

AN APPRECIATION

This is a note of deep appreciation to John Slack, our Executive Secretary and Editor of The Post Oflag 64 Item, from 1964 to October 1992

He has enjoyed an unusual and successful career in his management of his printing and reproduction company. Surely, some of the same attributes of which he has demonstrated there are easily noted in his untiring efforts with us. The continued regularity and the highly personal touch he has shown in The Oflag Item has made it always so welcome in our homes. While each issue carries much good news, there has to be some news of a sad note: deaths and illnesses, which are inevitable and we regret. Along with John's deadlines he has shown a deep concern and care for the entire membership. This rare and thoughtful consideration is often shown in his notes of encouragement to the many of us who have passed along current news to him relating to our closely knit colleagues. Another quality, so often noticed and appreciated by many, is his quick recall of faces and names amongst our members. This has been achieved despite the fact that we don't see him, generally, but once a year at our reunions. The core of earlier friends he made in his long stay at Szubin, has been enhanced by many late arrivals to whom he has shown a deep respect and a warm welcome.

In short, He has performed his role as the leader of our group in an exemplary manner. That is reinforced by his quiet dignity, his close attention to the innumerable details, and, moreover a great courtesy and respect to all of us.

Another accolade, equally as well deserved, goes out to his lovely wife, Mary. She, like him, has always been a good listener and a dear friend whom we always cherish.

John, our best wishes to you and Mary for such a long and very successful tour of duty, whose dedication to us will be and is so deeply appreciated.

Thanks for a job well done!

Your Editor would be remiss if this issue did not include some remarks about the achievements of Bill and Evelyn Korber, the two fine people, from Cheyenne, WY., who put our program together for the Annual Reunion in Colorado Springs this year. As it was he ran into two major problems. First was the late swap of the guest speaker. They returned to his hometown, at one time, Pueblo, CO. The substitution was made gracefully and Betty Alt did a creditable job with her presentation to us on "Camp Followers" from the Revolutionary Days to the present. Being required to find another than the original hotel for our use was handled very well. It was a wise choice and from the many remarks passed along, the stay at The Sheraton was comfortable and reasonable.

The program activities for Friday and Saturday were interesting and well coordinated. It was a toss up and which many of us may have chosen as most enjoyable- The Air Force Academy or the Visit to the Command Post in the Cheyenne Mountains. Obviously many details had to be covered for such a complex visit, especially, the latter.

The Evening Program on Saturday night was a joy to behold. The reverent respect shown by our group for the Posting and Retiring of The Colors was from up front an awesome sight. It was truly a proud moment, and followed by an even more impressive sound, The National Anthem, which we joined in its rendition.

The Happy Hour went well and the speeches were purposely short, and in sum, it went very well overall.

The Memorial Service held on Sunday was done again with the Catholic and Protestant Chaplains who were available. I regret missing it, but that will be corrected in '93.

Many thanks for the superb job that these two fine people did and our best wishes to you.

Harrison Township, MI. Good seeing you at Colorado Springs and thanks for the card, those who didn't attend, she lost Steve, her husband last November, following a six month long illness. Our best wishes, Mary Lane Barkovic.

Mount Pleasant, PA. Got your note and am sorry that you could not come to Col.Spr., we missed you and hope you will be well again soon. Thanks for the P. F. check and our best wishes. Leonard Feldman.

Northwood, IA. Thank you for your note and the handwriting is not all that bad. We missed you at Col. Spr., but your book was on display along with your note on the "out of print" status in the Hospitality Room. Bill Korber was nice enough to lend me his copy, which I found very interesting and factual. Your P. F. donation is appreciated. Hope to see you in Louisville in '93. Charles L. "Woody" Jones.

Pullman, WA. A fine recognition note to Leo Bustad, for the Distinguished Alumnus Award for 1991, he received. He is Dean Emeritus of WSU's College of Veterinary Medicine. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery and let us continue to hear from you. John Creech was there with us and his great work in Horticulture is of the highest order

England, AR. Thanks for the card, Billy and the news, as well as the news on Ed Moschel. If the Oshlo's can make it to the reunion, surely you can drop that feeble excuse of cotton picking time being a bad one for you to get away. Come on Billy Bingham!

