comrade--one of our own men.

As I paused a moment I thought of him leaving his home and loved ones in America. I thought of him, coming to this foreign land and finding his way up to this prison camp. Here he had given his life that I might be free. He had paid the supreme price for my freedom. He had given himself. Still standing there, I uttered a prayer of thanksgiving for this American soldier.

We walked on up the hill, saying little, but I was thinking of another Soldier. He was the Soldier of the

cross. My mind traced the story back to about 2,000 years ago when He too left His Father and His home and came to this old sin-cursed, war-ravished world. He, too, had died on a hill, on Calvary, near Jerusalem. He had shed every drop of His blood that I might be free. Free from the burden of sin, free from the guilt of sin, and free from the stain of sin. I was glad for that freedom and I knew it was my possession.

Would I not have been disrespectful if I had ignored or trampled the blood of my comrade underfoot on that hill that night in Germany? Would not I likewise be disrespectful if I ignored or trampled underfoot the blood of a Savior who died for me?

TIME FOR DECISION

We walked past the tanks and over the hill and were ordered to stop and get down. After a wait we began to sense something was wrong and the word reached us the tanks would not be able to carry so many and we would all be left to do what we thought best. Since most of the 1,500 were officers, the decisions were individual.

I personally believe the tanks' coming through forty miles of enemy territory and liberating us had a real purpose, and I am sure the spearhead either tested the defense, tied up extra troops, or caused the enemy so much concern that the battle in near-by sectors was made less expensive. But that night we were told that they had expected only 250 and could carry that number back, but that since there were 1,500 it would be too dangerous and too long to march that many back even with tank protection.

What should I do? What was Stonesifer going to do? He said he was going back to the camp and be protected by the thick walls of the buildings and would get a little food from the Serbs or from our kitchen. I didn't have a bit of food and to start out on foot would take a long time and be hard especially

since I was already weak. I told Stonesifer I was going to the tanks and do what they did.

He reminded me that if Jerry hit a tank, all who hung on or were inside would be killed or wounded. However, I kept on going. Just then I heard a burp gun go off. That was all the persuasion I needed. We heard that S. S. troops were around and they would perhaps shoot and then ask questions. So I ran and caught up with Stoney and 500 others and we went back into camp. I was so tired that I went to my old bunk and even went to sleep.

MOVING DAY

At 3:30 a.m. March 28, I was awakened and heard that the Germans had returned and were marching us out. I packed my blanket and a few belongings and got in line. The kitchen force had cooked all the potatoes we had stored. Before we started I managed to get about ten. I considered myself lucky because those who had been awake had first choice. We were lined up and counted.

The goons counted us every day at least once and sometimes three or four times. When they made count for bread even though they missed it they would not give one piece more nor one piece less. We were counted and then moved out. We marched past a great number of German soldiers and started our journey which lasted thirty-six days. The other 1,000 men were recaptured, put on boxcars and shipped to Nuremberg and marched eighteen days to camp at Moosburg.

THIRTY-SIX DAYS MARCH THROUGH GERMANY

In our group we had a guard company of fifty officers and men. This is how they worked. A forwarding party went ahead and made arrangements for us to sleep in barns. Then the kitchen truck would catch up with them, get a stove or two and have a soup cooked by

the time we arrived. Sometimes they would fix coffee before we left the next day. The stoves were large vats with fireboxes under them and were formerly used to boil potatoes for hog food. Almost all the farms had them. The truck was an old one and was used only to go from town to town and for pulling the German colonel's car. The guards would detail a civilian to use his wagon and team to get stoves, bread, and potatoes. The goon guards ate at their own kitchen and had more food than we did. The civilians also gave them food.

We walked varying distances, some days ten miles, some days less. The distance depended on whether they could find room or food for us. Some days they had to keep us moving to keep us away from our own advancing troops. We marched in companies and squads. The guards were divided so that to every twenty or thirty men there would be two guards. An extra number of guards were at the rear. In case a man fell out they left a guard with him--and, believe me, we gave the guards several headaches along this line.

