

I ESCAPED BUT: This is my short experience ^{of} an escape and evasion.

The relief from the watchful eyes of German guards was no respite for the constant state of alertness required to stay free was more of a drain on the mind and body than it was worth, especially when one's physical well being was wrecked with cramps, diarrhea and fever.

As the remnants of Oflag 64ites, now mixed with other U.S. POWs, watched the shuffling groups move out of the camp in Nuremberg at 7:30 in the morning, 4th of April, 1945, rumors were floating around that we were being moved to Munich and on to the Bavarian Alps and be held as hostages in a last ditch effort. U.S. Forces were closing in on Nuremberg by that time with sounds of ground and air attacks that could be heard off to the west. I did not relish the thought of spending any more time in captivity than necessary so when the platoon to which I was assigned finally moved out and joined the column around 1:30 P.M. I noted the direction, road condition, bridge, and anything that could be used as an identifying landmark. It was a wild shot but if I had the opportunity to separate from the column I would make an effort to hide out alone and let the U.S. Forces over run my position. It would be a matter of a few days at most, I thought. After all I had a Red Cross parcel that was only a day old and all I needed was a water source.

The chance of a lifetime arrived about 2 hours out of camp. The long column was strafed by our own fighter planes. I thought they were P-47s^{but}, was told later that they were P-51s. Being on the far right hand side of the road, I ran as far as I could and jumped into a depression in the ground well covered with overhanging foliage. When the German guards ran around shouting for all to get back out on the road, I stayed put and didn't move. Just before it got dark I crawled out surveyed the situation, but before I did, I burried a Prince Albert can

with a table knife, pistol and anything else that might incriminate me if caught. Nine (9) years later while stationed in Germany with the 1st Inf Div I located the exact spot in the woods and found the items that had not rusted away during that period.

As it was still semi-dark, I was able to locate the railroad line and the bridge across it which I wanted to avoid. I stumbled down the bank about 100 yards before the bridge and scampered up the other side, hid in the bushes for a few minutes catching my breath to see if anyone saw or heard me. Then I started to hike cross country toward the POW camp because that was where there was some security from hostile action. It soon became pitch dark and I couldn't see five feet in front of me. I stumbled in and out of gun emplacement and signal stations but managed to continue on without sounding the alarm. I could hear German troops talking in their blacked-out billets after supper without paying any attention to what was going on outside. I kept tasting the water quality of the creeks and small streams that I crossed by taking a sip without drinking it. They all had an acidic taste so I kept on walking. Seen as I found a source of water that was-half way potable I was going to stop and hide out. Just before day-break I found myself in a grove of trees across the street from the POW compound we left the day before. There was a running creek with water that didn't taste too bad compared to the others so a couple of Halazone tablets from the Red Cross ^{box} in a canteen of water should take care of it. The trees were planted in a neat symmetrical row for which the Germans were noted but didn't provide any overhead cover as they were only 5-6 feet tall. The bottom of the trees were all cleaned off so I could put my head to the ground and see for 100 yards in all directions. I had my water and a Red Cross box about half full by that time. What else could an ex: ask: for? Beside our troops should

over-run my position in a few days, I thought. I would crawl to the creek each day for my water supply, drop two instead of one Halazone tablets in the canteen, shake it and let it stand for 30 minutes like we were instructed in basic training.

The incessant air raids by both the British and U.S. Air Forces caused children to run through the grove of trees. I could see their feet as they ran around me but never stepped on me. If they did, I'm sure they would not have paid any attention for the anti-aircraft shrapnel was raining all around us. I picked up one piece that was still hot that landed near me, so from that point on I put the Red Cross box on my back as I layed ^{prone} on the ground. It could have provided some protection if a big chunk of shrapnel just happened to land on me.

Each day brought new hopes of being liberated but the bombing and artillery barrages continued day and night. How long can the Germans hold out? Maybe our side was getting tired too. After nearly a week of hiding out I decided to give myself up and become a Kreigy again. The fact that my Red Cross box was void of food and out of Halazone tablets had a lot to do with my decision. Also, my digestive system was rebelling to the point where one would think that I was blowing cigarette smoke out of my rear end for the nicotine stains on my shorts. After building up enough courage, I took a deep ~~breath~~^{breath} and in broad daylight walked out to the road about 100 yards from my hiding spot. I fully expected the Germans on the road would surround and recapture me but they did not pay any attention to this lone Oriental in a French split tail overcoat, not having bathed all winter, carrying an empty Red Cross box and shuffling toward the main gate of the POW camp about 500 yards up the road. ~~I was~~^{to} somewhat apprehensive to say the least, but If I had knowⁿ that I was going to be so inconspicuous and ignored I might have tried to escape a lot sooner. Civilians walking and

on bicycles passed me by without a second glance. Didn't I look out of place in their society or were they too preoccupied with the situation all around them to worry about this single odd looking character in their midst?

I walked up to the main gate of the camp and asked the guard to let me in. He didn't understand English and I knew that he didn't understand spoken Japanese so I asked him to get the Officer of the Day. Within a few minutes an officer arrived who spoke English and he had the guard open the gate to let me back in. As we walked back into the center of the camp, he kept asking me where I came from and what was I doing trying to get back into camp. I told him that I was in that column that departed about a week ago, got lost en-route to where-ever and mumbled something about being kranken (sick) and tired. My story must have sounded half way plausible but his side glances at me while we walked still had question marks. We reached a large tent next to the huge Russian POW compound where I was dropped off among 25-30 U.S. officers, mostly Army Air Corps who were shot down on raids over Nuremberg.

And that ends my short trip into freedom. I enjoyed every minute of it, to think for myself without being told what to do ^{during} ~~while~~ the previous six months. And that's what freedom and liberty is all about. My parents, brother and sister were also in a camp in Idaho, guarded by sentries so now I know how they felt at that time losing their freedom to move about as they please.



JIMMIE KANAYA

Von den amer. Kgf. Nr. 3335 (OFLAG C4 NUMBER)