

Post Oflag 64 Item

2007 - SUMMER

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OFLAG 64 - Tulsa Reunion

October 11-14, 2007

On the next few pages of this issue you'll find information for this year's Oflag 64 Reunion to be held in Tulsa, October 11-14. Look for the letter from Jay Wagner regarding planned events along with an itinerary, a registration form and information for reserving your hotel room at the Marriott Southern Hills Hotel in Tulsa. When you make your reservation, remember to tell them that you're with the Oflag 64 Reunion group. (Check out the link below for more information about the Marriott.)

<http://marriott.com/hotels/travel/tulsa-tulsa-marriott-southern-hills/>

Please fill out the bottom of the Reunion Registration Form with your name and the names of your guests. Return the form, along with your check(s) payable to 2007 OFLAG 64 Reunion, to Bob Thompson at the address given at the bottom of the form. This will help with the final head count.

We're excited to see things falling into place. Jay, his wife Shonda, and his mother Maggie along with Bob Thompson have worked tirelessly putting a nice package together for all of us.

If you have questions regarding any of the activities or need special accommodations, please email:

Jay jcwag@earthlink.net
Shonda shondaw@earthlink.net
Maggie mrwag1947@cox.net

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible in TULSA.

Warm Regards,

Elodie Caldwell (daughter of Reid Ellsworth)

REUNION BUSINESS

Dear OFLAG 64 Family,

I'm happy to report that we've been very busy finalizing plans for the 2007 Reunion and we now have a good idea of headcount as well as costs associated with the event.

We've got, I believe, a very nice weekend planned for everyone October 11th through 14th in Tulsa. Here's what we've got in store.

Thursday is check-in day at the Marriott Southern Hills. Then we'll board buses to Bob and Maggie Wagner's home where we'll have dinner and enjoy some local entertainment.

Friday, breakfast will be "on your own" followed by the business meeting and a luncheon. I'm working with the Army to have a U.S. Army Soldier come to speak to us.

Friday evening will be very special as we board buses and take a short drive to the Will Rogers Museum in Claremore, Oklahoma where we'll have a barbecue dinner and be entertained by the man himself.

Saturday breakfast and lunch will be "on your own". We've arranged for a guided tour of Tulsa which shouldn't take more than several hours. We'll have the bus take us somewhere with a variety of restaurants so everyone can choose where they'd like to have their lunch. If you prefer to hang out at the Marriott, Bob Thompson advises that the hotel bar may be nice place to hang out and watch a ballgame on Saturday afternoon.

Saturday night we'll have our banquet with a speaker and some authentic Oklahoma entertainment. I've been in contact with Michael Gonzalez, the curator of the 45th Infantry Museum in Oklahoma City about being our keynote speaker. He knows all about the Hammelburg Raid and in fact retraced it on a vacation when he was in the Army in Germany in the 1980's.

Sunday morning we'll have a breakfast followed by the memorial service and then it will be time to say our goodbyes for 2007.

Now onto the details...

We have 87 RSVP's so far which equates to a fee of \$150 per person. This covers the activities and meals listed above. Individuals will be responsible for their own respective hotel and travel costs.

At this time we are ready to begin collecting the Reunion Fees. My mother and Bob Thompson have set up a bank account for this year's reunion. SO, please make out your check to "2007 Oflag 64 Reunion" and please include a note including names of all of the people who will accompany you to the reunion. Send your checks and list of attendees to Bob Thompson at 7448 E. 68th Place, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74133.

These funds will be deposited in the reunion bank account under the watchful eye of Mr. Thompson. I think you'll agree, we're in good hands!

I look forward to seeing you all at the reunion!
All the best, Jay Wagner

2007 OFLAG 64 Reunion

October 11-14, 2007

Registration Fee: \$150 Per Person

Marriott Southern Hills Hotel

1902 East 71st

Tulsa OK 74136

To make your hotel reservations, please call:

866-242-5060

Room Rate: \$84 per night (incl. tax)

(Tell them you're with the Oflag 64 Reunion Group)

Thursday October 11, 2007:

2pm-4pm

Registration at Marriott Southern Hills

Hospitality Room Open All Day

4:45pm

Depart for Evening Event at Wagner Residence

5:15-8:30 pm

*Dinner and Entertainment
(Courtesy of The Wagner Family)*

8:30-9:00pm

Return to Marriott Southern Hills

Friday, October 12, 2007:

All Day

Hospitality Room Open

8:00am-9:00am

Breakfast in Hotel Ballroom

9:00am-11:00am

Business Meeting

11:00am-3:30pm

Free Time (Lunch on your own...)

3:30pm

Buses Depart for Will Rogers Museum

4:15pm--8:15pm

Dinner and Entertainment

8:15pm

Depart for Marriott Southern Hills

Saturday, October 13, 2007:

Until 9am Breakfast on your own...

*9am-1pm Tulsa Tour (Optional \$10 + lunch per person)**

All Day Hospitality Room Open

6pm-9pm Banquet and Entertainment

Sunday, October 14, 2007:

8am-9am Breakfast in Hotel Ballroom

9am-10am Memorial Service

10am Departures

** Not included in registration fee*

Reunion Registration Form

Name: _____

Guests: _____

IMPORTANT:

Please enclose your check for \$150.00 for each person attending made payable to "2007 OFLAG 64 Reunion" then mail to:

**Bob Thompson
7448 E. 68th Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74133**

A LITTLE COMPANY BUSINESS

“It’s Our Turn Now”

by

Patricia Di Francesco Bender

Once a year a group of people gathers in the Fall in various regions of the United States. They arrive from all over, often accompanied by loved ones who struggle with small children or older people in wheel chairs or walkers. They brave indirect flights, long lines at airports, and highway traffic. Some take several days to get to their destinations. Searching airline schedules, making connections, and finalizing reservations, these resourceful people look forward every year to this annual celebration. Who are these people and what are they celebrating, you might ask? They are the remaining members of Oflag 64 and the families who accompany them to their annual reunion.