TRADING WITH THE ENEMY

Trading with the civilians or receiving food from them was forbidden by the Nazi. It was difficult to march on the food they gave us. We had soap and other items which the civilians would like to have and they had bread, potatoes, onions, eggs, and other foods which we wanted. We sometimes ran the risk of trying to negotiate a trade and most of us were successful. Some who could talk their language fluently had it over the rest but in the end every man who watched and worked could trade. The most interesting thing to me was that the very people the Germans hated and killed, the Jew, made the best trades. They ate better than any of the others. The Jewish men with us knew their language and knew how to talk them out of their food. Most of the Germans we had anything to do with were people who lived on farms and had food put back in the basement and pantries. There were

refugees working on these farms, too, and they would slip us food. Some of the guards would let us go off to a house by the road and trade.

When we stopped for the night we stayed in barns and the people living nearby would bring their wares over and we traded across the fence.

On one occasion I had permission from the guard and was trading an old fountain pen for two quarts of berries and six onions. I made the deal and had about one hundred and fifty feet to go to get back to the yard where there were a hundred or more of our men. One of the officers started out to trade with the same lady but he had not received permission from the guard.

ON THE SPOT

When he started the guard called, "Halt!" This officer turned back into the yard. When he did, it left me standing out in the open. The goon threw a clip in the gun and drew a bead on me.

I stopped and looked down the barrel. I even turned my side so he would hit my arm rather than straight in the heart.

The seconds seemed like eternities. But the men saw what was going on and screamed.

The guard must have been afraid; for he dropped the gun, and I went on back in our yard and hurried up to the loft and lay down on my sack. I shook for an hour or more. That in my opinion was the nearest I had been to death.

WORSHIP ON THE ROAD

Our services on the road were something to behold. We had all kinds. We had not been able to get grape juice or wine in the camp but since we were on the road we got wine and had Communion services several times. We had our worship services every

Sunday morning and devotional services several times during the week. I will describe the Easter service for it was a combination of the Worship and Communion service and similar to those held later.

EASTER MORNING SERVICE

We were in a barnyard Easter morning, April 1. We had drawn one Red Cross box for each three men. We were feeling good over the boxes. Since it was Easter morning, we were going to stay all day in this one barn.

Chaplains Koskamp and Curtis were elected to take the Worship service. Stonesifer and I conducted the Communion service immediately following.

We represented the following faiths: Dutch Reformed, Disciples of Christ, Lutheran, and Nazarene.

This was quite a combination but we worked together beautifully. We never had any trouble with services.

Stonesifer and I took a harrow and plow and put them beside the barn and placed a wagon sideboard on them to form a Communion table. We put two Red Cross boxes on it to make a high center. Then we spread a blanket, which Chaplain Koskamp had brought, over the boxes. Koskamp took two pieces of stove wood and made a cross to go in the center of the table. Stoney and I found two short, round logs and stood them on end. We took the other sideboard from the wagon for the communion altar. We covered it with two blankets. We put the wine in front of the cross on the communion table and announced to the men to bring their own bread. It was black bread but it served the purpose. The spirit of the service was a blessing to all. German children, who had never seen anything like this came. They were all Catholics in this section of Germany. They gathered to see what was going to take place. The German colonel, Loutia, was the son of a Lutheran minister and he came along with several

other guards. I had several English speaking guards tell me they enjoyed the service and they came often. They said they came to worship and not to censor. In the camp they came to censor, but as the war drew to a close and they knew it was going to end in our favor, their attitudes were different. Chaplain Curtis led the singing and Chaplain Koskamp brought a helpful message to the interested audience standing in the open barnyard. Immediately, Stonesifer and I served communion to about one hundred men. They came forward in groups of fifteen and knelt at the altar and after being served one of them prayed, they returned to their places and another group came. It was the last service for a number of those men and as I think back on it, I am happy that we offered them the Communion for strength and grace.

A BAPTISMAL SERVICE

Two weeks later, we had a most unusual baptismal service. I was in charge but Stonesifer and Curtis helped. We met in the third loft of a barn and the men knelt in the hay before a shaking Red Cross altar. After a song by Curtis and a prayer by Stonesifer, I baptized three officers, Lt. George I. Green, Highland Park, Illinois; Lt. William F. Ruoff, New Albany, Indiana; and Lt. Ernest I. Ankrom, Williamsport, Ohio. In a few words I tried to challenge them to serve their Christ faithfully.

