

POST OFLAG 64 ITEM

SEPTEMBER 1986 Vol. XXII #3

FOREST ACRES, SC This was a great surprise to hear from William "Bill" Shular.

Real nice, Bill, and thanks much for the contribution for the Postage Fund.

Then in addition to that you sent in a new name to add to our list which I will gladly do and hope you can persuade him to come to Orlando also.

You are right on my identity. I was the Mess Officer at 64 from Sept. 1944 to all the way to Moosburg where I was in charge of the American Kitchen. That was a lot of mouths to feed!

One of the most heart-rending things I had to do was to take a whole refrigerated trailer load of steaks, dice them up and put them into the soups and stews that we made. There was no way to cook them properly for 35,000+ men.

See you in Orlando--

LEXINGTON, SC Welcome indeed to:

John C. Culler

124 Autumn Lane

Lexington, SC 29072

Hope to see you in Orlando. You should have received the reservation blank in the previous newsletter.

ENGLAND, AR How nice to hear from Cotton Country. Billy Bingham sent me a very informative note, good news and bad news.

Shorty Shinn called him to say that Jim Barnes had passed away and I will try to get more information about Jim to you in the next ITEM.

Billy, I'm sorry I have no information on Bob Hutcheson but any information you can send will be much appreciated by all.

I'm glad to hear you're going to try to get to Orlando. Looking forward to seeing you and I'm sure the Lord will bless you with a good harvest even in your absence. Incidentally, I do appreciate your major problem.

I have been to Burke, VA as mentioned by Gen. Waters. My daughter Marjorie resides there. I have on occasion also been to Washington and Potomac, MD, as they are both nearby.

Thanks much for your letter and looking forward to seeing you in Orlando.

PINEHURST, NC Early in July I received a nice contribution from Doc Herb Garris and then at the end of August another letter with a full-page clipping from the September 1 issue of Army Times which I have reproduced with this newsletter. Hope those that do not get the Army Times enjoy it. Thanks, Doc, for this clipping.

It was good to have a mini-reunion after your regular Battalion one in June. You must have had a great time.

Sorry, Herb, there are quite a few Slacks in the area but not from our branch of the family. I'll have to remember to drive by and see "The Stables."

I just checked my mailing list but do not have anyone by the name of Clorenson Brawn.

Oddly enough, I have no Browns on my list.

Thanks for Carl Bedient's name. As I recall, he used to be on the list but he must have moved and we lost him in the shuffle.

In any event, welcome Carl, and you will be receiving mailings from now on.

Thanks for Manny Arnold of Wichita, KS. Welcome back to the group, Manny.

I also had occasion to contact Bill Paty but didn't find him at home.

Thanks much for the kudos and your contribution. Sorry we won't see you in Orlando. Don't schedule any classes for the next one.

DES MOINES, IA What a nice report from the retired Adjutant of the Iowa National Guard. Your corn in Iowa must grow as well as here in the East because I've always heard the expression about corn as being a good growth if it is "knee high by the 4th of July". Of course the correspondent here is Verris Hubbell. Now Verris in his letter makes a comment on all of the 64ers in Iowa.

The Hubbells and the Wilcoxes met for a weekend of horse racing which must have been a "losing" fun time. The Wilcoxes and Hubbells are planning to be in Orlando.

Thanks for mentioning Bob Eckman. I don't know how his name ever was dropped from our mailing list. Thanks to you it is back on the list now and we'll make sure it stays there.

How nice to hear about Ed Moschel, whose health though still not up to snuff, is still much interested in our activities and sorry he

his 1935 class reunion will be of interest.
Mrs. Consuelo Z. Alger may be reached at
283 Makaweli Place, Honolulu, HI 96825.

Thanks, Jim for the great job and follow-
through on this most unusual and very unex-
pected demise of "Gentleman Jim" from our ranks.

UPPER ARLINGTON, OH J. Tuck Brown writes on
his rejoining our mailing list that he was
captured at Alta Villa near Salerno. In '64 he
was master of DIRT DISPOSAL and spent many a
night in the attics of the barracks moving the
Red Cross boxes full of dirt. After leaving
'64 he wound up at Lukenwalde. Bunked at '64
with Cundiff, Truett, Don May, Charlie Brocker,
and Phil ??.

Sorry we won't see you in Orlando but hope
you can make the next one. Thanks also for the
nice contribution.

FREDERICKSBURG, TX Thanks for sending Pat
Carlson's address. His name is now on our
mailing list and a BIG welcome to him. Maybe
he can make Orlando!