When these men were younger, travel was easier. Terrorism had not yet immobilized our country, and the Kriegies were more agile, less dependent upon steel joints, heart medications, or ambulatory devices. Their voices were stronger and their memories more exact. They wrote books and treatises about their war experiences. Many are published authors. They communicated through their newsletter, *The Item*, published since 1942. At the reunions, they joked and lied and insulted each other once a year. They wondered what happened to old bunkmates, marching partners, and fellow escapees. They had no Internet to help them; only print directories and friends. They shared common experiences and helped each other with information about obtaining medals and health benefits.

The Kriegies who are still physically able to attend the Oflag 64 reunions are dwindling. In the last few years, family members outnumbered the Oflag men. Their children are beginning to retire, and grandchildren and great-grandchildren have begun to appear. Among the next generation, special friendships have emerged. Some Kriegy “children” attend each year; others only when they can take time off from work or from family obligations.

Until recently, the men of Oflag 64 have always planned the reunions. What will happen when they are no longer around? Will the special bonds that their children and grandchildren have forged die as well? Will the pride that we feel for these men be swept into the backburner of our memories? We should not let this happen. It is our responsibility to keep our fathers’ memories alive for future generations. Our fathers’ stories must continue to live on through us. It is our turn now. Let’s begin to take charge of the reunions and keep Oflag 64 alive.

* * * * *

In What Barracks Did You Reside?

On the next page of this issue you will find a layout of Barracks 8-A. It was put together by Tom Johnson, who resided there while in captivity. We would like to put together similar layouts of all other barracks where our Kriegies stayed. If you are an Oflag 64 ex-POW, using the layout for 8-A as an example, please let us know where you were located and who might have been there with you. If you are a child of a deceased Kriegy and know where your father was located, we would appreciate hearing from you. We need to know the barracks and cubicle numbers. Please send responses to Elodie Caldwell by email or US Mail at either of the addresses listed on the front of page of this ITEM. Thank you very much for your help.

Barracks 8-A Layout by Tom Johnson

| Cubicle 1 | Cubicle 3 | Cubicle 5 | Cubicle 7 | Cubicle 9 | Cubicle 11 | ADDITIONAL NAMES NO KNOWN BUNK |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Commander | Commander | Commander | Commander | Commander | Commander | |
| James "Joe" Larkin | Charlie M. Wilkinson | Ed B. Kitchens | Art E. Mallory | Jim Chynowski | ??? Carpenter | Jim Huggit |
| W. "SJim" Fulkerson | Lynn M. Hunsaker | Ray L. Marnien | Carl J. Kasper | Arthur "Red" LeSage | James "Tex" Granberry | Dick Ness |
| Pat W. Trainor | John C. Vargo | Charles F. Goodman | Mark W. Weber | Sol Levy | Ken T. Gingrich | Hugh J. Jones |
| | Bob M. Watt | Tom P. Johnson | John A. Raffetto | Bill C. Cool | John A. Stansell | Marc Jones |
| F. "Joe" Lohrengel | E. Jim Betts | George A. Cobb | Tony R. Libertore | Harry "Cajun" Picou | | Dan Lewandowski |
| Clarence R. Meltesen | Arnold P. Perkins | William Gerry Ullery | Pat A. Teel | Lloyd E. Taylor | | Ed A. Baker |
| John Kroll | Clarence H. Dutkowskij | Duane Smith | Pete N. Gatch | Rudy J. Malchiodi | | Leo K. Bustad |
| | Tony S. Sito | Steve Marczak | Peter "Doc" Graffagnino | | | Bob E. Davis |
| | | | | | | Zeke Davis |
| | | | | | | Al W. Bohny (Bonnie) |
| | | | | | | Norm L. Alloway |
| | | | | | | Nick Dimling |
| | | | | | | Eugene A. Castle |
| | | | | | | Bill Speas |
| | | | | | | Dave W. Clifton |
| | | | | | | Ralph R. Gann |
| | | | | | | Howard S. Wallis? |
| | | | | | | ?? Randall |
| | | | | | | Jerry M. Sage |
| STOVE | | | | | | |
| Cubicle 2 | Cubicle 4 | Cubicle 6 | Cubicle 8 | Barrack Command Cubicle | | |
| Commander | Commander | Commander | Commander | | | |
| Charles W. Kouns | ??? | ??? | ??? | | | |
| Jim J. Hannon | | Charlie L. Palumbo | Bing E. Evans | John W. Dobson | | |
| Edmn "Rosie" Rinehart | | John J. De Martino | Tom E. Miller | Bob W. Crandall | | |
| Herb Shouter | | William S. Crain | Jim R. Dew | Bill R. Bond | | |
| Basil Spaulding | | ?? Buchholtz | ?? Patterson | Robert S. Palmer | | |
| Bill Bixby | | | | | | |
| Jim Strachen | | | | | | |
| Ralph E. Niffenegger | | | | | | |

Names in maroon are probable names but not verified. If you can verify names and/or cubicles, please contact Elodie Caldwell at either address on the front page of this ITEM.



MAIL CALL



LTC JOHN ALBREE from Columbus NC sent a nice note and thanks for the Spring 2007 issue of the ITEM along with a contribution to the postage fund. Although not an Oflag 64 ex-POW, he has been a friend to our Kriegies for several years having had contacts with various members of the Waters' families and with John Creech. *Thanks for the donation to the postage fund and for your continued friendship and association with our Kriegies.*

BARBARA BICKERS from Prospect Hts. IL recently wrote: Greetings from Barbara Bickers, daughter of James Franklin Bickers. Dad and Mother, Emily, are well in Wilmette, entering their 66th year of marriage. I plan to submit an updated biography from Dad very soon, after he composes his letter. Good work on your ITEM newsletter! *Thanks, Barbara, for your kind words. We look forward to reading your Dad's updated biography. Keep in touch.*

JIM BICKERS and EMILY BICKERS from Wilmette IL recently sent a donation to the postage fund along with some of his thoughts about Oflag 64 as they relate to his life. They are included later in this ITEM. *Thanks, Jim and Emily, for your generous donation to the postage fund and also for the pictures that accompany Jim's thoughts. CONGRATULATIONS to you both on 66 years of marriage.*