DEATH UNDER OUR BOMBERS

On April 5 we were marched near Nuremberg and were taking a ten-minute break. The German colonel extended the break to forty minutes and we started eating a few items of food which we had. I had a raw cabbage which had been given me. Stoney and I took some of the cabbage, some raw carrots, onions, and beets and cut them up in a salad. We also had bread and water.

As we finished we heard the air alarm and then saw our B-17's and B-24's coming our way. We all hit the dirt and waited. The first wave moved in and dropped their loads about five hundred yards from us. We could hear the bombs rushing down and felt the earth tremble when they hit. I got up and seeing Lt. Johnson from Birmingham, Alabama, who was formerly a radio announcer, standing there I walked over and asked him, "Is it easier sweating it out if you can see them?" He said it was, so I stood by him during the next few minutes.

We gave a play by play description of what took place. The second wave moved in and we saw the marker leave the plane so we hollered, "Bombs away!" and then "Down, down, down, down, they hit." We could see the trail of smoke from the planes to the ground.

The second wave hit nearer. We could see the trail of smoke made by the bombs. The third moved in nearer and then the fourth and fifth came quickly. Each time we saw the marker and then down, down, down and then the explosion. The earth would shake, the buildings would fall apart and smoke would rise up in the air. The fifth wave hit an ammunition plant about one hundred fifty yards away. The sixth wave dropped back on one of the other targets. The seventh wave hit the ammunition plant again and must have had all incendiaries for the plant caught on fire. It looked like a fountain of fire for many hours.

The eighth wave, instead of coming in from left to right, came in from the front. Ack-ack had been breaking around the planes and some of our number were ducking falling flak. We stood there and called to this wave of bombers, "Move over, move over," for they were coming-straight at us. Then we called out "Drop them, drop them," but we never saw a marker and then the planes were over us and we could hear the bombs coming down on us. The shrill, whistling noise will never be forgotten.

There were several bomb craters nearby but I did not have time to get to one so I stayed on top of the ground. I hit the ground near a tree and everything broke loose. The earth shook! I went up and down and it seemed my ear drums would burst. I could feel rocks and dirt being thrown over me. The bombs hit hard and fast around us.

I wondered how I would feel being torn apart or dashed out into eternity. During it all I knew whether I lived or died I would be in the hands of my God.

I opened my eyes but the dust and smoke limited my vision to fifteen or twenty feet. Then the ninth wave moved in and hit the target and then the tenth wave repeated what the eighth had done. This time I got in a bomb crater and it was not as bad although several bombs hit nearby.

After a few seconds I crawled out and looked around. I saw a number of lifeless bodies. I wanted to run, hide, fly, or anything, to get away. I didn't think I could stand it--then someone called out, "Water, water!" I thought, "I can give him my water," and I started. After that everything became natural. The Army had so trained us that in times like that we just acted. I went from man to man doing what I could. The guards moved all of the able-bodied out and left thirteen of us there to care for the wounded and deceased-four chaplains, three medics, and six others. We worked for an hour and a half and got about forty men on trucks and back to a hospital where we knew an American medic was stationed. Then we worked for two and a half hours on identification of the dead.

BUDDY, FAREWELL

I was put in charge and it never occurred to me that I was senior chaplain until I reached down for a dog tag. When I held it in my hand I read, "Rowland A. Koskamp." I dropped it on his chest and took hold of the left side of his shirt collar. There was the cross!

I looked into the face and surely enough there was Chaplain Rowland A. Koskamp!

Just a few days before, he had shown me his New Testament and had told me how much it had meant to him. He said that the pages were coming apart from wear. He then took his billfold out and showed me his wife's picture and the picture of his little girl, and one of his church and one of the parsonage in Holland, Michigan. Chaplain Stonesifer and I took his personal possessions so I could return them to his wife. I found an American blanket and I wrapped his body reverently, as I breathed a prayer. We had worked together and now he had preceded me to his reward. I realized it could easily have been I.

