

Tulsa, Oklahoma
April 7, 1998

Richard Whitaker
17462 Pleasant View Ave.
Los Gatos, Ca. 95030

Dear Sir,

Received your letter regarding the Hammelberg Fiasco and do appreciate hearing from you.

Attached is a copy of several of the latest Oflag 64 items. The Oflag 64 item is the newsletter that was published in the camp at Oflag 64 while we were there. The Post Oflag 64 item is a continuation of the newsletter that was published then.

They are all that I have. I am sure that others have many more copies than I have, but I just do not know who they are.

Our reunions have covered almost every year since 1945. I didn't know of the association until about 1962 when I went to a couple of them. For the past 20 years I have gone to almost all of them. The association almost ceased to exist last year, because nobody would assume the duties of publishing the newsletter. That is the only way we have if keeping in touch. I didn't want that to happen, so I assumed the duties.

There are a lot of our people that have a lot of stories as you can imagine. I am not sure that you know what Oflag 64 is. It was a camp for US Ground Force commissioned officers and was located near Posen, Poland. Our members participated in battles from the Desert Warfare in North Africa, Italy, The Normandy Invasion, the invasion of Southern France, etc. We were the infantry rifle platoon leaders, Rangers, Paratroopers, Artillery Forward Observers, etc. We all participated in operations that turned (similar to Hammelberg) into personal disasters for some of the ones who participated. Most of us were Lts., but we did have a lot of Captains, quite a few Majors and Lt. Cols and 2 or 3 Colonels. Most of the higher ranking officers are now gone and the great majority of the ones left were Lts., as I was.

I am not real sure what kind of information you are looking for, but I am attaching some of the stories about Hammelberg you may be interested in. We always had group photos at our reunions and I have some if you are interested.

There is a man in the Bay Area you could contact. His name and address is:

Clarence Meltesen
810 Gonzalez Drive Apt 4-D
San Francisco, Ca. 94132-2221
Phone: 1/415-584-0389

Clarence was a ranger that participated in a night infiltration through the German lines at Anzio Beachhead in Italy. 700 Rangers went through the lines and were ambushed. Only 7 of the 700 made it back. I think he stayed in the Army and retired as Lt. Col. Clarence has written several books about the experiences of the Oflag 64 people. Naturally, he covers the episode at Hammelberg. He probably has a mountain of information.

You mentioned the Cadet @ West Point. I would be more than happy to furnish him anything that I have. I am especially interested in his endeavor, because three of my older brothers were graduated from West Point. One in 1929, one in 1940 and one in 1943. The ones in 1929 and 1940 died in the war. The third one retired from the Air Force as a Col. and now lives in Sacramento. All three were at West Point at the same time. We have photos of them in their uniforms at West Point.

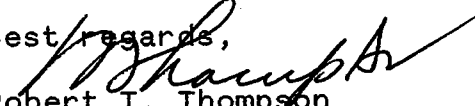
The Oflag 64 people at Hammelberg had just arrived there after a 355 mile brutal march across northern Germany. The weather conditions were atrocious. We left Oflag 64 with about 1400 men and arrived at Hammelberg with about 450. I think about 400 of the men escaped and made it through Russia. About 400 or so were sent to a camp at Luckenwald and the remainder of us, about 450, came on to Hammelberg.

Do you have Capt. Baum's address? Maybe he would like to be included on our mailing list for our newsletter. I won't bother him with it, but maybe the next time you contact him you might ask him. I would be delighted to include his name, if he so desires.

You asked about a reunion? Yes. we are having another one in Las Vegas in the middle of September. We generally have about 50 to 60 men with their wives, making about 120, or so people.

This letter of transmittal has turned rather lengthy. I will shut it down and assure you that I will provide you with copies of anything that I have that you might want.

Best regards,


Robert T. Thompson
7448 E 68th Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74133 Phone: 918/250-0897

Tulsa, Oklahoma
Mar 28, 1998

Mr. Richard N Whitaker
17462 Pleasant View Ave.
Los Gatos, CA. 95030-3320

Sir,

I read your article about the Raid on the Hammelberg Prison Camp in 1945 and it brought back many memories.