JAMES BOND from Waco TX sent a nice note to Bob Thompson not long ago. He said Waco has had some rain recently and that he enjoys visiting with his sons and grandchildren when they're able to visit. Sons James H. Bond and Gary N. Bond and their families live out of state and are only able to visit at Thanksgiving. *Thanks, James, for your updates. We enjoy receiving news from our Kriegies. Note: It was erroneously reported in the Spring ITEM that James was deceased. We are happy to report that he is not. Please see the correction in the TAPS section of this ITEM.*

O. L. BRADFORD from Grove City OH recently sent a donation to the postage fund. In addition to his donation came the following note: "Sure was glad to get the "Item" last week. I saw the list of donors to the Postage Fund and realized I'd never contributed this year yet. I told myself that no one enjoys our reunions more than I do so I'd better get a little check in the mail before I forget again. And if it comes to a vote, I'll certainly vote to keep our group rolling as long as possible, particularly since you younger people can do all the work and we few remaining old folks can show up and tell our lies and stories to each other. Keep up the good work and I'll see you in Tulsa." *Thanks, Brad, for your generous contribution to the postage fund and for your nice note. We look forward to seeing you at the reunion in Tulsa.*

ROBERT "Cheerful Charlie" CHEATHAM from Asheboro NC sent a donation to the postage fund. *It's with much appreciation that we say "thank you for your generous donation". It's wonderful to see such great support of the postage fund.*

REID ELLSWORTH from Farmington UT sent a nice note and donation to the postage fund. *Thank you so much for your generous donation and for your faithful and continued support of the Oflag 64 organization. NOTE: Shortly after sending his donation, on May 23 Reid suffered a heart attack and has been in the hospital ever since but is hoping to return home within the month. The family would very much appreciate your thoughts and prayers on his behalf.*

WILLIAM (BILL) GRAY from Bradenton FL, after reading the Spring ITEM, wrote to let us know that he is still “alive and kicking”. *Note: It was erroneously reported in the Spring ITEM that Bill had also died. We were pleased to hear the good news that you are still with us, Bill. Please see the correction in the TAPS section of this ITEM.*

JONEL HILL from Pasadena CA sent a check to the postage fund. *We send our gratitude to you, Jonel, for your thoughtfulness and for your very generous contribution. It's the contributions of our members that help make mailing of the ITEM and other communications possible.*

NANCY LEAVITT from Gloucester MA sent a donation to the postage fund in memory of her cousin Irving Yarock, who was close to us all. *Thank you very much, Nancy, for your thoughtful contribution. We appreciate being able to stay connected to families of our deceased Kriegies. Irv was a good friend and is truly missed.*

MAUREEN LINKOVICH from Winstead CT sent a donation to the postage fund. She also wrote that she recently found our Oflag 64 website and stated: “My father was one of the men on the Raid. He was in the 10th and his name was Patrick Quinn. He has been deceased for 13 years. I am very much interested in keeping the memories of the men of the raid alive and would like to see the story of their efforts never lost.” *Thanks for writing, Maureen, and for sharing information about your father. And thanks for your postage fund donation. We hope you'll keep in touch.*

PAUL MARABLE from Waco TX sent compliments on the Spring ITEM and included a check for the postage fund. *Thank you very much, Paul, for the nice compliment and for your thoughtful contribution. We greatly appreciate your generosity.*

LYNNE MELTESEN, daughter of Clarence Meltesen wrote recently that the family has several copies of Clarence's last book ROADS TO LIBERATION and would like to see them in the hands of ex-POWs and their families. She will keep us posted on how distribution will take place. *Thanks, Lynne, for contacting us. We look forward to hearing from you again, hopefully also at the Reunion.*

BOB O'NEILL from Prescott AZ recently sent a nice note along with a donation to the postage fund. *Thanks, Bob, for your note and for your generous donation. We appreciate your patience and thoughtfulness and look forward to seeing you in Tulsa.*

RICHARD PARKER from Washington D. C. sent a donation to the postage fund recently. *Thanks, Richard, for your thoughtful and generous donation to the postage fund. We so much appreciate the support of our contributors.*

JOHN PAULL from Ridgecrest CA recently found our web site when he was looking for information on his uncle Julius Paull who passed away several years ago. He wrote: “Unfortunately my Uncle passed away and said very little about the POW camp. I do know he mentioned escaping twice and something about going to be shot if he attempted it again or for what he already tried. If there are certain things that are of interest to your records and site, please advise. I have no problem providing my Uncle J. Paull's background, history if you would like it and I do have most of his military records from the Army and notes. It would be a pleasure to be added to your e-mail list.” *Thanks, John, for your email. We're happy to welcome you to our Oflag 64 family and would love to have any information you'd like to share about your uncle.”*

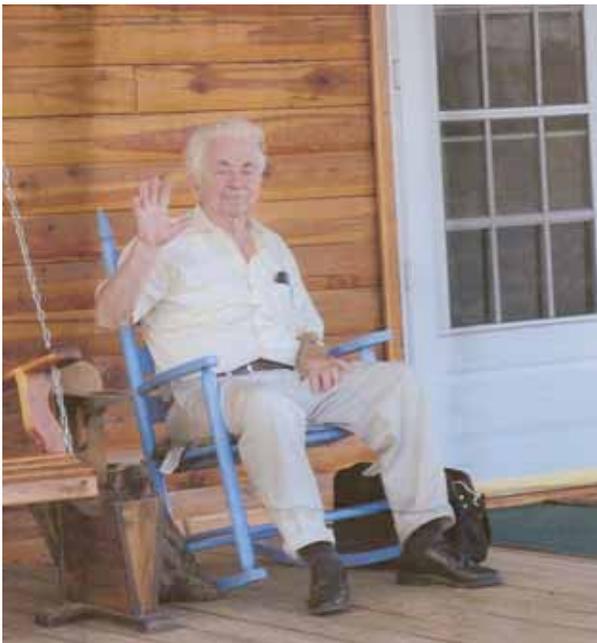
ROBERT RIVERS from Orcutt CA sent a contribution to the postage fund. *Thanks so much, Robert, for supporting the ITEM by your donation. We express much appreciation to you.*

