

Artist's drawing of Oflag 64 without barbed wire, towers and guards.
drawn by Jim Bickers

POST OFLAG 64 ITEM

WINTER 2005

POWs in Attendance At Ft Lauderdale---all 29 of them



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Editor- Bob Thompson
 7448 E 68th Place
 Tulsa, OK 74133
 Pho: 918/250-0897

Treasurer- Joe Seringer
 1930 Edwards
 Wooster, OH 44091
 Pho: 330/345-5878

Contributing Editor- Bill Warthen
 P.O.Box L
 Vidalia, GA 30474
 Pho: 912/537-

*It's time to say goodbye to Irv Yarock
 Rest in peace good friend.
 You are missed !!!*

Guest Editor- Pat (Di Francesco) Bender
 7039 McCallum St
 Philadelphia, PA 19191
 Pho: 215/242-5504

2006 Reunion Chairman-Pat Waters
 412 Rice Hope Dr
 Mt Pleasant SC 29464
 Pho: 843/881-6021

MAIL CALL

George Juskalian, Centerville, VA writes that he is truly sorry that he could not attend the reunion in Florida. He expresses his appreciation Irv Solotoff for devoting so much time and energy to the affair. He also sends in a donation to the postage fund. Thanks, George.

Mel Rappaport, Douglaston, NY sends in an article on Lord HAW HAW the propoganda man from Berlin. My scanner is broken and I may not be able to put the article in this issue of the Item but maybe next time. Mel sends in a donation to the OF for which we thank him.

A.P.Clark, Colorado Springs, CO ordered a debriefing of Gen John K. Waters. Gen Clark knew most of the senior officers at Oflag 64 by their days as cadets at West Point and military service afterwards. Gen. Clark made a special trip to Colorado Springs when we had our reunion there and came up to the cadet library and talked to us.

Tom Johnson, Lake Geneva WI writes that he was known as the "young-un" while at Oflag 64. He is 81 now so he would have been about 20 yrs while at Oflag 64. Tom sends in a nice donation to the postage fund. Thanks, Tom.

T.J.Bugg, West Chester, OH wrote asking for information about his father who was at Oflag 64. We sent him some books that we hope contained the information he was looking for.

Reid Ellsworth, Farmington, UT sends in a donation to the postage fund and we thank him for it. Reid showed up at the reunion and came with a party of 10 people. **WOW**

Ed Batte, Southern Pines, NC sends in a donation to the postage fund. Thanks. ED

Wayne Fieldsmith, Dallas, Texas ordered some books about Oflag 64.. Wayne is a dentist and grinds Roy and Helen Chapelle's teeth!

Dot Jellison Bangor, MA asks that we remove her name from the mailing list. She and Milt always enjoyed coming to the reunions and enjoyed reading the Item, but it is now time to remove her name from the mailing List. We will do that. She also sends in a nice donation to the Postage Fund.

Richard (Dick) Parker Washington, DC writes with regrets that he could not attend the reunion in FL. He also sends in a donation to the Postage Fund. Thanks, Dick!

Ed Rinehart, Montgomery AL sent his regrets that he could not attend the reunion in FL because of health problems. He also sends in a donation to the postage fund. Thanks Ed

R.S. Woodhurst, Augusta GA sends in a donation to the postage fund Thanks!!.

Jerry Alexis, Beaver Falls, PA sends in an article that has some signatures of interest to the men of Oflag 64 It is included in this issue of the Item. Jerry also sends in a donation to the postage fund. Thanks!!

Jim Monaghan, Birmingham AL asks that we change his mailing address, which we will do. He also sends in a donation to the postage fund Thanks.

Royal Lee, Mankota, MN writes that health problems prevented him and Harriet from attending the reunion on FL. Maybe next year!! He also sends in a donation to the postage fund. Thanks!!

October 16, 2005

HI BOB,

Here is a list of all those who attended the 2005 annual OFLAG 64 reunion last month. I am sorry that it took so long to get it to you, but I have a few health problems that prevented me from doing any work at all. But, thank heavens it's all behind me now and I can resume my activities. Also enclosed is a check for the balance of the money collected for our reunion, and I will send a financial statement to Joe Seringer, per your suggestion, showing all of the income versus the expenses, and then what is left I am sending you. By the way thank you very much for your E-MAIL and your complimentary words regarding the reunion. It was a lot of work, but, it was a labor of love and I was glad to do it, as a matter of fact if you need me again please do not hesitate to ask. I will always be there to help in any way that I can.

Regards,



IRV

THOMPSON. BOB & GLADYS

McALLISTER, MARLENE

WYATT. NANCY

MARLOTT. PEGGY

WARTHEN, BILL & DOROTHY

WARTHEN. ELLEN

WATERS, GEORGE P.

KANNERS. MARCIA

BRADFORD, O.L.

BROWN. GAIL BRADFORD

BENDER, PAT

LEE. ROSA T. & PAT COCHRAN

BAUM, ABE & EILEEN

BOLLING. ALEXANDER R

BRYANT, A. W.