ASHEBORO, NC Sure was an extra nice contri-
bution to the Postage Fund and much appreciated.
Bob Cheatem, you'll interested to know that I
forwarded our family tree to Marilyn Holmes but
she replied that she is still looking. There
was no connection between the two families.
Look forward to seeing you in Orlando.

WAQUOIT, MA It will be nice to see you again.
Thanks for your real nice contribution. Sorry
to hear about your vascular surgery and will
hope it doesn't keep you from Orlando.

Glad to learn that Jim Bickers and Emmy-Lou
will be in Orlando. I am getting a lot of
affirmative answers here and it should be a
great reunion.

Cal Van Vliet has been in touch with a person
who is planning to show a videotape at the
reunion. Bring yours anyway on the Katyn
Forest incident. See you there!

LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU.

PROVIDENCE, RI We now have two (2) members on
our list from Rhode Island, Hyman E. Goodman
and Walter Heisler from Wakefield.

Hyman, you wrote to the right place regarding
your comments on the book entitled Raid. At
our reunion in Philadelphia at the Marriott
Hotel, two of the authors attended. Many
questions were asked by Richard Baron and Abe
Baum to not only try to get the facts correct
for the book, but also to confirm or change
their own recollection of events.

I am not familiar with the book on Gen.
Patton by Ladis Las Farago.

The picture of Oflag 64 is a projection by
Jim Bickers as if it were taken from the air.
It was drawn in the Oflag by Jim after
tediously making detailed, exact measurements
with limited equipment, if any.

For your information, my name is John F.
Slack and I have been putting out the POST
OFLAG 64 ITEM for better or worse since our
reunion in Omaha in 1962. Any other questions
or information you would like to share with the
rest of us (some 375 strong), please write and
I'll do what I can. Thanks for your letter.
Can we look forward to meeting you in Orlando?

WINSTON-SALEM, NC Recently added to our list,
James T. Godfrey, M.D. Thanks much for your
kudos and your contribuon. You also made a
contribution as a medical officer to all of us
at '64 as well as at "Wollstein". Thanks much
to you as well as all medical officers.

The enclosed "sophomoric piece" by Dr.
Godfrey was written by him, on July 4, 1943,
after a memorial service on that date in the
chapel at Oflag 64. I thought is was more than
a sophomoric effort. Thanks, Doc, for sharing
it with us.

SAN ANTONIO, TX If any of you fellows have any
photographs, drawings or any information on
Stalag IIIA, Luckenwalde, please share it with

"Chum" Williamson
12653 King Oaks
San Antonio, TX 78233

He is writing about kriegie life of the 36th

enjoyed it, Jack. Looking forward to seeing you in Orlando.

POSTVILLE, IA Nice short note from Marv Chevalier. Thanks, Marv, not only for the nice contribution but also for Henry Schulte's new address, as well as your slight address change. Would love to chat with you again. It's been a long time since Des Moines.

COLWYN, PA Harry's request for the Logistics article should have been received by now. Harry Albertson will join us at our next reunion. It's always the same second weekend in October so don't make any plans for that weekend.

See you soon.

KENNEBUNK, ME How nice of Vic Danylik to send me his new address. Retired from U.S. Army Research and Development and moved from Dover, NJ to Maine. A nice place to which to retire. Thanks also, Vic, for the generous donation to the Postage Fund. Glad to have you back on the list again.

RIDGE, NY Great to hear from Gardner Simes that he and Frank Smith have gotten together and will be sharing a cabin on the cruise after the reunion. He will also be at the reunion. Great!

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN -- KITTELY POINT, ME On a trip to Denver to be present at the official presentation of his many P.O.W. documents to the Air Force Academy, on July 2-3, 1986. See enclosed copy of photos and news items about Henry Söderberg.

ALTAMO, KS Thanks to Bill Schular, a warm welcome to Norman J. Alloway whose name is being added to the list as of this mailing. Norman also sent me the address of Frank Bucholz who lives in Queens, NY. Norman said he has retired from farming and is now enjoying his large family of kids and grandchildren. Great! It's not too late to make the Orlando reunion. Hope you can make it. Nice to have you, Norm, hope to meet you in Orlando. Thanks also for your contribution.

This was done on purpose because some out there were missing the mailing, and I thought the list of "D" were the ones that were not included. Thanks for advising me, Jim.

Thanks for the check for the Postage Fund and article. It all helps.

