

EX-POW BULLETIN

the official voice of the
American Ex-Prisoners of War

501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization

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April~May~June 2024

Gold
Transparency
2024

Candid.



We exist to help those who cannot help themselves



*Volunteers at Andersonville
preparing for Memorial Day*



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Deadline for the July-Sept 2024 Bulletin is May 30.. Please send all materials to the editor at the above address.

April-June 2024

D-Day



75 Years Ago—April 15, 1944: Countdown to D-day. Allied Expeditionary Air Force issued Operation Neptune Overall Air Plan for D-day, temporarily suspending attacks on oil and industrial targets in favor of transportation targets.

On June 6, 1944, more than 160,000 Allied forces landed in Nazi-occupied France as part of the biggest air, land and sea invasion ever executed. Operation Overlord. It was the beginning of the end of World War II.

Inside front cover:

Victory in Europe Day is the day celebrating the formal acceptance by the Allies of World War II of Germany's unconditional surrender of its armed forces on Tuesday, 8 May 1945; it marked the official end of World War II in Europe in the Eastern Front, with the last known shots fired on 11 May. Russia and some former Soviet countries celebrate on 9 May, as Germany's unconditional surrender entered into force at 23:01 on 8 May Central European Time; this corresponded with 01:01 on 9 May in Moscow Time.

Inside back cover:

On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress passed an act establishing an official flag for the new nation. The resolution stated: "Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." On Aug. 3, 1949, President Harry S. Truman officially declared June 14 as Flag Day.

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POLITICAL PRINCIPLES

Former President and Mrs. Ford were parishioners in the church I served in Palm Desert, California. In those nine years, I was blessed to be friends with both, to get to know them as faithful Christians, and finally to officiate his memorial service when he died. Some of what I said in that homily was based on the Beatitudes of Jesus, one of which was "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Gerald Ford showed mercy when others demanded vengeance.

In John 15, Jesus said, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." In WWII Gerald Ford served in the Navy, willing to die for this nation and our allies. When he became Vice President, he laid aside his life's ambition to be Speaker of the House. As President, he laid aside his political future to heal this nation.

In 1974 President Ford spoke of his way of doing public service:

1. "Men of differing political persuasions can find common ground for cooperation. We need not agree on all issues in order to agree on most.
2. "The majority must take into account the proper interests of a minority if the decisions of the majority are to be accepted.

"Democracy thrives on the habits of accommodation, moderation, and consideration of the interests of others."

Whenever we go to the polls, I hope we consider his words when we evaluate the candidates and cast our votes. Gerald and Betty Ford were lifelong Episcopalians who lived their lives with honor and integrity. While many voters disagreed with his decision to pardon his predecessor, they expressed that disagreement by voting for his opponent in 1976; and following that election he and President Carter became close friends. My prayer for this nation is that we can respect others with different opinions by practicing principles before personalities, recognize their legitimate interests, and remain friends engaging in civil discourse.

Another former President, John F. Kennedy said, "Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer, but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past. Let us accept our own responsibility for the future."

from the CEO



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I hope you and your family have been able to stay safe and healthy.

In all likelihood if you are reading this Bulletin, you have a wealth of life experiences. Life experiences are integral with change. Changes in weather, jobs, people, technology, and our living environment. And the list is endless. Many changes we look forward to, others less so. That constant change describes our veteran service organization, AXPOW. For those of you who have been a member of the organization for a long period of time, you remember how AXPOW was. Annual conventions widely attended at various locations around the country. Service unit officers helping our members and their families to receive the benefits they earned. AXPOW playing a vital role in influencing public policy in Washington. The list goes on and on.

Over the recent decades', AXPOW has experienced a decline in membership, support, and activities. Convention attendance dropped dramatically as more EXPOWs passed away

and the remaining membership population grew in age with travel restrictions. Services too declined for many of the same reasons, as did our revenues to support AXPOW. Then our expenses exceeded revenues. AXPOW was on the doorstep of ceasing operations were it not for the generosity of EXPOWs who felt so strongly about our organization and its meaning that they included AXPOW in their estate. We so appreciated their generosity and through their actions we were able to continue as a vital organization albeit continuing to reduce our support and actions due to limited human resources. Although that changed our financial position it did not turn back the hands of time for our membership which continues to decline in number. At this time, our best estimate of remaining members is 1085; our EXPOW population is 680, with anticipated much reduced numbers by April 2025. As these changes continued internally, our participation and influence were reduced externally as well. Our status as Member to Associate Member for the Arlington National Cemetery Veterans Day celebration occurred. We are still invited to attend the ceremony, Presidential breakfast and laying of the wreath at the tomb of the unknown soldier. However, as an Associate Member we are not invited to participate in the ceremonies directly on the stage with the President of the United States and not named during the announcements. Our invitation from Congress to present our annual legislative agenda directly to Congress was withdrawn so only written comments could be submitted, similar to any concerned citizen.

During our Board of Directors meeting of September, 2022, we decided to proceed with the unwinding of the organization as we know it with our goal being April 9, 2025-National Prisoner of War Recognition Day. As part of that process, we entered into a general agreement with Friends of Andersonville (Friends) to work with AXPOW. As many of you are aware Friends works closely with the National Parks Service (NPS) regarding the Andersonville cemetery since 1988. The NPS presents projects for the site to the Friends Board of Trustees for their approval for funding. They have been a great partner for Andersonville and now for AXPOW.

Our contribution to this agreement will be the establishment of the "American Ex-Prisoners of War National POW Museum Fund". This fund will enable us to leave a legacy in the form of continuing support for the museum – a wish we first envisioned when we worked to pass the POW Commemorative Coin Bill more than 20 years ago. At that time, we were only able to fund the museum, but the idea of a perpetual endowment was always there but not until recently has our financial position been able to support it.

With our time horizon approximately one year, a detailed process and timeline will be developed and communicated in the upcoming Bulletin. AXPOW has served its veteran community since the 1940s and holds a special place in all of our hearts. We hope to accomplish this process with honor and dignity for all our past and present members.

andersonville



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Greetings from Andersonville,

After many years of working in the Law Enforcement ranks as Chief Ranger mostly in Florida, I come to Andersonville National Historic Site on a temporary detail as Superintendent where I am experiencing the rich history that this place has to offer. I am impressed, as of many other things, with the friendliness and warmth from its people while I visit the towns around us. With that said I want to share some of the highlights worth mentioning here at Andersonville National Historic Site.

The FONSI (Finding Of No Significant Impact) was released for Section Q, so we will be moving forward with grading that portion of the cemetery. The process of bidding and choosing a contractor will begin soon. When the work is completed, it will allow for additional burials in Ander-

sonville National Cemetery for several years to come. The full FONSI (Find of No Significant Impact) can be found on our park web site, under the Management tab. In other news, our horticulture staff have been hard at work planting trees and shrubs and caring for the older trees in the cemetery and throughout the rest of the park.

This year marks the 160th anniversary of the Camp Sumter prison and the museum staff have events, exhibits, and social media campaigns planned out for the next 14 months related to that story.



The first event, a Night Museum, was held on February 24, the anniversary date of the arrival of the first prisoners to the site, with a good turnout from visitors. A temporary exhibit, with letters and other artifacts from soldiers that were highlighted during Night Museum, is in place through early May. A second 160th anniversary temporary exhibit will go in at that point.

There are also plans to upgrade the prisoner database this year. We have roughly \$30,000 Eastern National donation money to spend and this is a perfect project. Right now, there are over 100,000 records in the current database, with more added almost daily. As many of you know, researchers, both professional and amateur, access or

request access to our database daily, some looking for very specific information. It is the most requested service the staff at the National POW Museum provide. We are looking into the possibility of making the database searchable online and more user-friendly.

Everyone at Andersonville National Historic Site is preparing for the annual Memorial Day events. We'd love to have you join us in decorating the graves in the cemetery with American flags. You can sign up to volunteer by going to our Calendar on the Andersonville NHS website and clicking on Memorial Day Observance. The full weekend's events are also on that page.

I sincerely hope that you are doing well and that our relationships keep growing fostering friendships for years to come. Our staff is grateful for the wonderful partnership that has made things possible and our jobs a lot easier.

Annual Events

Each year the park hosts a series of recurring events at the National Prisoner of War Museum, the historic prison site, or the Andersonville National Cemetery.

April: Avenue of Flags, National Former POW Recognition Day

May: Memorial Day, Avenue of Flags

July: Avenue of Flags

September: Avenue of Flags, National POW/MIA Recognition Day

November: Avenue of Flags, Living History Weekend

December: Avenue of Flags, Wreaths Across America

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Remembering Bill and Nancy Fornes

John Kennedy was quoted as saying, "Victory has a hundred fathers, defeat is an orphan." That sums up how many people led the effort to build the National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville National Historic Site. Two of those champions for that cause were Bill and Nancy Fornes. Not only were they tireless cheerleaders for the project, they also dove into the minutiae of every facet of the work, both before and after the museum became a reality.

Bill was originally from Kentucky and while attending Virginia Tech enrolled in Air Force ROTC. He aspired to be a pilot and got his wish upon graduation in 1950. Late in his time in college, he met Nancy who he married. Bill trained and deployed to Korea, where his F-84 was shot down on his 50th mission. The North Koreans and Chinese held and tortured him for 13 months before his release. Bill continued to serve in the Air Force for 24 years, retiring as a major.