Birmingham, MI. Thanks for the change of address you sent to me. For his many friends of Oflag 64 it is:

Marcia and Vic Kanners
32035 Waltham Road
Birmingham, MI. 48025-3929

Vancouver, WA. Got your note and am sorry that a conflict arose which caused you to cancel. We missed both of you. Gene and Rosalie Liggett.

San Antonio, TX. Enclosed near the end of the Item is a fine obit for one of our own submitted by C. A. Williamson. It is Harold D. Craft of Basking Ridge, N. J. He shared space with Max Cooler and C. A., in 3-B. Thank you very much for the note and the clipping.

Rockford, IL. Bob, thank you for the slight change in the mailing address, it has been fixed now. Enjoyed seeing you and the ride on Sunday morning to the airport was a pleasant farewell. Bob Aschim and his lady, thanks for the P.F. contribution, they are always welcome.

Charles City, IA. Harold and Mary, surely enjoyed visiting with you from the start as we drove in from the airport to the hotel. Thanks for the generous P. F. contribution and our best wishes. Harold and Mary Spaulding.

Worcester, MA. Irv. thank you for the fine invocation that you gave at the Saturday evening program. Good seeing you again, and thanks for the generous P.F. gift that you made. Irving Yarock.

Des Moines, IA. Good seeing you out at Col. Spr., and many thanks for your very generous P. F. contribution. Best wishes. Robert and Lillie Eckman.

Fredericksburg, TX. George, surely wanted to visit and catch up a little bit on that part of Texas you are from, since I had a truly great tour just east of you with 2d Armd. Div. 1963-65. We loved it: caliche, flash floods and hot summers, were all offset by the friendliest and nicest folks in and around Killeen. Thanks for the P. F. contribution and best wishes. George and Margot Greene.

Northfield, VT. Jerome, learned that you, with your fine and meticulous printing, entered many of the pages of the Oflag 64 Roster which was on display in the Hospitality Room. It was so neatly done and such a nice job. Thanks for your generous gift to the P. F. and best wishes. Jerome Hatch.

Bellerose Village, N. Y. Lorraine, good seeing you at Col. Spr., and thank you for the P. F. contribution. Lorraine Glendinning.

Wichita, KS. Carl and Mary, so glad that you were able to come. Your first and we hope we were welcoming enough to get you out to Louisville in '93. Enjoyed the meal and visit with your sister, Mary. Best wishes. Carl Bedient and Mary Arnold.

Bellaire, TX. John, what a nice and newsy letter of 9/20/92. Your remarks about the way news spreads in The Item was very encouraging and appreciated. So glad that the leg and the new and much stronger bar is such an improvement. Can easily see why you simply could not make Col. Spr. We missed you even so and a fourth trip out there might have been too much. It went well and this issue will show some of the fine parts played by those who organized the events while there. Best wishes, John and Bettie Stansell.

Elkhorne, NE. Kermit, sorry that your schedule would not let you stay awhile longer and to be able to join us, since you were already in Colorado. We missed you, but the appreciation that you wrote so thoughtfully about Paul Karnes, as suggested by Bill Korber, is enclosed for our members to read. It reflects the very best in one of our own. . It also represents the true artisan that you are at his best in this very cleverly done essay. You will find it enclosed later in The Item. Thank you Kermit Hansen, very much for such a tribute.

Kaufman, TX. Roy, thank you such a nice job on the P. oestant invocation that you made on the Saturday night dinner. It was sincere and thoughtful. Enjoyed spending a few minutes with you and Helen. Roy Chappell.

Arlington, VA. Frank, thanks for the good start that you and Bill Cory have made so far on the 50th Anniversary Booklet for Louisville in '93. It should make a fine memento especially with the combined talents of you two and Jim Bickers. Any assist that you may think of that John or I can give, please ask.

Frank, your book entitled The Welcome Swede is a real treat and they have been moved here to Pinehurst and are available for our members for only \$10.00 with a prompt mail out.

It is an exciting story of how Henry Soderberg, whom we all respect and admire, with his unflagging dedication to his YMCA duties did so very much to make our lives in Oflag 64 more comfortable and useful. His adroit skill in dealing with the SS and the Gestapo of Nazi Germany, facing their deep resentment of any aid to air crews particularly, was daring and imaginative. Frank, this is a fine story of Henry and his memoirs written in a readable interesting style. Frank Diggs.