Nice representation at the National Reunion of Oflag 64. Look forward to meeting and seeing you

ALEXANDRIA, VA How nice to hear from Jerry Moher. Not only nice but he sent me a picture of yours truly ordering his dinner at Las Vegas. I didn't realize what a nice looking waitress we had. It will be good to see you, Jerry, in Orlando, and Jenny. Thanks also not only for the contribution to the Postage Fund but for the new names and addresses to be added to the list.

It will be great to see you, Jerry.

CINCINNATI, OH Well, David, we were sorry to hear about your wife's ticker problem and we hope that by next month she will be well enough to make the trip to Orlando.

In any event we know you'll be there in spirit and right now I'll tell Col. Van Vliet, Arnold Roberts and Jerome "Horrible" Hatch that David McConnaughey was looking forward to seeing them.

I'm sure it would be a real treat to all of you if you can possibly do it in person.

Hope your wife is much improved. God Bless.

MIDLAND, TX Dr. Walter Parks writes that he hasn't recognized many names from the newsletters except the late Amon Carter and Craig Campbell.

I tried to contact Palliconi many years ago in Chicago but was never able to pick the right one. He roomed with me in the White House for a short time so I knew him quite well.

As to recognition, we have over the years been a very independent outfit and have not sought any kind of recognition except among ourselves.

There has been a little delay in shipping the articles you requested to you. I hope to get them off to you shortly. Sorry about that.

BELLROSE VILLAGE, NY A very nice letter from Lorraine Glendinning indicating her desire to come to our reunion in Orlando. I'm sure she will prove to be a very interesting guest. Welcome, Lorraine.

CUPERTINO, CA Lillian and John Cannon writing to say they will be with us in Orlando. Great! Thanks for the addition to the Postage Fund. Appreciate it very much. See you in Orlando.

BALBOA, CA Great to write about two Californians successively. Bill Swanson notes that he won't be at Orlando but he'll try to make next year. Did we miss you at Las Vegas, too, Bill? Glad you're able to keep up-to-date on things with lunches, etc., with Jim Fraser. Take care of him, he's my old roommate in 64. Thanks much for the check for the Postage Fund.

WINSTON-SALEM, NC Here's a SPECIAL INVITATION from "Doc" Jame Godfrey. He writes: If 5 or 6 of you Kriegies have already been to Sea World or have no desire to go, join "Doc" in his room for some "one dollar bet" draw and stud from noon to 5:00 PM. He hasn't played in 25 years (so bring the written rules: Ed. note). Leave word in his room box at the desk if you can join him.
Thanks and hope you all enjoy it.

MERRVILLE, TX Received the summer edition of the Stalagluft III "Klarion". Nina and Bob Weinberg who help keep this group going are moving to Texas; see address under "Change of Address".

EAST LIVERPOOL, OH Thanks for your brief note and contribution to the Postage Fund, Curtis Jones.

Did you recall that you and your wife had dinner at the same table as Fred Livingston and myself and our wives? There were two others whom I do not recognize. One of them may have been Alan Dunbar. Anyway, I'll bring the snapshot to Orlando and maybe we can figure it out. See you in Orlando.

COLUMBUS, OH Stanley Stetson sent me his new street address, still in Columbus. I was sure hoping to see you in Orlando. It's been a long time, Stanley, so let's make sure you mark the date on your calendar next year and the year after.

Thanks much for your new address and your contribution to the postage fund.

Feel free to have your brother join us for at least the Saturday evening affair. Just make sure Dick Meskill knows about it. He is our General Chairman.

If any of you have not read In the Presence of Mine Enemies by Rev. Daniel, he plans to have some books available for purchase.

Thanks much for your contribution to the Postage Fund, and Orlando, here we come.

HUNT VALLEY, MD What an informative, nice letter from Hank Ackerman.

Thanks for sending me George Herr's name. His reservation form is going out today which is Labor Day. I tried to call him but was not successful in reaching him.

Welcome, George Herr from Lancaster, PA. Jerry Sage and Ted Ellsworth will both be enthused to see you. I expect both of them to be in Orlando.

I am going to mail this letter to all of the names you sent me and let you know in Orlando how many we get back. Thanks for this list of 20 Kriegies.

I do not recall the main building of this estate. Was Weigheim Poland in the town of Exin?

I have also added Harvey Todd's name to the list.

Your mailing address has been updated. Thanks much for all your help. Looking forward to seeing you in Orlando.