CHEATHAM. ROBERT

CHEVALIER, MARVIN

ROLLAND. BETTE. & dale

DiFRANCESCO, "DOC"

CHRISTMAN. MARIA

EZELL, KATHERINE

GRAF. EDWARD

GRAUL, DON

GRAUL. CHARLES LTC RET

HEISLER, WALTER & CHRIS

JONES. CURTIS & NORMA

KANAYA, JIMMY & LYNN YOSHIHARA

KLINKENBORG. RAY & NANCY

LITTMAN, HERM & LUCY

LOWE. JANET & CHARLIE

KNIGHT, TIM & JUDY

LUSSENDEN. LUCY & TRICIA

MOORHEAD, ROBERT & JOAN

MYRON. GEORGE

NELSON, LEWIS & ANNETTE SECOR

O'NEILL. ROBERT

ALVIN, & MARTHA ROBIN

ROSENTHAL, GEORGE & ARLENE

SUDMEIER, JIM & JILLIAN HENRY

SERINGER, JOE

SLACK, MARGIE

BARRETT, JOSEPH F

THOMPSON, HARRY

SOLOTOFF. IRVING & HELEN

ELLSWORTH, REID, & JANET

CALDWELL, ELODIE & LÓRIEN

RICHINS, BARRY & BARBARA

HILL. HENRY & DIANE

WEATHERFORD, CHRIS & CECILY

SOME NICE WORDS FROM A NICE MAN

October 16, 2005

HI BOB,

To all of the members of OFLAG 64, I would like to thank you for having the confidence and faith in me by allowing me to host YOUR 2005 reunion. I realize that this annual event is very important to all of you as it gives you a chance to meet, greet, and reminisce with old friends and "KRIEGES" with whom you all have so much in common. While I admit that it was a lot of hard wok, time consuming, and often frustrating, it was truly a labor of love.

I enjoyed doing it and being a part of it. My thanx and all the thanx that I will ever ask for are the many letters, e-mails, and phone calls that I got from those that attended, telling me what a wonderful time they all had. It was very gratifying to hear from many of you telling me how wonderful everything was, it made me very proud to a part of OFLAG 64. To those who could not attend for the many reasons that crop up as we get older, you missed a great time. I am sure that PAT WATERS is already busy with plotting, and planning of the "06" reunion, and I hope that many of you who could not make it this year will be able to meet with us at our next reunion, where ever it may be.

Once again thanx to all of you and GOD BLESS.

Sincerely,



Irv Solotoff



Bob,

Roy and Helen Chappell asked me to tell me all that I remembered about the activities at this year's Reunion. Following is the note I sent them. If you think there is any value in printing this for the benefit of all those who were not able to attend, please feel free to do so. If you want any changes made, just let me know.

It was so nice to see you and your family again. Take care.

Dear Roy and Helen,

I'm happy to recount all that I remember of the wonderful days of the Reunion last week.

First of all, you and your family were a BIG absence and GREATLY missed. It just wasn't the same without you both. We so hope you can join next year's Reunion, which is still hoped to be held in New Orleans!!!

Irv Solotoff, this year's host, said he would mail a list of this year's attendees to us. Certainly, Bob Thompson will run a copy in the next *ITEM*.

Irv handled all the arrangements for this year's Reunion! Rosa had volunteered to help Irv, and was contacted by phone for her input. Irv seemed pretty exhausted by the end of our "Memorial" meeting on Sunday morning. He and Helen were to fly to New York this morning (Monday) to see their new (and only) great-grandchild. I hope he didn't get too run down. He wasn't feeling well at dinner on Saturday night.

I think there was something going around, because Harry Thompson (author of *Patton's Ill Fated Raid*), age 91 or 92, fell ill Friday night, but was better by Sunday morning. Lou and Janet Lowe and their son attended this year from Arizona. Janet was ill Saturday evening and did not attend the dinner, but was better by Sunday morning and joined us for breakfast & the service. Robert "Cheerful Charlie" Cheatham wasn't feeling well on Sunday morning, but carried on. We took him in our cab to the airport and I hope he made it home OK. He comes up to Michigan every Christmas to visit his niece and her family who live just north of the Ohio state line, and always visits with us then, too. He says he'll be up again this year. It seems to me that there might have been another couple of people who were not feeling well, but can't remember who they were. Possibly just a nasty bug going around.

As you know, we all stayed at the Embassy Suites hotel in Ft. Lauderdale. If you've ever stayed at an Embassy Suites, you know that they include a FULL breakfast (anything you want—eggs, omelets, pancakes, cold cereal, hot oatmeal, grits, fresh fruit, juices, etc.), AND a cocktail party every night including anything you want to drink (soft drinks, juices, beer, wine, hard liquor, etc.) and popcorn, etc. Plus the whole center of the hotel is like an Italian or Spanish center courtyard with a meandering pond, large and colorful plants, wood ducks swimming around (in Ft. Lauderdale, at least), lots of garden tables and chairs, and more. The whole courtyard is open to all the floors, so everyone can look over the railing and enjoy the activity from above. Plus, every room looks out to the city scenery. Oh my, there was so much atmosphere and it was really wonderful. So we had a fun time visiting with each other twice every day, plus in the hospitality room. There was a wonderful big outdoor pool and a pond with big goldfish—just the works! At the cocktail party (2 hours from 5:30 to 7:30 PM) we would pull together several tables and all sit around and laugh and just have a lot of fun. There was an Italian restaurant in the hotel with really good food, albeit a little pricey. But that's par for the course today, I guess. Anyway, the hotel stay was just wonderful and I think everyone enjoyed themselves very much. Plus, it freed up the host from needing to arrange for breakfast and cocktail hours for our group!! All this for only \$97 per night, plus tax.

