

picked up the day we went down and we were very glad to see each other. I felt bad about Griff as we had become very good friends I mentioned the list I had seen on the board and they had seen it also. Bill was close enough to see Griff go down in the water. He then heard the shots that had killed him but he didn't know it at that time.

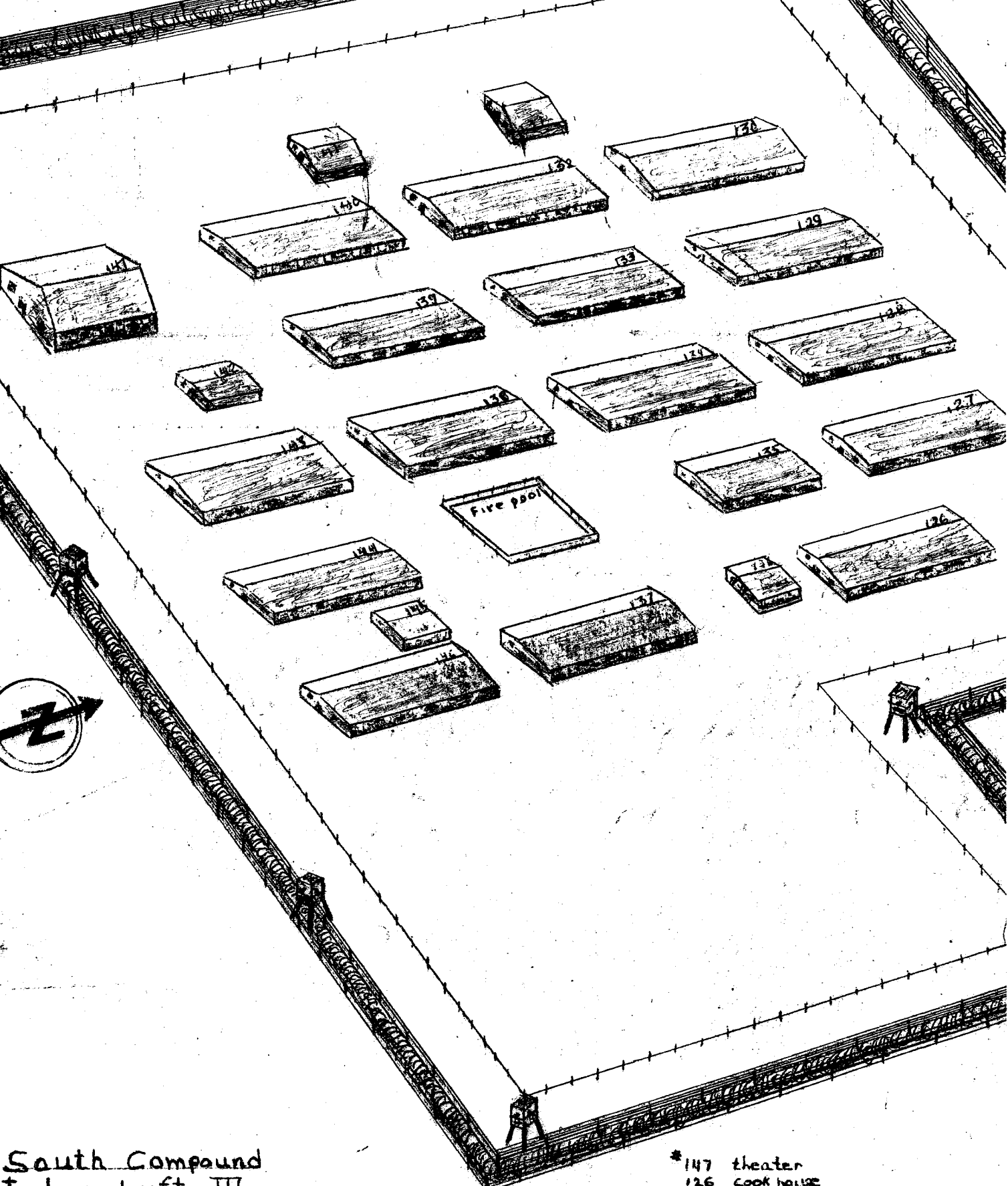
There must have been about fifty of us that boarded the train. We were a mixture of Allied flyers, American, English, Canadian, Australian, New Zealanders and South Africans. We were all Airforce Officers and our destination was a place called Stalag Luft III and was located about ninety miles southeast of Berlin. The loaf of bread was to sustain us for the trip, which was expected to take two or three days, depending on the air-raids. We were loaded into two coaches with our guards, there must have been one for every two of us, and we were very crowded. After a few hours it became very uncomfortable as we only had room enough to sit down and no moving around. Just before dark the train stopped outside a town and we were told to get out and relieve ourselves. Passengers in the other cars stared at us as we followed orders. The train continued on into the station where we sat for several hours. Some evidence of a previous bombing raid could be seen. A guard said that American Luftgangsters had bombed the city and destroyed much of the tracks. That was the reason for our delay. We could only hope the RAF had a different target for tonight as we were sitting ducks. The guards allowed some of the smaller of us to climb into the baggage racks overhead which relieved our crowded condition considerably. They were lucky as they could stretch out and sleep. I was very miserable with my cast and seemed to ache all over.