Vallingby, Sweden. Henry, so glad to see you again and to have the chance to meet and visit with you and your attractive relative, John Andura on Saturday night. Your remarks at the Air Force Academy Museum along with General Clark and Duane Reed, were well done. What a generous move on your part with the priceless donation of your works. Sorry that Claire could not come this time, Louisville is not that far off. Warm regards to both of you. Henry Soderberg.

Sanford, N. C. Buddy, I want to thank for your response to my phone request on Monday of this week. I found the note in some transition paper from John. His father, was one of us and the obit which Buddy sent is enclosed near the rear of The Item. Our best to you . Buddy Makepeace.

GLADWYNE, PA: Some of the following items were not available to mail to Herb in time for him to include in his portion of this Newsletter. As a result you'll have to put up with a few more items from my pen.

First: Let me say that copies of Henry Soderberg's OFLAG 64, AS I SAW IT are available for \$7.50 each. I have received three (3) orders so far but more than that many hands went up at Norfolk. So let's see many more orders come in to Herb or myself.

KERRVILLE, TX: Just in case I didn't mention it before, our PF Fund received a nice contribution from Stalag Luft III. The excuse given me was for some little things that I had done for them. I did buy some books from that as well as to sell them some of Henry's books.

They are a great group as both Henry and Bill Korber know. It is a little difficult to realize but there were about 25,000 Americans in Sagan at Stalag Luft III. Most of them arrived by parachute. What a way to go.

Thanks, Stalag Luft III !!!

W. ARLINGTON, VA: Frank Diggs and Bill Cory asked me to include the questionnaire. Don't waste any time. Fill in right away so that Frank, Bill and Jim Bickers can get working on the 50th Anniversary Booklet. DO IT NOW PLEASE. Mine is done and in the Mail.

GLADWYNE, PA: I thought that Herb Garris' "eulogy" to me was extremely overdone but I didn't change it because I didn't want to spoil his fun.

Thanks Herb and many, many thanks to each of you for your many fine letters and your terrific contributions to the Postage Fund which has made all of this possible.

I'll miss your letters but know that you still send them to Herb as the questions and information to pass along comes to you. I'll look forward to seeing more of you at the coming Reunions.

OAKLAND, CA: It is with much remorse and sadness that I convey to you that Jim Sherman's wife, Betty, passed away about two weeks ago. Jim called and advised me on Monday, November 16th of this sad news.

Jim, we were all pulling for you and Betty and Jeff at Colorado Springs. We are indeed sorry and you will all be remembered in our prayers.

Look forward to seeing you in Louisville along with Jeff.

John Slack
PAST EDITOR

HAVE A NICE THANKSGIVING!

The New Editor of Oflag 64 Item.

In closing this issue I want to share a few thoughts with you. How my name was selected is beyond me for I am aware that the fine qualities stated in John's appreciation are well beyond my capacity. So it with much humility and, yes, some trepidation that I set forth.. It is an assignment, as attested in my solo flight. This reaches nearly 500 families and it must be done in good taste and the highest standards. So whatever success we will have , it will be a two way street.

For those of you whom I have not met, I am a late arrival at Oflag 64 September 1944. Had jumped into the Normandy assault, was captured a bit later and by foot, truck and train became one of you with an assignment to Barracks 3-A, until the move-out of January 1945.

It is a great honor that has been shown me and I will try to uphold your expectations and look forward to hearing from you.

One last note suggested by Frank Diggs. Please read, fill out and mail back the short questionnaire relating to the '93 Booklet.

Sincerely,
Herb Garris

Pinehurst, N. C.



HERB GARRIS
P.O. Box 1693
Pinehurst, NC 28374

Hi fellows:

I know he isn't the best photogenic "Kriegie" in the remains of our group, but he can write, he is a Southerner and he is interested in each of us.

I'm more than pleased that we have found Herb and am sure he will prove to be a great guy as more of you get to know him.

J. F. Slack

(See reverse side for more info.)

GARRIS, HERBERT L.
Box 1693, Pinehurst, North Carolina 28374

Born in Weldon, North Carolina. Primary and Secondary Meter Tester for Carolina Power and Light Company in Raleigh, North Carolina. Called to active duty on January 13, 1942 to Fort Bragg. Attended Parachute School in September, 1943 and was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division, "D" Battery, 377th Prcht. F. A. Bn.