In the 1980's, Bill came to Andersonville where he felt an immediate connection. He met Chief Ranger Fred Sanchez who was seeking to develop support for telling the expanded POW story which was mandated in the 1970 federal law that created the National Historic Site. That plan came together in 1989 when Congress made a small

appropriation for the initial planning of the museum. Both Bill and Nancy had been active in AXPOW when National Commander, John Edwards, asked Bill to serve as the Andersonville Coordinator for the organization. At the same time, AXPOW created the Andersonville Committee to work with the National Park Service in planning the museum. That committee had AXPOW members who had been POWs in WWII ETO, WWII PTO, Korea and Vietnam. Bill and Nancy were a part of that process. All major reviews of plans and design went through the committee for advice and counsel.

Bill and Nancy played a big role in fundraising. One antidote was Bill's idea of inserting a donation request card with disability checks mailed from the Veterans Administration. When the VA agreed to the solicitation that was mailed in 1.9 million checks for the February 1994 cycle. Bill and Nancy took on answering every donor with a thank-you letter by moving to the park in a borrowed motor home. Roughly 10,000 donations came in and netted the project nearly \$80,000.

As the museum's construction finally came together, both Bill and Nancy worked for a year to help the park plan for the grand opening event. That event proved to be an enormous logistical challenge. With 4,000 people in attendance for two days of activities in remote area, food, lodging, media relations and transportation had to be arranged. Because the government could not pay for many of the expenses associated with such an event, more fundraising had to be arranged. Despite bad weather on the first day, the event exceeded expectations.

Bill and Nancy continued in their service to Andersonville and the

Museum. A month after the museum opened, Bill appeared on C-SPAN live to talk about the museum and his experiences and to take calls from viewers. I think Bill was more terrified about that experience than perhaps anything, but he did extremely well. Later a play was produced about Andersonville and its ties to modern POWs called, *And Grace Will Lead Me Home*. Bill turned out to be the star of the show overcoming his fear of telling his story before a large live audience. The show ran in the Rylander Theater in Americus for two seasons.

Bill died in 2009 and Nancy in 2021. This short tribute to their work only touches on a few highlights of all they did. One of the most telling legacies Bill left was a large stained glass image of the symbol of the American Ex-Prisoners of War. That item has been proudly placed on display in the exhibits of the museum to tell how POWs banded together after their release for camaraderie and healing. In a similar way, the Andersonville Survivors Association formed after the Civil War, AXPOW has its roots back to World War II. Both Bill and Nancy left a profound impact on the park but mostly to those who knew them as American patriots and the dearest of friends.



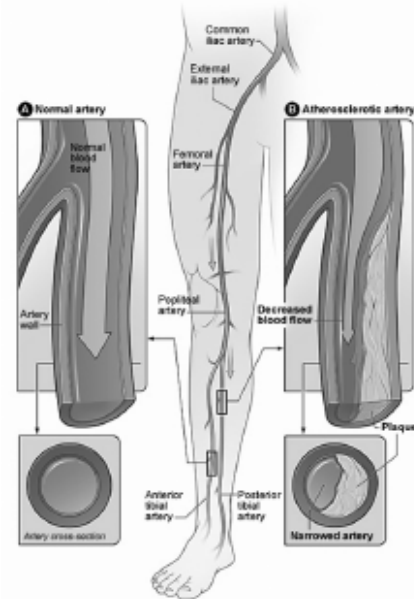
On April 9, 1992 the park hosted a Ground Breaking event for the museum. Bill Fornes is the third person from the left.

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Peripheral Arterial disease



What Is Peripheral Arterial Disease?

Peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) occurs when plaque builds up in the arteries that carry blood to your head, organs, and limbs. Plaque is made up of fat, cholesterol, calcium, fibrous tissue, and other substances in the blood.

When plaque builds up in arteries, the condition is called atherosclerosis. Over time, plaque can harden and narrow the arteries. This limits the flow of oxygen-rich blood to your organs and other parts of your body.

P.A.D. usually affects the legs, but also can affect the arteries that carry blood from your heart to your head, arms, kidneys, and stomach. This article focuses on P.A.D. that affects blood flow to the legs.

Normal Artery and Artery With Plaque Buildup

The illustration shows how P.A.D. can affect arteries in the legs. Figure A shows a normal artery with normal blood flow. The inset image shows a cross-section of the normal artery. Figure B shows an artery with plaque buildup that's partially blocking blood flow. The inset image

shows a cross-section of the narrowed artery.

Overview

Blocked blood flow to your legs can cause pain and numbness. It also can raise your risk of getting an infection in the affected limbs. It may be hard for your body to fight the infection.

If severe enough, blocked blood flow can cause tissue death (gangrene). In very serious cases, this can lead to leg amputation.

If you have leg pain when you walk or climb stairs, talk to your doctor. Sometimes older people think that leg pain is just a

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symptom of aging. However, the cause for the pain could be P.A.D. Tell your doctor if you're feeling pain in your legs and discuss whether you should be tested for P.A.D.

Smoking is the main risk factor for P.A.D. If you smoke or have a history of smoking, your risk for P.A.D. increases four times. Other factors, such as age and having certain diseases or conditions, also increase your risk.

Outlook

If you have P.A.D., your risk for coronary artery disease, heart attack, stroke, and transient ischemic attack ("mini-stroke") is six to seven times greater than the risk for people who don't have P.A.D. If you have heart disease, you have a 1 in 3 chance of having blocked leg arteries.

Although P.A.D. is serious, it's treatable. If you have the disease, it's important to see your doctor regularly and treat the underlying atherosclerosis.

P.A.D. treatment may slow or stop disease progress and reduce the risk of complications. Treatments include lifestyle changes, medicines, and surgery or procedures. Researchers continue to explore new therapies for P.A.D.

Other Names for Peripheral Arterial Disease

Atherosclerotic peripheral arterial disease
Peripheral vascular disease

Vascular disease
Hardening of the arteries
Claudication
Poor circulation
Leg cramps from poor circulation

What Causes Peripheral Arterial Disease?

The most common cause of peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) is atherosclerosis. The exact cause of atherosclerosis isn't known.

The disease may start when certain factors damage the inner layers of the arteries. These factors include:

Smoking
High amounts of certain fats and cholesterol in the blood
High blood pressure

High amounts of sugar in the blood due to insulin resistance or diabetes

When damage occurs, your body starts a healing process. The healing may cause plaque to build up where the arteries are damaged.

Over time, the plaque may crack. Blood cell fragments called platelets stick to the injured lining of the artery and may clump together to form blood clots.

The buildup of plaque or blood clots can severely narrow or block the arteries and limit the flow of oxygen-rich blood to your body.

Who Is At Risk?

Peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) affects 8 to 12 million people in the United States. African Americans are more than

twice as likely as Caucasians to have P.A.D.

The major risk factors for P.A.D. are smoking, age, and having certain diseases or conditions.

Smoking
Smoking is more closely related to getting P.A.D. than any other risk factor. Your risk for P.A.D. increases four times if you smoke or have a history of smoking. On average, smokers who develop P.A.D. have symptoms 10 years earlier than nonsmokers who develop P.A.D. Quitting smoking slows the progress of P.A.D. Smoking even one or two cigarettes a day can interfere with P.A.D. treatments. Smokers and people who have diabetes are at highest risk for P.A.D. complications, including gangrene (tissue death) in the leg from decreased blood flow.

Age
As you get older, your risk for P.A.D. increases. Genetic or lifestyle factors cause plaque to build in your arteries as you age.

About 5 percent of U.S. adults who are older than 50 have P.A.D. Among adults aged 65 and older, 12 to 20 percent may have P.A.D. Older age combined with other risk factors, such as smoking or diabetes, also puts you at higher risk.

Diseases and Conditions
A number of diseases and conditions can raise your risk for P.A.D. These include:
Diabetes. One in three people who has diabetes and is older than 50 is likely to have P.A.D.
High blood pressure or a family history.
High blood cholesterol or a family history.

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Heart disease or a family history.
Stroke or a family history.

What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Peripheral Arterial Disease?

At least half of the people who have peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) don't have any signs or symptoms of it. Others may have a number of signs and symptoms.

Even if you don't have signs or symptoms, discuss with your doctor whether you should get checked for P.A.D. if you're:

Aged 70 or older

Aged 50 or older and have a history of smoking or diabetes

Younger than 50 and have diabetes and one or more risk factors for atherosclerosis

People who have P.A.D. may have symptoms when walking or climbing stairs. These may include pain, numbness, aching, or heaviness in the leg muscles. Symptoms also may include cramping in the affected leg(s) and in the buttocks, thighs, calves, and feet. Symptoms may ease after resting.

These symptoms are called intermittent claudication. During physical activity, your muscles need increased blood flow. If your blood vessels are narrowed or blocked, your muscles won't get enough blood. When resting, the muscles need less blood flow, so the pain goes away.

About 10 percent of people who have P.A.D. have claudication. This symptom is more likely in

people who also have atherosclerosis in other arteries.

Other Signs and Symptoms

Weak or absent pulses in the legs or feet

Sores or wounds on the toes, feet, or legs that heal slowly, poorly, or not at all

A pale or bluish color to the skin

A lower temperature in one leg compared to the other leg

Poor nail growth on the toes and decreased hair growth on the legs

Erectile dysfunction, especially among men who have diabetes

How Is Peripheral Arterial Disease Diagnosed?

Peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) is diagnosed based on your medical and family histories, a physical exam, and results from tests.

P.A.D. often is diagnosed after symptoms are reported. An accurate diagnosis is important, because people who have P.A.D. are at increased risk for coronary artery disease (CAD), heart attack, stroke, and transient ischemic attack ("mini-stroke"). If you have P.A.D., your doctor also may want to look for signs of these conditions.

