

Calvin Brend  
317 Wadsworth Avenue  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
(201) 757-5760  
September 15, 1988

BELATED NEWS RELEASE

Three years ago I donated my P.O.W. log book of sketches to the Air Force Museum at Wright Patterson A.F.B., Dayton, Ohio. I was supposed to receive the release very shortly after. It was also to include copies of photos of me presenting my book to Mr. Jack Hilliard, curator. The photos were taken in his office. That was September 1985.

As you see, it has been three years now. I just received the "News Release" and a photo of some unidentified gentleman looking at a page from the log book. To get this much, it took many, many calls to the museum to no avail. They seemed to be giving me the "run around". I finally had to enlist the help of Sen. Bill Bradley of N.J. The museum then sent this very short release and no photos of my presentation.

I say short, because it is short. I had, at their request, written and sent much background material pertaining to myself and the log book. The material consisted basically of how I obtained the book, hid it from the Germans and smuggled it from camp to camp, even on the forced march across Germany. We were run, bayoneted, bitten by dogs and slept in the snow fields in bitter cold weather, where I again got frost-bit. Some did not make it, but the log book did. No matter what was cast aside, I managed to protect the log book. I always had in mind to donate it to the Air Force Museum.

I do not know what happened to this information. It was supposed to give them advanced info to prepare a news release.

Anyway, I have just written Mr. Hilliard. I said that I thought the U.S.A.F Museum flew a little higher and better than the others, but in my opinion, it just crashed.

Supposedly, the museum will supply additional information, as noted in the release. I am available also for further information.



# NEWS RELEASE

## United States Air Force

U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM, WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, OHIO 45433

PHONE: DAYTON, OHIO, (513) 255-3284

JAN - 7 1987

Mr. Calvin Brend of South Plainfield, New Jersey, recently donated a personal sketchbook to the U. S. Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio.

The log book is actually an illustrated account of Mr. Brend's experiences as a German prisoner-of-war during World War II.

Brend, a graphics illustrator in civilian life, served during World War II with the 306th Bomb Group as a ball turret gunner on a B-17 "Flying Fortress". He successfully bailed out after his aircraft was shot down by German fighters on February 22nd, 1944, but was captured by German ground forces.

The book, one given to prisoners by the Red Cross during the war, includes excellent sketches of the various POW camps in which Brend was held, as well as detailed illustrations of many of his fellow prisoners-of-war.

Brend donated the book in honor and memory of his B-17 crew members and all the brave men who were fellow POW's.

The log book, currently being preserved through conservation processes by Air Force Museum staff members, will become part of the Museum's Research Library and will be available to serious researchers for study.

The Air Force Museum, internationally recognized as the world's oldest and largest military aviation museum, welcomes visitors everyday

(more)

of the year except Christmas Day. Museum hours are Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and weekends from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. The Research Library is open by appointment only, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed all federal holidays).

-30-

NOTE TO MEDIA: For additional information, call Linda Smith or Dick Baughman, Air Force Museum Public Affairs Division, (513) 255-3284.

22 December 1988

5:45 p.m.

Discussed at length with Calvin Brend the reworking of his material on his POW experience and the sketch book which he had sent to the Air Museum. He agreed to prepare an article, on cassette, and to copy from negatives pages of his sketch book, or to recreate sketches for a future issue of Echoes, probably April 1989. He will also do a special print- of the POW medal for me to use in EChoes.

RAS

Calvin Brend  
317 Wadsworth Avenue  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
Phone # (201) 7575760

September 19, 1988

Editor  
306th Echoes  
2041 Hillsdale  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007

Enclosed are copies of three photos I recently obtained from my pilot's mother. She is 87 and in a nursing home in Detroit. The fourth photo is of myself in my glory days.

The first photo shows my pilot putting his head and shoulder thru a hole in our B-17's nose. The pilot's name is 1st Lt. Jack P. Toombs(306 Bomb Group, 423rd Squadron and Eighth Air Force). This photo was taken about Dec. 1943 at Thurligh near Bedford, England. Lt. Toombs was K.I.A. over Germany on 2/22/44.

This hole happened on our 3rd mission and was the result of the B-17, that was in our formation and above us, not spreading during the bomb run and drop. This ship piloted by a new replacement pilot dropped its bombs directly on us. The #3 engine prop caught a 100-lb incendiary bomb, cutting it to pieces. Part of the bomb was thrown into the nose of our B-17. It hit the navigator in the fanny.

Other damage to our B-17 was our left aleron was ripped off. It was hanging and useless. Part of our left wing tip was gone and extensive damage was done to the tail section. The ball turret (which I was in) was sprayed with the incendiary solution from the bomb that was split by #3 prop. The ball turret was useless. The solution stuck to all viewing surfaces making it impossible to see. The turret was further damaged with my exit.

We went down in a spin. I got out of the ball turret to find only one Waist Gunner, S/Sgt. Guy Aubrey, L. Waist Gunner, had passed out at the exit door from lack of oxygen and fell out. I later met him in P.O.W. camp.

The pilot righted the ship and pulled back to altitude-falling into formation with a B-24 group. We flew on 3 engines with this group until we reached the coast. Breaking formation, we headed for our base. Over the base the pilot asked if we would like to bail out. Every man chose to stay with the ship.

It was not until after we landed, with bomb doors still open due to damage, that we were told our pilot had been flying the whole time on auto pilot. He flew formation and landed on auto pilot aided by the co-pilot, on other instruments. Manual control had been impossible with all the damage. Our pilot received the D.F.C. for this feat. I remember well sitting on top of ship, outside the radio operation gun hatch and waving to all. We were proud of our pilot and happy to be back.

The second photo is of our crew. It was taken at Thurligh base near Bedford, England about Dec. 1943. It was taken in front of our B-17G. "Margie".

Pictured from L. to R. - top row - 1st Lt. Pulver, Navigator, K.I.A.; -1st Lt. Taunton, Co-Pilot, K.I.A.; - 1st Lt. B. Branon, Bombardier, K.I.A.; -1st Lt. Jack P. Toombs, Pilot, K.I.A.; -

bottom row - S/Sgt. Paul Gair, Radio, K.I.A.; - Me, S/Sgt. Calvin Brend, Ball Turret, Ex-P.O.W. S/Sgt. William Harris, R. Waist, Ex-P.O.W.; - S/Sgt. Folley, L. Waist, Ex-P.O.W.; = S/Sgt. Chappie, Tail, K.I.A.; - and S/Sgt. Wheeler, Top Turret, K.I.A. Note: the ground crew member in nose of ship.

The third picture is of the military cemetery in Margraten, Holland. There are 28,000 buried there including my pilot Jack P. Toombs. Jack's grave was adopted by Mary Sweets of Holland, in 1946. Mary was 16 at that time and still cares for the grave today.

I do not know where the rest of my crew is buried. I do not know the whereabouts of two of my former crewmates, Guy Aubrey and Foley. I am in constant contact with William Harris, Greenville, Mississippi. We are close friends.

