

Headquarters
AAF Training Command
Fort Worth 2, Texas
10 December 1945

Dear Kriegies of Center Compound:

As Christmas draws near again I am constrained to remember those of 1943 and 1944 and to be so thankful we do not have to celebrate this one under similar circumstances. All of us have so much to be grateful for that I anticipate each of you will have the happiest Christmas you ever had. However, if perchance something has happened to mar the gay times you so well deserve, then all of us feel that through our past experiences together we are better able to share your misfortune with you and to wish you happiness from now on. In many ways we have been blessed and have been so fortunate in preserving our health and happiness that we can shut firmly the door of unpleasant memories and see some of the amusing and even beneficial things which happened to us.

So before you forget all about what happened during your P.O.W. life, I want to bring you up to date on a few things. In the first place, General Vanaman and I did not forget you after he, Bill Kennedy, "Pop" George, "Brownie" Brown and I were taken away in Spremberg. We were never repatriated but were taken to Luckenwalde (not Buckenwald) near Berlin, where we remained for six weeks. General Vanaman and I were taken to Berlin while the other three joined you at Moosberg. While we were "guests" of the S.S. in Berlin, I know that much was done to make your last days secure and to warrant the deliverance such as you experienced. General Vanaman was truly an ambassador for your cause; and through his intercession with the S.S. General in charge of all P.O.W.'s and with a couple of high-ranking members of Himmler's staff, promises were obtained which made it possible for you to get some Red Cross food and medical aid during the last days and for you to be delivered safely.

For your information, we were closely guarded all the time and experienced some "lulus" when it came to bombings. We were dashed madly by auto from Berlin to Constance just as the Russians were knocking at the gates of Berlin. The trip surpassed anything that even a Kriegie's imagination could conjure. We were wrecked; visited by P-51's; stayed in Gestapo Headquarters in Nuernberg, Munich and Bregenz; and finally we managed to escape into Switzerland on April 23. General Vanaman came to the United States to report about you, while I remained on duty in General Eisenhower's Headquarters for six weeks to tell what I knew of your predicament and to help where I could. The day you were

liberated I flew to Nuernberg and drove down to your camp, where I found all of you safe and rejoicing. I was never happier.

General Vanaman came back to France and remained there working for you until all of you were accounted for. All of your senior officers did all they could to take care of you while in Europe and also after they returned home. Some of the results of their endeavors are evident - promotions, quicker discharges, temporary duty for sixty days instead of leave, etc. We are sorry we couldn't do more. The Army Air Forces tried to take care of P.O.W.'s.

The history which was promised you may come on the market after all. I was unable to get the Government to sponsor the "Human Interest Story" which you wanted, but I have prospects of getting the same team who finished the official history (550 pages but not good for public consumption) to put out one for the public at a nominal sum. If any of you have any pictures or sketches, please let me have them to pass on; that is, if you have no objections.

I have seen and heard from many of you and would be pleased to hear from all. General Vanaman is Commanding General at the Mobile Depot in Alabama. Colonel A. Y. Smith is Commanding Officer at Davis Monthan Field at Tuscon; Willie Hatcher is his Deputy. Colonel Jenkins is at Columbia Army Air Field, South Carolina. Mulligan, Burbank, Rawlinson, Brunn, Goodson, Magee, Chaplain Daniel, Delaney and hundreds of others are out of the service; while Dix, "Salty" Saltsman, "Pop" Fulghum, Moe Lee, Charlie Grooms, and quite a few others are still in. Colonel Kennedy and I are here at the Training Command Headquarters.

I hope all of you have enjoyed living as much as I have since we were liberated. Yet I pray you haven't put on as many pounds in the same place as I have. God bless each one of you and may you have the Merriest Christmas and Happiest New Year ever!

Sincerely,

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