Medical and Family Histories

To learn about your medical and family histories, your doctor may ask:

Whether you have any risk factors for P.A.D.

About your symptoms, including any symptoms that occur when walking, exercising, sitting, standing, or climbing

About your diet

About any medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines

Whether anyone in your family has a history of cardiovascular disease

Physical Exam

During the physical exam, your doctor will look for signs and symptoms of P.A.D. He or she may check the blood flow in your legs or feet to see whether you have weak or absent pulses.

Your doctor also may check the pulses in your leg arteries for an abnormal whooshing sound called a bruit. He or she can hear this sound with a stethoscope. A bruit may be a warning sign of a narrowed or blocked section of artery.

During the physical exam, your doctor may compare blood pressure between your limbs to see whether the pressure is lower in one.

He or she also may check for poor wound healing or any changes in your hair, skin, or nails that may be signs of P.A.D.

Diagnostic Tests

Ankle-Brachial Index

Doppler Ultrasound

Treadmill Test

Magnetic Resonance Angiogram

Arteriogram

Blood Tests

How Is Peripheral Arterial Disease Treated?

Treatments for peripheral arterial disease (P.A.D.) include

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lifestyle changes, medicines, and surgery or procedures.

The overall goals of treating P.A.D. are to reduce symptoms, improve quality of life, and prevent complications. Treatment is based on your signs and symptoms, risk factors, and results from a physical exam and tests.

Lifestyle Changes

Treatment often includes making long-lasting lifestyle changes, such as:

Quitting smoking.

Lowering blood pressure.

Lowering high blood cholesterol levels.

Lowering blood glucose levels if you have diabetes. s.

Getting regular physical activity.

Follow a healthy eating plan that's low in total fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium (salt).

Medicines

Your doctor may prescribe medicines to:

Lower high blood cholesterol levels and high blood pressure

Thin the blood to prevent clots from forming due to low blood flow

·Help ease leg pain that occurs when you walk or climb stairs

Surgery or Procedures

Bypass Grafting

Angioplasty

Other Types of Treatment

Researchers are studying cell and gene therapies to treat P.A.D. However, these treatments aren't yet available outside of clinical trials.

How Can Peripheral Arterial Disease Be Prevented?

Taking action to control your risk factors can help prevent or delay peripheral arterial disease and its complications.

Know your family history of health problems related to P.A.D. If you smoke, quit.

Follow a healthy eating plan.

Get regular physical activity.

These lifestyle changes can reduce your risk for P.A.D. and help prevent and control conditions that can lead to P.A.D., such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, heart disease, and stroke.

Living With P.A.D.

If you have peripheral arterial disease, you're also more likely to have coronary artery disease (CAD), heart attack, stroke, and transient ischemic attack (TIA, or "mini-stroke"). However, you can take steps to treat and control P.A.D. and lower your risk for these other conditions.

Living With Peripheral Arterial Disease Symptoms

If you have P.A.D., you may feel pain in your calf or thigh muscles after walking. Try to take a break and allow the pain to ease before walking again. Over time, this may increase the distance that you can walk without pain.

Talk with your doctor about taking part in a supervised exercise program. This type of program has been shown to reduce P.A.D. symptoms

Check your feet and toes regularly for sores or possible infections. Wear comfortable shoes that fit well. Maintain good foot hygiene and have professional medical treatment for corns, bunions, or calluses.

Ongoing Health Care Needs and Lifestyle Changes

See your doctor for checkups as he or she advises. If you have P.A.D., but don't have symptoms, you should still see your doctor regularly. Take all medicines as your doctor prescribes.

Lifestyle changes can help prevent or delay P.A.D. and other related problems, such as CAD, heart attack, stroke, and TIA. Lifestyle changes include quitting smoking, controlling risk factors, getting regular physical activity, and following a healthy eating plan.

National Institutes of Health

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PRESUMPTIVE SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITIES

Public Law 97-37

by William Paul Skelton, III, MD
F.A.C.P.

All ex-POWs should keep these. Whenever you open your claim, take them with you and make sure the adjudication officer sees them and have him read them! Make sure he knows all about them. Tell him your own story as it relates to your problem.....

1. ARTHRITIS, TRAUMATIC

Also known as articular trauma.

2. AVITAMINOSIS

The total lack of vitamins in the diet.

3. BERIBERI

Caused by a severe lack of vitamin B1 (thiamine) in the diet.

4. DYSENTERY, CHRONIC

A disease characterized by frequent and watery stools, usually with blood and mucus, and accompanied by rectal and abdominal pain, fever, and dehydration.

5. FROSTBITE

The actual freezing of tissue.

6. HELMINTHIASIS

Infection with any type of worms that parasitize the human.

7. MALNUTRITION

Merely means bad nutrition.

8. PELLAGRA

It is caused by a virtual lack of vitamin B3 (niacin) in the diet.

9. ANY OTHER NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCY

The lack of protein and calories in the diet generally produces no lasting side effects.

10. PSYCHOSIS

A generic term for any of the insanities.

11. PANIC DISORDER

Characterized by discrete periods of apprehension or fear.

12. GENERALIZED ANXIETY DISORDER

13. OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER

This may be either obsessions or compulsions.

14. POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

The re-experiencing of a trauma of a past recognized stress or that can produce symptoms of distress.

15. ATYPICAL ANXIETY DISORDER

This is a category that is used for diagnosis when the affected individual appears to have an anxiety disorder that does not meet the criteria for entry into any of the other known anxiety disorders.

16. DEPRESSIVE NEUROSIS /DYSTHYMIC DISORDER

Characterized by depressive periods in which the patient feels sad and/or down and has a loss of interest in the usual activities that cause pleasure or involvement in usual pastimes.

17. PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY

Literally Greek for the suffering of nerves outside of the brain and spinal cord.

18. IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common disorder of the intestines that leads to crampy pain, gas, bloating, and changes in bowel habits.

19. PEPTIC ULCER DISEASE

A peptic ulcer is a sore or hole in the lining of the stomach or duodenum (the first part of the small intestine).

20. CIRRHOSIS

Scar tissue replaces normal, healthy tissue, blocking the flow of blood through the organ and preventing it from working as it should.

21. STROKE & COMPLICATIONS

A stroke occurs when the blood supply to part of the brain is suddenly interrupted or when a blood vessel in the brain bursts, spilling blood into the spaces surrounding brain cells.

22. HEART & COMPLICATIONS

Heart disease includes atherosclerotic heart disease, and hypertensive vascular disease (including hypertensive heart disease, and hypertension).

23. OSTEOPOROSIS

Osteoporosis is a disease in which bones become fragile and more likely to break.

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Disability compensation is a monetary benefit paid to Veterans who are determined by VA to be disabled by an injury or illness that was incurred or aggravated during active military service. These disabilities are considered to be service connected.

To be eligible for compensation, the Veteran must have been separated or discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

Monthly disability compensation varies with the degree of disability and the number of eligible dependents. Veterans with certain severe disabilities may be eligible for additional special monthly compensation (SMC). Disability compensation benefits are not subject to federal or state income tax.

# namPOW news

Sergeant Ken Wallingford  
Former POW, Cambodia

In September, 1969, I entered the United States Army where I completed basic and advanced infantry training at Fort Polk, Louisiana. I completed paratrooper school at Fort Benning, Georgia and attended Special Forces, phase one training, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. After training, I went to Vietnam in August, 1970 and began my assignment as a sniper with the 25th Infantry Division based in Lai Khe, South Vietnam. I extended my tour of duty an additional seven months so I could separate from military service five months early.

On my second tour of duty in September, 1971, I served as a military advisor with LTC Richard Schott, Major Albert Carlson, Major Mark Smith, and SFC Howard Lull, MACV (Military Assistance Command Vietnam) Team 70. In March, 1972, I was sent to Loc Ninh, 75 miles north of Saigon, where I helped advise 200 South Vietnamese troops. At 0600 on April 5, 1972, my life changed forever as we were attacked with heavy mortar and artillery fire from three divisions of North Vietnamese Army and Viet Cong (30,000 soldiers). On the second day of a three-day battle, the South Vietnamese camp commander and artillery commander walked out of the camp and surrendered to the enemy. After oppressive and massive warfare for three days, the numerically superior enemy

overran our camp driving Russian tanks. Severely wounded, I was one of three survivors taken prisoner, six days before my scheduled discharge from military service.



*Capture-Ken in sling,  
second from left*

Out of the five-man team, only Major Carlson, Captain Smith and I survived. Over the next several days, the Viet Cong forced us to walk the Ho Chi Minh trail deep into the jungle of the neighboring country of Cambodia. We were led to a small POW camp (one of three in Cambodia) with five "tiger cages." I was put in a 5'x 6' cage made of bamboo tree logs with a 10' chain around my ankle and secured to the cage. Because of the limited height of 5', it was impossible to stand while I was in the cage. The chain around my ankles never came off unless I used the "facilities," which was a hole in the ground or went to bathe at a small stream every two weeks. I was kept in solitary confinement for the first six months. The Viet Cong believed in letting injuries (seventeen shrapnel wounds) heal from the inside out. With no medical attention, it is a miracle that they healed in four months with no infection.

While being held prisoner, I was more afraid of dying from a snake bite than anything else.