Jumped into Normandy on June 6, 1944 and was captured near Valognes and marched south to Rennes, and by train through Tours to Limburg, Germany and Stalag XII A, and finally to Oflag 64 in Szubin, Poland. Escaped on the first stop of the march westward from Szubin on January 21, 1945 and by truck and train to Odessa, for repatriation and sailed on the 'Moreton Bay' to Port Said and Naples. Rejoined the 101st Airborne near Dusseldorf and remained in Europe (initially near Berchtesgaden and then to Auxerre in France) until assimilated into the 82nd Airborne Division, which left France for the Victory March in New York City in early 1946.

Received a Regular Army Commission and continued a career which included a mix of: troop command, instructor duty at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, an aide to a general officer twice, and positions at Division Artillery, Division Army, and finally with The Joint Chief of Staff (J-3) and retirement as a Lt. Col. in February, 1967.

Completed the Bachelor Degree at the University of Omaha, 1959, the Masters at the University of Maryland, 1966, and the Ph.D. there as well, in 1973 in Government and Politics. Until recently have served as an adjunct instructor for Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, with all graduate classes at military bases along the Eastern Seaboard and Lajes, Azores, off the coast of Portugal.

Family: Wife - Ethelene Moore Garris, a Civil Service Retiree from the Library of Congress. Daughters - Anna Goiser, a writer, illustrator and talented musician. Married and lives in Fairfax, Virginia. Pati Fekete, an executive secretary for a senior official of the Potomac Electric Power Company in Washington, D. C. Married and lives in Olney, Maryland.

Avocations: Golf, gardening and flowers, writing book reviews for the local newspapers on military history, and leader for the Tape Ministry for our homebound members at Brownson Memorial Presbyterian Church, and an occasional lecturer at civic and military groups on POW experiences.

Harold D. Craft, Captain Courageous

by Alan "Chum" Williamson

On "Black Monday," 13 September 1943, on the Salerno beachhead, Corp. Charles E. "Commando" Kelly, of Co. L, 143rd Infantry joined a small group of men in a storehouse near an ammunition dump on the outskirts of Altavilla, Italy. Kelly had gone to the dump to replenish his supply of ammunition.

The men occupying the storehouse were a detachment of Co. K, 143rd Infantry. Captain Harold D. Craft, CO of Co. K, was with them. Col. William H. Martin, CO of the 143rd Infantry, had sent the company into Altavilla to relieve LTC Gaines J. Barron's 1st Battalion, 142nd Infantry, which the Germans threatened to surround. (Barron was captured). And now, Co. K was surrounded.

Kelly was later awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions in defending the rear of the storehouse. According to the citation, he fired two automatic rifles until each, in succession, locked from overheating. With the enemy threatening to overrun the position, he "picked up 60mm mortar shells, pulled the safety pins, and used the shells as grenades, killing at least five of the enemy."

The 60mm mortar has two safety pins. Pulling the first was no problem. Normally, the second pin is released when the shell strikes the bottom of the mortar tube, detonating the propelling charge. Since Kelly had no mortar, he solved the problem by banging the shell against the concrete floor until the pin popped out. Then he threw the shells on to the enemy soldiers below.

When it became necessary to evacuate the building, Kelly volunteered to stay behind and cover the withdrawal of Captain Craft and his men. Craft was taken prisoner. He spent the rest of the war in Oflag 64 and other German POW camps, as did LTC Barron. Kelly succeeded in rejoining Co. L.

When he returned to the States on rotation, Kelly went through Fort Benning, Georgia. There he was asked to demonstrate the feat of pulling the second safety pin from 60mm mortar shells by hand. Using shells from the same lot Kelly used, they were unable to remove the second pin even with a hammer. Kelly declined.

When told of the skepticism, Craft said, "I was there! I saw him do it! I handed the shells to him!" He did say that there was so much firing going on around the building that he couldn't tell if the shells were exploding on impact or not.

Hal Craft was one of the company commanders of the 36th Division most admired and respected by his men. The soldiers of Company K, 143rd Infantry, one of the Waco units before mobilization, idolized him.

Harold D. Craft, of Basking Ridge, New Jersey, died 10 June 1991. He is survived by his wife, Pat. He was 82.

A TRIBUTE TO PAUL KARNES

November 1992

By Kermit R Hansen

At Oflag 64 we didn't have a church.