We started moving about midnight which lifted everyone's spirits. An hour or two out of the city, we heard shots from the other car and the train stopped. The guards jumped out and started "flapping", a word we used to describe the German antics when excited or mad. Two prisoners had jumped out a window in an attempt to escape. One was carried back with a broken leg and other injuries, while a little later we heard some shooting and the soldiers returned carrying the other body. We found out that they were Polish flying in the Free Polish Squadron with the RAF. We might have been near their home. The train moved on and the Germans punished us by not allowing any more talking. One Englishman started arguing with a guard speaking in German, I caught the word "dumpfkoff" [dumbhead], used by the Limey. The guard struck him in the face with his rifle butt, then proceeded to beat him unconscious. This was a good indication to the rest of us that they were in a foul mood, and not to be harrassed.

After day light we again allowed to get off the train and became a little more comfortable. We lined up and were counted to see that we were all still there and loaded back into the coaches. We were allowed to talk again but it wasn't long before some Limeys started singing patriotic songs, which only infuriated the guards. so again we were forbidden to talk.

We moved along good that day and in the late afternoon when we

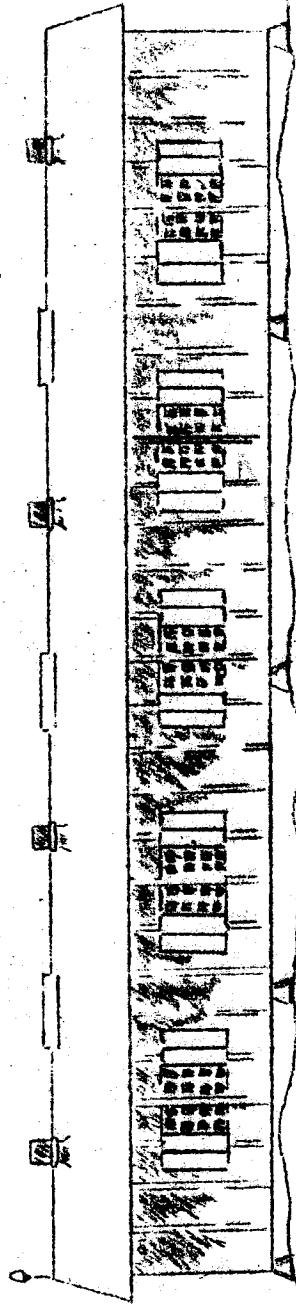
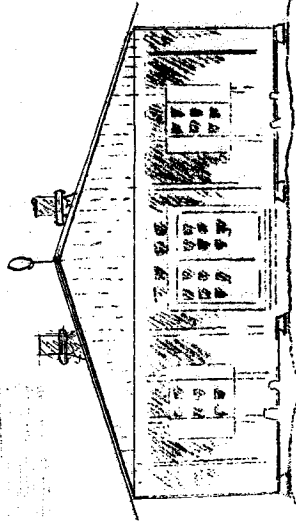
should of had our pit stop, we were informed that we would soon reach our destination and be in the camp before long. Hours went by and still we did not stop. Nature started taking it's course, and before long the coaches started to smell very foul. Sometime around midnight we did finally stop at a small station. The guards pointed out some search lights in the distance and said that was our camp, but we would remain on the train until daylight. The guards all moved outside to guard us. We weren't allowed to open the windows so by morning the stench was almost unbearable. Thankfully for me I was having a bout of constipation.