Cambodia has some of the most venomous snakes in the world (black cobra, green bamboo viper and the krait). On my first day of captivity, I was alarmed when I saw a black cobra snake outside my cage. I immediately called the guard, but gratefully, the snake slithered away before he came. I slept in a hammock strung inside the cage with a mosquito net draped over me. I contracted malaria and had relapses every six weeks. During the day, the guard unlocked the door to my cage and we were allowed to go out, as far as a 10' chain would allow. Our diet consisted of three "meals" a day which included rice, a little pork fat about the size of a quarter with 1/16th" of meat with the hair still on it, a little vegetable and three small bowls of water. When a guard approached our cages, we had to stand up, bow and greet them in Vietnamese. We were locked inside our cages each afternoon for a two hour "siesta." Later that day, a guard would stand in the middle of the small camp with a transistor radio, broadcasting the "Voice of Vietnam" from Hanoi. For example, the North Vietnamese announced that George McGovern was going to defeat Richard Nixon in the 1972 presidential election. Of course, we now know that Nixon won in a landslide. For thirty days, they replayed a recording by Jane Fonda who visited North Vietnam and made anti-American statements. I'll never forget her closing sentence: "I go to bed crying every night thinking of the damage we've done to these poor innocent people." She never visited Cambodia to see the inhumane living conditions we had to endure,

During an interrogation session, I was forced to sit on a 12" high

## namPOW,cont'd...

stump. This gave the interrogator the superior position so I would have to look up toward him. He spoke fluent English. At the end of 1 1/2 hours, I asked him where he learned to speak English. He replied that as child in Saigon, he listened to the BBC radio.

The Viet Cong always told us "when the war was over we could go home." In January 1973, the "Voice of Vietnam" announced the signing of the Paris Peace Agreement. There were now seven POWs in the camp (the only Air Force pilot and one Marine aviator held in Cambodia.) We were taken back to Loc Ninh, South Vietnam, and released along with twenty other POWs from two camps in Cambodia. On February 12, 1973, US Army helicopters from Tan Son Nhut Air Base in Saigon flew in to pick up the 27 of us held in Cambodia. The remaining POWs were released from Hanoi.



*Release - February 12, 1973*

As I noted earlier, this experience changed my life forever. Prior to going to Vietnam, I was an agnostic. You've heard the adage, "battlefield conversion." On the second of the battle when it looked like it would be impossible to get out alive, I started to pray, "Lord, get me out of here alive and I'll come home and make a profession of faith." Upon my return to Austin, Texas, I walked down the aisle of the church my mother attended and where the pastor wore my POW bracelet and I honored my commitment.

A poem composed by Air Force Captain Dave Baker, a fellow prisoner in my camp, encapsulates our experience:

In this camp are seven men, all of whom Uncle Sam did send, "to Vietnam, to fight," he said, so others can decide how they want to be led.

Gladly we went, but alas for us, we were captured in battle in the heat and the dust, taken away from our families out of the war, then chained to a cage, life is really a bore. We are Army, Air Force and Marine, and all of us are ready to scream about the inhumane treatment and care, the Viet Cong call "lenient and fair."

As prisoners of war we eat pork fat and rice, but we think of steak and other things nice. Our minds seem to dwell in the future and past. Oh, how long can this war last?

I know that some day we will all be set free, but only the good Lord knows when that will be. The United States, friends, and wives, surely it will be the happiest day of our lives.

Until that great and eventful day, we must all stick together and pray and give thanks to God for being alive for surely it was He who let us survive.

We will be a little older, but much more wise and I don't mean from listening to Communist lies. If there is one thing upon which seven men can agree, that one thing is:

**Freedom is not free!**



# pow/mia

Mary Schantag, Chairman  
P.O.W. Network  
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## A snail's pace

Work at DPAA continues at a snail's pace.

While it appears that they are have a good number of dignitaries visiting the labs from foreign countries, or our own foreign ambassadors, the work pace on final identifications remains agonizingly slow.

The posted numbers on DPAA's website stand at, "WORLD WAR II – 22; KOREAN WAR – 3; COLD WAR – 0; VIETNAM WAR – 1, Current Identifications by Conflict for FY 2024."

As of 18 Feb 2024, no identifications have been added to the website since 12/26/2023, although we are in mid-February.

Additionally – it seems the more updates DPAA makes to the website, the less "user friendly" it becomes. For example – Missing by state – a very useful annual tool for POW/MIA remembrance services is no longer simply a click and print.

To get a list generated you have to find the appropriate list IF you want it to contain such items as dates of loss, and then set the parameters, and then download before it begins to be usable. If are working more than one conflict, the main list (mis-titled as containing the "profiles") is unusable and you have to hunt each era for the alternative search list, download that, merge it to make it usable, re-sort to what you need and print.

Same if you are working an MIA date and not a name.

Seems the old KISS principal has gone out the window and you have to have an IT degree to figure it all out now.

Meanwhile time is running out for Budget passage: "Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget. The current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on March 8, which

is very problematic for DPAA because our budget remains capped at FY 2023 levels until an Appropriations Bill is passed. This means we are still unable to access the \$46M increase included in our FY 2024 budget. To date, we have been able to manage the shortfall, but should the CR be extended, we will have to cut field missions that were planned with the additional funds." DPAA Jan 31 2024 Family-VSO Quarterly Call Notes.

Add in turf wars!

Per DPAA Quarterly Call Notes again, "Disinterment Pause. On December 12, the Undersecretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) issued a pause of Phase 5 of the Korean War Disinterment Project (16 Phase 5 disinterments had been completed in the fall) as well as any approvals of World War II (WWII) disinterment requests. We responded with a thorough and comprehensive package addressing the various concerns and are awaiting feedback. Given the adverse impacts to our analytical and identification efforts, we are keen on disinterments resuming soonest."

From Rick Downes, **Coalition of Families** on February 13th. "... There is good news. Phase 5 of DPAA's Korean War Punch Bowl cemetery disinterment project has been cleared to restart. Disinterments are scheduled to resume 'mid-March'. Three months will have been lost but at least it will be underway. Phase 5 is expected to be completed by October.

The delay was ordered in December by a DoD counterpart agency, Personnel & Readiness. The short term issues raised were resolved last week. The broader issue is tied to which agency within DoD has authority over past conflicts disinterment projects – should P&R even have had the authority to halt the project. This issue still needs to be resolved.

An upcoming Coalition newsletter will present the ins-and-outs of the entire *saga*. Crazy."

Meanwhile,

- Laos missions have been cancelled because "Our military and civilian members permanently assigned to our detachment in Laos do not have diplomatic protections like other US Embassy employees.



- The DPAA contractors conducting work on the behalf of the US Side of the USRJC continued their research in the Central Archives of the Russian Ministry of Defense until December 31 when the Government of the Russian Federation notified them that their archive access was suspended. The Russian Side did not notify the US Side Chairman of the suspension and they have not had any further communications with US Side personnel.
- Planned Disinterments. Until the disinterment pause is reversed, the only planned disinterment events are for requests previously approved – two at NMCP (14 WWII Unknowns) and one mission at MACM (35 WWII Unknowns). If we are unable to resume disinterments by April 19, we will not be able to complete Phase-5 during FY 2024.
- ...we accounted for US Army Air Forces 2Lt Porter Pile and TSgt James Triplett, crewmen aboard a B-24 that was shot down over Germany in September 1944. From 3 excavations at a site discovered by a local German historian, remains were recovered and identified, and also associated by EM historians and Nebraska Lab scientists with remains from 2 disinterments from the Cambridge and North Africa American Cemeteries. The latter took seven years of coordination with the Government of Tunisia to allow the disinterment of Unknowns. In December, the families of 2d Lt Pile and TSgt Triplett chose to have a single funeral service and inter them in adjacent graves at Arlington.

As of March 1, 2024, the number of Americans Missing and Unaccounted-for from the Vietnam War remains at 1,577 .

There are 81,611 still unaccounted for US Military personnel since 1941.

## civilian

[The following article was originally distributed by Maurice Francis to his WWII Philippine Internment Email List. If you would like to be added to his list, please send a message using the *Comments form*. Following the article, I have recapped the previous contributions by Prof. Meadows.]

### *Encounters With STIC Guards (or, "Nippon" at My Heels)*

by Martin Meadows

INTRODUCTION. Whenever anyone asks me what life was like during more than three years in Santo Tomás Internment Camp (STIC) in Manila, one question in particular is sure to arise. That question, usually a follow-up to the most obvious ones about food and housing conditions, concerns the treatment of internees by the camp's Nipponese guards. When that once again came up during a recent radio interview, it prompted me to decide to provide as detailed an answer as memory would allow (certainly one far too detailed for any sort of interview). This is a purely personal account, one which should not be considered as necessarily applying to the experiences of STIC internees in general. In the following discussion, I distinguish between what I call "routine" and "non-routine" encounters with guards. The former deals with "normal" or every-day kinds of encounters, meaning the type that most internees would have undergone; the latter covers a limited number of interactions which were not "normal," in the sense that very few other internees would have experienced them. And, to be properly pedantic as befitting a former professor, I further divide (and sub-divide) each of those two major kinds of encounters.

I. ROUTINE ENCOUNTERS. In this classification I distinguish between two types, which I call "random" and "non-random."

A. The random category includes, as might be expected, the numerous times when internees happened to randomly cross paths with Nipponese guards. In my case, these instances almost always occurred somewhere on the STIC grounds — that is, not within a building. On such occasions, having been suitably

## civilian, cont'd...

warned as to the required behavior, I made sure to bow correctly — from the waist rather than merely with a nod of my head. The guards for the most part simply ignored me, looking straight ahead as they walked; if and when they did react, it was usually with a head nod. Rarely did a guard actually bow from the waist, and even then only slightly so. Never (that I can recall) did I observe any of the guards bow “properly” in return (nor did internees expect them to do so).