But we had Paul Karnes. He could turn a prison room into a chapel--his words, his bearing, his sincerity coated that drab cell with new surroundings. At the "Sczubin College of Higher Knowledge" (remember our pretentious labeling of our efforts at self-education?) we had no organ.

But we had Paul Karnes. He could pull out "stops" on his organ. Instead of trumpets, or strings, or trimolo that might be found on a pipe organ, Paul Karnes would play on the key of A major with the stops of hope, perseverance, and faith.

He projected into us his own conviction. He demonstrated for us how one man--under the auspices of a higher power--can transform mean and depressing surroundings into a base for future growth, or freedom!

We remember Paul Karnes--We thank him for being a light in a period of shadow and gloom. We salute him for bringing messages of good cheer and anticipation when many were unsure and dejected.

We appreciate Paul Karnes--for being a spokesman of assurance and rays of sunshine--and inviting us to share his faith. We do so now-in his memory.

1921 - 1975

(This is an aftermath of our Reunion in Colorado Springs where some preliminary discussion took place between Bill Korber and Kermit Hansen. It is indeed appropriate to recall this great person). JFS

Civic leader Makepeace dead at 75

William Russell "Bill" Makepeace Jr., 75, a community business leader, died Monday night at his home.

Funeral will be conducted at 11 a.m. Wednesday at St. Luke United Methodist Church by the Rev. Dr. Vernon Tyson. Burial will be at Buffalo Cemetery.

Born in Rocky Mount, he was the son of the late William R. Makepeace Sr. and Mabel Schuman Makepeace. He received his education at Sanford City Schools, Fork Union Military Academy and North Carolina State University.

He served in World War II and received a battlefield commission as a first lieutenant in the 3rd Army Corps of Engineers in the European Theater of Operations. He saw action in North Africa and fought in the invasions of Sicily and Italy. He was captured by the Germans in Italy on Oct. 7, 1943, and was a prisoner of war for 19 months.

He was president/owner of Makepeace Millwork Co. Inc. of Sanford and Carolina Millwork Corp. of Wilmington. When Makepeace returned from Europe in 1946, he took over operation of the company from his father. Makepeace Sr. was the company's founder and leased it to his son. Upon the elder Makepeace's death, Makepeace became the sole owner of the business.

The company did custom millwork, producing windows, doors, molding, counters, cabinetry, staircases and bookshelves. Makepeace Sr. founded the business in 1902. It operated for 10 years as Makepeace Box and Lumber Co. until the business was destroyed by fire in 1928. Organized as a stock company, the business was reconstructed on the same site and named Makepeace Millwork Co. Makepeace Sr. bought out the stockholders in 1936.

Makepeace Jr. was active in the community. He served as chairman of the Lee County Board of Commissioners, was a volunteer fireman for 30 years and was a former member of the Lions Club and the Rotary Club. He was a member of the Moffitt Bible Class and the Wednesday morning prayer breakfast group of St. Luke United Methodist Church. He was a charter member of the National Congressional Club and was Lee County manager of the Jesse Helms for Senate Campaign Committee.

He served as president of the Lee County United Fund and was a member of the Sanford and Lee County ABC Board. He served on the board of directors of First Federal Savings and Loan and Southern National Bank. He was honored in the 1980s for serving 35 years on these boards.

Surviving are three daughters, Kitty Hood of Durham, Bev Makepeace of Raleigh and Elizabeth Angell of Jacksonville; two sons, William "Buddy" Makepeace III of Sanford and Thomas Rush Makepeace of Wrightsville Beach; two sisters, Kitty Byerly of Raleigh and June Barrow of Murrell's Inlet, S.C.; seven grandchildren and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by one sister, Charlotte Abernathy of Williamston.

The family will receive friends Thursday from 7 to 9 p.m. at Rogers-Pickard Funeral Home and at other times at the home of Inez R. Makepeace of 515 Greensboro Ave.

Memorials may be made to Road To Recovery in care of Howard McDonald, 2005 Sutphin Drive, Sanford, N.C. 27330, to St. Luke United Methodist Church or to the charity of one's choice.

Members of the Moffitt Bible Class and St. Luke United Methodist Church Wednesday morning prayer group are asked to serve as honorary pallbearers. They should be at the church at 10:40 a.m.