Hank, I have a Robert L. Krower at RD #1, Old Plank Rd., Venango, PA 16440, and LT Douglas J. Cole, 126 Jamesville Ave. Q-5, Syracuse, NY 13210.

LANCASTER, PA Welcome again to George Herr who was in barracks 3-B with Max Gooler and Jerry Sage. I am sending you a reservation form for the reunion and will be looking forward to meeting you. Your name is on our mailing list.

POTOMAC, MD Just a short note from Gen. Waters saying he would be attending his 55th reunion at West Point. He later reported that about 50% of the class attended. Congratulations.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA Thank you very much, Clarence Meltesen, for your contribution to the Postage Fund. Clarence writes that he completed a pet project that is "Route of the

GLADWYNE, PA POTPOURRI: PLEASE MAKE A SPECIAL NOTE TO SEND ME A CHANGE OF ADDRESS, WHEN AND IF YOU MOVE.

"Need New Address" means mail has been returned as "undeliverable". Your help is indeed needed to reduce this list.

ORLANDO NOTES:

1. Recreational vehicles have a place to stay about four miles from the Marriott.
2. Movie to be shown on "Katyn Massacre" at two different times at Orlando. Should be very interesting. Maybe all your questions will be answered.
3. Chairman Richard Meskill doesn't want you to keep him awake at night but in case you have questions his phone number is 1-904-255-2914, after September 14, 1986

That's all this time.

SEND IN YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!

This will be the last mailing before we get to Orlando. Look forward to seeing you all in Orlando.
John F. Slack
Editor

NEED NEW ADDRESS

Patrick Trainor
312 Sherman Ave.
Ordway, CO 81063

Tom McHale
13612 Midway Ste 520
Dallas, TX 75240

Joseph R. Green
2406 S. Kapoo
Springfield, MI 65804

James M. Gillersie
Wilmatic, CT 06226

Lt. Robert J. Miller
4051 S. Normandie
Los Angeles, CA

Lt. Edward Baker
549 Hellman St.
Philadelphia, PA

"Pop" Phill Foster
Penn State

Thomas Rush

Lt. Edward B. Haney

Walter L. Gill
115 S. Main
Roswell, NM 88201

Sy Bluhm
100 Court St.
Plymouth, MA 07360

NEW ADDITIONS

Manny Arnold

Carl Bedient

John C. Culler
124 Autumn La.
Lexington, SC 29072

E. W. (Pat) Carlson
RT 3, Box 840
Bandera, TX 78003

Norman K. Alloway
RR
Altamont, KS 67330

Frank J. Bucholz
6644 74th St.
Queens, NY 11379

James Cooney
166 Englar Dr.
Sebastian, FL 32958

Dallas Smith
1008 Paradise Dr.
N. Pt. Richey, FL 33552

Paul C. Miller
3800 Great Neck Ct.
Westgate
Alexandria, VA 22309

George L. Herr
1340 Hunter Dr.
Lancaster, PA 17601

Harvey A. Todd
1057 South 21st St.
Decatur, IL 62525

Doc Herb Garris: Please send address of Manny Arnold and Carl Bedient. I have one address but do not know who it belongs to. Thanks--
Editor

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Weldon L. Plants
6236 Virgin City La.
Amlin, OH 43002
Phone 614-876-8966

Henry G. Schulte
3614 42nd Ave. NE
Seattle, WA 98105

Victor Danylik
16 Longwood Dr.
Kennebunk, ME 04043

Nina and Bob Weinberg
2229 Rock Creek Dr.
Kerrville, TX 78028

Stanley Stetson
5290 Woodrun Blvd.
Columbus, OH 43220

Lt. Col. H. P. Ackerman
(USA Ret.)
1001 Western Run Rd.
Hunt Valley, MD 21030



U.S. Air Force photo by Bill Madsen

Henry Soderberg, third from left, presents some of his collection of documents on World War II to Duane Reed, second from left, and Donald J. Barrett, right, of the Cadet Library. At left is retired Air Force Lt. Gen. A.P. Clark, former Academy superintendent.

Library receives valuable documentation of World War II

By Duane Reed
Academy archivist

A collection of documents about prisoners of war during World War II has been presented to the Cadet Library. Henry Soderberg, a Y.M.C.A. representative to allied POW camps in Nazi Germany during World War II, gathered the materials during his service in the war.

The collection of photographs, diaries, manuscripts and official reports and documents depict Mr. Soderberg's support of the Y.M.C.A.'s mission to provide humanitarian aid to both allied and German POWs during and immediately following the war.