B. The non-random category includes two kinds of encounters. (1) One kind involves regularly-scheduled encounters, meaning specifically the twice-daily roll-calls, in which the residents of each room would, at the direction of the room monitor, bow in unison as guards strode past. (I do not know if this was the procedure in the Annex building, where mothers with younger children were housed.) Precisely because such encounters affected almost all internees, and were routine as well as non-random/regularly scheduled, normally they would require no further elaboration, except of course in the case of an out-of-the-ordinary event, one example of which is discussed as a “non-routine” occurrence (see II. A.).

(2) The other kind has to do with non-scheduled but non-random encounters, by which I mean the occasions when guards at the STIC main-entrance guardhouse checked internees who had received passes permitting them to leave the camp, whether for the day or for longer periods. In

my case, these included the following instances.

(a) Dr. Lindsay Fletcher (who, incidentally, had been our pre-war family doctor) gained permission to transport me to a city hospital (name not recalled) in order to use its fluoroscope, so that he could properly set a complex fracture and dislocation of my left elbow. (Following that painful procedure, during which I probably disturbed the whole hospital, Dr. Fletcher placed a wrist-to-shoulder cast on my arm, utilizing hospital equipment and material).

(b) My father and I were allowed to leave STIC for my bar mitzvah at Temple Emil, the Manila synagogue on Taft Avenue. (Only one parent could accompany me.)

(c) My mother and I received passes to see our pre-war Filipino ophthalmologist (Dr. Sevilla), so he could treat my case of conjunctivitis.

(d) My mother and I were allowed to visit uninterned (non-enemy alien) friends (the Sharuff family) for a week, ostensibly to recuperate from various health problems (or so Dr. Fletcher claimed in his recommendation supporting the application for passes submitted to the commandant’s office).

(e) I was among a small group of youths allowed to leave STIC for a weekend visit (possibly because it coincided with Halloween) with an American missionary family (if I recall correctly, that of Dr. Hugh Bousman, one of dozens of

missionaries who had been released for a time from STIC).

In concluding this account of guard-house encounters, three points should be highlighted. First, although all such inspections were strictly routine in my case, obviously this may not have been true for every other internee who received a pass. Second, while I classify these cases as routine — as they were, for the guards — they were not entirely routine for me, for it was hard to be fully at ease while being reviewed by guards who (I thought) might arbitrarily decide I had committed some infraction of the rules. Third and most significant of all, it should be emphasized (unnecessarily, for ex-internees) that all of these occasions occurred during 1942-1943, when civilian commandants were in charge of STIC; none took place after the Nipponese military took over in February of 1944.

## II. NON-ROUTINE ENCOUNTERS.

These were, as might be expected, much fewer in number than the routine ones. And each one — as the “non-routine” designation almost by definition implies — affected at most only a small number of internees other than myself. Here too, still being overly pedagogical, I distinguish between two varieties, which for want of better terminology I call “hybrid” (in that the example I cite, though non-routine, might have occurred more than once) and “limited” (meaning that these were highly unlikely to have been duplicated).

A. Hybrid.

My only example of this hap-

## civilian, cont'd...

pened during one of the daily roll calls, for which we — meaning in this case the occupants of room 43, on the third floor of the Main Building — would line up in two rows in the hallway outside our room. At the order of our room monitor, Henry Pile, we would all bow together as the guards passed. On one such occasion, someone in the front row bowed so low that his head struck the saber of one of the passing guards. The startled guard swung around toward us as he placed his hand on the saber. Quickly realizing that the bump had been accidental, he unsmilingly resumed stride with the other guards, presumably unaware of our barely concealed mirth.

B. Limited.

(1) One such instance turned out not to involve me directly, though initially I feared that it might. I was in the camp hospital as a result of my aforementioned broken elbow, and my bed was near the end of the ward in which I had been placed. One day I heard a commotion at the entrance to our ward, and I looked up to see several guards heading in my direction. As they approached, naturally I wondered whether they might be coming for me. But they wanted the man in the last bed of the ward, two beds from mine, and they quickly got him up and took him away. I never did find out why he was removed; I asked nurses about the matter, but they claimed to know nothing about it.

(2) I was among five or six youths passing near the commandant's office when several guards motioned to us to follow them. We were led to a grassy area of the camp grounds and instructed — with grunts and arm gestures — to cut some overgrown grass, which was to be used to feed the commandant's nearby carabao (water buffalo). For the task, guards thoughtfully and kindly provided us with very rusty and extremely dull scythes — so dull that several strokes were required to hack off each handful of grass, which was then tossed into a straw basket. (Note: Toward the end of our internment, guards killed the carabao for food, whereupon a number of internees [not including my family] were able to scavenge bits and pieces of the carabao's tough but no doubt flavorful [?] hide.)

(3) One of my STIC pastimes was to observe — and tamper with — the activities of the red ants that covered much of the trunk of one of the trees on the front grounds of the camp, about midway between the front gate and the Main Building. On one such occasion, a guard walking along the roadway toward the gate saw me and came over to see what I was doing. My impression was not that he was suspicious but, rather, that he was merely curious. After bowing, I motioned up and down at the ant-covered tree; he glanced at it, nodded expressionlessly, turned and resumed his walk toward the gate, thus apparently confirming my impression.

(4) By far the most noteworthy, interesting, and amusing non-

routine encounter took place while I was among about a half-dozen teens taking turns casually shooting a basketball — we were not playing a game. We were at the south end of the outdoor earthen basketball court, located in a grassy field on the front grounds of the camp. On the day in question, I saw a lone guard walking along the driveway from the guardhouse at the camp entrance toward the Main Building. Upon seeing us, he left the roadway and headed in our direction. When he reached the court, he motioned for us to toss him the basketball. He then proceeded to attempt perhaps 15 shots, all while standing about 12-15 feet from the basket. Wearing the usual uniform with jacket and heavy boots, and with his saber swinging at his side, he missed badly on every heave, though he did hit the rim a few times. He cackled loudly the whole time, clearly enjoying himself, while we tried to limit ourselves to weak smiles along with gestures of approval. He soon wilted under the hot sun and, without a word, he abruptly turned away and resumed his walk.

CONCLUSION. This has been as complete a record as I can recall of my various encounters, routine and non-routine, with STIC guards. With regard to the question posed at the outset — concerning treatment of internees by the guards — I have recounted no personal mistreatment (rusty and dull scythes notwithstanding). Indeed, with regard to STIC commandants (of the civilian variety, of course), the various passes I received to leave the

## civilian, cont'd...

camp could be viewed as evidence of leniency. On the other hand, three points should be emphasized in the latter connection — points that potentially could be used to modify any claim on behalf of leniency.

First, it is worth repeating that this is a purely personal account; it does not mean to imply, nor should it be inferred, that any conclusions based on my experiences are applicable to STIC internees as a whole. Second, my personal account is based almost entirely on encounters with guards that occurred before the Nipponese military assumed total control of STIC in February 1944; at that time, for example, passes to leave the camp became virtually non-existent (certainly that was so in my case). It is conceivable, therefore, that treatment of internees by the guards might have worsened at that juncture, but I probably would not have noticed such a change, not only because I did not leave the camp after 1943 but also because I had no close contacts with guards of any kind that would have enabled me to notice any change in guards' attitudes. Finally, this account deals only with direct — meaning observable — encounters; it does not cover what might be called the indirect effects of the role of the guards (and their superiors). To be specific, I am referring to their function in maintaining and enforcing the kind of treatment that caused and/or intensified internee malnutrition, starvation and death, as well as many other health problems. And that is to mention only the most obvious, most deleterious and most egregious consequences of STIC internment, all under the auspices of, and thanks to, the solicitous Nipponese Empire's benevolent *Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere*.



*Hyman, Dacha and Martin Meadows  
in Oregon, 1945*



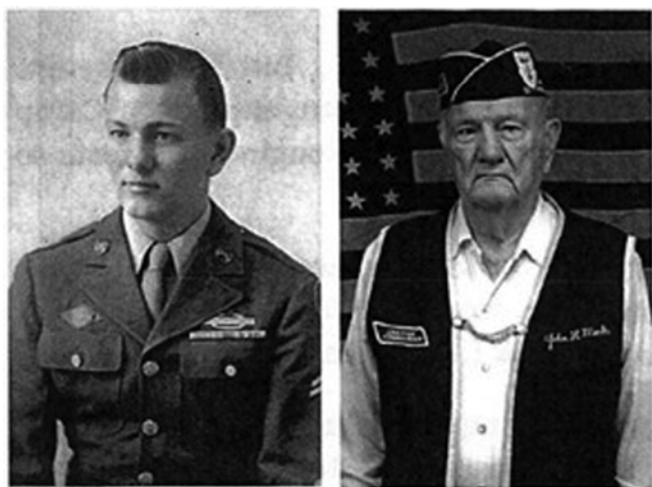
*Martin with his daughter, Sally,  
and his granddaughter, Rachel,  
Sacramento, 2018*



# Your stories



## John Mock



The 106th infantry Division was activated on March 1, 1943, at Fort Jackson, SC and transferred to Camp Atterbury, IN on March 30, 1944. It was the 1st of the 66 Infantry Divisions that were activated during WWII. It was continually stripped of its trained manpower for service in other Divisions or as replacements sent to replacement depots. Some were brought into the 106th at the last minute from other training programs in the Army such as the Air Corps where the need was not as acute as it was in the infantry. As a result, when the 106th shipped to France on November 10, 1944, a large proportion of the men were under-trained and unit integrity was poor.