ATTENDEES
OFLAG 64 EX-POW REUNION
OCT 8-11
1992
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO.

ANDERSON, Mays
Arnold, Mary (sister of Carl Bedient)
ASCEIM, Robert (Gladys)
BALL, Jim (Win)
BARKOVIC, Mary Jane
BARNUM, Wm. H.
BARRETT, Joseph (Mary)
BEDIENT, Carl
CANNON, Roger (Ruby)
CASNER, H. A.
CECIL, Albert (Dorothy) (cancelled)
CHAPPELL, Roy (Helen)
CHEVALIER, Mrvin (Faye)
CORY, William R. (Caroline)
CREECH, John (Elaine)
CUPIT, James (Mary)
CHRISTENSEN, Robert (Jean)
Di Francesco, Vincent
DUCKWORTH, Grace
DUNBAR, Alan (cancelled) (Lila)
DURGIN, George (Virginia)
EBERLE, Charles (Emma)
EAKMAN, Robert (Lillie)
EDSALL, Lester (Edith)
FRIEDMAN, Joseph (Sylvia)
GARRIS, Herbert L. (Ethelanne)
GLENDENNING, Lorraine
GRAUL, Donald (Dottie)
GREENE, George
HARRELL, William (Dana)
HATCH, Jerome
HERR, George (Betty)
HOLDER, H. Randolph (Clementine)

HUBBELL, Verris (Arlene)
IRHIE, Leroy (Leilabeth)
JONES, Curtis (Norma)
KEISER, Marvin
KENNEDY, Duane
KLINGEBORG, Ray
KORBER, William (Evelyn)
LAWSON, Thomas (Sue)
LEE, Royal (Harriet)
LOWE, Lewis (Janet)
LUSSENDEN, Donald (Lucy)
MacAvevey, James (Nan)
MELTENSEN, C.R.
MILLER, Thomas E. (Eleanor)
OHL, Donald *Last minute drop out. (Ruth)
OSHLO, Robert (Evelyn)
PAWLOSKI, Theodore (Adele)
RATHBONE, Jack
ROSENTHAL, George (cancelled)
SHERMAN, James (Doris) : also drop out last minute
SIMES, Gardner
SLACK, John F. (Mary)
SMITH, Matthew (Bel)
SODERBERG, Henri (Claire) *Spouse not in attendance.
SPAULDING, Horace
THAL, Sidney
THOMPSON, Robert (Gladys)
VADEN, Len (Evelyn)
VAN VLIET, John H.
WARTHEN, William D.
WILCOX, Lumond
YAROCK, Irving
GARRETT, Thurston
WAFUL, Don (Cassie) * Last minute drop out-health problem Cassie.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA. The publishers of "The Welcome Swede", Frank Diggs' book based on the wartime diaries of our Henry Soederberg, are closing it out now and are letting us have the last few copies. If you would like to have one or two made out to the OFLAG 64 POSTAGE FUND, in care of Herb Garris, P.O. Box 1693, Pinehurst, NC 28374, Herb will shoot off a copy, postage paid, in time for Christmas.

USE THIS FOR YOUR ORDER

GHOSTS OF 64

Hey! We've got a reunion coming up next month and I'm not going to be with you! But that isn't so important after the big party we had last night. I've been to Ghost Parties before, but none like the one we had last night when all of you guys from the early days, and a lot of you from the later days, came to my house and said you were going to have a Ghost Party. I recognized a lot of faces even though we were all 50 years older.

One guy didn't seem to remember me. Then Frank Maxwell spoke up and said, "That's Charlie Jones. Hell, he played my mother in "Petrified Forest". Then John Hannan said, "Yeah, he played a housewife in my guest-starring role in "The Man Who Came to Dinner". I didn't mention that I played women's parts so damn often at the glorious Barracks 2-B Theatre. It took me two years after the War to get my voice back down to the bass clef. It seemed like all the theater ghosts were there. Lew Otterbein, with his hammer and screwdriver with which he made back drops--and anything else a script called for up to a Cadillac car. And who was this one? Oh yes, John Glendinning hogging the front center of the stage, lisping and combing his hair. John "Cookie" Kock came up to shake my hand. (I think it was in sympathy for having to play all those women's roles.) I recognized Russ Ford for he was still wearing that sexy, ink-dyed dress--with the two white hands sewed on it in appropriate places--which he wore the night they made him up with Henri Soderberg's make-up kit, put a towel turban around his wavy black hair, put Lew Otterbein's tin can spot light on him and heard him sing a torchy song. The whole damn Camp fell in love with him that night. I didn't speak to Russ's ghost. I was afraid he might still be mad at me for screwing up a solo the time we sang "The Messiah".