WILBUR SHARPE from Bethesda MD sent a nice note recently with compliments on the Spring ITEM. He also sent information that Jim Bickers, who produced the drawing of Oflag 64 that we use on the ITEM, is still interested in receiving the ITEM. *Thanks, Wilbur, for your kind words. Thanks also for updating us on Jim Bickers whose name is still on our mailing list.*

MARGIE SLACK from Burke VA sent a nice note to Bob Thompson recently. She expressed regrets at not being able to attend the reunion in New Orleans but found it impossible due to circumstances beyond her control. Since then she has retired and is adjusting nicely to the newness of retirement. She says she could get quite used to this more relaxed pace. She also thanked Bob for his efforts over the years on The ITEM and said: “You did Dad proud!” *Thanks, Margie, for your nice note. We hope that retirement is agreeing with you and that we’ll see you at future reunions.*

DARWYN WALKER from Springfield MO sent a check to the postage fund. *Thank you very much, Darwyn, for supporting the ITEM through your generous contribution. We greatly appreciate your thoughtfulness.*

TERESA WHITE from Wichita Falls TX sent word as follows: “I was recently looking at your website. I knew my father, Ted L. White, was a POW during World War II. I have a photograph of him taken at Oflag 64 similar to the ones at the top of your webpage banner. I noticed he isn't listed in the taps section but I've seen copies of your newsletter among his belongings and found his information in your roster. He passed away in 1986 in Wichita Falls, TX.” *Thanks, Teresa, for the information on your father. We have added his name to our TAPS list. We hope you will keep in touch.*



ORPHA ZIEGLER from Dallas TX sent a contribution to the postage fund along with a nice note accompanied by this picture of him. He wrote: “In September of this year I will be 86 years old. I still live in the home I built in Dallas, Texas some 40 years ago, with my wife of 50 years, Iris Ziegler. Our four children are scatted all over, but our 3 cats stay pretty close to home. I’m lucky enough to be in pretty good health by taking on the task of felling a 40-year old tree in my yard, sawing the trunk into lengths of fireplace wood, and chipping the stump out with a double bit axe and electric drill. I may have proved my health but my neighbors questioned my sanity. In retrospect I can’t say I blame them. I have the pleasure of being a member of a WWII veteran’s group meeting once a month at the Veteran’s North Texas Health Center. I have heard many an interesting story about both the European and Pacific Theaters of the war. I’ve come to believe that my

time at Oflag 64 put me in position to watch history in the making. Furthermore, since I’m not a big fan of rice, I’m glad I ended up in Poland eating brat with the fellas at Oflag. My oldest daughter Deborah is writing a book entitled “Have I Told You Lately” about my life growing up in the Oklahoma oilfields, the dust bowl, and my time in the service. A sample of the book won the editor’s choice award at the San Diego Writers Conference in January of this year.” *Thanks so much, Orpha, for your donation to the postage fund. Thanks, also for catching us up on your news and that of your family. Congratulations to your daughter on receiving the writers’ award. We love hearing from our Kriegies. Please keep in touch.*



The National WWII Museum

3/20/2007

Robert Thompson
The Men of Oflag 64
7448 E. 68th Place
Tulsa, OK 74133

On behalf of The National World War II Museum Inc., I want to thank you for your recent contribution of documentary information. This Museum is designated by Congress as America's official World War II Museum. As such, it interprets the American Experience during the World War II years and celebrates the American Spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage and sacrifice of the men and women who won World War II and promotes the exploration and expression of these values by future generations.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact our Curatorial Department at (504) 527-6012, ext. 270 and our Registrar will be happy to assist you.

Your donation will be added to the growing collection of research material that is used by staff, visitors, and researchers alike to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the American Experience in one of the most critical periods in our nation's history. Specific items you have donated include:

- ***Spring 2007 edition of "The Oflag 64 Item" for addition to the Oflag 64 Collection***

Sincerely,

Samuel J. Wegner
Vice President & Chief Operating Officer

Always great to hear from you, Bob.

The War That Changed The World™

THOUGHTS

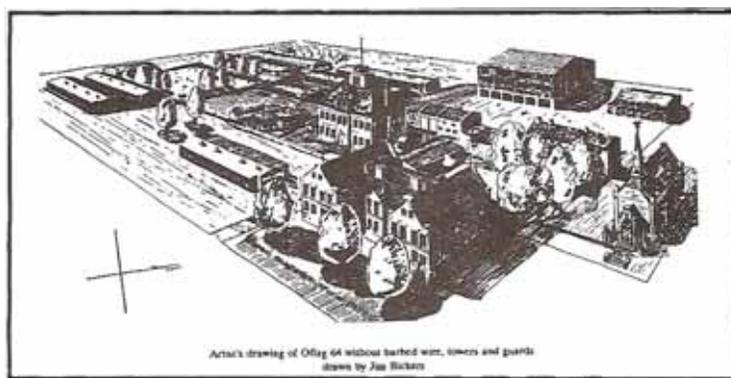
from
James F. Bickers, Jr.

Beginning February 14, to approximately February 16, 1943 one-hundred and fifty American officers, of which I was one, were captured by the Germans at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia. As the war continued, so did the capture of fellow officers. Most wound up in prison camp in Poland—Oflag 64. Eventually that camp had a population of 1500 officers, until war's end, when the camp was disbanded by the allies in 1945.

Camp life was recorded in many ways—some humorous, some sad, as the original Oflag 64 Item, and subsequent writings have revealed. The officers in Oflag 64 were all ground force personnel. The Germans also held thousands of Air Force officers, whose activities were documented, notably in the film “Stalag 17.”

Now, the average age of these officers is 80, and with that goes the sad observation we are winding down. Soon there will be no survivors of Oflag 64.

Thanks to the artistry, determination, technology, and love of our families today we have our legacies held sure with video documentaries and interviews, books, letters, artwork, photography and memories. One of my contributions to the reality of our lives as POW's was the aerial camp drawing. It is hard for me to believe that I drew the overview of Oflag 64 in September 1944, yet I am pleased it heads our newsletter to this day.