After a brief training period in England, the 106th landed at LeHavre, France. They were trucked to the area around St. Vith, Belgium, arriving on December 11, 1944 and replacing

the 2nd Infantry Division. The Division was spread thin along the snowy ridges of the Schnee Eifel as the Infantry Regiments moved into old German bunkers.

After only five days in the line, on the morning of December 16, 1944, at 0530, over 8,000 German artillery pieces blasted the American lines in the Ardennes. During the next three days, the German armor and infantry were able to quickly and stealthily surround the troops of the 422nd and 423rd Infantry Regiments. The men of the 106th fought valiantly. But as they slowly ran out of food and ammunition, they lost their ability to fight on and were ordered to surrender. The Division had 8,663 casualties. Over 7,000 men became POWs for the remainder of the War. It was a difficult defeat but the 106th was able to delay the German's timetable for the assault, a delay that they were never able to make up during the battle.

The 424th Infantry was south of the Schnee Eifel and were able to avoid the encirclement. They were assigned to the fifth Armored Division and participated in the offensive at Manhay and the retaking of St. Vith. They went on into Germany and were at Mayen, Germany, at the end of the war.

Here is his story...

I was born on September 18, 1925. I was born in the oilfields since my dad was working there. We had oil on our place and were also farming.

I was drafted in December 1943. I volunteered for the Air Corps, but failed the eye test; I went back home and waited to be drafted. My basic training started at Camp Fannin in Texas where I was put in communications. I did well enough on the tests so that I didn't have to go to the infantry then.

From there, I went to Fort Campbell, KY, with the 20th Armored Division. Each squad had a half-track and we didn't walk anywhere; we rode. We would go out into the boondocks and have a class, and then we rode back to camp in a half-track.

## John Mock, cont'd...

I started out in communications when stationed at Camp Atterbury, located south of Indianapolis outside of Edinburg, IN. I was assigned to L Company, 422nd Infantry, 106th Division. The 106th was formed at Camp Atterbury and at this point I was now an infantryman. I had a hard time learning Morse Code.

As we were building up the division, we had part of the Air Corps, because they had too many people. We got men from everywhere and it took a while to get them straightened out. We trained at Camp Atterbury for about three months and from there we were transferred to Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts for about 10 days. During that time, we were going through all types of drills, such as lifejackets and lifeboat use.

From there, we were transferred to New York Harbor where we boarded the ship Aquitania for overseas. The ship was fast enough that we were not in a convoy. On the third night out, we picked up a submarine. We had a 7-inch gun aboard, a 20mm and a 40mm on both sides of the ship. If the sub surfaced, we could usually see it. It left a big wake that we could see. (The wake looked like a big wave on each side of the ship.) We outran it. The ship was running wide open and vibrating all over.

The next day, we slowed down and conditions on the

ship grew calmer and more settled down. Our ship was a British four stacker. It was a big ship, and had the biggest rats I've ever seen in my life. We ate British food and it was terrible! Hardtack, hard bread and pickles. We didn't see much of the British crew. We had bunks six high with just enough room to get into the bunk. I missed one meal because of an upset stomach but after that, no problem.

We provided the gun crew on deck A. I was on the 20mm and 40mm was next to me. The 40mm had two guns mounted together. The 20mm was like a big machine gun with a large ammunition drum. To cock it, a cable had to be put on it and then had to be tipped in position so it could fire. It could not be cocked by hand. It had a large spring and was automatic.

We had to do lifeboat drill. Duty was eight hours on the anti-aircraft gun, and then eight hours off to sleep and then back on gun crew. Because the galley was so far down to the bottom of the ship to eat and get back to bed, we would soon be awakened again. It seemed like we had no sleep at all. Then every third day, we would get the day off.

We landed at Glasgow, Scotland. We came in and the Queen Mary or Queen Elizabeth was just leaving as we passed her. We had a destroyer on each side of us and escorts all the way into the port. From there we went on a train to Stow on the Wool

(a town) in England. We walked all over the countryside. The old farmers had stone walls built up on the property lines that had been in place for hundreds of years.

From there, we went to Southampton and boarded a ship. Here we were ordered to board an LCI that was waiting for us and unloaded us on Omaha Beach. Here we saw the concrete houses where every window and every door was a gun port. The whole beach was that way. We walked for a couple of hours until we came to some open pastures. We are told to pitch our tents. It rained every night, and it was a mess trying to keep dry. The daytime was nice but it was rainy at night. We were waiting for the Red Ball express, a truck convoy, to take us up to the front. We were there about a week when they finally came and got us. This was around December 11, 1944.

We rode the trucks to the Belgian-German border, got off and met the 2nd Division. We were able to talk to them for a few minutes before they had to move out. Our duty was to patrol and we had people stationed on the front lines watching the Germans. You had to get them relieved before it got light in the morning and after it got dark in the evening. At one place, we put a piece of canvas going up and down beside the side of the road. Then we were pretty well invisible.

On December 14th, we heard some loud-speakers coming from German tanks. With the

## John Mock, cont'd...

snow, it was very cold and no wind; everyone could hear the tanks revving up. On the 15th about 4AM, the tanks started up again. On the 16th they came, but they bypassed us. There wasn't any road by us, so they just went right by us. We are along the Siegfried line where all the pillboxes were. Col. Thomson had his headquarters in a pillbox, and even had telephone wires running into the back door.

The Americans had little wooden huts built, and you had to crawl down into them. The engineers had built little log cabins and each squad had one of them. The kitchen had one below ground level. We had a railing with wire and cardboard is a bed.

We were on the top of the hill in concrete bunkers on the backside of the hill, because they were looking towards France. Our section was about 4 or 5 miles and had a little road around it. We went on trails and the road when we went out on patrol and it was all on foot. For supplies, we had one 6 x 6 truck. The 106th Division was spread out as far as 28 miles.

The Germans came into the little town Auw, behind us in the Valley, and I think the 81st Engineers were there also. The Germans took them prisoners. We came down out of the hill and chased them back about a mile. It started to get dark and we were ordered to make a lot of noise. So, we started to make noises, banging on trees and things we could find. As soon as it got dark, we put a dead man

on a stretcher and moved out. We went back to the little town where our 105 was. The gun crew had not gotten caught. There was a stone wall around the barn. The 105 got right in behind the rock wall and was pretty well protected. We dug foxholes around this area and around the edges of the town.

About 11PM that night, the trees where we had made all the noise were hit by German artillery fire, and they made toothpicks out of them. They were up on a hill and they did not know what we were doing. We waited a while, but the Germans figured out where we were, or someone in the town had told them. They were dropping rounds outside all of the buildings, but they didn't seem to want to hit the buildings in the town. The next morning, there were two small tanks that came around the hill. The 105 got both of them. They were good, because it was about a half a mile shot. The next day there was a convoy that came out of the trees into an open field. There were two trucks and the 105 got them. Everything behind them was a team and wagons and that was their convoy. The 105 also blew up one of the team and wagons stopping the convoy.

The next day there was a tank coming toward us. He just came up over the hill to get the 105. We didn't hear him until he started shooting. I was out of my foxhole but sitting close by. You had to use your rifle as a crutch to slide yourself in, but my feet did not make it. A shell hit 5 feet away. You couldn't hear anything. You feel pressure, your ears ring and you are stunned. We can't move or do anything for a while. In time, we could hear the shells going off. We were in front of the 105 and they were shooting at the tank.

When I got back into my foxhole, I found a piece of metal that had gone through my shoe. It didn't bleed too much, but the rest of the day, I just sat and started shaking and couldn't help it. I told Lieutenant Christiansen there was something wrong. I'm shaking but I am not cold. The sun was shining. He told me to sleep in the hay mound that night where it was nice and warm. I did, was warm, but still shaking. Sometime in the night an old sheep came up there. He was noisy and snoring! The next morning, I was over it.

Then the Captain said to go take Schonberg before the Germans got there, but they were

## John Mock, cont'd...

already there and they started shooting at us. Then they started hitting us with tree busts and it made a lot more shrapnel. So L Company asked what are we going to do?

Lieutenant Christiansen said we're going to head south and get back to the American lines. In the daytime we hid and tried to find some evergreens and put the limbs over the snow to help us get warm. Then during the night, we would go single file through the snow. We saw a little town on our left and we could hear the Germans and saw the lights. It was night and they shot up flares and started shooting at us. The whole company was eventually surrounded.

Lieutenant Christiansen was leading and he got shot in half, then they hit Captain Spudola and others. Another boy and I were about half-way down the line and we got on our hands and knees and with our arms through the slings of our rifles. We were going through there fast and we were going to get out of there. All the ones that were hit were carrying on quite a bit and crying for help. We looked at each other and said, "We can't leave them", so we went back and stayed with them. We were then

taken prisoner near Auw.

The Germans put us in an old school room. They had straw around the outside walls for us to lie on. The next day, the Germans came in and asked if anyone was wounded. Eight or nine of us got up, but I did not want to leave. The Sergeant said "You better go and get that foot taken care of or you are going to be in big trouble, so about 10 of us went to the first aid station. One guy had shrapnel in both legs and we ended up carrying him piggyback. They cleaned my foot up and put black coal tar salve on it, the same kind of salve my grandmother used back home in

the '20s - "black coal tar salve". They wrapped it in crepe paper bandages because Germany didn't have cotton fields to make regular bandages. I didn't get any infection in it. Our feet and legs were also frozen.

The Germans didn't know what to do with us. We were wounded, and one day we stayed in the hospital. Then on Christmas Eve, we stopped in a German first aid station. It was a house and barn with a big enclosed hallway between them. There was straw on the ground and we got a bowl of soup and a slice of bread. The Germans ate the same thing.