Wednesday was a free day. Our daughter, Tricia, and I checked in about 6 PM. On Thursday, some folks took a tour to the Everglades, where they saw alligators while flying across the grassy water on an air boat. I think that's the right kind of boat. Don and I took one of those rides many years ago. Of course, the Native American Indian would stop the boat where the alligators usually "hang out." Alligators have their own territories, I understand. Then they were taken to see a guy "wrestle" alligators, or whatever. He had lost a few fingers over the years!! That was about a 4 hour round trip tour.

Thursday evening we all had dinner at the hotel in a private room. I had the fish, which turned out to be salmon! It was wonderful, and everyone else said that their meals were really good, too. Some had sliced beef and others had chicken. The salads were nice and fresh! A kind of strawberry shortcake tort was dessert, and very good.

The "business meeting" was held after breakfast. Pat Waters talked about where we would have next year's meeting. He still hopes it can be held in New Orleans, but is keeping Charleston in his hip pocket, too, "just in case things go bad in N.O." Apparently the D-Day museum did not sustain much damage, except that caused by some no-goodnick looters! Pat passed around an e-mail he had received which was an account by one of the volunteers who spent the night at the museum so he could "take care of it." After they lost power, he stayed hidden as some people appeared outside and began to break in. Not knowing what would happen, he did not reveal his presence. Hopefully Bob Thompson can run a copy of that e-mail in the *ITEM*, because I can't remember everything that was in it. The looters took a few small things and tried to break into the ATM machine. Also, the museum was not flooded, I don't think. I think the volunteer said also that the looters had urinated in the building.

Bob asked if the group wanted to continue having Reunions after next year. Later he spoke with individuals on a one-on-one basis. The general feeling is that people still want to have Reunions. But, everyone realizes that our group is getting more and more frail each year. Bob O'Neill (from Arizona) said that maybe we could take a cruise boat out of San Diego.

Those cruises can be anywhere from 3 to as many days as you want. He thought it might be good to have a Reunion on the West Coast, since some folks live out there. Bob Thompson asked Bob O'Neill to look into it.

Joe Seringer gave an update on the group's finances, which are in good shape. There was a discussion of whether we should "do something" with the extra funds, and a number of suggestions were made as to good groups who could use the money. But then, Bob pointed out how much it costs to mail out the *ITEM*, which is about \$6,000 per year. With about \$14,000 in the account, we couldn't mail out the *ITEM* for many years at that rate, unless voluntary contributions continued at a good rate. Right now, each Reunion contributes a nice sum to the account, which makes it possible to function on the kind of voluntary contributions made by the group so far.

Bob Thompson asked me to come up and say a few words about the binder of photographs that I brought with me of the trip I took to Germany this year. My friend, Charlene, and I drove from Berlin up to the Baltic Sea and took photos of the barns, churches, and other buildings where our POWs had slept while on their march in 1945. We didn't go into Poland, but started at the first village west of the Oder River, called Garz. I kept the book in the hospitality room for everyone to enjoy. Our trip went from Garz to Parchim, where we took photos of the train station. Then we went to Hammelburg and took photos of that train station as well as the display of Abe Baum's adventure which had been set up by Peter Domes. I think that covers pretty much the main items discussed at the meeting.

Irv had white T-shirts printed with the Bickers' sketch of Oflag 64 and words about the Reunion, etc. Each of you is entitled to one free. Others are \$10 each. They were available in Large and X-Large. Very nice.

Also, he had black zippered briefcases printed with the camp and Oflag 64 on it. Again, if any are left, you are each entitled to one, I think. Plus, a mug with Oflag 64 on it was available for each person. Check with him to see if he still has some of these things. Or, you could probably contact Rosa, if you have her number. She might have the extras. Representatives from the American Red Cross came & passed out samples of MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) to the POWs only.

At about 6:00 PM, we were bussed to a boat that took us on a tour through the canals and waterways of Ft. Lauderdale, the "Venice" of Florida. Wow! You should have seen the fantastic and beautiful homes and yachts—all selling in the millions! That sure would be a wonderful way to live, if you had the money. Our destination was an island where we disembarked and had a BBQ dinner of ribs and chicken, cole slaw, really good baked beans, steak-fried style potatoes, and a square of cake for dessert. Then we all walked a short distance to benches where we enjoyed a good live show. First was a ventriloquist, followed by a juggler, then a comedian. It was a good show. Back on the boat and home. We got back to the hotel about ten o'clock, as I recall. It was a very long and tiring trip. Fun, but I think everyone was pretty wiped out when they got back to their rooms. I know we were.

On Saturday, some folks took the City tour and others went on the Everglades Tour (as described above). Some folks swam, others took naps, people wandered in and out of the hospitality room—you know how that goes. Saturday evening we had dinner together again at the hotel. This time I had prime rib, and it was cooked just right and very tasty. A beautiful chocolate cake for dessert. Names were pulled from a box and some folks took home prizes, like bottles of booze. I don't know what else might have been given out. Irv had hired a disk jockey to play music from the 40s. Joe Seringer said Grace before dinner on both Thursday and Saturday nights. He looks great and seems to be in good health.

After breakfast in the atrium on Sunday morning, we gathered in a private conference room for the Memorial Service. Unfortunately, the list of our group members who had passed on over the past year had been misplaced. There was no printed program. Irv introduced a Rabbi, who gave a short homily on life and how we should not sweat the small stuff. He talked about the ordeal that our POWs had gone through, as well as the folks who lost so much as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Then he said a prayer for all our lost folks and sang the prayer in Hebrew. I think the service lasted about 20 minutes, followed by everyone leaving for the airport and home.