I thought you would be interested in using this info in your publication and archives. Further info available on request. My P.O.W. log book of sketches and the padlock of the main gate of Stalog 357 have been donated to the Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

Sincerely,



Cal Brend

Member -V.F.W., D.A.V, Ex-P.O.W.'s

3 March 1989

Dear Calvin:

Your materials arrived this morning by UPS, and I have had a chance to look over the visuals. They are great.

I took the tapes to a secretarial service and they will have them transcribed sometime next week. I will then review them and have the typescript corrected for my editing for the newspaper.

Once I have a finished typescript I will send a copy of it to you, along with the tapes.

When I have made the picture selections for the April issue of Echoes I will return those that I do not intend to use, so that I can keep my files clean.

I think the material is great, and it should evoke considerable comment from the 306th readership.

Many thanks for your hard work to this point.

All the best,

317 Wedgeworth Ave  
So Plainfield, N.J. 07080  
3-7-89

Dear Russ -

This is just a quick note to inform you of some added info that I might not have included in my tapes.

When I was in Bedford, after returning from POW camp, I hitchhiked a ride to Therleigh. I was let off along a ~~road~~ road that ran past the left side of the field. This would be to the left when standing in the tower and facing the runways.

I didn't know that road was there before. I could not see the field but the driver said just go thru those woods and you'll find it.

I entered the field and came upon a newer version of the B-17. It had a "turret" in the tail. I went over and inspected it from outside the ship. As I proceeded from the ship towards the tower I noticed someone in the tower watching me thru binoculars. I was in uniform and just waived. He waived back. I expected to be challenged but was not.

I proceeded to my squadron area and visited Squadron U.O. There was no officer present but the 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. was glad I came. We had a good chat and he presented me with the Presidential Unit Citation pin. He said, even though I was not present at the presentation I had earned it when I was their out that I should wear it. I did.



Thirteen years later my wife and I returned to England for a month's visit with her parents. At this time I also was able to visit our field.

The field was now an RAF field with much jet activity. I was surprised to see my old squadron area was no longer part of the official field. It was being used for sheep. Sheep now occupied my old barracks. What a let down.

I also drove to the road that was at the right of the tower and at the end of the runway. We stopped to watch the jets landing. They were only about 50 ft above us before touching down.

I thought you might be interested in this info. It might be interesting to other 306'ers.

Thank again. Received your letter about the package arrival.

Sincerely

Coly Brand

317 Wadsworth Ave.  
So. Plainfield, N.J. 07080  
2/28/89

Russ Strong  
5323 Choral Place  
Charlotte, NC 28205

Phone (201) 757-5760

Dear Russ -

As per your request enclosed are ① a line drawing (photographic) of the POW medal ② Copy photos of some of the pages of my log book that was donated to the Air Force Museum. ③ A picture of me beside the ball turret of the B-17 at the Air Force Museum. ④ Two illustrations - one of my bail-out after the ship exploded and one of the four mile run from the train station to Stalagluft II. ⑤ Three audio cassettes containing the story of Margie's last mission and of my POW life and log book. ⑥ Our local weekly newspaper containing an article about me and the log book. I believe I already sent you a photo of the padlock from the gate of Stalag 357.

The audio tape sides are numbered 1 thru 5. Side 6 is blank. Please note - the beginning of tape side # 2 did not record the first sentence. It should be added as follows - Standing by the waist hatch was our radio operator

This has been a difficult thing for me to do. I hope it meets with your approval. If there is anything further you require please contact me.

I would like to see a copy of the typewritten text before publication. You have my permission to change, alter, add or delete. Just keep the facts. As I said I'm not a writer

and after checking this recording I'm not much of a recording star either.

If it's possible I'd like all copywrites returned to me when you are finished. I'd also like the original drawings returned. The rest of the material you may keep for your files.

Thank you for this opportunity -

Sincerely

Calvin Brand

15 March 1989

Dear Calvin:

I am returning to you:

A typescript from the tapes

The tapes themselves

Some of your pictures

The two newspapers

I thought you might want to have a copy of the typed version of your tapes. I had a secretarial service transcribe it as I did not have time to do it. I then listened to the tape as I read the script and made corrections. They then retyped it for me.

I have made some changes in the script by way of editing, and will do more editing before I publish it.

My present plan is to publish the entire story in the April issue of Echoes, along with pictures. Once that is done I will return the pictures to you, along with extra copies of Echoes.

I hope that you understand that I will be publishing a version of the story that has been edited by me, to fit my publishing standards. I don't intend to make great changes, but to clean it up in spots and to explain some things to the readers. I will also append some other mission data to the story.

I think our readership will find it enjoyable, as it is a good story and tells many things that most people do not tell. That enables all of us to understand the POW experience a bit better.

I'll keep you posted.

Sincerely,

● **SENDER:** Complete items 1 and 2 when additional services are desired, and complete items 3 and 4.

Put your address in the "RETURN TO" Space on the reverse side. Failure to do this will prevent this card from being returned to you. The return receipt fee will provide you the name of the person delivered to and the date of delivery. For additional fees the following services are available. Consult postmaster for fees and check box(es) for additional service(s) requested.

1.  Show to whom delivered, date, and addressee's address. (Extra charge)      2.  Restricted Delivery (Extra charge)

3. Article Addressed to:

CALVIN BREND  
317 WADSWORTH AVE  
S. PRINCETON, NJ  
07080

4. Article Number

P934658026

Type of Service:

- Registered       Insured  
 Certified       COD  
 Express Mail       Return Receipt for Merchandise

Always obtain signature of addressee or agent and DATE DELIVERED.

5. Signature - Address

X Calvin Brend

6. Signature - Agent

X

7. Date of Delivery

7/21/89

B. Addressee's Address (ONLY if requested and fee paid)

Virgil C. Cheppie  
Fair Harbor

with my art work.

BREND

317 Wadsworth Ave.  
So. Plainfield, N.J. 07080

July 31, 1989

Mr. Russell A. Strong  
5323 Cheval Bl.  
Charlotte, NC 28205

phone - 201-757-5760

Dear Russell.

I received the advance issues of "Echoes" and the returned photos and artwork. Thank you again for publishing my story.

I'm sorry that it was not mentioned about the log book in in the library at the Air Force museum, Wingar Patterson A.F. Base, Dayton Ohio.

I also thought I had dedicated the story to William Harris and Troy Lombardi.

Several questions come up in the April issue. One is that you stated the mission was Bernburg. I thought it was Leipzig. I know we hit railroad yards. We passed thru them several days later. There was still damage and several small fires. We had thought at the time that it was about time the booty bombs would go off.

Secondly - In the island copy on page 5 we were the only ships from the 423 to go down. Who was our left wingman that I saw go down? I did not know we were a company. Could he have been from another squadron.

I have since also heard from Lt. Col. Hoop (Ret.). He was our leader that had to abort. He wanted me to know what happened. He went back, got another ship. (from where I don't know - we could not get a spare) He tried to catch up but could not.

I would like to comment on the observation made by Mr. Konrad Rudolph in the July issue of *Esprit* about my capture. It just isn't so, at least in my case.