Emmy Lou and I continue to enjoy our lives in our Wilmette, Illinois home, and our 66 years of marriage!



Jim and Emmy Lou Bickers
Taken Christmas 2006

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

By

Reid F. Ellsworth

While talking with Doc Di Francesco and his girls at a reunion a few years back, this occurrence came up and Doc suggested that I send it in to be printed in the "Item".

A number of years ago, my wife and I were traveling from our Phoenix home to Utah to visit with a couple of daughters. On the way we stopped at a service station in Kingman, Arizona to refuel. While I ran the gas, my wife went into the service station. She stepped up to a washbasin to wash her hands. She noticed a young lady a little to her side and rear. She turned and motioned for the young lady to come forward and said "come on up and I'll move over, there is room for both of us." The young lady haltingly said "I do not understand." And my wife said "mi scusi". The young lady said "Parla Italiano" and my wife answered affirmatively and was asked how that could be. My wife informed her that we had lived in Rome for a couple of years as we represented our church there. They went on outside and were talking and the young lady's husband came out from the service station and joined them. He had paid for his gas just a few moments before I did the same, and then I joined with them outside. As we talked, they noticed that I spoke with a larger vocabulary and perhaps with a bit better grammar and asked how that was. I stated that I already spoke Spanish and that made Italian easier and besides that, I had spent some time in Italy during the war. They asked if I was a soldier and I told them no, that I had been a flier and had been shot down. They asked where that was, and I told them "near Pavia" in northern Italy. Milan was on the north side of the Po River and Pavia was on the south side.

They asked if I had been captured promptly after having had to parachute down and I answered them negatively. They then asked, what happened, to which I responded, "I walked". When asked where I walked, I told them that it was almost to Rome. (I spent 35

days walking for a total, mainly on mountain trails, of probably over 600 miles. They asked to where did I walk near Rome. I answered "Do you know where Rieti is?". Very surprised, one of them repeated "Ri ett i". It was obvious that they knew of that city. I went on and asked if by chance they knew where Rocca Sinibalda was. And with even more amazement, the husband responded "RO cca Sin ee bald a".

At this point I need to say that this village was a tiny village in the hill country, maybe 25 miles north of Rome. The village as such has probably 8 or 10 homes plus a relatively large government building. Other homes are scattered around through the hills with no two homes being closer together probably than a quarter mile.

I then asked the husband if by chance he was familiar with the family name Cenciotti. His jaw dropped and he said, "that's one of the best known names in the area" and added "When I was a little boy, we lived at Rocca Sinibalda for a time with my grandmother. She told us that during the war an American soldier lived for a time with the Cenciotti family." I pointed to my own chest and told them that it was I. I lived with the family for 5 weeks, making my evasion from capture 2 1/2 months.



Cenciotti Family and Ellsworths circa 1987 standing in front of a stone shed (arrow); capture site of Reid Ellsworth in January 1944

To complete the story, they asked if I had the addresses of the Cenciotti children, which I did, each of them having a residence in Rome proper. Two of the children also had new homes built on the family's hill property. They were able to visit with each member of the family after they returned to Rome. Probably neither of the two couples of us was at the station at Kingman more than 20 minutes. Had there been just a one-minute difference in timing, we undoubtedly would not have had this interesting encounter.

The [young Silvi couple] had just married a couple of years earlier and had wanted to visit the United States on their honeymoon, but didn't have adequate money. They worked and saved for a couple of years and made the belated honeymoon trip. They flew from Italy to the east coast, rented a car and drove to Niagara Falls, had probably made other tourist stops along the way, but had just been to the Grand Canyon before we met them. From there they went to Death Valley, California and on to Los Angeles and thence back to Rome.



Massimo and Loredana Silvi

I have had correspondence with "my Italian family" and subsequently this young couple. From 1943 until the present, with intervals, is quite a span of years for this connection to have been made.

THOUGHTS TO PONDER!!

In case we find ourselves starting to believe all the anti-American sentiment and negativity, we should remember the words of England's Prime Minister Tony Blair. In an address to British ambassadors in London, he said:

"First, we should remain the closest ally of the US, and as allies influence them to continue broadening their agenda. We are the ally of the US not because they are powerful, but because we share their values. I am not surprised by anti-Americanism; but it is a foolish indulgence. For all their faults, and all nations have them, the US are a force for good; they have liberal and democratic traditions of which any nation can be proud. I sometimes think it is a good rule of thumb to ask of a country: are people trying to get into it or out of it? It's not a bad guide to what sort of country it is."

* * * * *

An unknown author said:

"Only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you: Jesus Christ and the American G.I. The first died for your soul and the second for your freedom. May we never forget either."

* * * * *

"The United States is like a giant boiler. Once the fire is lighted under it, there is no limit to the power it can generate". ~ Winston Churchill

* * * * *

"The proper means of increasing the love we bear our native country is to reside some time in a foreign one." ~ William Shenstone

INFORMATION STATION

Mr. T. J. Bugg, son of Thomas (Tommy) J. Bugg, Jr. has recently been searching for Kriegies his dad knew from The Long March. In his search he found the following from the National Archives and Record Administration (NARA).

HOW TO REACH LIVING PERSONS

Two Federal agencies, the Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), may be able to help locate missing persons in the following manner: A letter to the missing person placed in a stamped, unaddressed, and unsealed envelope may e sent to either agency along with an explanatory cover letter. The agency will examine the letter and decide whether to forward it to the person.

1. The SSA has addresses for individuals who have received benefits in the past two years. In your cover letter, provide as much of the following information as possible: name, social security number, date and place of birth, mother's maiden name, and father's name. Address your communication to:

Social Security Administration
Letter Forwarding Unit
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, Maryland 21235

2. The VA has claims records for living and deceased veterans. If your forwarded letters re returned to the VA by the post office, you will notified by the VA. In your cover letter, provide as much of the following information as possible: claim or insurance number, social security number, service serial number, name, date of birth, branch and dates of service, and date of separation. Address your communication to:

VA Records Processing Center
P. O. Box 5020
St. Louis, Missouri 6315

3. The A also will forward mail to living military veterans for whom they have a current address. Mail should be addressed to the veteran (name, and if available, service number), care of Mr. Michael D. McIntyre, Veterans Administration (203CI), 810 Vermont Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20420, It is recommended to call the VA fi8rst to verify that the veteran is listed in their files. The telephone number is 1 (800) 827-1000.