Pat Waters had to leave early. One of the wonderful things that he has been doing is flying pet rescues, since Katrina separated so many loved pets from their families. Martha had to be in New York City and could not be with us this year. Pat's son-in-law, Robert, will send anyone who wants, at no charge, a CD or DVD (movie) of an updated and (I guess improved) film that he had made of Oflag 64. Just let Pat know if you want one. Also, the Lipizzaner Horses from Vienna will be touring the U.S. this year and next, I guess, and Pat can get free tickets for you, if you like. The seats will be in a special VIP box. Check with him as to where in Texas they will be performing, and the dates. I'm planning to attend in Columbus, Ohio, Nov. 4,5,6, this year with "Brad" Bradford and his daughter, Gail, who attended with him this year. Except for listing some of the other people who attended, I think that pretty much covers the event. Marcia Kanners attended, as did Marjorie Slack, the Heislars from R.I., Abe Baum, his wife and sister, George Rosenthal & wife, the Bill Warthen family, Herm & Lucy Littman, Curtiss Jones & wife, Roland ("Bill") Corbin, wife & son, Don Graul, Ed Graf & his daughter & son-in-law (he lost his wife this past April), and many more. I think there were fewer than 100 this year, but am not sure of that.

I hope this will make you feel as if you were with us at the Reunion. We sure did miss you.

Love,
Lucy

OFLAG 64 POSTAGE FUND

Joe Seringer Treasurer

Statement Of Cash Receipts and Disbursements For the period from September 21 2004 to September 15 2005

Receipts for the period:

Contributions to the Fund	\$2240.00
Books	698.85
Interest earned	58.88
Proceeds from 2004 reunion	3760.13
\	
Total Cash Received	\$6757.86

Disbursements for the Period:

\	
Copies for the Item	\$2765.80
Advance for reunion 2004	709.08
Postage for the Item	1194.30
Supplies	432.71
Total Cash Disbursed	\$5101.89

Excess of Receipts over Disbursements	\$1655.97
Bank Balance September 20 2004	\$12811.68

Balance in Bank September 15 2005	\$14467.65
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Notes:

\Bill for fall 2005 Item has not been paid.

Net profit for 2004 reunion amounted to\$1551.05

Aug. 25,2005

Bob Thompson
7448 E 68th Place
Tulsa, OK 74133


Dear Bob:

This a letter I wish I didn't have to write, but there comes a time when we must give up. We will not be able to attend the reunion this year. My arthritis and a bad back makes it almost impossible to walk for any distance or to stand for any length of time. Our son and his wife had planned to take us down to the reunion, but Harriet and I decided that it best to say farewell.

I have visited with Bob Cheatham several times and even with his encouragement we have declined his offer to help carry me. please give my regards to the old krigies and please remember us to your good wife Gladys.

I am enclosing a check for the Oflag 64 Item

Sincerely


Royal Lee

Richard B. Parker
3317 P St NW
Washington, DC 20007
Tel 202-342-6543 Fax 202-342-0954

1 Sept 05

Dear Bob -

Here is a check for postage.

We will not be going to the reunion. Neither my wife nor I feel up to it. I was only at the office for two or three weeks and I'm sure no one remembers me, and it's mutual, but I enjoy the Ham.

Sincerely,

Dick Parker

The enclosed biographic statement will tell you what I have been up to, but I have slowed down a good deal following a cerebral hemorrhage last summer.



Mr. Edmon L. Rinehart
1725 Croom Dr.
Montgomery, AL 36106-2625

AREA CODE 334
TELEPHONE 272-8745

August 6, 2005

Dear Bob,

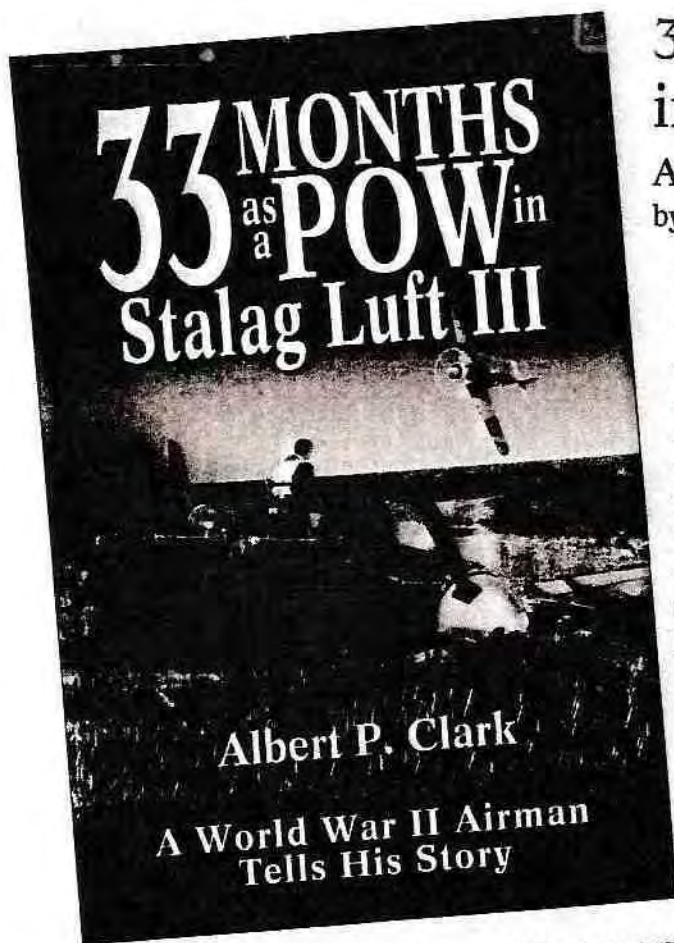
Barbara + I won't be at the Ft. Lauderdale meeting. It's not been a good year for either of: too many visits to hospital, operations, + all of M.D.s. Up until the last week of July we thought that we would be there. Neither of us bounce back the way we used to.