Among the POW camps routinely visited by Mr.

Soderberg was Stalag Luft III, the allied camp made famous by the book and movie, "The Great Escape."

The Cadet Library contains a substantial collection of unique materials donated by retired Air Force Lt. Gen. A.P. Clark, former Academy superintendent, and other POWs, and has been designated as the official repository for records gathered by the Stalag Luft III Historical Association.

Mr. Soderberg's collection will be housed within the Special Collections Branch of the library, and will be made available to cadets and historians researching the history of the POW experience during World War II.

James T. Godfrey, M.D.

July 4, 1943

Silent in a chapel one moment we stood
The trumpet spoke your benediction
Across this alien land
And in the soul of every man
Came whispers from his God.

Briefly you lived, violently died ...
You would not have us mourn for that
But in some heart fire-bright your love
Will live, a changeless thing.

We hallow those who sought our sacred soil
Strange centuries ago
The gentle iron men shaying Truth
To 2 nations' fundament

They who perished with the young of
AT frozen valley Forge or lured by
her childbirth
or healing with their blood at Gettysburg
The nigh-mortal wound of brotherhood.

Or dying without doubt of Chateaufort
When the dark fist of despotic
Thierry
was raised against the world ...
For ignominy and injustice are

And with impunity no earthly power
Which bears repellent to the blood
And with impunity no earthly power
shall crucify our creed ...

We hallow those who make our
Who fail us not in whatever
Final terrible tempestuous hour -
heritage more noble
if America

No less are you heroic now
Who quietly sleep in Africa!

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES DYCE ALGER

James Dyce Alger was born in Brockton, Massachusetts, 25 March 1912. His early education was obtained in schools in Bridgewater, Massachusetts, and he was graduated from Gould Academy, Bethel, Maine, in 1930 and the Swavely School, Manassas, Virginia, in 1931 before entering the United States Military Academy. He was graduated from the Military Academy in 1935 and commissioned a second Lieutenant of Cavalry.

Prior to World War II, General Alger served with the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Bliss, Texas, with the 26th Cavalry Regiment (Philippine Scouts) at Fort Stotsenburg in the Philippines, and with the 1st Armored Division at Fort Knox, Kentucky.

In 1942 he commanded the 2d Battalion of the 1st Armored Regiment, 1st Armored Division, which in that year moved overseas to Northern Ireland, England and into combat in World War II in North Africa.

On return to the United States in May 1945, he attended the Command and General Staff College. This course was followed by assignments as a regimental commander in the Armored Training Center at Fort Knox; as U.S. Liaison Officer at the British Fighting Vehicle Research, Design and Proving Establishment at Chobham, England; and various tours of duty in the United States to include Headquarters, Continental Army Command, UN Military Staff Committee, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.

During the Korean War, he served as Chief of Staff of the 45th Infantry Division and later as Chief of Staff of the Korean Military Advisory Group. In the Korean War, General Alger is credited with the Third Korean Winter and the Korean Summer and Fall Campaigns 1953.

He returned to the United States in 1954 and served a tour as Chief of Staff of the 4th Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. This was followed by an assignment in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel on the Army General Staff in Washington. In May 1957, he returned to Germany as the Assistant Division Commander of the 3d Armored Division and he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in August of that year. In June 1959, he moved to Headquarters, Allied Land Forces Central Europe and assigned the duties of Assistant Chief of Staff, G3 (Operations, Plans and Training). On 1 July 1961, he returned to the United States to command the II U.S. Army Corps, with headquarters at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. On 6 May 1963 he became Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Military Operations, Department of the Army. General Alger assumed command of the United States Army Forces Southern Command in the Canal Zone on 2 July 1964 and remained in that position until August 1967. On 1 August 1967, he assumed Chairmanship of the Inter-American Defense Board. From this assignment, General Alger left the active ranks.

Since his retirement from the Army, General Alger has been engaged in business activities in the Continental United States, Hawaii and overseas. He is: President, ALDA Properties, Land development in New Mexico; Vice President/Treasurer, CONAL, Inc., a U.S. based (Delaware) corporation; Board of Trustees, Gould Academy, Bethel, ME., served for 30 years. Now member emeritus.

He is married to the former Consuelo Zobel de Ayala y Montojo of Manila, Philippines, and Madrid, Spain. They maintain their official residence in Bethel, Maine, with other residences in Honolulu, Hawaii, and Ranchos de Taos, New Mexico, as well as Manila, Philippines.