How-to Books and Articles on Finding Living Persons

Gormley, Myra Vanderpool. "20th Century Military Records." Heritage Quest 10 (May-June 1987) 3-7.

Hinckley, Kathleen W. "Locating the living" Twentieth Century Research Methodology." National Genealogical Society Quarterly 77 (September 1989): 186-196.

Johnson, Richard S. How to Locate Anyone Who Is or Has Been in the Military, Fourth Edition. Fort Sam Houston, Texas: Military Information Enterprises, 1991.

Martin, Amy Suzanne. "Playing Detective: How Government Records and the Freedom of Information Act Can Help You Locate a Missing Person." Heritage Quest 7 (July-August 1991): 7-8.

* * * * *

Edwin "Jim" Betts

I have absolutely no idea who I am speaking to but it is with the deepest level of gratitude that I write to you today. By a very strange chain of events my family and my father have found the oflag64.org website as well as made contact with a former Army buddy. This all after the passing of 63 years we all stand in

amazement. I feel compelled to share with you what led us to this so here it is in a nutshell. First let me say we had previously made several attempts to connect our father with any of the events of his service in the Army but every avenue seemed to be a dead end.

My father Ret. US Army Major Edwin James Betts recently turned 90 years old. In attendance was a little old lady at our church who has been a family friend for quite some time. She has always been very active in the historical society. At the party we had some of the military memorabilia for my father on display and she was very intrigued by his story. She asked if she could do a story on his service in the local paper and he said yes. She had located your website and called me the other day to make sure I was aware of the upcoming OFLAG64 reunion to be held in Oklahoma. SHE was the one that led us to your website!! We were going through the website and were speechless when we ran across the June 1944 issue of "The Item" listing my fathers name and address as a current occupant!!! I had printed the current issue of "The Item" for him to take home and read and of course several of the issues when he was actually there. Later that evening my sister called to say that someone in the current issue was trying to locate our father!!! At this point I'm sure we were beyond speechless. We contacted TJ Bugg and found out his father and our father were part of a trio that traveled together on "the march" and if it hadn't been for each other they probably would have all died. He informed us how every hour they would rotate while sleeping trying their best to keep the one in the middle as warm as possible in the -30 degree weather. He also informed us that our father was the scavenger of the group and he was the one that found what food they could find to keep them alive.

So many pieces of this puzzle are falling into place. Our father has never really told us the actual story of any part of his battles or his imprisonment. It has always been the sanitized version. I remember once he told me while on their march they were going through a village. He felt a tap on his shoulder and a man from the village was motioning him to come in his home. He led him down the hall and he and probably

his daughter sat my father down and fed him a bowl of soup. He said he wished he could go back and thank them for that bowl of soup. When he told me this story I remember thinking to myself "big deal-a bowl of soup". Needless to say he had never mentioned that they were not being fed on a regular basis if at all while they were on the march. Somewhere when I later realized this I asked him what they ate. He told me they ate whatever they could find!!! Sometimes it would be carrots they would find in barns that were meant for the horses or potatoes that they would find left in the ground. I then realized that that simple bowl of soup was comparable to a kings buffet to him at that time!!

Mr. Bugg is currently in the hospital but TJ got them both on the phone and they were able to reunite. I am thoroughly convinced timing of their [reuniting] is definitely a "God thing"!!! You can only imagine how emotional this is for all of us. There are absolutely no words to adequately express our gratitude for the work that has been done on this website. Now with two families searching hopefully we can locate the other missing link Johnny Kozelski.

Thank you again for all the efforts that are so apparent in the Oflag64 website. You will never know how much it already means to our family!!! ~ Jeanie Cospers, daughter of Edwin J. Betts <jeaniecospers@southwestproperties.net>

And another...

Thomas (Tommy) J. Bugg, Jr.

How amazing are the stories!! Your group [deserves] a HUGE credit to what it does and how it reaches those in the past and yes..... let's not forget God's hand in this as we celebrate yet another VICTORY!

This morning June 4, 2007 my father, 2nd LT. Thomas (Tommy) J. Bugg, Jr. (now 87 years old and in the hospital this morning) spoke with Edwin J (Jim) Betts (now 90 years old) – Dad and he had not spoken in over 60 years and yet they and another buddy Johnny Kowosky (sp??) (whom I have not yet found) were in OFLAG 64 together – they were on that 350 march together sharing a blanket and sleeping 3 abreast and alternating the middle man every hour in order to

share body heat and not freeze in the -30 degree weather – they went to Ashville NC after returning home and then for 2 1/2 months were at Camp Walters in Texas together and have not spoken since then – over 60 years have passed by!

Thank you for what you do! And it is all because of yours and others efforts and with the help of today's technology, The Item and yes.....divine intervention!!!

I have attached the email from Mr. Bett's daughter for your records as well.

Thank you again!!