We all know such a procedure of following footprints was done. That's why I walked in the streams to help throw off anybody following incl. dogs.

I am a country boy. I know the woods. I doubled back many times to check if anyone was following. After I arrived at the house there was not enough time for those who might have been following the footprints to radio ahead and have a car dispatched to intercept me. The Gestapo man's car was a black 4 door and there was no radio. There must have been some other way he was notified. I could not have been in that house for more than 10 to 15 min.

I also understood that the German people could not help me, but I thought I was in the Netherlands or Holland. Though the average person might not be able to help me I was hoping to get lucky and that those people would put me in touch with the underground. As soon as I realized I was in Germany I started to leave. That's when the Gestapo man came in.

I hope some of those questions can be answered someday. Thanks again for publishing my story.

Sincerely -  
Calvin Brand

P.S. Do you know where I might obtain a 423 sq. insignia? Maybe *Esprit* should make and sell some?



317 Wadsworth Ave.  
So. Plainfield, N.J. 07080

Phone - 201-757-5740

5/19/89

Dear Russell

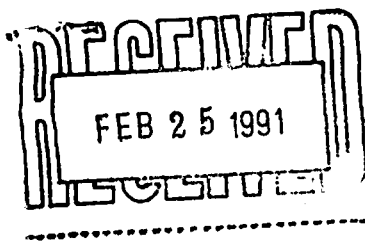
I want to thank you for printing my story. So far I have received two letters because of the article. One from a member of our ground crew. He did not know until the article what had happened to us. We hope to get together soon.

The other letter from Warren Day, P.O. Box 5272, Bossier City, LA 71117. He was a Radio Gunner on another ship which did not get shot down. He also did not know what happened to us till the article. He was very friendly with Paul Gair our Radio Gunner.

Evidently he did not fly when we went on our last mission. Our Paul Gair said he had a feeling about this flight and left some personal effects and the airtight photos with him for safe keeping. Warren, at my request, sent the photos to me for copying. I enclose a set for your records as that is also what Warren wants. Warren also sent a check, thru me, to you which I also enclose. My check is included. Sorry I can not afford more. I had to retire and now live on a fixed income.

By the way the first letter was from Dave Graubard, 656 East Godfrey Ave. Phila PA 19120. He has a similar photo as the one of our crew. In his photo the ground crew was also present. He intends to stop by or send the photo so I can copy it. I will also send you a copy as soon as I receive it.

A question - I note in the island copy on page 5 of the recent issue of 306 Echoes there was only 1 plane downed from the 423 ours. Who was our left wingman that was downed? Were we in a composite formation? I did not know this. I like also to know



Obit From: McCriskin Home For Funerals, So. Plainfield, N.J.  
Phone:908-561-8000  
Please call our office to confirm receipt.

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South Plainfield- Calvin T. Brend, 67, died on Friday, February 22, 1991 in Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center, Plainfield.

Born in Norwich, Conn., he had resided in New York City for 4 years before moving to South Plainfield in 1950.

He was a self employed Graphic Designer & Photographer for 31 years before his retirement in September 1990.

He had attended the Art Career School in New York City and the New York Institute of Photography in New York City.

Mr. Brend had served in the United States Army during WW II as a Staff Sgt. serving in the 306 Bomb Group of the 423 rd squadron. He had been a Prisoner of War captured by the Germans from February 23, 1944 to April 16, 1945. He had been a recipient of the Purple Heart, which he received on April 30, 1945. He had also received the Air Medal, and the POW Medal.

He was a member of 306th Bombardment Group Historical Association, a life member of the Disabled American Veterans, and the American Ex-Prisoner of War Organization. He was also a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Storr-Richie Post # 506 of North Plainfield.

Mr. Brend was also a member of the South Plainfield Special Police Dept., where he was instrumental in assisting the Police Dept. in doing photography and making photographic composites for many years.

His first wife, Jean M. Brend died in 1980.

Surviving are his wife: Karen Coughlin Brend and a nephew, Sonny Troyner of Beaver, Utah.

Funeral services will be held on Monday at 11 AM in the MCCRISKIN HOME FOR FUNERALS, 2425 Plainfield Ave. South Plainfield. Interment will follow in Hillside Cemetery, Scotch Plains. Relatives & Friends may call at the funeral home on Sunday 2-4 & 7-9 pm. Memorial Donations in his name may be made to the American Diabetes Association.

25 February 1991

Dear Mrs. Brend:

I was saddened today to learn of Calvin's death.

I had enjoyed getting to know him during the period we were getting his two articles ready for publication in 306th Echoes. His enthusiasm for this project was contagious, and he certainly doubled the effort through the illustrations which he so generously provided for the publication.

Unless I hear further from you I will continue your name on the mailing list for the 306th.

I know that I express the condolences of the officers and directors of the Association, and those whom he knew in the 306th who are still living.

Sincerely yours,

Dear Russ -

About the pictures of 306<sup>th</sup> Aircraft  
you are skidding as per the Jan. 1990  
issue of 306<sup>th</sup> Echoes.

I don't know if there are mine or not.  
I had a 35mm camera which I really did  
not know how to set exposures at that  
time. I took a roll of pictures, some  
were of our planes in formation, some of flak,  
some of bomb drops, some of the RAF Challenge  
air coming in over the sea to Scotland and  
I believe some on the ground at Thurleigh.  
Most of the flying pictures I took thru the  
ball turret window.

When I finished the roll I gave it on  
to the post photography office for processing.  
When I went to pick them up the man at  
the counter went to check. He came back with  
a rather strange look and said there was no  
film in the cassette. I knew that was  
impossible. I loaded the film and the film  
counter on the camera worked fine. It works  
by the film passing thru the film sprockets  
to turn the counter. The camera was an  
Argus C-3 (which was never returned to me  
after I was shot down.)

If any of this description of the photos matches your photos I would like to take a look at them.

I ~~think~~ don't know if they ruined them in processing or if I shot something I should not have, or maybe they were so good that they just kept them. Any help would be appreciated.

Question - Before being transferred to B-17's I was stationed at Orlando, Fla. with a night fighter group. Was that not a different Airforce than the 8<sup>th</sup>. I think so but have forgotten what. We trained in P-73's waiting the arrival of the P-61. One had just arrived the day I was transferred to - 1<sup>st</sup> Salt Lake, then Spokane and finally Walla Walla, Washington and the 8<sup>th</sup> A.F.

Thank you -

Cal Broad  
317 Weddsworth Ave  
So. Plainfield, N.J. 07080

P.S. Had some Med. problems. The mis-directed patch will soon be returned.

Thanks again - Cal

317 Washworth Ave.  
So. Plainfield, N.J. 07080  
(201) 757-5760

1-9-90

Mr. Russell B. Strong  
5323 Cheval Place  
Charlotte, NC 28205

I guess you missed my call to your answering machine some time ago. My message was about the 'patch' you sent to me. In your letter you said you would be sending me a 423 Squadron patch. What I received was a white background patch with a Viking type man swinging a chain with a ball of spikes on the end. I can't remember ever seeing this patch. Is it possibly a 306 group patch? I did not know one existed. Perhaps it's some other patch sent in error. The 423 patch was the Grim Reaper with cape and blazing sickle.