Clarence Meltesen + Irving Yarick are great losses. Irving is mentioned several times in a recent history of the 18th Infantry Regt. Clarence's Road to Gibraltar was a great contribution in particular to me because I was attached to the 1st Ranger Bn for part of Anzio including the ill-fated attack on Cesterma di Littoria. Clarence was in the same barracks but I did not meet him till Oflag 64 because he was wounded at Cesterma. Have a good meeting + thank Irving.

Check enclosed for whatever

Ed Rinehart
Page 11

LT Gen A. P. Clark has written a book about his experiences as POW in WWII. When we had our reunion at Colorado Springs, several years ago Gen. Clark came to the Cadet Library while we were there and visited with us. He was friend of most of our senior officers, such as LTC Waters, Col Goode, LTC Schaefer, etc. He is on our mailing list and we hear from him occasionally.



• Includes previously unpublished photographs of Stalag Luft III, collected from the Special Collections Branch of the Air Force Academy Library

33 MONTHS as a POW in Stalag Luft III

A World War II Airman Tells His Story
by Albert P. Clark

Many fascinating stories of the Great Escape have been told since the end of World War II. But not until now has the story of Lieutenant Colonel A. P. Clark, the first combat personnel captured in U.S. uniform by the Germans, been told. In his 33 months in the infamous prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft III, Lieutenant Clark was involved in and responsible for directing escape work among American prisoners. His tale of courage and perseverance is accentuated by the stark photographs he took from the inside with a pinhole camera.

General A. P. Clark graduated from West Point in 1936 and immediately entered the Army Air Corps. Aside from his many military accomplishments, General Clark devoted a great number of years to volunteer work with the Boy Scouts of America, the U.S. Olympic Committee, and several foundations supporting the Air Force Academy. He lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

• General A.P. Clark served in the U.S. Air Force during WWII, as a U.S. Air Force officer in France, Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Okinawa, and finally served as superintendent of the Air Force Academy before retiring in July of 1974 in the grade of lieutenant general after 38 years of service.

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In late September 1991, my wife and I drove on a tour to Northern Germany, where we tried to find some of the old prisoner of war camps. We also visited Barth, Luft I. The local population was helpful in showing us the way to the former campsite. Nothing is left of the old Stalag Luft I, but there is, on what used to be the cemetery, a single block of concrete on top of which a black stone has been placed bearing the inscription: "HIER BEFREITE DIE SOWJETARMEE IN MAY 1945 KRIEGSGEFANGENEN AUS DEN USA UND GROSSBRITANNIEN." A number of pine and birch trees have been planted around the small memorial place. It seemed tidy and was well maintained in its simplicity. The area was partly covered with gravel. The wooden crosses which used to be on the cemetery with the name and nationality of the deceased POW have apparently been removed long ago. No names are mentioned at all. Not surprisingly, the Russians have not forgotten to mention their own contribution! Nobody had been informed in advance about my visit. I am glad that I am able to send you these photos...they might be of interest to someone who has a father, a son or a brother resting in the Barth cemetery.

I have just completed a 240-page book, *Seven Years with Prisoners of War*, published by the Odense University Press, in Danish. A copy has been sent to the U.S. Air Force Museum at Colorado. In April 1990, my wife and I were invited by the former American POWs of Stalag Luft III, Sagan, to attend and take part in their reunion at Norfolk, Virginia. We enjoyed the three days of meeting tremendously, and wonder if the ex-POWs from Stalag Luft I and Luft IV have similar arrangements from time to time.

Finally, I shall be very grateful if you, through the *Ex-POW Bulletin*, will transmit my sincere greetings and best wishes to all ex-prisoners of war from Stalag Luft I, Luft IV, Hammerstein and Muhlberg, who still remember the YMCA man who used to visit them when they were prisoners of war in Germany. Should any of them happen to pass or to visit Viborg one day, I shall be glad to welcome them and perhaps reciprocate a bit of all the hospitality which I also enjoyed when visiting them in their POW camps.



POW memorial placed at the former cemetery of Stalag Luft I. To the right, YMCA delegate to prisoners of war Chris Christiansen.



POW cemetery of Oflag II-E and Stalag II-A, Neubrandenburg, Germany.

Werte Besucher!
 Sie betreten das Gelände des Ehrenmales
 für die auf diesem Friedhof zwischen
 1939 und 1945 zur letzten Ruhe
 bestatteten Kriegsgefangenen aus den
 Neubrandenburger Lagern Stalag II A
 und Oflag II E/87.
 Fern ihrer Heimat liegen hier:
 Eine unbekannte Anzahl sowjetischer Soldaten
 in Massengräbern. Etwa 500 Soldaten und
 Offiziere aus Belgien, Frankreich und seinen
 Kolonien, Großbritannien, Griechenland,
 Italien, Niederlande, Polen, USA sowie
 Serben und Slowaken.
 Sie starben an Krankheiten, Hunger und
 Entkräftigung aber auch als Folge von
 Übergriffen der Wachmannschaften.