I was one of the prisoners that went with the recon patrol that night looking for a way out and back to our lines. When the patrol was hit bad and went back to the side of that hill to meet with the rest of the main group, most of the prisoners went back to the camp, thinking that all was lost (and it was). I chose to stay with the armored task force and mounted a half-track which was immediately hit with a tank shell. The explosion blew me off the halftrack. When I recovered my senses I crawled around behind the building where all the dead and wounded were. I won't go into any of the details of what happened in the next several minutes. I am sure that somebody has already related them to you.

The group of prisoners that I was with were the ones from Oflag 64 in Poland. Col. Goode and Lt. Col Waters were very familiar to all of us and we all were proud to include both of these men as our friends and comrades. I have visited with Lt. Col Waters several times and have enjoyed his friendship at our reunions.

The whole incident was a terrible mistake and should never have happened. I came up through Italy and Southern France and was involved with several things that were mistakes and should never have happened. It is my understanding, though none of them have ever told me so, that the tankers are very bitter about the incident. All of the men in that armored column were very brave men.

The men that were at Oflag 64 publish a newsletter and have been doing so for better than 50 years and in January I agreed to be the publisher. I was one of the younger men at the camp and can probably handle the work better than most of the others. The newsletter naturally contains stories about our time in Europe during the war and a lot of the stories are about our experiences at Hammelberg. Several of the men made it back to the American lines and have related their stories to be placed in the newsletter.

I was especially interested in your writing about wandering around that building where all the dead and wounded men were. When the Germans ceased firing and came around to the back of the building where we were, we were made to go into the

building and take the dead and wounded out of the building.
I remember the first man the I helped out and then my mind
goes completely blank. Did you take any photos of that
building when you went back? I would sure like to see a
photo of that building!

Do you have any interest in seeing one of our newsletters? If
you do, let me know and I will send you one.

Regards,



Robert T. Thompson
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Tulsa, Oklahoma 74133

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Robert T. Thompson,
Publisher, Oflag 64
7448 E 68th Place
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74133

March 30, 1998

Dear Robert,

I was very relieved to get your letter of March 28th as my answering service took down the wrong telephone number when you called last year and left a message for me. I tried several ways to locate you but I was dealing with a Kansas area code which threw me off your trail!

I was happy to hear that you are the new Publisher of the Oflag 64 newsletter and I am sending you a copy of my August 23rd 1997 letter that was never answered. Yes I would be happy to receive a copy of your newsletter and in fact I would love to peruse all of the back issues especially the earlier ones where the recollections may be sharper. I was wondering if there are any members in the San Francisco, Bay area that may have old issues on file as I can make an appointment to drive over and visit. I will give them a copy of the Raid article I wrote if this can be arranged.

To answer your inquiry as to the photo of the building on hill 427 with the dead and wounded in it, I was told by the German historian that met me at Hammelburg that the building was demolished and that the only remaining WW2 building is the one in the photos I had blown up for you and is enclosed. I also spoke with Abe Baum this morning who is in San Diego and he remembers it this way as well.

I also received a call yesterday from a senior cadet at West Point whose term paper is on The Hammelburg Raid and I referred him to you and Abe Baum for further information.

Thanks again for your letter and I hope to hear from you soon.

Best regards,


Richard Whitaker

P.S. I have been trying to find one of the Hammelburg internees who may have a souvenir from the lager and would appreciate it if you could mention my interest in your newsletter. Also any photos of the men or lager that I can get copies of including a period photo of yourself would be appreciated as I am developing an album for a possible reunion. Do you have any scheduled?

Oflag 64 Association
P.O. Box 170
Gladwine, Pa 19035

August 23, 1997

Dear Sirs,

I have just learned from one of your Association members that you have recently published an article on the "Hammleburg Raid" which was originally in the Armor Magazine 1996 Nov/Dec issue. I am the author of this article and I did not know that there was a "Oflag 64" Association.

I wonder if you would be so kind as to send me a copy of this for my files and I was also wondering if you have received any mail on this subject since the article was published?

Armor magazine has sent me a one year subscription to their publication and has forwarded letters regarding the article and I was wondering if you might be able to do the same? It is always nice to know that the effort that goes into researching and writing an article does not go unrewarded even though there is no money involved.

Thank you for your time and courtesy.

Best regards,

Richard Whitaker A.A. / B.S.