About 11PM three German officers came in with a bottle of schnapps. We took a drink and they gave the wounded Germans a

drink. They started singing 'Silent Night' in German. We sang it in English. It sounds the same.

The boy who had shrapnel and his legs had to be carried piggyback. We told the guard about him. The guard said he would take him to the hospital. The next day we asked how he was doing, and we were told he died. You don't die overnight from something like that, so we don't know what happened to him.

We went from town to town along the Rhine River. We went through Koblenz five times and we saw that big church with spires each time.

A lot of times we were on regular passenger trains. One time one of the Germans got really upset because he had lost his family in a bombing. We had to go back to another car. Generally, the German guards were usually good to us. They didn't abuse us, and they didn't want to walk either. One day we were riding in a truck, and it started missing. So, they pulled over. There is a big stove hanging on the side of the truck. They opened the top, put in woodchips and sealed it up. It had screws in it.

Then they lit a fire under the bottom one. There was a tube that ran from it into the truck tank on the top of the cab. They were making wood alcohol. They ran the stove for about a half-hour until he got enough

## John Mock, cont'd...

alcohol, then started the truck and away we went.

When we crossed the Rhine River, they had little flat-bottomed barges. They had no motors, but they had an anchor up in the middle of the river with a cable. They would use the rudder to go from side to side carried by the current. They could get a team and wagon, a Volkswagen, or some cows across on the barges. This is how they got across the Rhine because most of the bridges were blown up. When crossing bridges, there was usually only walking traffic. We walked around bomb craters in the middle of the bridges.

About January 18th, we ended up in Stalag XIIA, Limburg, Germany. I spent the rest of the war there. First thing in the morning we have roll call and they would count us. If we were short, we would stand there while they went in to check the barracks. Some of the men couldn't even get up and walk anymore. They would count them and then up again to verify everyone was present. We would get a bowl of grain-like paste that they had roasted, and then we would get a loaf of bread to a six-man squad.

### BLACK BREAD RECIPE

Former prisoners of war of Nazi Germany may be interested in this recipe for World War II Black Bread. This recipe comes from the official record from the Food Providing Ministry published as Top-Secret Berlin 24.XI-1941 from the Director of Ministry Herr Mansfield 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 (sawdust)  
10% minced leaves and straw

From our own experiences with black bread, we also saw bits of glass and

sand. Someone was cheating on the recipe!

This bread recipe could have some protein in it. When the grain goes into the grinder, there could be some insects and maybe a mouse or two. You sliced it so each man would get the same, and we took turns at picking first. At 4PM we got a bowl of soup. It was cooked and the bugs floating on top because they had been cooked, and they didn't bother you any. We also got a small piece of cheese once a week. When we first got there, we got one cigarette a day. In February, we got two cigarettes a week, and in March, we got no more cigarettes. They were regular cigarettes.

One man from Tennessee would trade his bread rations for a cigarette. He smoked his cigarette under his blanket so he could get every bit of smoke into his lungs. He finally died.

You could tell the ones that smoked because the thumbs and fingers would be black. They would put out the last little bit of cigarette and put it in their shirt pocket. When they had enough pieces, they would make another cigarette. We got one Red Cross package for 10 men and we got one only once. I know more were received because we unloaded them off the boxcar and put them in a warehouse. We spent one day flattening tin cans and that was the only work I did. There were thousands of men in XIIA. We just sat around the rest of the time. We picked lice and talked about food. It started out with breakfast talking about pancakes with marshmallows and sorghum, then a big steak and banana cream pie. Banana cream pie was a favorite of everyone. Each person would talk about what they wished for.

Each day we watched the bombers go over. Some would get shot down and we would count parachutes but we never saw a full crew get out. We would only see three or four at a time because the plane would start spinning before all the crew could get out the door.

## John Mock, cont'd...

I was there about a week when someone came into the barracks and asked if anyone was from Kansas. I said I was from Eureka and he said, "that is where I am from". It was Mr. Dunlap from Dunlap School near Hamilton, Kansas. We used to go there for track meets and things. I had never seen him before. Later, I was moved to another part of the barracks and I never saw him again. He made it home also. If you had a "J" on your dog-tag when you were captured, you were taken up to the castle and never seen again. Jewish soldiers were segregated.

By March the Americans were getting close. One night they put us in a boxcar when the Black Widow bombers were flying at night by radar. The air raid sirens were going off all the time and we had to go back to camp. The next night we got back on the train. We would go for a while and stop for a while, The next day a P-47 and P-38 strafed the engine. They didn't get the boxcars but they got the engine so there we sat on the tracks. We were outside Bergholms, Germany.

On the 27th, a train crew came along and unlocked all the doors. The guards were gone. We broke into their boxcar and found bread and canned goods. I didn't get any of the bread. I was too late, but I got a can of peas and carrots to eat.

There was an overpass over the railroad and it was the main street of Bergholms. The safest place we could get was under that overpass. It was covered with rock, but we lay down. It was the first time we had been able to lay down for a week. There were 50 of us in the boxcar. The cars are only 21 feet long and 8 feet wide; a Cadillac is about the same size. The first POWs sat down all around the sides of the car. The next group in sat down back-to-back down through the center of the car. We were just crammed in and could not lie down.

There was a big can by the door that was the toilet and the guards would

empty it every day. That night we heard some machine gun fire and a grenade. Then we didn't hear anything else. The Americans had just bypassed us. The two POWs who could walk okay went out and got hold of the 99th Division. The rest of us were under the overpass popping cooties. We would take a louse and roll him around and when we dropped him, he would walk off. You had to put him on your thumb and put him under your other thumb and pop him.

C Company, 393rd Infantry, 99th Division liberated us on March 28, 1945. Here they came. We were just skin and bones. They looked like the fattest GIs we had ever seen. After our tears stopped, and we got our voices back, we started talking to them. When they saw us, they said they had seen a lot of dead bodies but it had never seen anything like us. One of the GIs was Bill Tumblin who sent me a picture of the rescue.

That night, we stayed in a house. I had a canteen cup, the German cup that is about twice as big as ours, and I had a square piece of blanket I used to put over my head to keep my ears warm. I also had an old worn-out razor that would not cut anymore, all in the pillow case. A chaplain with the 99th Division held a religious service on the side of the underpass.

I put an article in the 99th Division paper and talked to a lot of people who remembered the train at Bergholms. I found one guy in New Jersey who was also on that train. The men were from all parts of the different divisions. That evening the 99th Division came in with a weapons carrier. The whole back end was filled with fresh baked bread. It was great! There were 277 of us on the train. The next morning, ambulances started taking the ones who could not walk. Each ambulance could only take four at a time. It was late that night before they took me.

We rode a long time but soon we stopped at a field hospital. There were a

## John Mock, cont'd...

bunch of big tents with rows of cots. Two of us went to a tent and there was a nurse sitting at a desk. She just looked at us. We were walking skeletons, dirty and long whiskers and just skin and bones. I had on a German overcoat with the left pocket torn out.

She did not say anything. We started speaking English and told her we were Americans and had been prisoners of war. She started to cry. And then she jumped up and took the man with me to another tent. She came back and took me to a cot. Then she left and came back with a bucket of warm water, soap, wash rag, towel, razor, a metal mirror and a new pair of pajamas.

I was to put my clothes in the middle of the floor because they were full of lice. After I got cleaned up, I shaved and was in pajamas, she came back with a coffee cup of sliced peaches. You cannot believe how good they tasted! We talked for a long time. We were the first prisoners of war she had seen. She said there would be an ambulance plane in first thing in the morning to take us to the hospital in Reims, France.

We got on the plane. There was one stretcher on the floor and then they were stacked up one on top of the other and on both sides of the plane, nothing but stretchers. At Rheims, we were put on the third floor of an old school house that had been made into a hospital and we were assigned to a bed.

One evening, meal was served by two German POWs, and we didn't go for that and complained. We didn't see them again! French workers served our food and they gave us bars of soap and clean pajamas. We went to the nurse; told her we wanted G.I. soap because we were loaded with lice. We took shower after shower until got rid of lice.

We suffer from malnutrition, and I had trouble with my ears. They have been ringing for 65 years, and I can't hear out of my left ear. My feet had been frozen when we were walking in the snow. We had to cross a stream one night, and it had ice on top. So, we were walking in ice water and our feet could never really get dried out. When I got wounded in the foot, I had to march without a boot.

In Reims for treatment, my feet were put in ice cold water and then warm water. Then every day, they made the water a little warmer and

that did more for my feet and circulation than anything else.

When we first arrived at the hospital, we had to eat in bed. We were wearing red clothes and had to stay in our room. We could see a chow line down below us in the yard and they had on blue clothes. After five days we got ourselves blue clothes (not issued to us.) The reds were served first. After finishing eating, we would go in the bathroom and change into the blues, go down the back stairs and get in line again. We would take Jello, fruit, pies and cakes – all the good stuff because we were starved. One day, the nurse caught us. She said, "We are not serving you in bed anymore". While in blues, you could go back for seconds and have as much as you wanted as long as you cleaned up your tray. We started to gain weight then.

I was not sent back to the states until May 25, 1945. They wouldn't or couldn't send us home since we were talking skeletons! I weighed 105 pounds and was 6 feet tall, and I could touch my finger and thumb when I put them around my arm.

From Reims we went to Paris where a guide showed us some of the sites. We were there four days and issued new class A uniforms.