Signboard at entrance to the POW cemetery, Neubrandenburg, Germany.

REUNION IN 2006

At our reunion in Ft Lauderdale, Pat Waters told us that he was working on having the reunion in New Orleans, depending on the progress of the recovery of the City of New Orleans.

The hurricane there put a lot of questions about anything concerning New Orleans. Pat remarked that he would proceed as if New Orleans would be the spot but keeping in mind that Charleston was still available and we could go to Charleston if New Orleans was out of the picture. He has contacted the officials at the DDay Museum and they would welcome us with open arms if we decided to go there.

We will keep you posted as to where we will go, as each Item is published.

REUNION IN 2007

The possibility of having a reunion in 2007 is still a question. The health of our members may prevent us from having a reunion. At the business meeting in Ft Lauderdale, Bob O'Neill, suggested that we consider a cruise ship for a few days. On a cruise ship the ship handles all the arrangements so we wouldn't have to depend on one our people to make all the arrangements. All we would have to do would be to eat and visit. Bob and Abe Baum suggested that San Diego would be a good spot to board the ship. They both have some contacts with cruise people in San Diego and they will contact their friends and get some of the details. We would like to have some comments from our members as their opinion on this arrangement. Please send your comments to Bob Thompson in Tulsa and we will publish them in the Items as we receive them. The address is on page two of this Item.

Distributing the Item via the Internet

Elodie Caldwell (Reid Ellsworth's daughter) made the suggestion in Ft .Lauderdale that the Item could be distributed via the Internet and after discussing it a few minutes she said she could handle the details of the distribution. She has contacted several of our members that have computers and they have stated that they would be happy to get it via the Internet. She has written a statement regarding the details and we are putting it in this issue for your consideration. We are also considering putting the Item on a website operated by her brother-in-law in Plano ,Texas. Elodies' statement follows:

Dear Oflag Family,

In an effort to reduce the ever-increasing expense of mailing the "Item" to everyone by US Mail, we would like to begin sending it by email to as many as have email. It would be in printable format for easy reading. However, if you choose not to receive the "Item" by email, you will continue to receive it as you are receiving it now.

We are also exploring putting the "Item" on an Oflag website. As soon as that is possible, we will send an email notifying everyone of accessibility.

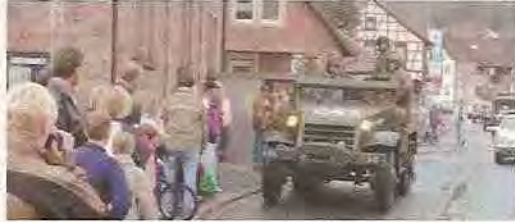
Please help us by sending your preference to Elodie Caldwell (daughter of Reid Ellsworth) as soon as possible. Mail to: caldwells@adelphia.net We look forward to hearing from you soon. Thanks for your help and for your support.

Sincerely,
Elodie Caldwell

Patton's Task Force Baum Raid Lives Again!

by Jim Sudmeier

What in the world is all the ruckus? The unmistakable whine of a dozen vintage Willys Jeeps convoying through one German village after another -- then a half-track -- all vehicles filled with scores of American GIs wearing the insignias of the legendary 4th Armored Division, the spearhead of Patton's Third Army?



(All photos courtesy of Herbert Hausmann.)

It looks like a movie set from "Band of Brothers" without the guns. Why are hundreds of German civilians lining the roads? Many scratch their heads in puzzlement, while others wave, cheer, and smile. Reporters and TV crews are following closely. Now the mayor appears carrying a white flag and surrenders the town. The commanding American officer in the lead Jeep who accepts the surrender is none other than 84-year-old Major Abe Baum.

A few of the older Germans remember the actual event from Mar. 26-28, 1945, being commemorated here today, and some of them crowd around Baum's Jeep as if he were a rock star, some with tears in their eyes, to tell their stories, to shake the hand of their former enemy, and to seek his autograph. Then they go together, both Americans and Germans to the Town Hall for an official reception, speeches, and food, drink, and good fellowship. At one stop in Gemeunden, Mayor Schiebel

jokes, "I trust we are giving you a better reception than the first time you came here."



Major Abraham Baum welcomed by Mayor Thomas Schiebel of Gemeunden.

At another stop, the German Infantry School in Hammelburg, all the 1945-style "GIs" stood in the same cafeteria line with soldiers wearing modern German uniforms. Many puzzled looks, as if to say "Oh No!..They're back!," came from the Germans, many of whom had evidently not been informed about the impending "reinvasion."

The retracing on Oct. 22-23, 2005, of Task Force Baum's Hammelburg Raid, one of the most fascinating and controversial chapters of WWII, was the brain child of two German Army soldiers, Lt. Col. Peter Domes and Master Sgt. Martin Heinlein, who have turned their hobby of gathering the complete history of this raid onto a German and English website (www.taskforcebaum.de). Domes and Heinlein, with the assistance of their 10-member Task Force Baum Working Group, have become the unquestioned world authorities on this raid.



Major Baum and raid retracing organizer German Lt. Col. Peter Domes (photo: Gesa Albert).

When then Captain Baum and his armored task force of 313 men and 57 vehicles came thundering in the middle of the night on the daring mission through this 50 mile route of forested hills, wide valleys, and villages just east of Frankfurt, Baum was a 24-year-old, battle-hardened, handsome Jewish guy from the Bronx, with a thin Erroll Flynn style mustache.