Please advise what I should do.

Thanks.

Cal Broad

## preface

As a profess to these two stories, I'd like it noted that for me to do this, for me to recall these events and thoughts that go with them, was an extreme hardship. I learned to survive in POW camp with humor. Whatever occurred, we made light of it, often times creating jokes out of injury, pain, hardship, and even death. It was ~~easy~~ at least my, way of coping. After the war, I found that in order to cope with these memories, it was necessary for me to avoid crowds, to avoid too much discussion and detail in any conversation about what really happened. To this day, I have the same outlook and avoid even going meetings or various ~~VETS~~ <sup>veterans</sup> organizations to which I belong. I even have to avoid the special POW group meetings at the VA. I do know that these meetings are an effort to help and I condone and thank those who are trying to help. It does seem to work for some, but not for me. And so this effort of mine to relate what happened to me, became a ~~real hardship~~ <sup>difficult</sup> thing to do. I thought it a necessary thing as perhaps the more that is brought out the better those who have not lived through it might understand. One of the greatest ~~God~~ <sup>God</sup>-given gifts to man is the natural ability to forget the bad and remember the good. It just takes longer for some of us, but we try. My story and drawings reflect some of this. I hope it may do some good for some one. Even though writing this, recalling it, and illustrating it has been very, very difficult for me, I deem it an honor to do so. Thank you.

After going through basic training <sup>at</sup> Miami Beach, ~~FL~~ <sup>and</sup> Gunnery School at Fort Myers, ~~FL~~ <sup>Florida</sup> I was initially assigned to Night Fighters at Orlando Air Base, ~~FL~~ <sup>FLORIDA</sup>. We had been held back three times from going overseas. ~~We~~ <sup>we</sup> wondered why. ~~After time became evident, we went out to be with the Night Fighters.~~ We were transferred to Heavy Bombers. I was shipped eventually to Walla Walla, Washington, for ~~heavy bombing~~ training. After our training and after our

flight overseas, we landed at <sup>Thurleigh,</sup> ~~Theroff~~, England, near Bedford, ~~England~~. We were assigned to the <sup>th</sup> 306 Bomb Group, <sup>rd</sup> 423 Squadron. We were an eager crew. If there was any flying to be done, we were there. We had seen thirteen missions as a crew, going to Norway, Germany, France, Southern France, etc. We ~~had~~ carried various bomb loads, including 500 ~~pound~~ <sup>#</sup> booby <sup>trap</sup> bombs, 500 ~~pound~~ <sup>#</sup> demo, 100 ~~pound~~ <sup>#</sup> ~~incendiary~~ <sup>incendiary</sup> ~~ensinderies~~ <sup>ensinderies</sup> clusters, anti-personel <sup>#</sup> bombs, even leaflets. We loved our job. We were experienced, young and foolish, but pros.

Our ship was named Margie. This is a story of Margie's last mission. It was now February 22, 1944. The ~~awake~~ <sup>up</sup> call came at 2:30 am. We quickly dressed in the cold ~~dark~~ and went off to chow, then to briefing. When the briefing map dropped, drapes were pulled. A great sigh was heard from all. It was to be a deep penetration into Germany. I have forgotten the exact target, but I do remember it was a railroad marshalling yard. Our altitude was <sup>25</sup> ~~30~~ to <sup>30</sup> ~~38~~ thousand feet or so. It was mixed bomb load through the squadron. ~~Some~~ ~~carried the dreaded boobie bombs, others carried 500 pound bombs, 100 pound~~ ~~incendiaries~~ ~~ensinderies, etc.~~ Our ship carried 500 ~~pound~~ <sup>lition</sup> demo and 100 ~~pound~~ <sup>incendiaries</sup> ensinderies. We were designated to be second to lead. Rushing to dress for flight, we ~~danned~~ <sup>danned</sup> our heated suits, heated shoes, heated gloves, sheepskin pants and jacket, <sup>2 1/2</sup> ~~may~~ vest, parachute harness and helmet. We ~~gabb~~ <sup>g</sup>bed our chute and rushed for the truck that would take us to ~~our ship~~ Margie. When we reach <sup>ed</sup> the ship, I jumped off the truck, my heated suit cord got caught on the truck it ripped almost completely off. I had to return and ~~change~~ <sup>fix</sup>. When I arrived back at the ground crew <sup>gunners</sup> tent, all had cleaned their guns and installed them in <sup>ed</sup> ~~a~~ <sup>the</sup> ship, while the pilots check and started the engines. I was the last. It was pitch black, with ~~a blackout and~~ low clouds, <sup>y</sup> you could not see your hand in front of your face. The pilot was now running up the engines. As I walked



toward the ship, I did so rather carefully, not knowing precisely where I was going in relation to the ship. As I approached the ship, with one gun held in front of me, I became aware of a sound I had never heard before. The engines were revving quite high, but there was an added sound. I can only describe it as a <sup>hi</sup>warring sound. I stopped, listened intently took a slow half step and the sound seemed louder. I think I was walking into the spinning prop. I quickly <sup>ed</sup>back off and went the long way around to approach from the rear. I had to get to the <sup>turret</sup>baller of our B17. It was not easy walking up the slip stream of the ~~revving~~ engines with a heavy gun. I finally made it and had to repeat the procedure for the other gun. Finally all set, I climbed in <sup>in</sup> and a few minutes we began to ~~track~~ taxi. As we taxied down the ~~Tomac~~ <sup>perimeter track</sup> one ship after the other, ~~it~~ <sup>there</sup> was suddenly a bang. We blew a tire. The pilot pulled off ~~out the way out~~ onto grass area. We all jumped out and ran for the spare ship. Too ~~late~~, it was already taken. We went back to Margie. Soon we got word to stay put, they would change the wheel. Seems that's going to be one of those days that things just don't go right. Soon a truck and a jeep arrived, those in the truck began changing the wheel. The <sup>group</sup>base Commander was in the jeep. He was talking to with the pilot for a short time, then came over to us. During a brief chat with our <sup>C.O.</sup>~~sea state~~ "Seems like you boys don't want to go today". We all said, "You're right, we have a feeling about this one". The wheel was changed, we climbed in, and took off. The others were already up and mostly <sup>ed</sup>formed into formation by now. As we rolled down the runway, an unexpected snowstorm came up. The clouds were high, we were on oxygen before breaking through <sup>with the sunshine</sup>. As we broke through the snow the group came straight at us and very, very close. The pilot rolled to the right and dove. Not a thing to do with a B17 fully ~~bomb-~~ <sup>ed</sup>load, but necessary. We climbed the back and joined our squadron. Things settled down now and we proceeded towards the coast. We were the low squadron