T. J. Bugg ~ PROUD SON of 2nd LT. Thomas (Tommy) J. Bugg, Jr. <tjbugg@centennialinc.com>

Leo W. Fisher

Thank you so much for your quick response. I would like to be included in the newsletter and deeply appreciate your willingness to do that. My Dad died in June of 1971. Like many veterans he did not talk about the war or his time as a POW very much. I have become very interested in that period of his life and am grateful for your help. I have already received some responses, including some pictures. So far I have not seen any with my father in them but the pictures are fascinating. It would be great if I could talk to someone who remembered him...perhaps that will happen... Thanks again for all of your help. P.S. My father was at Oflag 64 from March 1943 until Sept. 1944. ~ **Steve Fisher** <fisher@eastbroadtrustcompany.com>

Franklin T. Garrett

After some conversations today with my mother, Carolyn B. Garrett, about my father's combat in WWII, I learned that he jumped into Normandy and later into Holland, where he was eventually captured by the Germans. I understand that he escaped from imprisonment after the POWs were moved from Poland into Germany or, perhaps while they were being moved. My father is Franklin T. Garrett, Colonel, US Army (retired 1972) and he is listed in your roster. He seldom talked about his experiences as a prisoner of war, which is why I

am writing. My father died two years ago on January 24, 2005 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center after as a result of progressive heart disease and prolonged cortical dementia (not Alzheimer's, though). He served in the active Army for nearly 30 years, saw combat in Korea as Company commander of the Heavy Mortar company, 32d Infantry Regiment, taught at Ft. Benning, studied at Ft. Leavenworth, served at HQ USAEUR in Heidelberg, served as EX and Deputy Cmdr for the 507th Airborne Infantry at Ft. Bragg, served at the Pentagon (twice, the second time in the OJCS, after which he retired in 1972) served with the UN forces in Korea, was a commander of a training brigade at Ft. Polk. I understand that he also saw brief duty in Vietnam as a senior advisor.

I am sure there is much more that you might wish to know about him. I regret that I only found your web site recently and only after his death. If you would care to know more, please contact me and I will forward your request to my mother. I am sure she would be willing to share what she recalls with you.

I realize that at this point there may be few survivors of Oflag 64 still alive. If there are, I hope this information will be interesting to them. ~ **Bob Garrett** <robtgarrett@cox.net>

And another...

Thank you for your very nice e-mail. I've enjoyed exploring your site and I will share what I found there with my mother.

I hope that I will have items that may be of interest. My mother and I recently transcribed a letter written to my father in September 1945 by a young Netherlander, C.L.J. "Kees" Vink, who had been a member of the underground and had tried to help my father escape from behind enemy lines. My father had been sent by his commander to locate a British unit that had missed rendezvous with the US forces. As it happened the unit had, quite literally, "stopped for a spot of tea." While trying to return to his unit, my father and the Jeep driver encountered a German patrol. The driver was killed and my father was wounded but managed to elude capture. A Dutch farmer assisted him and alerted the underground. The letter from Vink recounts

what happened afterward. After his capture, my father was briefly in a German hospital to be treated for his wounds and then shipped to Oflag 64.

The closing of Vink's letter mentions escape by walking away from the POW camp. I am hopeful of finding something conveying that information. ~ Bob Garrett

For all former POWs of OFLAG 64

If you are NOT presently receiving 100% service-connected benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs and would like to file a claim for increased benefits, please write to me at the address below. This benefit applies not only to veterans, but also to widows. Be sure to include your VA claim number and last letter you received from the VA on your claim.

I will be at the Reunion in Tulsa and will have information and packets to share at that time. If you are unable to attend the reunion, please contact me at the address or phone number that follows.

Mr. Alan Dunbar, 4675 Green Canyon Drive, Las Vegas NV 89103-4386, Phone: 702-871-5046

ITEM COMMENTS

Let us know how we are doing. Constructive comments and criticisms are welcomed and appreciated. Here are some nice comments from some nice folks.

Great job with the new ITEM! ~ *Pat Bender*

Good work on your ITEM newsletter! ~ *Barbara Bickers*

We have just received your publication of the Oflag ITEM, and I have read every word of it--- with deep and genuine interest and we truly salute you for your new assignment!!! ~ *Roy and Helen Chappell*

I enjoy getting and reading the ITEM ~ *Bill Gray*

Thanks for a very informative edition of the ITEM! Great job! ~ *Sharon Hutchison*

You are doing a great job as Editor of the Post Oflag 64 Item! ~ *Paul Marable*

You are doing a great job as Editor of the ITEM. ~ *Bob O'Neill*

You are doing an excellent job. ~ *Ted Roggen*

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the superb Post Oflag ITEM you have produced. It is informative, well-organized, professional, and interesting to read. ~ *Wilbur Sharpe*

OFLAG 64 WEB CONNECTION

Your group [deserves] HUGE credit for what it does and how it reaches those in the past. ~ *T. J. Bugg*

Thank you again for all the efforts that are so apparent in the Oflag64 website. ~ *Jeanie Cosper*

I've enjoyed exploring your site and I will share what I found there with my mother. ~ *Bob Garrett*

Thank you for this outstanding forum for our news about Oflag 64. ~ *Jimmie and Lynn Kanaya*

It's a wonderful thing that you are doing. ~ *Maureen Linkovich*

Great job on your web site. ~ *Pat Waters*

New visitors to our website:

Edwin "Jim" Betts- Oflag 64 Kriegy

Barbara Bickers--daughter of Jim Bickers

Jeanie Cosper--daughter of Edwin (Jim) Betts

Steve Fisher--son of Leo Fisher

Ed Graf--Oflag 64 Kriegy

Bill Gray--Oflag 64 Kriegy

Maureen Linkovich--daughter of Patrick Quinn

Lynne Meltesen--daughter of Clarence Meltesen

John Paull--nephew of Julius Paull

John R. Shoaf--son of James Shoaf

Vern Siebert--Oflag 64 Kriegy

Anne Trujillo--daughter of Clarence Meltesen

Janice Turner

Teresa White--daughter of Ted White

Matt C. Zubin

PUBLICATIONS

The following publications might be of interest to you. Many of them were written by our men. Your local library is a good place to check for availability. If you can't find what you're looking for there, check Amazon.com or write to the author or publisher.