And speaking of singing--there was a ghost separated from the others going "Mi Mi Mi" in a vocal warm up and then suddenly bursting into a verse of "Good King Wencalous". One of the "new men" ghosts asked me who that was. "My God!" I said, "You mean to tell me you don't remember Tom Holt?!"

All at once the whole dance band descended on me. There was Lou Wilcox and his Stradivarius; hirsute Capt. Barker--virtuoso of the bull fiddle; Ken Goddard carrying his drumsticks in one hand and a "bash" in the other. And there was immaculately groomed John Van Vliet carrying his guitar but not yet learning to play it. Roy Chappel was practicing his slip horn and making two minute orations about the virtues of the Lone Star State. Don Waful shut him up. They never got around to playing a piece of music. But talk, we did. Just like a real Oflag 64 reunion. George Lucey played an off-key version of Taps for us.

Sad Sammy Saxton who played the organ at our little church outside the fence was talking about what a difference it made in our "choir" when Boomer Holder got to Camp. Sammy wondered if "Boomer" was his real name. I think we drew straws to see who had to hand pump the organ for both Protestant and Catholic services.

I was starting to think that ghosts are as real as people when they started dropping names and telling stories. Like the time Col. Drake sentenced Bernie Bolton to a week's confinement to his room for stealing an apple from the Camp's only tree. (A rough penalty for a champion Lounge Lizard!)

Frank Aten asked Eddie Berlinsky if he remembered Bill Luttrell hitting a ball over the left field fence and the game was postponed when the damn German guard wouldn't throw it back to us. I remembered Berlinsky--All American, profuse sweater, quick--like a ghost!

When ghosts all talk at once it becomes a cluttered clatter. I caught snatches of conversation and short remarks--like "that damned Thrie wanted to fine me for keeping one of his library books two days too long!" Royal Lee, who talks in his sleep, says "O. it's about the size of a 50 calibre" "Murphy and I made a crock of raisin wine in the attic of the White House. Murph drank it too soon and got sick--he was white as a ghost!" "Do you remember Doc Salerno teaching a class on Marriage Hygiene? Drake put the "kibosh" on THAT!" There was Big Hearted Edward, Jim Sherman and Dusty Rhodes--the only man in Camp with a Bath Robe! And there was Red Bankor and John Slack, each still trying to learn to walk gracefully in those British GI shoes. And how we wondered about the thought behind the person who thought boxing gloves would be a good item for POW's? Lou DiBella, the only guy who ever put them on. And from a Tennessee ghost named William (Bill) Jones came a remark in memory of a time when I passed a pan of baked beans I'd received from home under his nose but offering no taste, and Bill said, "You son-of-a-bitch! You do that again and I'll kill you!" Tennessee ghosts were tough in those days.

The ghost party gradually quieted down and I went around and thanked each one for stopping off in Iowa. There's a growing "Field of Dreams" in Iowa based on a current movie whose message is "If you build it, they will come." For nearly 50 years we have been building room in our hearts, in our thoughts and memories of the days we clung together as a unit bent on survival, perhaps only incidentally giving each other strength and a determination that "if you can do it, I can do it." And we did.

Ghosts don't shake hands. There's nothing there to take hold of. It was time for them to leave and get on toward Colorado. Like a movie scene dissolves, they faded out and were gone--as Jim Shoaf reads the News.

Glad you came for a visit, fellows. We left our marks on each other. Have a good time.

Charlie J
-- Charlie Jones

Northwood, Ia.

Sept. 24, 1982

Dear John:

No, I have no more copies of my
book which I wrote about 10 years ago.

Am enclosing a short little essay in
token of my absence at Colorado Springs which
I thought might be used as a "hand-out" to
those registering at the reunion.

Have a great time.

Charlie J.

Encl.

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David Westheimer, author of numerous novels, now lives and works in California. A graduate of Rice University, he is also a screenwriter and has been a journalist.



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