In combat in France and at the Battle of the Bulge, Baum earned several Bronze and Silver Stars, Purple Hearts, and the nickname "Able" -- a guy with a bullhorn voice, decisive leadership, and undisputed courage. His reputation was that of an Officer who always got the job done. Sixty-one years later, despite the recent artificial knee replacement, the leadership qualities and the sheer force of his personality are still evident to all, undiminished by time.

What was the purpose of this daring nighttime raid, 50 miles behind enemy lines? It was the personal business of General George S. Patton Jr. himself. He wanted to rescue his son-in-law, Lt. Col. John K. Waters, from the German POW camp at Hammelburg. The unauthorized raid was out of bounds, crossing into territory assigned to the Seventh US Army. Thus Patton did not dare send a

force large enough to ensure its success. Nor did he provide accurate intelligence or air support. The number of US prisoners was grossly underestimated (there were 1500, not 300). Nobody suspected that Baum would run into a German Tank Destroyer company with 10 Hetzers.

Thus the raid was doomed to failure, with 25 of the raiders killed, most of the rest taken prisoner, and a score of American POWs killed. Col. Waters was seriously wounded in the melee, shot near the spine, and could not be moved. These failings lie with the planners of the raid, and not on its execution by Capt. Baum or his courageous men. Baum was wounded twice during the mission and had the Distinguished Service Cross pinned on him by Gen. Patton while still recuperating in a military hospital. After the war, Gen. Patton would admit to the Hammelburg raid as his "one mistake."

The reenactors, about 40 strong, were history buffs, mostly civilians, coming from as far away as Munich and Czech Republic. Their passion for history is reflected in their beautifully restored Jeeps, half-tracks, uniforms, and equipment.



Major Baum inspects raid reenactors at the beginning of the route in Nilkheim.

When Major Baum arrived on Saturday morning, Oct. 22, with Col. Domes by

Jeep in a light rain at the tour's starting point, the Nilkheim athletic field, he was astonished at the large number of military vehicles and spectators waiting there, and the GI reenactors standing in formation. The troops were commanded to attention by Sgt. Heinlein, and Major Baum conducted an inspection.

Then the convoy took off, following as closely as possible the original route of the raid, with traffic controlled by Fire Chief Herbert Hausmann and volunteers. The first stop was for a briefing at Laufach, where TFB lost its first tank and its first man KIA. The second briefing was at Bischbornerhof, where TFB opened fire on a large group of German soldiers doing their morning calisthenics in a field. The briefings were conducted by Col. Domes, Sgt. Heinlein, and various members of the TFB Working Group. After lunch and an official reception by Mayor Siegfried Selinger at the Rathaus in Lohr, the convoy's next briefing stop was at Langenprozelten, and finally Gemuenden.

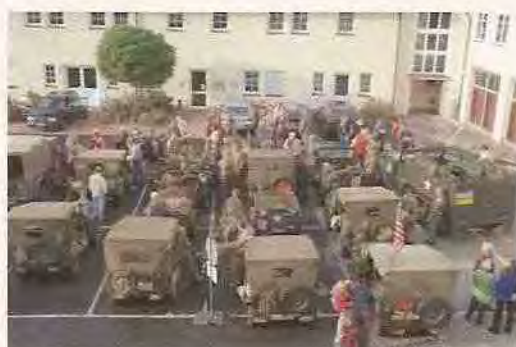


Major Baum signs the Golden Book of Gemuenden with the Mayor standing by.

Another big surprise for Major Baum was Mayor Schiebel's reception in the

Town Hall of Gemuenden. Baum was led into the hall where the Mayor was waiting along with scores of spectators and photographers, and all the GIs standing at attention as an honor guard, which Baum passed in review -- a moment richly symbolic and emotional. Mayor Schiebel gave a welcoming speech, and invited Baum to sign his name in the town's Golden Book for distinguished visitors.

When TFB arrived in Gemuenden early in the morning of Mar. 27, 1945, the reception they received was decidedly unfriendly. The Germans suicidally blew up the Saale bridge in Baum's face, knocked out 3 Sherman tanks, killed a half-dozen GIs, captured many more, and shot Baum's right hand and leg full of shrapnel that cut to the bone. The defenders were mostly young combat engineers well-armed with Panzerfausts, the very effective one-shot, blunt-headed, armor-piercing rocket. The lost bridge forced Baum to take a detour to the north in search of a river crossing. Gemuenden suffered far more, being 2/3 burned to the ground and losing 65 civilians, mostly from Allied bombs in Mar.-Apr., 1945.



Retracement vehicles parked for the night in the Huttenschloss courtyard in Gemuenden.

Old wounds were long since forgotten, however, at the festive dinner hosted by Gudrun Schneider and the Film-Photo-Sound Club at the Huttenschloss, a former

castle near the embattled bridge, now housing their Museum. Following normal protocol, the GI enlisted men went through the chow line before the officers and dignitaries.



Mayor Waldemar Horn of Rieneck with the white "surrender" flag talks with Sgt. Heinlein.

On Sunday morning, Oct. 23, the column rumbled off northward to Rieneck, where the good-natured Mayor Waldemar Horn appeared with a white flag, "surrendering" the town to Major Baum and inviting the entire group to breakfast.

Next stop was Burgsinn where a "guide/hostage" was captured (a friend of Col. Domes) and a briefing held. Here TFB found a bridge over the Saale, so they could proceed eastward to Hammelburg over back roads, aided by local guides. The next briefing stops were at Weickersgrueben and Hammelburg. Then the column was admitted to the German Army base where TFB met its end. Lunch was served in the mess hall of the German Infantry School, reenactors in strange juxtaposition with regular German Army.