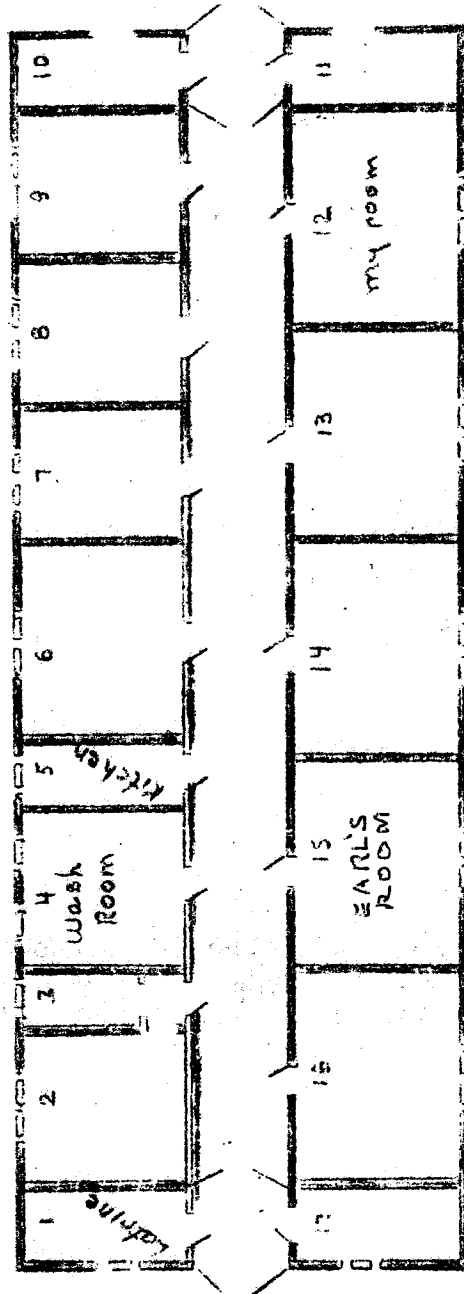
South Compound
 Talag Luft III
 Sagan, Germany

July 1943 to May 1945

* 147 theater
 126 cook house
 125 wash "
 129 my barracks



Barracks Plan
Stalag Luft III



Black Bread Recipe

Former prisoners of war of Nazi Germany may be interested in this recipe for WWII Black Bread. This recipe comes from the official record from the Food Providing Ministry published (top secret) Berlin 24.XI 1941 and the Director in Ministry Herr Mansfeld and Herr Moritz. It was agreed that the best mixture to bake black bread was:

- 50% bruised rye grain
- 20% sliced sugar beets
- 20% tree flour (saw dust)
- 10% minced leaves and straw

From our own experiences with the black bread, we also saw that it was almost impossible to obtain on the market.