and the last over the target. We did not worry much as we were supposed to have fighter escort most of the way in and most of the way back. Before we crossed the channel, three of our squadron had turned back with various problems. We were one short to start, but this left now only three planes in our squadron. One of the planes that turned back was the squadron leader. Since we were number two to lead, we took our place and proceeded on. Nothing much happened as we went on to the target, except that we were somewhat late and missed our escorts all the way in. We reach<sup>ed</sup> our IP and made a great bomb drop. ~~Made a great bomb drop~~ and turned for home. Still no escort. There was an occasion<sup>al</sup> ~~an~~ flack, no enemy fighters. We began to think of one more mission and we would go for ~~the~~ week <sup>Read R</sup> ~~RNR~~ in London. Wrong thoughts. Soon the navigator said we'll be crossing the Belgian<sup>on</sup> ~~boarder~~ anytime now. Then some one said, "Hey, here comes our fighter escort one o'clock high." We were to meet Spit<sup>fire</sup> escorts at this location. We knew we were late, but figured they were too. Then our hearts bailed out and some one said that they are not Spits, they are ME109. Guns began to rattle. A long stream of fighters made a pass between the squadron and us, the low squadron. ~~I~~ <sup>B</sup> being in the ball turret, <sup>e I</sup> only got a glimpse of several that dip<sup>ped</sup> below our ship. ~~I do believe go one who dipped rather low.~~ One <sup>of</sup> this pass they got our left wing<sup>man</sup>. He went down. I saw several chutes open, ~~after a time.~~ The fighters reformed for a second attack from the same location. As they started the attack, our right wingman suddenly left us and pulled up and over to join the lead squadron. The move was stated over the intercom as "Were the hell is our right wingman going?" The next thing I heard, almost immediately, was guns firing again. Suddenly there was a great jolt and we started down. I saw flames coming from the number three engine, we started our death dive. I rolled the ball turret<sup>e</sup> up to get out<sup>A</sup> as I reach<sup>ed</sup> behind my head to unlatch the hatch, ~~A~~ heavy G force

held me down. The pilots, although they must have been mortally hit, made a last heroic effort to straighten out the ship and allow others to bail out. I opened my hatch, but only about three inches, it was stuck. Panic!! All the stories ran through <sup>my</sup> head about the ball turret <sup>e</sup> getting jammed with shell casings, etc. Yet in this panic, I realized the ball had enormous creep that day and <sup>I</sup> had not turned off the power. I quickly flipped the handles forward to revolve the hatch up <sup>and</sup> back into the ship and noted the power was beginning to fail. I switched the power off. I jumped out, glanced around, the radio <sup>room</sup> was a blaze. <sup>Turbo amplifiers (for the engines)</sup> Radios against the bulk head of the bomb bay were on fire. A terrible smell!! ~~It smelled~~ like a mixture of <sup>an</sup> electrical fire, oil, gas and ~~a odor of~~ what I believe was flesh burn <sup>ing</sup>. Standing by the waist <sup>door</sup> hatch was our radio operator ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> seemed frozen. He did not jump. The ship was level now, thanks to the pilots. What they must have been going through was unthinkable! I turned to grab my chute which <sup>was</sup> wired to the ball turret <sup>e</sup> support column, so it would not get tossed around and lost. My thoughts were that I would take the radio operator with me, pull his chute, then pull mine. At this moment, 20 millimeter shells burst around me. One struck the ~~ball~~ <sup>e</sup> turret support column just above my head. This sprayed shrapnel over me, striking my head and shoulder <sup>s</sup>. No big pieces, thank god, just very <sup>small ones,</sup> minute pieces. The fighters must have hit us again, seeing that we were flying level. I broke my chute loose <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ one hard tug and turned, snapping the chute on and took one step toward the rear. BOOM!! The ship exploded. When I came to I was lying on the floor, near the exit. All the ammo belts from the waist guns were wrapped around me and piled on top. I tore through these as though they were Cream Cheese, <sup>on the</sup> something I could never do when I tried back <sup>on the</sup> ground. As I tore the belts I noticed my gloves were gone, my fingers and hands were stiff and cold and white. Frost bite! I had done it before. The radio operator <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ gone. The

nose forward of the ball turret<sup>e</sup> was gone. Everything to the rear behind the rear tail wheel was also gone. I quickly realized I should not go out these large openings as there was to<sup>o</sup> much jagged metal. Once I removed the ammo belts, I rolled out the hatch next to me. I remembered<sup>ot</sup> delay the jump, don't pull the cord yet." Then something asked the question, "How long was I knocked out?" Since I was tumbling through the air, I could not see the ground. I did not know to stretch my arms to straighten my body in the fall. I decided I better pull the cord. Panic again!! I right hand could not find cord handle, I looked down at my chute. I had put it on ~~inside out~~ upside down. The cord was on the left side. Would it open ~~upside down?~~ I pulled it; wait, wait, wait! Was it going to open? It suddenly opened as I was looking at it. POW! I got the full impact in my face. Sometime back I had exchanged chute with an English flyer. He had one that was suspended from the shoulders, not from the chest, as ours were. The harness joined<sup>at</sup> the ~~chest~~<sup>waist</sup> in a round connector that was also a quick disconnect, ~~to~~ be used when coming down over water. A turn to the right readied for a hard punch with your fists to release all harnesses, straps, etc, ~~and~~ drop free before entering the water. It was a great chute, but don't look at it. It was about to open as I did. Since it goes up over your head, you get one hell of a smash in the face. As the chute suddenly blossomed with a loud snap, I also felt a snap in my lower back. Although this was very painful, I had no time to think about it. I was only about 200 feet in the air. When the chute opened, I saw my walking shoes which I wired to my chute harness break loose. Now I had only heated boots and sheepskin boots. I also saw the waist section of the ship that I had bailed out from ~~it~~ was falling ~~and~~ oscillating back and forth, motion. ~~The air going through both openings made in do so.~~ It was not falling straight down. An ME109 buzzed by. I braced for impact, keeping my knees relaxed. A hard landing and roll out in the snow

covered field. When you know even a large <sup>boulder</sup> ~~boulder~~ to had it in for me. I grazed as I landed and rolled. Limping badly, I gathered the chute to take it into the nearby woods. As I did this, I noticed a farmer and children run into a house, which was about 700 feet away. I buried the chute in the snow when I reached the woods. I also found I could not run or walk very fast with my sheepskin outfit. I took that off and buried it along with the chute. I was now dressed in my heated suit and <sup>OD's</sup> ~~OD's~~. I kept the sheepskin boots, but discarded the heated boots. Heading into the deeper woods, I noticed I was going the right way. Southwest!! My immediate thoughts were how could I get back to keep a date with my girl? I knew she would be waiting for me back in Bedford in the Theater lobby. Funny now, but not so funny then. I pressed on through the woods. I came to a field in which stood a scarecrow with an old torn suit jacket on. I borrowed the jacket. It would help me keep warm, if I had to spend the night in the snow. As I trudged through the woods and the snow, I suddenly heard distant voices. At the edge of the woods, I saw two children returning from school, at least that was my impression. "Oh, god they have a dog! Will the dog get my scent?" I found a depression under the trees, which was snow and leaf covered. I laid down and covered up with the snow and leaves. I watched as they passed by. The dog did not scent me, much to my dismay. The children ~~who~~ were about 11 or 12 years old <sup>and</sup> had wooden shoes on. This confirmed to me that I was in Belgium, as the navigator had said. Back to my trudging <sup>in</sup> the woods, a stream <sup>I</sup> had best walk a ways in it to hide my scent from any dogs that might be looking for me. Walk I did and got wet feet from my effort. I trudged up and down hills, ~~across the~~ fields, I was trying to get near to a railroad, I had heard nearby. I thought if I could get close to the tracks with no houses around / I could jump a freight and get out of the immediate area. No such luck. Always homes were between me and the tracks.