There was a briefing in Hoellrich, where one of the escape attempts was carried out, and finally the entire group assembled for a briefing, final words, thanks, and group photos on the flank of the "Reussenberg"

(Hill 427) where the coordinated German attack on the morning of March 28 scattered the Task Force and ended any hope of escaping as a military unit.



Major Baum describes his "last stand" on Hill 427 before the wreck of his 105mm assault gun.

This beautifully planned and executed retracing event was originally intended by Col. Domes and Sgt. Heinlein as a reward for the TFB Working Group researchers, reporting their latest results along the way. When Major Baum agreed to attend, along with his wife Eileen, sons David and Eric, daughter Susan, and David's wife Nancy, it became more of a celebrity event.

Domes' and Heinlein's passion for history has obviously infected the hundreds of participants and spectators in this event, testifying to the great public interest that remains in WWII. Their research results will soon appear in book form ("Alarm, die Panzerspitze kommt!" plus an English edition). Domes and Heinlein are also collaborators with the present author on a new screenplay, "Patton's Secret Mission," which will soon be searching for a producer.

Date: 05-11-09 20:29:58 EST
 From: DWestheime
 BCC: THO7448

We are saddened by the loss of our friend and father David Westheimer. He passed quickly and peacefully surrounded by his family and close friends on November 8th, 2005.

Sincerely,
 The Westheimer Family

Novelist DAVID WESTHEIMER passed away Tuesday, November 8th, 2005 at UCLA Hospital from heart failure. He was 88 years old. Born in Houston, Texas, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Rice University in 1937. He began his successful writing career at the Houston Post in 1939 as an assistant editor in the amusement department, then became radio, magazine and television editor before leaving the paper in 1960. He would return to the paper as a columnist in the 1980s.

His first novel, SUMMER ON THE WATER, was published by MacMillan in 1948. During the span of his career he wrote many books. He is perhaps most well known for best sellers VON RYANS EXPRESS and MY SWEET CHARLIE. MY SWEET CHARLIE became a Broadway play and later, a TV movie that won Patty Duke an Emmy. Twentieth Century Fox made a film on VON RYANS EXPRESS, starring Frank Sinatra. David also wrote numerous teleplays and adapted the screenplay DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES into a popular novel.

David served as Captain in the Air Force between 1941-45, spending three years as a POW in Italian and German prison camps. He remained in the Air Force Reserve, serving as a Lieutenant Colonel until he retired.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Dody (also a former Houstonian and graduate of Rice); his two sons, Fred and wife Susan; Eric and wife Karen; five grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. No services planned, at his request.

David Westheimer was not at Oflag 64, but he was in a POW in Italy with several of our men like Irv Yarock, Boomer Holder and the rest of the men that were caught in the North African Tank battles. They were all good friends and our men spoke highly of David.

Robert Reppa; U-Md. Official

Robert Bruce Reppa Sr., 85, who helped thousands of part-time adult students obtain college degrees when he introduced weekend classes at the University of Maryland's University College, died Aug. 23 on the way to Inova Alexandria Hospital. He had Parkinson's disease.

Dr. Reppa retired in 1978 as assistant vice chancellor for state-wide programs at University College, a dozen years after joining the university as a graduate assistant.

He was born in Richmond Hill, N.Y., and raised in the Panama Canal Zone. He graduated from Amherst College in Massachusetts.

Called to active duty in the Army in 1941, he was initially assigned to the Panama Canal Zone and later served in the European theater during World War II. He was captured by Germans on the second day of the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. Sent to prisoner-of-war camps at Nuremberg and later Hammelberg, he suffered through inadequate heat and food, depending upon twice-monthly Red Cross packages to survive.

According to a 1994 article in the Army's Soldiers magazine, the 4th Armored Division's Task Force Baum fought 60 miles through German territory to liberate the POWs at Hammelberg, but the force was too small to handle the hundreds of POWs who were wandering in the darkness. The task force was surrounded and wiped out. Dr. Reppa was among the few who escaped, but four days later, their group was

recaptured by the Germans and returned to the camp, where they helped bury their fellow prisoners. After a month-long forced march to a point just east of Munich, Dr. Reppa and another soldier escaped again, taking refuge in a German house that flew a white sheet. U.S. forces finally freed them in May 1945.

After the war, Dr. Reppa remained in the Army. At Fort Hood, Tex., he commanded the 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 67th Armor. He was a staff officer in the Defense Intelligence Agency's national intelligence analysis and estimates office, Middle East branch, from 1961 to 1966, when he retired as a lieutenant colonel.

Dr. Reppa's doctoral dissertation at the University of Maryland was published in 1973 as "Israel and Iran: Bilateral Relationships and Effect on the Indian Ocean Basin."

Dr. Reppa, a resident of Alexandria, was a member of the Northern Virginia chapter of Ex-POWs, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, the U.S. Cavalry Association and the Panama Canal Society. He also belonged to Beta Theta Pi and honor societies Pi Sigma Alpha, Alpha Sigma Lambda and Phi Kappa Phi.

His son, Robert Reppa Jr., died in 2002.

Survivors include his wife, Jane Maynard Reppa of Alexandria; a daughter, Katherine Reppa of Carbondale, Colo.; and two grandsons.

WASHINGTON POST Aug. 31, 2005

This sent in by George Juskalian