CHAPTER IV
POW CAMP, STALAG LUFT III
July 3, 1943 to Jan. 29, 1945

On July 3, 1943, we arrived at Stalag Luft III. A model camp, it was said to be the best in the country. It was under the control of the Luftwaffe, with only Allied flying officers held here. There was a small compound set aside for prisoner workers. Either Russian POW's or imprisoned Jews with a large Star of David painted on the backs of their clothes. We were lined up and marched about two miles to the camp, where all the inmates were crowded near the gate. It took nearly all morning before we were all inside. We were finger-printed and photographed. Then our clothes were taken while we showered. I think we were all a little apprehensive about these German showers, and were all greatly relieved when water came out of the shower heads instead of gas. As we showered our clothes were being washed and dipped in disinfectant. We were issued a dog-tag with a number, mine being 1618. This meant that I was the 1618th something, probably American Airforce Officer to be captured. At the gate we were issued a knife, fork and spoon; a bowl, plate and cup; a blanket and a straw-filled "palias" [pad or mattress]. Armed with all these goodies we finally entered the North compound. At this time there were three compounds in operation. The East, Center and the newly opened North. The South compound was under construction at the time but would not be finished and occupied until October. It would be home to American Officers only as would the West that was still on the drawing board. The others would remain all British. Here in the North we were some what segregated by barracks.

The Senior Ranking American Officer was a Colonel, he along with three other Colonels had been medium bomber Group Cammanders. The mediums were twin-engine B-25's and B-26's. We had lost many of them the first part of the war. They flew very low and the Germans threw everything they had including the proverbial kitchen sink at them.

All the new kriegies were interrogated by one of these Officers, and assigned to our living quarters. Back in the Army again. Even to the saluting, although this was more or less voluntary. As we were all presumably Officers and Gentlemen, one of the questions they asked was amusing to me. "Did we have any special skills, such as picking pockets, cracking safes, counterfeiting, etc.?" These talents were very useful in some of the escape activities which was the top priority.

Besides Bill, Earl and myself, there were two others here from our Group. Their plane had blown up in mid-air, and they were the only ones that were lucky enough to have been blown free and were wearing their parachutes. They were the Navigator and the

Bombardier. Evidently the nose section had separated from the main fuselage. All of our gunners had gone to another camp and we might see them again after the war.

After getting settled in our barracks we were issued a Red Cross Parcel. The allied governments bought these parcels and hired the International Red Cross to deliver them. Theoretically, each man was to receive one, ten pound parcel week. They came from England, America and Canada and were all different which gave us a good variety of food stuffs. When mixed with the meager German ration we received, it was sufficient to keep us relatively healthy, although constantly hungry. The American and Canadian were almost the same except the Canadian contained a half pound of sweet chocolate and a can of large dried biscuits. These could be ground up to use as flour in cakes, pies etc., also when soaked they made huge pancakes. In contrast the American had D-Bar of chocolate and a can of K-2 crackers. In addition to these items; raisins or prunes, a can of soluble coffee [Nescafe], pound of sugar, powdered milk [Klim], Velveeta Cheese, a can of Spam or salmon and a pound of oleomargarine. The American had a small can of jam and butter. The British added tea instead of coffee, a can of corned beef or such exotic treats as ox-tail soup, canned kidneys and canned fish. All of these parcels were greatly appreciated and absolutely necessary for our survival. We also drew a German ration that varied with the season. Also the loaf of brown ersatz [imitation] bread liberally diffused with sawdust, a small potato ration, some moldy cheese occasionally, pea, barley or dehydrated soup generously seasoned with various types of worms and other bugs and insects. dried millet which when crushed and the chaff blown off made very good corn bread. Also there was the old faithful kolarabi, a sort of turnip used for livestock food, but also relished by Kriegies. Occasionally we were treated with horse heads and lower legs to boil for equine soup. Not to mention the weekly ration of BlutWurst [Blood sausage]. This had to be congealed blood with animal hair, gristle, crushed bone and other unidentifiable parts of the animal anatomy that obviously was swept up from the floor of the slaughter-house. Needless to say, many of these issues were quickly deposited in the outside latrines, preferably without looking it in the face. However before the end of the war they were greedily licked up to the last bug or hair.

Each of the barracks had a small kitchen with a cook-stove and oven. Time on this stove was allotted to the rooms so that each would have the same amount of time to prepare their tasty dishes. The rooms or cooking combines were made up of six or eight men at first. Later they would be eight and twelve to the room. Each room would pool their ration, appointing one individual as "Food Fuehrer", either permanently or take turns at this most important duty. He was in absolute charge of the rations and could cook and ration them as he wished. The basic idea was to make the meal tasty? filling? and balanced so the weekly ration would last through the week.