During the four hours the ammunition plant had been on fire shells were exploding by the hundreds. In fact, as I worked trying to identify a body, a delayed action bomb went off (it may have been a large powder room) and a piece of four-by-four came buzzing through the air and over my head, causing me to duck. Several of the fellows said, "What's the matter, chaplain? Are you jumpy? That missed you!" I guess I was jumpy. I was tired and ready to move on.

I had the personal belongings of twenty-four officers who had been killed. They amounted to about fifteen pounds of extra weight. We couldn't get them to the Red Cross or to our lines, so I gave them to officers who knew the men. They promised they would see that the belongings were returned. At times we were so tired we couldn't take another step, and because I knew I could not carry that extra weight, I had to do the next best thing.

Twenty-four officers were killed the first day. We heard that five died the next day. Three Germans also were killed.

A few of the civilians wanted to help us and I talked to some who stopped me as I went from man to man. They said Hitler was the cause and he should

be hanged. They were careful when they spoke such words because they were afraid of the guards and their fellow civilians. One man said he had lived in America twelve years and hated Hitler and wanted to leave Germany and return to the States. However, the guards moved the civilians back and we worked without their sarcasm or sympathy.

PREDETERMINED TARGET

We knew that the target had been predetermined days ago and that the bombardiers could not see us from 20,000 to 30,000 feet above. If they could have seen us, they would not have known that we were Americans. They had no way of knowing we were on the road and we did not hold it against them. I went around and counted ten new craters made by five hundred-pound bombs. Had the bombardiers missed as some have, there may have been five hundred Americans killed.

REJOINING OUR GROUP

It took us three hours to catch up with the group again. We had marched hard and were tired.

During one of our breaks the German colonel said to the thirteen of us, "I want to tell you men that I appreciate the way you cared for your comrades."

I told the interpreter to reply to the colonel, "We appreciated the opportunity of caring for our buddies."

The break was over and we marched on. When we arrived the men were anxious to know who had lost their lives. They had made a check and knew what men were missing and wanted to know if they were wounded or killed. I read the list to them time and time again. They wanted a service held in memory of the men and later we did so. They also urged that we have a Thanksgiving service because God had spared so many. That is the kind of American soldiers we have. When death comes most accept it as God's

will or when spared they feel that, too, is His will and thank Him for His care.

There are many things we cannot understand now, but the good old song says, "We will understand it better by and by." I have seen men live and I have seen men die. It is a mystery I cannot explain. It is up to us to trust Him and leave ourselves as well as our loved ones in His hands.

AN UNUSUAL EVENT

War affects countless people. We have suffered. Our enemy, too, has suffered. I remember one day we were marching along and the guard in front of us kept waving along the streets of a small town. He would look ahead at a house and wave if he saw friends and if not he would look back until the house was out of sight. We noticed him straining his eyes as he looked ahead at a little white cottage. As he approached, several children waved and then one young woman began to wring her hands and gasped as he came even with the house. As we passed, I saw her tear-filled eyes as she stood there breathless. Stonesifer said, "Moore, isn't war hell?" I answered, "Yes."

A few days later I saw one of our German-speaking officers talking to the guard and I said, "Ask him if we passed his house a few days ago." He said, "Yes, we did, and I saw my frau whom I hadn't seen for many months." I further inquired why he hadn't dropped out and visited with them or why he hadn't gotten off that night when we stayed but a few miles from his place. He said the German officers would not let him. He closed by wishing the war would soon be over.

THE YANKS WERE COMING

Our troops got close to us at times as we marched on, but each time the guards moved us ahead of them. We marched most of two nights to keep in front of them.

SIGNS OF THE END

We knew that the end was near because we could hear tank- and artillery-fire on either side. We met a number of German soldiers going from place to place. They had left the front and were going home or back in the Alps--going away from the war and the S. S. Troops. One complete battery of artillery left their guns and passed us on the way back.

We had seen several strange turns in the war and although hope was strong we were very cautious. We knew that we were to be held as hostages and the guards were carrying us back into the Alps.

When we arrived at Gars on the Inns River, we stopped. They were going to march us across. Our colonel told us to be hard to find, and we disappeared. When the Germans could not find us they had to blow up the bridges at the appointed time. That left us north of the Gars River and much nearer our troops.