From Paris, we boarded an Army DC-6 four-engine plane. We landed next in the Azores for fuel just for a few hours. There was a restaurant there;



## John Mock, cont'd...

it was closed but the lady running it asked if we were hungry. Well, a little bit, we told her, so she opened it back up and made sandwiches and served pie. She wouldn't take any money when she found out we were POWs.

From there we flew on to Newfoundland, Long Island, Detroit, Chicago, Des Moines, and landed in Kansas City. Each man was sent to a hospital close to their home. The Army picked up three of us and took us to Winter General Hospital in Topeka, Kansas.

Of course, my family was there. My family only knew I was missing in action and they first found out that I had been in a prisoner of war camp when I arrive4 at the Rheims hospital.\*\* There they took our names and addresses of our folks and sent telegrams that we were okay. It had to be a shocker for the family, but a happy one. I was discharged October 1945.

When I was discharged from the Army, there were not many employment opportunities in my home community of Hamilton and Eureka, Kansas. I went to work in Hobbs, New Mexico. Everyone there was short of help. I worked overseas for oil companies for 19 years, so didn't marry. My job was chief mechanic for drilling rigs. I worked on offshore rigs, land rigs and helicopter rigs.

I taught local mechanics to do maintenance and overhaul of drilling equipment in the countries where I worked. We drilled wells in Brazil1 Colombia, Venezuela, Singapore1 Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

After the war each state received a 40 and 8 box car from France refurbished for display. The one for Kansas. is located at the American Legion Post parking lot in Hays, Kansas and has been converted into a small museum.

I retired in 1984, married in 1993 to a retired schoolteacher and World War II Wave veteran. We now make our home in Eureka, Kansas and have been very active in our community, especially veterans' organizations. I am presently Commander of the Air Capital Chapter, AXPOW in Wichita. I am also an active member in the Disabled American Veterans in Eureka, and past commander in Emporia.

In addition, I am an officer in the Purple Heart, VFW Military Funeral Commander and former member of the Lions Club. My hobby is show cars.

John was awarded the Purple Heart, Combat Infantry Badge1 ETO Ribbon with 3 Battle Stars, American Defense Service Ribbon, and the Good Conduct Medal.

\*\*For over 3 months I was a Gold Star in my mother's window.

The Boston Tea Party  
Reenactment on Cape Cod  
Across the Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts, patriots  
celebrated the 250<sup>th</sup>  
anniversary of the  
Boston Tea Party on Dec. 16,  
2023.

Here on the Cape, we marked  
the occasion with descendents  
of the original Tea Party  
Participants.



# MEMORIES...



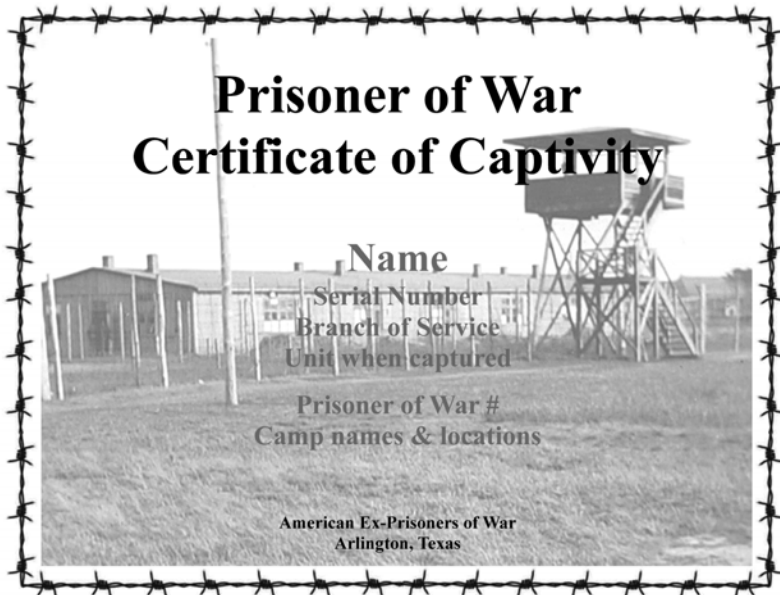


## new members

Welcome Home!

Robert J "Sweetness" Sweet  
Wadsworth OH  
Iraq USAF 353 TFS  
Biltmore, Joliet, AF Base 2/15/91 to 3/7/91

Ricky A Gregory  
Clarksville TN  
NOK Son of Toy Lee Gregory, ETO



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## The Meaningful Gift

A number of years ago, one of our members made the decision to establish a bequest to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. He felt strongly that he truly cared about our future and wanted to leave a legacy to us. He and his wife are now gone, but their generous gift enabled them to demonstrate in a very meaningful way their commitment to AXPOW.

You, too can take action today to help ensure that the American Ex-Prisoners of War remains through your will or living trust. This gift can be funded with cash or securities, mutual funds or other investments that are not serving your current needs. This special gift will benefit future generations as well as we continue our transition to a true legacy organization.

It's very simple to make a bequest to the American Ex-Prisoners of War. Simply share this sentence with your attorney or financial planner and they can add the following to your will or living trust:

"I give, devise and bequeath to the American Ex-Prisoners of War, PO Box 3445, Arlington, TX 76007-3445, the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_(named investment) or \_\_\_\_\_percent of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate."

Your generous support of our programs over the years has made a tremendous difference to ex-POWs and their families. Please take a few minutes of your time to help ensure our future. And feel free to contact CFO Marsha Coke at [axpow76010@yahoo.com](mailto:axpow76010@yahoo.com), or CEO Cheryl Cerbone at [axpowceo@comcast.net](mailto:axpowceo@comcast.net). Phone #817-649-2979.

## Thank You!

## Contributions



please send donations to:

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### GENERAL FUND

In memory of James L Fall, by Ethel Fall  
In memory of my father, Pierre JJ Kennedy, by Paul Kennedy  
In memory of Robert R Smith, by the Evans and the Dahls families

### ESTATES

John Pederson estate



# taps



Please submit taps notices to:  
Cheryl Cerbone, 23 Cove View Drive, South Yarmouth, MA 02664

FALL, James, age 100, of Marion, IN passed away June 10, 2023 on the 79th anniversary of his capture. He was captured while serving in the Army Air Corps with the 9th AF, 366th FG. He was held until liberation. He is survived by his wife of nearly 78 years, Ethel Mae, 3 children, 3 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren. He lived a long and full life and will be missed by many.

KALBERLOH, Ralph J., of Jefferson City, MO, died Jan. 21, 2024. Serving with the AAC during WWII on a B-17 bomber, he was shot down and captured and held until liberation. Ralph served as Commander of the Missouri Department of American Ex-POWs and the Central Missouri Chapter of the American Ex-POWs. On April 30, 2012, Missouri Governor, Jay Nixon, in a ceremony at the State Capitol, presented Ralph with the Silver Star Banner Award for his service and sacrifice. His first wife, JoAnn, predeceased him; he is survived by his wife Barbara, 1 daughter, 2 stepsons, 6 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren and a host of extended family and friends.

RAY, Jaquelyn Lou "Jackye" 96, of Boone, Iowa, died on October 27, 2023. She was married to Dale for more than 50 years before he died in 2000. Both Dale and Jackyre were tireless workers for the Iowa State Dept and local chapter. They attended several National POW Conventions and were key planners when the National Convention came to Des Moines. Jackye was known for her smile and her love for entertaining with great flair. She leaves one daughter and one son, 6 grandchildren, and 16 great grandchildren.

ROWDEN, Wilburn C., past commander of the Central Missouri Chapter, AXPOW, died Feb. 13, 2024 after celebrating his 100th birthday. While serving with the Army Air Corps – 8th Af, 452nd BG out of England – he was wounded and captured and spent 415 days in German POW camps. He was the first living inductee into the MO National Guard Hall of Fame in 2021. Wilburn is predeceased by his wife of 70 years, Launa; he leaves 2 daughters, 5 grandchildren, 1 great-granddaughter, 1 sister and their families.

SMITH, Robert, of Tomahawk, WI passed away Nov. 5, 2023 at the age of 97. He served in the Army during WWII, with the 37th Tank Bn. As a bow gunner. He was captured in Hammelburg and held in Stalag XIIIC. His daughter, Cheryl survives him; he is missed deeply by his family.

VAN CAMP, Lawrence, 99, of Akron, OH died May 16, 2023. He served in the Army during WWII in the 2nd Bn., 157th Reg. 45th Div., H Co at Anzio Beachhead, Italy and was captured by Germany in Feb. 1944. He was held in Stalag 7B until liberation. He was the last commander for the North Central Ohio Chapter, AXPOW. His wife predeceased him; he is survived by 4 sons, 1 daughter, many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and their families.

YOUNG, Damon F. of Barboursville, WV passed away May 16, 2023. He was 99. During WWII, he was captured in the Battle of the Bulge, serving with the 106th Inf. Div., 423rd Reg, Co D, 1st Bn. He was held in Stalag XIB, then moved to IIA. He was liberated by the 82nd Airborne. He was a life member of AXPOW and the WV Barbed Wire Mountaineers Chapter. Damon went on to serve in Korea and Vietnam. Survivors include nieces, nephews, a large extended family and friends.



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# AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR VOLUNTARY FUNDING PROGRAM

The AXPOW Voluntary Giving Program parallels that of other VSOs, whereby the entire membership, including life members, is given the opportunity to contribute to the operation of our organization, based on ability and willingness to contribute. All contributions are to be sent directly to National Headquarters to be used for the operation of the organization. A complete accounting of contributors will appear in the Bulletin each issue.

I am enclosing my contribution to support the operation of the American Ex-Prisoners of War.

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