Bill and I became acquainted with two others on the train ride so the four of us joined four older Kriegies to make our eight man

combine. These four had been down about four months and were well settled into kriegie life. Some of their rules were rather difficult to accept but necessary to harmonious living. It wasn't long before we were as goofy as they were.

The older kriegies were Harold Clymer from Quakersville, Pa. He was a rich kid that couldn't get along with his step-mother so ran away to Canada and joined the RCAF [Royal Canadian Air Force]. Upon his graduation from flying school he was sent to England. There he flew American made A-20's as night fighters against German bombers. When America entered the war, he was automatically transferred to the U.S. Airforce. where he became a co-pilot on a B-17 His pilot was Roger Fortin, a misplaced French-Canadian born in Boston. The Bombardier on the crew was Tom Waldon from Brunswick, Georgia. Also flying with them that day as a gunner was Maurice Pickett, a Warrant-Officer from Sweethome, Oregon. He need never have been in a POW camp. He went overseas as Group Engineering Officer in the 90th Group. His, was a ground job in charge of all the air mechanics in the Group. When the Group became short of gunners, Pickett volunteered to make a mission. On this first mission he was credited with shooting down a German fighter plane, so became a full time gunner. This 90th Group had flown the first B-17's to England and had made twelve missions before they were shot down in December, 1942. The other two were from the 306th Group, and were shot down the same day we were except they were on the other raid to Huls. The pilot was Harold Gilmore Russell, from Eau Claire Wisconsin. His co-pilot and Bombardier had been killed in the plane. The Navigator was Louis Steven Chadwick, of Fernandina, Florida. Chadwick and I became very good friends, and spent many hours walking around the perimeter of the camp telling stories and lies to each other. He was from a wealthy Catholic family and never attended a public school. His father owned ships and beach property at Jacksonville, Florida. When Chadwick was four years old and his sister six, their parents died in a ship wreck at sea. His Mother's brother a Commander Brady, a graduate of Annapolis Naval Academy, was appointed guardian of the children. His being in the Navy and single, he left the children in the care of his Mother, Grandma Brady. Chadwick attended private Catholic schools and was to become a Priest. Two weeks before he was to be ordained, the war started so he promptly forgot the Priesthood and joined the Airforce. His Father's estate was to be settled when he became twenty-one that would be in August, 1944. Then we would be living with a millionaire.

No one in our combine wanted the responsibility of the "Food Fuhrer" job permanently, so we changed off, each taking it for a week at a time. After the first round through the roster, Chadwick was relieved from this duty because he was too good a taster. Pickett and Russell were too busy in the escape activity, Bill and Waldon spent all of their time playing ball, Clymer was too rattle-brained to plan so we wouldn't run out of food in the middle of the week and Fortin too contemptible to make an effort. They all liked my way of handling the job, and being in the cast I couldn't do

much of anything else, so I was appointed permanent "Food Fuhrer". The others all had duties also. Some one had to pick up our German ration each day. A water carrier to get hot water twice a day from the kitchen. The room must be swept and mopped each day and one man from the combine was required to join the camp labor gang each day.

That first day in the camp, July 3rd, the Americans were planning a 4th of July celebration. In one room of my barracks something highly secret was taking place. We didn't know until the next morning what this was all about. Others were straining raisin wine into all kinds of storage containers, sampling it generously along the way. The wine was made with raisins, sugar, water and a "bug", the bug was some mash still fermenting from a previous batch. The wine casks used were huge wooden vats primarily used for water in case of fire. Each barracks was blessed with two of these.

About sun-up the morning of the 4th, I was awakened by the cry, "To arms, to arms, the British are coming". Out of the door of the room that was so busy yesterday, came a horse fashioned from palias covers with a Colonial type astride. Galloping through the barracks, he turned and made another run, making sure that all the Englishmen were awake. Away he went through all the other barracks. The German guards thought it was funny, we thought it very clever and appropriate for the occasion, but the English said, "Bloody well ignorant you know".