As I trudged along the woods, I came upon a wing section of B17, perhaps ours. No markings! I suddenly felt sick. Would I also find bodies? I came closer and checked it out, but nothing was there for me to identify. On I ~~go~~<sup>went</sup> through the woods. I walked until I could walk no longer. It was very dark and I kept running into trees and branches. I spotted a light. It was light from a small cabin. I decided to stay nearby, figuring if anyone was looking for me they might go ~~to~~ into the cabin. I could hear this and move on. Picking a spot under a low hanging fir tree, I made a snow nest and tried to relax. I distributed my escape kit items throughout my body, pockets, etc. I did not sleep, but may have dozed several times. God, it was cold!!! I wished I had not discarded my sheepskin. The injury to my back and knee were killing me. My hands and feet were the worst. I pulled the scarecrow's jacket ~~over me~~ up over my head so that my warm breath would help warm me. I lit a cigarette under the jacket. Amazing how much warmth came from that match and cigarette. Despite this warmth, I was getting colder and colder. It finally got ~~to~~<sup>to</sup> a point where I could no longer stand it. ~~I decided that if I were going to be so cold slowly, why prolong it.~~ I stood up, opened my jacket, opened my shirt, jumped up and down doing exercises. Super cold would have been warmer than this. When I tired, I got back down in my nest and buttoned up. That did it! I was now very warm, but only for a short time. I kept doing this all night. When it was light enough to walk without hitting the trees, I started out again. As I was climbing one hill, a deer<sup>e</sup> stood about (50) feet away. He looked at me and I looked ~~at~~<sup>at</sup> him. I ~~wandered~~<sup>o</sup> how I could kill him and have breakfast. God I was hungry! I walked and walked. It was about noon when I ~~and~~<sup>in</sup> my attempt to get close to the railroad / came upon an ideal setting, just as they say in escape classes. A secluded, peasant's home close to the woods, one which you step out of the woods and knock on the door. After observing the house for about and

hour, I decided that this was it. Since I was in Belgium, I might be lucky to get help from the underground. I knocked on the rear door. I had my language book from my escape kit in my hand. After I had knocked, I noticed the rear door was near shut. Just then an old woman parted the curtains of the door, I said in Belgian<sup>an</sup>, "I am an American and I'm hungry." She put her finger to her lips in a quieting gesture and motioned me to go around the house to the left to the front door. Once inside the living room, she handed me a cup and proceeded to pour full of hot black coffee. I noticed an old man sitting in the corner at the dining table. I was scared stiff, ~~Freezing~~ cold and nervous. So much so that my whole body was trembling so violently that not a drop of coffee stayed in the cup. She took the cup from my hand and placed<sup>it</sup> on the table to fill it again. I carefully drank some of the coffee as she cut a generous piece of black bread. Scarfing down the black bread and coffee, which tasted horrible, I asked, "where am I?" They did not understand. When I had finished the snack, I again asked, "where am I?" This time I took out my escape map and spread it on the table. The old man and woman were not paying attention to me. They were admiring the silk of the map. I pointed to where I thought I was and again asked where I <sup>was.</sup> ~~am?~~ Finally she looked more carefully at the map. It was written in English and they did not understand. After some time, she pointed to a spot just a little northeast of Cologne. Oops! This was in Germany. Surprise, surprise! I pointed questionably<sup>ninety</sup> to the Belgian<sup>an</sup> side of the border. She indicated "no" and pointed to the German side. I now noticed a small picture on a wall<sup>of</sup> a young man in a German uniform. I began folding the map to leave. As I did so I said "Thank You" and headed for door. Now the most puzzling thing, that still bothers me, ~~today~~ happened. As I took several steps, ~~to the front door,~~ the door opened and a ~~Gustapo~~<sup>Gestapo</sup> officer entered with gun drawn. "Do havensee<sup>s</sup> pistol? I indicated "No" and raised my hands.

He put his pistol away and patted me down. As he more carefully search<sup>ed</sup> me, he found all but two items of my escape kit. I kept hidden a small compass and my pep pill. When he started to count my escape money, you should have seen the old ~~man's and woman's~~<sup>couple's</sup> eyes light up. It was like ~~that~~ they did not know that much money existed. I was ushered down a dirt road to where his car was parked. As I previously stated, I am puzzled even today / as to how that ~~Guistapo~~<sup>Gestapo</sup> man knew I was in the house. There was no wires at all going to the house. The nearest house was a good 500 feet away and the rest of the houses were about the same distance from each other. There was not enough time for a third person to run out of sight as I moved around house to the front. The only thing that's come to mind over the years is that there must have been some sort of a signal. Possibly a quiet signal such as we used to employ years ago for the iceman to leave ice at our house. We did this by placing a card in the window. Such a card could have informed another house that they need<sup>ed</sup> the ~~Guistapo~~<sup>Ges</sup> man there. They certainly knew that there were many of us in the area. I would have liked to return ~~to the house~~ after the war to find that house and the people just to get the answer to this very puzzling question. However, time and money did not permit it. He drove me about five miles to ~~Guistapo~~<sup>Ges</sup> head quarters in a small town. Thus was my start of my fourteen months as a POW. ~~This is the end of the story of Margie's last mission. Margie was down. I will pick it up at this point in a future article on my POW escapades and how I recorded much in a log book with drawings and how the log book is still a prisoner.~~