DECORATIONS AND AWARDS

UNITED STATES

Distinguished Service Medal (Oak Leaf Cluster)--Citations attached.
Legion of Merit (Oak Leaf Cluster)
Bronze Star Medal (Oak Leaf Cluster)
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Army Commendation Medal
Purple Heart
American Defense Service Medal
American Campaign Medal
European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal
World War II Victory Medal
National Defense Service Medal (Oak Leaf Cluster)
Korean Service Medal
United Nations Service Medal

FOREIGN

ULCIII Distinguished Service Medal (Korea)(Oak Leaf Cluster)
Philippine Legion of Honor
Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation Badge
Medalla Commenoration De La Operacion Ayacucho/Presidente De Comando
Conjunto De La Tuerza Armada (Peru)
Order of Military Merit, Degree of Great Officer, Republic of Brazil
Military Order of Ayacuchu, Grade of Great Cross, Republic of Peru
National Order of Vasco Nunez de Balboa, Republic of Panama
Military Order of Ayacucho, Grade of Grand Officer, Republic of Peru
Cross of the Venezulean Ground Forces, First Class, Republic of Venezuela
Grand Star of Military Merit, Republic of Chile

OPINION

Former POWs Have Earned Medal, Letter Writers Say

CLINTON, Conn. — This is a response to Col. L. Fred Belcher's letter on the new Prisoner of War Medal in the Aug. 11 issue.

The colonel owes an apology to the thousands of former POWs of this country and their families for his thoughtless, unpatriotic letter concerning the award of this medal. The fact that he has risen to the rank of colonel with his warped perspective concerning combat veterans who became prisoners of war is mind-boggling, to say the least. I am more than ever convinced that the Army officer promotion system is seriously flawed. Someone should take the man aside and explain to him that you can't get any closer to the enemy in combat than those who became POWs.

The vast majority of American POWs were taken during World War II, around 95,000 in the European Theater of Operations and 35,000 in the Pacific. The majority of ETO prisoners were fliers, shot down hundreds of miles behind enemy lines. The largest number of ground forces were taken during the Battle of the Bulge, as it came to be known. Incidentally, the most heavily decorated unit in the Army was one which was taken prisoner and only recognized a few short years ago.

The men from Bataan and Corregidor, it should be remembered, were surrendered by their officers, and then only after all hope of reinforcement was abandoned.

Prisoners of war suffered greatly from starvation, disease and cruelty by their captors, as well as by strafing and bombing from the Allies. No less figure than the President of the United States issues a proclamation each year for POW/MIA Recognition Day and the Congress designates a day each year to honor these veterans.

According to the proclamation of 1985, "The bravery, suffering and profound devotion to duty of our POWs and MIAs have earned them a preeminent place in the hearts of all Americans. Their heroism is a beacon to follow forever. Their spirit of hope and commitment to the defense of freedom reflects the basic tenets of our nation."

The governors of each state and the mayors of cities large and small issue similar proclamations. The date for this year's observance of National POW/MIA Recognition Day is Sept. 19. I urge all who read this letter, especially misinformed persons such as the colonel who wrote this disgraceful letter, to take part in the ceremonies which will be held in each state.

EDWARD J. GIERING
Major (Ret.)
Commander, Connecticut Chapter
American Ex-Prisoners of War

NAMPA, Idaho — In the Aug. 11 issue Col. Belcher complained about the POW medal, saying that "becoming a POW becomes none of the above" criteria of being "in recognition of heroism, meritorious achievement or meritorious service." Many former POWs acquitted themselves quite bravely under those circumstances of capture or captivity.

For example, during Vietnam, five POWs received the Medal of Honor for their POW activities alone. They were Marine Col. Donald G. Cook, Air Force Col. George E. Day, Air Force Capt. Lance P. Sijan, Rear Adm. James B. Stockdale, and Air Force Lt. Col. Leo K. Thorsness. They continually resisted exploitation and helped others to do the same. Their actions were no less brave than had they not been captured.