Things settled down a bit until after "Apell", meaning to fall out in formation to be counted. After a hearty breakfast of one thin slice of bread and ersatz jam, the party started. We sang old patriotic songs of the Revolution, and Patrick Henry gave his famous speech. The English took a very dim view of the proceedings and became downright insulting. With the wine flowing so freely all over camp, it was inevitable that some Yanks and some Limeys would wage their own private war. Being outnumbered by about five to one, we lost and all of our leaders were thrown in the fire-pool, a large concrete lined pool. Some of the Germans joined in the festivities and all had a good time except the English who took it all as an insult. They were quite obnoxious anyway. Many of them were from aristocratic families, the grandson of Winston Churchill was here, and other relatives of royal families. The English ran the camp and did a good job. Some of them were captured at Dunkirk in 1940 when the British were pushed out of France into the English Channel. Some of the old timers were accomplished brewers. Besides the raisin wine, which they distilled, they also laid down batches of potato whiskey. This could be purchased with cigarettes, chocolate and other foods.

Many of those wearing the RAF uniform were natives of other European countries. They had escaped to England when the Germans took over their homelands and joined the RAF. They were known as The Free Polish Squadron, The Free Dutch Squadron, The Free French Squadron, etc. The famous Eagle Squadron was all American volunteers but were automatically transferred to the U.S. Airforce when we entered the war.

Casey Jones, Ace Langdon and George Sperry were three Eagle types that I knew pretty well. George and his brother had inherited the Sperry Flour Mills, located in northern California. While his brother squandered the family fortune at home, here was George slowly going nuts in a POW camp. By time the war ended he would be a mental case.

The best dressed crew in the camp was a B-26 crew. They had left Iceland flying to England via Scotland. Either bad weather or poor navigation caused them to miss Scotland completely and home in on the German held Brest Peninsula in France. The tower at a field talked them in and they had no inkling of their mistake until after landing. The Germans allowed them to keep all their clothes, so they had a full wardrobe. The only clothing confiscated by the Germans were the heavy sheepskin lined flying suit.

We were allowed to receive one ten pound parcel from our folks every four months. The first one took about six months to arrive and was very anxiously awaited. Usually we requested clothing and toilet articles. In addition to this personal parcel, we could receive three cartons of cigarettes every six weeks. These parcels were packed by our parents or next of kin, and must have been quite a struggle for them to obtain the items requested, and to pack them to conform to the specifications of the U.S. government and the Swiss Red Cross. Once in a while the government would throw in a special parcel that would contain escape materials but usually the German censors would intercept them. All of the parcels were carefully searched. Canned food was punctured so we could not save it up for escape food. The Germans could and did confiscate anything they wanted. The non-perishable items were stock-piled to be used as emergency rations for the future. We expected the worse when ever the war started winding down and the Germans realized they were going to lose. We knew that one of three things would happen. [1] The guards would abandon us to be liberated by the Russians [2] We would be moved out to other camps. [3] We would all be executed. We were near the eastern border of Germany, so assumed that the Russian Army would liberate us if abandoned. If we were to be moved, we made small packs and sleds to carry our meager possessions and food. In the event that we were to be executed, there was a plan for this also. We would over-throw the camp and fight it out. Hand picked personnel were trained and briefed for the take-over. This plan was under the direction of a Major "Silent Death Sage". He was an expert in commando tactics and other fancy arts of self defense and mutilation. When captured he was wearing Airforce clothing so he could pass as a shot down flyer. In reality he was on an espionage mission and organizing a resistance unit for sabotage at the time of his capture. His disguise worked or he would of been executed. He did make several escapes that were almost successful. On one he was crossing the French border when one of the border guards recognized him. He had worked in the camp previously. Sage was offered a position in the OSS [now called the CIA], and was trained in covert activities. He was just doing his job when captured. His first escape at Stalag Luft III was the usual wire job. This was followed by the de-