~~I arrived at ~~Guistapo~~<sup>es</sup> headquarters after my capture. (See previous article) I was strip searched. A very thorough search! They found my pill and asked what it was. I indicated for headache. They returned the pill to me. I still~~



had the compass. I had palmed it. After the search, I was taken to another room and shown several parachutes. One belonged to my left waist gunner. His name was stamped on it. The pack and harness had a lot of blood. I was asked if I knew any of these. I played dumb and indicated "no." They insisted I did, but left the question. I was brought to a large room and served a bowl of potato soup. As they handed it to me, I sat at the desk and made a booboo. I said *Denke schon.* Up to now I indicated I knew no German, but I did know a very few words. I am German and English and remember a few words from my German grandmother. It just slipped out. You should have seen the Germans. They were insisting that I knew German and was hiding the fact. They picked up the soup pretending they were going to take it away unless I told the truth. I finally convinced them and was given the soup back. Several hours later, I was put on an open-back truck with two guards. We drove for hours all over the area picking up captured airmen. It was after dark when we arrived at the hospital in Cologne. There we picked up several more prisoners. I recognized one of my crew members, William Harris. He was our right waist gunner. I was never so happy to see anyone I knew before in my life. We kept our recognition very quiet <sup>so</sup> as not to let the guard know that we knew each other. Harris had been injured by 20mm in the foot. He was limping badly and needed help getting on the truck. I found out through Harris that <sup>e</sup>Foley, our left waist gunner, was still in the hospital. He had been hit with a 20mm in the back. He was wearing a flack <sup>e</sup>vest otherwise he would not have been here today. I never saw <sup>e</sup>Foley ~~again~~ until after the war <sup>r</sup>. Harris and I stayed together throughout our POW days. We were driven by truck to an air <sup>e</sup>field at Colone <sup>r</sup>. Where we were fed and bedded down for the night. The next morning we were briefly interrogated one at a time. I remember after I would not answer any of the officers question he asked for my watch. I said NO, not unless I get a

receipt. He had someone make <sup>out</sup> a receipt and I gave him the watch. We were then  
 all transported to transfer camp near Frankfort ~~Germany~~ <sup>a</sup>. This was a great  
 place, nice accommodation, reasonably good food. I remember they even cut the  
 crust off the bread before slicing it. I thought boy if this is how POW's live  
 it won't be too bad. Was I wrong!! Next we were transferred to an  
 interrogation camp in Frankfort. This was Hell City. First we were all put in  
 one big room, we expected as we did before that there might be hidden  
 microphones so we did not talk about anything military. At this point, I  
 removed the cover of my electric wire on the plug to my heated suit and put my  
 compass inside. They took us one by one to another room and strip search <sup>ed</sup> us  
 again. They did not find the compass and I palmed the pep pill. After  
 returning our clothes we were each put into solitary. I do not know how long  
 we were there, but someone tried to communicate with me through the walls. I  
 did not answer. Soon an ~~officer~~ officer entered my room. I stood but did not <sup>a</sup> salute.  
 He asked me what air group I was from. Where was I stationed? What was my  
 mission? To all questions I only answered with my serial number and name. He  
 became very mad and slapped me quite hard. I fell back on a cot. He then  
 calmed down and said how old are you. I answered with my serial number. He  
 said <sup>he</sup> needed my age so that I <sup>C</sup> would be allowed to eat. That was because of  
~~r~~ <sup>he</sup> rationing. I said I can't give you that information and I had been eating  
 right along, although it wasn't the best of foods <sup>ed</sup>. He slapped me again and  
 left the room. After about an hour of so, I was released from my room and  
 taken to another barracks <sup>ed</sup>. There ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> many POWs here and everybody was glad to  
 see each other. Suddenly, someone found a hidden microphone and everyone  
 calmed down. The next day we were put on trucks, driven to a demolished section  
 of Frankfort to a railroad station. We got on a train. There was even  
 civilians <sup>s</sup>, or what seemed to be civilians, mixed in, of course we had many guards.

I thought the guards and many others were very important people as they all carried brief cases. This thought was soon put to rest when they all began to open their cases. In the cases they had a loaf of bread and sausage, and a thermos. That's how they carried their lunch. They ate in front of us. Nothing to eat for us. My recollection is fuzzy about the next move. But somewhere we were transferred to boxcars. Half the car was sectioned off with eight inch logs. In one half they put roughly 20 or 30 POW's. You couldn't hardly sit down. In the other half there was only two guards. Thus started our trip to ~~Lubania~~ <sup>Pomerania</sup>. It took about two weeks, as we were side tracked many times. A great fear came over us along the way, we discovered we were stopped for a time on a siding and then passed through the same marshalling yards that was our target several days ago. Since we knew that some of us carried booby <sup>trap</sup> bombs and the 72 hour time limit was just about up, they were due to explode anytime. For those who do not know what a booby <sup>trap</sup> bomb is I will explain. It is a 500 pound demolition bomb, that when the detonator is screwed in it's nose, it is impossible for anyone to remove it. It is designed to bury itself <sup>and</sup> not explode. Mixed with other bombs that do the damage, the enemy may not find these bombs. If they do and make a quarter turn of the detonator to remove it, it will explode. If they don't find them, they will explode in 72 hours. Perhaps after they have repair <sup>ed</sup> the initial damage ~~the result is that after~~ ~~repair~~ it will all go up again without another raid taking place. We arrived at ~~Stalag Luft 4~~ <sup>Stalag Luft 4</sup>. There were several other searches before the one upon arrival at this camp. Through all of these searches I managed to palm or trick my keeping the compass and pep pill. I later contacted the escape committee and donated the compass and pep pill. If one had a plan of escape, and presented <sup>it to</sup> the escape committee and, if they approved, they would assist in the escape. If <sup>in</sup> such assistance came <sup>in</sup> the form of make shift German uniforms, compasses, pep pills,

STALAG 4

sharpening up the plan and other help. At Starlickfor, there ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> mostly English POWs but one <sup>lager</sup> ~~lager~~ was for us. At this camp, we spent about eight months. During this time I contracted a bad case of Scabies. My arms swelled to twice their size. It was very painful. I went on sick call at the onset and was given a GI brush and sulfur ~~sax~~ <sup>lye</sup>. I was told to take hot showers <sup>for</sup> which they gave me special permission, ~~for~~. And to scrub with a brush then apply the sulfur <sup>lye</sup> ~~sax~~. It got much, much worse. I may have gotten Sulfur poisoning as well. Finally I stopped this treatment, and now that the weather was becoming warmer, I sunbathed. The sun seemed to do the trick. <sup>The scabies</sup> ~~It~~ finally went away. By now all the tiny pieces of ~~flack~~ had worked their way out of my skin, both from my head and my shoulders. It was at this camp, that was fairly well supplied by the ~~red cross~~ <sup>red cross</sup>, that I started and ~~Art Class~~ <sup>classes</sup> to keep busy. After a time the escape committee asked me if would conduct <sup>in</sup> certain spots outside. They wanted my class to hide certain noises of tunnel digging and allow some dispensing of gravel from the tunnel by those who gathered around. Many tunnels were dug, but none succeeded. One was being dug from under the latrine. I was sitting on the latrine one day and ~~I~~ noticed one POW standing near the window for a long time. No one else was present. A ~~look out~~, I thought. Sure enough after a time a head poked up from the seat next to me. A POW asked if I had any matches. I gave him some and he went back down to work. This tunnel was later discovered when the ox drawn ~~suction~~ <sup>to</sup> wagon that was cleaning out the latrine suddenly caved in the tunnel. It had been raining for about four days and the ground was very soft. Another tunnel was abandoned to the Germans as a joke. When a guard found the dirt near the stove, he moved the stove and found a dark hole. The guard ran for the commandant. When he showed the commandant what he had discovered, all the POWs laughed and laughed. The commandant said, "I don't understand, I found your secret and you