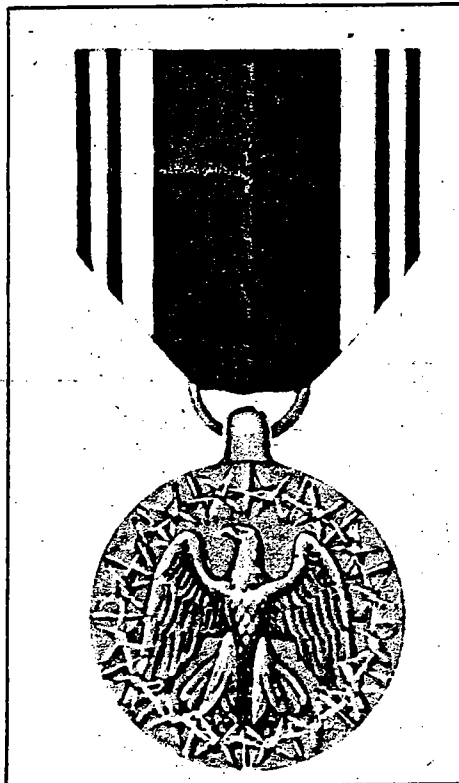
Many Vietnam POWs were pilots who were unable to successfully evade capture and be rescued. Others were captured in ground actions, again before they could evade capture.

There are exceptions who deserve no POW medal, such as former Marine Bobby Garwood. Such POWs either turned against their country and fellow POWs, aiding their captors in many ways, some by broadcasting propaganda, or else they sought special favors for themselves. Col. Belcher is correct in stating that such former POWs deserve no recognition.

On the other hand, I see no reason not to honor former POWs who acquitted themselves loyally, bravely and meritoriously during their captivity. Those loyal POWs simply continued the fight on another battlefield — their POW camps. Their weapons were loyalty, brains, ingenuity, compassion for fellow POWs, and constant efforts to thwart their captors' attempts to exploit them.

ROBERT T. DONALD
Chief Warrant Officer 2 (Ret.)

PORTLAND, Ore. — In response to the fulminations of



Proposed design for the Prisoner of War Medal.

Col. Belcher in the Aug. 11 issue on the proposed award of a POW medal, I would like to present another side of the coin.

As a corporal in Company E, 6th Armored Infantry, I was wounded and captured at Kasserine Pass in North Africa. Two and a half years later I was liberated by the Russian army, still a corporal. There was no automatic promotion at that time. Upon return to the states I was decorated with the Purple Heart with cluster and with the Combat Infantry Badge. Without me, the 6th Infantry fought the entire Italian campaign, with the regiment winning a Presidential Unit Citation, the battalion a second citation, and E Company winning still a third. I know of no other unit the World War II with such a sequence.

Despite the colonel's belittling remarks about getting captured, I would like to point out the following:

Nobody in his right mind voluntarily allows himself to be captured.

By being captured I was denied potential further promotion.

“The bravery, suffering and profound devotion to duty of our POWs and MIAs have earned them a preeminent place in the hearts of all Americans. Their heroism is a beacon to follow forever. Their spirit of hope and commitment to the defense of freedom reflects the basic tenets of our nation.”

By being captured I was denied the chance for potential winning of further decorations — although on sober reconsideration, the potential also existed that they might be posthumous since only 38 men survived from the 177-man company which invaded North Africa in November 1942.

Two and a half years is a very long time, and the last months of World War II is not a time to be remembered with any great relish. As anyone who served in the European Theater is aware, the winter of 1944-45 was, and still is, the most bitter of this century. Imagine if you can, the misery visited on POWs when, to avoid the advancing Russians, they were forced to spend bitter days and weeks on the road — marching ill-clad, ill-fed, lice-infested, and constantly harassed with bombing and strafing attacks by the Red air force, while the temperature never rose above -15 degrees. On capture I was a healthy 190-pounder. Upon return to American control, I managed to muster a massive 114 pounds.

Do not deny us one small award which we who survived can claim as our own. Since that time, in other wars and other campaigns, I have earned other medals and citations. When and if the POW medal is issued, I will find room in the fruit salad for the ribbon. And anyone who will denigrate the award will get the classic answer — “At least I got close enough to the enemy to get captured.”

JOHN G. LINDER
Lieutenant Colonel (Ret.)

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Col. Belcher, who wrote about the POW medal in the Aug. 11 issue, apparently never served as a line officer in combat. Most former POWs were taken in large numbers as the result of a blunder by higher command or a surprise enemy attack. Americans captured at Corregidor are a case in point. The alternative was a dirty, useless death.

When the Germans blitzed at Kasserine Pass, Combat Command A, 1st Armored Division, was doubly decimated. The 168th Infantry, less one battalion not engaged, ceased to exist as a unit. Of 40 officers in its 3d Battalion, all but one were killed or captured.

Col. Thomas Drake, the regimental commander, and Lt. Col. John H. Van Vliet Jr., 3d Battalion commander, were among those taken. As Drake said while interned at Oflag 64, a German camp for American ground force officers, “Anyone who got close enough to the enemy to be captured was close enough to be killed.”