LIBERATION AGAIN

Contact was made with the 14th Armored, but before they could get to us a lieutenant and his men heard that there were some American prisoners of war at Gars and came down to "have some fun." I heard someone say, "The G. I.'s are out there."

I ran to the barn door. I saw two American soldiers coming up the road. They looked good! They carried their rifles in hand, pistols by their side and hand grenades hung all over them. Their steel helmets, although covered with dirt, looked to us something like crowns on their heads. They walked straight and proud as they came boldly up to the barn.

The guards started running out and throwing their guns in a pile. The guards laughed with joy and said they were glad the war was over. They said, "We are your prisoners now." Just why they took that attitude is anyone's guess. I know they wanted to be American

prisoners rather than Russian. That afternoon while they were still our guards we found out they had not had food for several days, so we shared our food with them. I am sure that Christlike attitude of feeding enemy guards made them feel that they would receive kind care.

SHOULDER PATCH OUT OF PLACE

I noticed a shoulder patch on the Americans who had liberated us and said to them, "You are supposed to be overseas, aren't you?"

He answered, "We are overseas."

But I insisted, "You are supposed to be in the Pacific."

"But we are over here," he argued.

"But you are the 86th Division, aren't you?"

"Yes, and we are over here," he replied.

I then told him that my brother was in that outfit and I knew they had been scheduled for the Pacific. He didn't know J. E. but the second soldier did and went after Captain Barney Slagle who was with the Artillery and knew J. E. When he came up he asked if Moore was my brother and when I told him he was, he said he wanted to surprise him and to take me back to see him. I was more than willing and as soon as we got permission from my colonel, we started. We couldn't find J. E. that night, but the next day I found his room and met a number of the fellows from the 86th Division Artillery.

CONTACT

I found several letters in J. E.'s room and read one from Dad, Mother, and my sister. Dad would not let us read each other's mail at home. In fact, he would whip us if we did. But I broke training that time. J. E. returned

from Munich, where he had gone to see if he could find any news of my whereabouts. When I found that he had received a letter from my wife but had destroyed it, we almost had a third World War. It was about 3:30 p.m. when he returned. I knew what was going on and he didn't! I am sure had he known I was nearby he would have done everything in his power to have liberated me. But he did not know. In fact, on one occasion they saw our column moving and thought we were Germans. Since they could not reach us with artillery, they asked the Air Corps to strafe us. Before the Air Corps could get to us a cloud moved in and covered us for two days. That was a "pillar of cloud by day." Although my brother was willing to help me and couldn't, I had a Savior who protected me at all times and in all circumstances.

BROTHERS MEET

J. E. stepped to the door. I was just inside of the room. When he saw me he almost fainted. He threw his arms around me and started crying. He then pushed me back and said, "Let me look at you." He was excited, and when he got excited he stuttered a little. He kept hugging me and crying and every now and then he would push me back and say, "Le-le-le-le-let me lo-lo-lo-look at you!" I said, "J. E., what is wrong with me?"

KNOWLEDGE IS FOOD

Now, I knew that before I started the march I was a sad looking case, but we had been on the road for thirty-six days and had been eating. We had soap from our Red Cross boxes that we traded for bread, potatoes, onions, and other food stuff. We had really gained back most of our weight, and I wondered why I looked so strange. Some of the fellows didn't trade for the food they got--it was called "liberation."

I remember one old boy from Arkansas, who knew the habits of the hens perfectly. The city men would

look the barns over when we first went in, but they missed. When this Arkansawyer went in, he knew where the old contrary hen had gone and he always came out with a good supply of eggs.

One night about 8:00 p.m. after he had gone in our barn, one officer from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, came to me and said, "Chaplain, I got into the hen house but someone had been there and got every egg. But you know what I am going to do? I am going to get up in the morning about five o'clock and get every egg that the hens lay during the night." I said, "Do you think you will?" He said he would.

Another fellow said, "That old hen squawked, pecked at me, and ruffled up her feathers; but I got all fourteen eggs she had laid!"

Well the German lady squawked so much that our colonel made him put the setting eggs back lest we be thrown out of the barns and have to sleep in the cold.