1. **Diary of A Kriegie** by Ed Beattie. Diary of Ed Beattie, A UPI Correspondent captured near the Moselle River in Sept '44. Publisher: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York NY
2. **Escape to Russia** by Howard "BOOMER" Holder. Story of Boomer Holder as he went across Russia in 1945. Publisher: Iberian Publishing Co., Athens GA
3. **Home Was Never Like This.** Diary of Col Yardley. Publisher: Yardley Enterprises. Evergreen, CO.
4. **In the Presence of Mine Enemies** by Eugene L Daniel, Contact Rose Daniel at 5100 Sharon Road #603, Charlotte NC 28210-4720.
5. **Justifiable Pride** by William D. Stevens, Jamal Books, 2340 Devoe Drive, Lincoln NE 68506, 402-488-6005.
6. **Katyn Forest Video** (Beta or VHS). Ray Towers, Jr., 25105 Vista Greens Court, Hayward CA 94541, 415-582-4871
7. **Kriegie** by Kenneth Simmons. Diary of an Air Force Pilot. Publisher: Thomas Nelson and Sons. New York NY.
8. **Kriegsgefangenen** (Prisoner of War) by Clarence Ferguson. Publisher: Texan Press, Waco TX
9. **OFLAG 64, 50th Anniversary Book.** Anniversary Committee. Publisher: Evanston Publishing Co., Evanston IL.
10. **Passages to Freedom**, Joseph Frelinghuysen, 1990, Publisher: Sunflower University Press, 1531 Yuma (Box 1009), Manhattan KS 66502-4228, 800-258-1232 (\$17.95, includes S & H)
11. **Raid.** The story of the Task Force Baum raid on the Hammelburg POW Camp. Publisher: Dell Publishing Co. (A few copies are available at \$8 each through our organization. Please make checks payable to the Oflag 64 Postage Fund c/o Elodie Caldwell.)
12. **Roads to Liberation from Oflag 64** by Clarence Meltesen. Story of Liberation from Oflag 64. Publisher: Oflag 64 Press. San Francisco, CA (\$25.00)
13. **A Ramble Through My War** by Charles T. Marshall, Publisher: Louisiana State University Press, 1999. (\$29.95)
14. **The Escape Factory** by Lloyd Shoemaker. Story of a secret organization in Wash DC that maintained contact with all POWs in WWII. St Martins Press. New York NY

15. **The Water and The Rock** by Charles Jones. Diary of a man captured in Africa. Publisher: Anchor Publishing Co., Northwood, IA
16. **The Welcome Swede** by Frank Diggs. Publisher: Vantage Press, New York, NY (\$11.00)
17. **33 Months as a POW in Stalag Luft III** by Albert P. Clark. Publisher: Fulcrum Publishing, 16100 Table Mountain Parkway, Suite 300, Golden CO 80403, 800-992-2908 (17.95 pb)

Other Publications

The following are available through the Oflag 64 organization. (Please make your check payable to Oflag 64 Postage Fund and mail it to Joe Seringer.)

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------|
| Oflag 64 Audio CD | 5.00 |
| The Oflag 64 Directory | 3.00 |
| Original Roster-Oflag 64 | 10.00 |
| The Men of Oflag 64 | 20.00 |
| My Tour of Russia | 5.00 |
| Tribute to TF Baum | 15.00 |
| Hammelburg Roster | 7.50 |
| The Waters Story | 19.50 |

Write directly to the following contacts for these publications.

Press Releases by Ted Roggen, 101 Westcott, Houston TX 77007 (\$10.95)

Vic Kanners Diary. Contact Dave Kanners, 5479 Sandy Lane, Columbiaville MI 48421, 810-793-2719 (FREE)

Americans Behind the Barbed Wire by Frank Diggs, Story of Frank's trip across Russia in 1945. Publisher: Vandemere Press, P. O. Box 5243, Clearwater FL 22205 (New price is \$22.00 and includes Shipping and Handling.)

Readers' Digest Publication: "Memories of WWII" (Possibly available at Tulsa Reunion)

Roads to Liberation: Clarence R. Meltesen (Hopefully available at Tulsa Reunion)

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THANKS to all who have generously donated to the postage fund. Without such thoughtful contributions, mailing the ITEM and other materials or information would not be possible. If you would like to help, please make your check payable to Oflag 64 Postage Fund and mail your donation to:

Joe Seringer
 1930 Edwards
 Wooster OH 44691

or to

Elodie Caldwell
 2731 Terry Avenue
 Longview WA 98632



TAPS

“Rumors of my death have been greatly exaggerated”. ~ Mark Twain

CORRECTIONS

In the Spring 2007 issue of the ITEM, it was erroneously reported in the TAPS section that **WILLIAM R. GRAY** had passed away. Bill recently wrote that he is “alive and kicking” and living part of the year in Florida and part of the year in New Jersey. We are pleased to know that he is still among the living and apologize to him and his family for the misinformation.

Apologies are also extended to **JAMES B. BOND** and his family for the erroneous report of his death. Gary Bond, son of James, wrote: “I believe that my father, James Boyd Bond, was also reported in error as being deceased.” We are pleased to hear the good news and appreciate the update.

NOTE: IF YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHERS WHO WERE LISTED INCORRECTLY IN THE SPRING 2007 ITEM, PLEASE SEND WORD TO ELODIE CALDWELL AT EITHER ADDRESS ON THE FRONT PAGE OF THIS ISSUE.



PAUL S. HALL ~ We have recently received word of the death of Paul S. Hall and express sympathies to his family and friends at their loss. We know he will be missed. We will add him to our TAPS list on line.

*Dear Mr. Thompson,
I would appreciate your having Paul S. Hall's name removed from the mailing list of Oflag 64. He died in December 2006 after a long illness. Thank you.
Dorothy Hall*

LEO W. FISHER ~ Every so often we receive word that one of our Kriegies passed away in years past. Mr. Fisher passed away in 1971 and will be added to the TAPS list on line.

JULIUS J. PAULL ~ Mr. Paull, another former Kriegy passed away in 1989 and will also be added to the TAPS list on line.

* * * * *

Do You Know These Men?

I have long had questions regarding the true identity of two officers at the Oflag.

Question 1: Who was the chaplain from an Airborne regiment who called himself "The Original Jumping Jesus" and used to put cigar ash in his food because it gave him needed minerals? He was in barracks 6A or B.

Question 2: Who was the young lieutenant who was called Sidi Bou, because he wanted always to talk about the battle of Sidi Bou Zid in Tunisia? (Named for the nearby tomb of a Muslim holy man whose name meant roughly "Father of Increase.")

(Richard B. Parker, 3317 P St. NW, Washington, DC 20007, tel. 202-342-6543)