The POW medal is not a decoration, but a service medal. The latter are awarded for service in designated areas during specified periods of time, just for being there. Surely, those who spent time in Japanese death camps or the Hanoi Hilton are as deserving of recognition as the GI who served in the Army of Occupation of Germany during the Korean War.

To those who have long since stopped wearing the uniform and ribbons, even to retiree functions, the POW service medal is meaningless except as a memento. But to any former POWs still on active duty, the ribbon will provide a means of recognition among those who endured a unique experience which cannot be shared or even understood by anyone who wasn't there.

ALAN WILLIAMSON

FORT DEVENS, Mass. — I am not surprised to see letters written condemning the new POW medal. It seems to me that most of the complaints are written by people who have never been a POW or people who have a chest full of armchair awards for spending their time in an assignment. Each week in the *Army Times* I read the awards given to soldiers throughout the Army. How many of these are given for having your life in danger or for being confined in a prison by someone who would just as soon shoot you as give you a drink of water?

Anyone who has ever been to a VA hospital and seen the patients who have been there since World War II, Korea or Vietnam, that have been injured for life as POWs, or to the outpatient clinics where they are being treated for problems relating to their capture, would say giving them a medal is very poor compensation for their sacrifice. Knowing some of them, they would be very proud to wear such a medal just knowing their country still cares enough to say thanks.

So, all you armchair medal wearers, get up and start pushing for support for this medal. Let's tell all the people who have given for their country, “Thanks. We are very proud of you for the things you endured for us.”

NAME WITHHELD

Tracy Diggs, 69, businesswoman

Tracy B. Diggs, 69, founder and former owner and manager of the Old Dominion Employment Agency in Northern Virginia, died of cancer Sunday in Arlington Hospital. She lived in Arlington.

Mrs. Diggs opened her employment agency in 1960 in McLean, and later opened offices in Arlington and Alexandria. She operated the agency until she sold the business in 1970.

Mrs. Diggs was born in Oklahoma City. She received a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma College for Women, now the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, in Chickasha.

She moved to the Washington area in 1940 and for about 10 years was a personnel recruiter for the old Civil Service Commission.

In 1942, she married J. Frank Diggs, a Washington reporter who now is a retired senior editor of U.S. News and World Report magazine.

She also is survived by two daughters, Deborah Churchman of Arlington and Peggy Diggs of Williamstown, Mass.; three brothers, Louis Briscoe of Yukon, Okla., and Bernerd and John Briscoe of Mustand, Okla.; two sisters, Lucille Diver of Upland, Calif., and Nell Ramsey of Baton Rouge, La.; and four grandchildren.

Funeral services will be at 10 a.m. tomorrow at the Ives Funeral Home, 2847 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, with burial in Columbia Gardens Cemetery.

The family suggests that expressions of sympathy be in the form of contributions to the American Cancer Society.

TRACY BRISCOE DIGGS,

69, the founder and former manager of the Old Dominion Employment Agency in Northern Virginia, died of cancer March 8 at Arlington Hospital.

Mrs. Diggs managed the employment agency for 10 years before selling the business in 1970. During her tenure, the firm had offices in McLean, Arlington and Alexandria.

A resident of Arlington, she was born in Oklahoma City and graduated from the old Oklahoma College for Women. She moved to the Washington area shortly before World War II. During the 1940s, she was a recruiter for the old Civil Service Commission.

Survivors include her husband, J. Frank Diggs of Arlington; two daughters, Deborah Churchman of Arlington and Peggy Diggs of Williamstown, Mass.; three brothers; two sisters, and four grandchildren.

19 March 87

Dear John,

I thought you and some of the other old kriegies would want to know that Tracy passed away this month. You might want to run a note something like this in the "Item" if you have the space:

ARLINGTON, VA.: Cancer finally caught up with Frank Diggs' charming wife Tracy, who many of you have gotten to know at kriegy conventions over the years. She had fought and won a battle with breast cancer some 20 years ago but it struck again while they were at their place on Montserrat this winter. Tracy was flown home and spent two months in a Washington area hospital, where a team of cancer doctors tried to save her. But she died on March 8. Frank's address, in case you knew Tracy and want to drop him a note, is: 5090 N. 37 St., Arlington, Va. 22207.

Thanks,

Frank

My best to Mary. I thought she might like to see Tracy's obit in the Washington papers