We had a great time on the road. We much preferred it to prison life. We had eaten well and I wondered why J. E. thought I was strange. I guess it was because he couldn't believe his eyes.

HAVING A BIT OF HOME

The night of May 3, J. E. and I read Mother's favorite Psalm, the 121st, and went to bed. Before retiring, J. E. heated some bath water and got a clean change of clothes for me. I had had only two baths in five months and wasn't too clean. I kept noticing J. E. would leave the room and then return. I asked him, "What's wrong, J. E.?" And he said, "Mark, you stink!" I disagreed with him, but when I stood up and realized that the hot water had loosened the body oil and the stench that I had endured for months, I readily agreed with him. We had lived in the filth for so many weeks that I had become accustomed to the odor. Five days later, when I returned to the camp, to join the other

prisoners for transportation home, I could hardly bear the stench we had lived in so long.

I enjoyed the days I spent with my brother and the men of the 86th Division Artillery. They were all kind to me. J. E. and I had two services together.

On the way to one service, I saw something which made a lasting impression on me. On the front of a church in Austria, we saw Hitler's picture and a number of other characters with the Nazi flag praising Hitler. I told J. E. I wanted to get our pictures in front of that building. The Austrians had been liberated only a few hours. When we returned from the service, to get a picture, we found about a hundred civilians around the church. They had ladders and brushes. They were trying to rub from their church the marks of Nazidom. We thought that made an even more impressive picture. My prayer is that the Church of Jesus Christ in Europe may soon erase the harm done by Nazi power. They can if they seek God's help.

HEADING TO U.S.A.

The time arrived when I had to leave J. E. and I crawled into a Cub and flew to Moosburg. We had to "sweat it out" there two days and then by truck to Strabing. We spent one day there and took a C-47 to Le Havre. It was a real thrill to fly over Germany and leave it. I hope the hour will come when we can leave them to their own self-democratic government. We went to Tent City, Camp Lucky Strike, and sweated it out there eight days before going back to Le Havre and the 15th Port Transportation Command. At each of the places we had the best of care and food. Some of the things were not perfect but when thousands of men come in at one time we couldn't all expect to get a shower within three minutes or clothes within ten. We did get good food and plenty of it. They moved us as fast as they could but even an hour seems like an eternity when trying to return to people we had not even heard from for months.

WORKERS OF THE LORD ABOARD

Finally, 1,500 prisoners of war boarded the U.S.S. "General Gordon" and found that we were going to Trinidad to leave some troops off there. That took ten extra days. We held services daily and two on Sunday. I met two Coast Guard sailors who were really working for the Lord. They were Verne Trueblood and Max Simmons. Max was the chaplain's assistant. Since the ship's chaplain, Lt. Thomas F. Maher, was Catholic, these men took charge of the Protestant services when there was no Protestant chaplain on board. Trueblood preached with zeal and enthusiasm. Many sought the Lord. Max took charge of the music and they both bought tracts and with the help of fellow Christians passed them out to the troops. May God bless them!

THANK YOU, GOD!

Just before we arrived in New York, I asked some of the men if they would like to have a Thanksgiving service before the Statue of Liberty. They said it would be grand. We set up an altar and soon the statue was in sight. We were all excited and soon the symbol of liberty was beside us and then we were passing it. Chaplain Curtis led in the singing of a verse of "America." We then turned aft and came to attention and pledged allegiance to the American flag. I led in a prayer of thanksgiving, consecration, and dedication. We concluded the service by singing, "God Bless America," as the Statue of Liberty faded into the distance. Needless to say we were thrilled beyond words. One officer in telling Mrs. Moore about it later said, "For a time we thought that artillery shells were breaking around us and then we suddenly realized we were hearing our hearts pounding within us."

MY LORD, MY HOME

Yes, America is the greatest country under the sun! She is great because she has honored God's Son. Other nations have a form of religion and know about Jesus but they have gone down because they have not known Jesus. I am not afraid of Naziism, Fascism, or Communism as long as we honor God and spread the full gospel of Jesus Christ His Son! As long as we keep true to Him we will live! When we fail Him, we will go down in despair!

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