laugh." Some one said, "that's nothing, you should see the other one." With that they showed him another hidden tunnel. The goon guard rattled something in German. Commander said to him "Dumb cuff go in and see where it goes". The goon snapped to attention and stepped into the tunnel, up to his waist in water. Histeria broke out and the goon and commandant left. Yes, there were many funny moments, but mostly little food, constant harrassment, pain and death. A death was witnessed by many. We thought of it <sup>as</sup> an execution. We were always locked up at night. Dogs patrolled the outside. In the morning a guard unlocked the doors and collected the dogs. One morning as he unlocked the door of the first barracks and proceeded to the next, a POW came out of the first barracks and headed across the parade ground toward the latrine and washroom. He had his soap and towel in his hands. The guard in the tower did not think he was supposed to be out, and shot. The POW fell in the middle of the parade ground. He lay there obviously in great pain as he rolled around several times and raised a hand once. We were all shouting for help for this victim. As we took turns looking out the window. It was almost an hour before some one came. It was too late. The POW was dead. I never learned the identity of this man, but I did secretly make a painting of the scene. I kept this painting hidden throughout the POW days. Later at home when I was interviewed by the was crimes commission, I loaned it to them. I never got it back. In camp we had the special BBC news everyday. Somehow <sup>our</sup> ~~are~~ radio operators put together a small ~~radio~~ sets capable of picking up this broadcast. At one time we had so many of the radio's that we would occasionally let the German's find one. They would pull searches that were surprises. A radio would be left semi hidden. As soon as they found it the search was called off. Many other things were safeguarded because of this. Soon the Russians started there <sup>is</sup> advance on the German's. When they began to get close, we were evacuated by truck to the <sup>a</sup> ~~B~~altic Sea. We were

eventually all put down in <sup>the</sup> A dark empty hold<sup>s</sup> of several freighters. We were packed in so tight we could hardly move, let alone sit or sleep. There was bucket to be used for a ~~John~~. These buckets were then pulled up by rope to be emptied. The bucket never made it all the way up without spilling several times on to those unfortunate~~s~~ to be directly below. Swill was lowered for us to eat. We never knew if one of the same buckets <sup>was</sup> were used for this purpose or not. Twice we were allowed in small groups of six to climb up the ladder to the deck. This was for fresh air and exercise. On one of the outings several POW<sup>s</sup> jumped over board. We heard shots, but never found out what happened to the escapes<sup>e</sup>. The must have also frozen. It was cold, ~~ice~~ water. Several days later we arrived in <sup>Stettin</sup> ~~Statin~~. The ship tied up to a dock which had large battleship <sup>e ed</sup> ~~birth~~ on the other side. We tried to get the name of it, but could not. Again we were put aboard box cars, but this time it was <sup>to</sup> A difference ~~we~~ We were handcuffed two by two during this trip, <sup>some</sup> Some of us <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ able to unlock the primitive cuffs with a <sup>Kum</sup> ~~climb~~ milk can key / We all kept around our neck. We did not let the guards know about this. As we saw we were being taken off of the box cars, we refastened the cuffs as to not get into trouble. That was one bad move. We did not know what was about to happen. After lining up about six abreast, we were marched along a road. This road was lined with sailors and other guards that had either a rifle with a fixed bayonette~~s~~ or several guard dogs. After about a mile or so, a commandant of our group gave an order to make us run. The guards and the sailor~~s~~ ~~guards~~ started to attack us. ~~The~~ They jabbed the bayonette~~s~~ at us, ~~The~~ The dogs nipped at our heels. We ran about four miles, ~~I~~ It must be remembered here that we were all suffering from malnutrition, diarrhea and some even had canes or crutches, still suffering from their wounds. Many fell by the wayside, as did I. As the dogs and bayonette~~s~~ came close we jumped back on our feet and ran some more. I got a small stick <sup>from</sup> ~~for~~ a bayonette~~s~~ in my

back side. Shots were heard. Many did not make it. Those who survived will never forget. After we were herded into the gates of Stalag ~~13~~<sup>Luft 6</sup> Six, we had no barracks. We had tents for several weeks. It was while we were in these tents that a German soldier working on a telephone pole was electrocuted. When we heard the news we all ran to the fence to see. The German guards with the linemen thought we were going to riot. We were cheering. The Germans let loose a burst of machine gun fire. ~~All~~<sup>ALL</sup> POWs ran and dived for shelter. I suddenly found myself hiding behind a tent. A TENT? ~~is~~ What kind of protection is this? We all watched as they lowered the dead linemen. It was also at this camp that I obtained my log book. This is a book of blank pages, hard <sup>u</sup> bound, and made by the YMCA, but distributed by the Red Cross. I obtained this through the help of several my comrades. We <sup>e</sup> pooled <sup>oo</sup> our resources of cigarettes and chocolate from the Red Cross ~~Food~~<sup>are</sup> ~~possels~~, to trade for it. Chipping in for this was Harris, my crew member, and Tony Lombard, a POW, who later became a great friend until he passed away in 1986. I'm am not a writer, I <sup>was</sup> more of an artist <sup>at that time,</sup> not a professional artist, but I had a lot of art training. So I wanted to do sketches for a record. I made many sketches, sketches of each head of those in my room and barracks, sketches of life as a POW, sketches of dreams of what a private jet might look like in the future. I also kept the painting of the executed POW with my log book. I did all this work when there <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ no guards around. If I had been found out, I do not know what may of happened to me. This camp was not as good as the previous camp. There was not as much food, not that we had even enough food at ~~Stalag 13~~<sup>Stalag 4</sup> for. At this camp we got so hungry I tried to eat grass. I tried it raw. I tried it boiled. <sup>us</sup> Lozy, <sup>us</sup> lozy, <sup>us</sup> lozy. ~~We~~<sup>we</sup> First of all there ~~was~~<sup>were</sup> the maggots. We were served a <sup>oo</sup> ~~grail~~ of dehydrated vegetables and grains. This was loaded with maggots. Each bowl had dozens. They were dead from the cooking in our mess hall, but they were

maggots. At first I could not eat, then I found a secret from the English POW/s. They were in our <sup>lager</sup> ~~lager~~ at that time. We were a mixed American and English <sup>lager</sup> ~~lager~~. I traded for some Curry powder, this would make the <sup>ass</sup> ~~gruel~~ <sup>palatable.</sup> ~~powderable.~~ I ~~had~~ put quite a lot of Curry powder in each bowl, but I ate it. I ate it with closed eyes. I ate it to survive. The Russians began their <sup>in</sup> ~~there~~ advance even more. Our camp was beginning to get more available to them, ~~Something~~ the Germans did not want. So we again made ready for evacuation. ~~We~~ all made some sort of nap sack. It was again winter. So I also made a pocket in the inside of my big coat. This pocket would hold my log book and the painting. We were to march on the road. We had no idea of the torture this would be. Walk we did in the freezing cold and snow. It was in February, the first week or so, ~~I~~ saw many blistered feet. Many POW/s picked up sticks to use as crutches or walking aids. We walked from dawn to dusk. We went around cities, always staying in the country. We had little food, ~~An~~ occasional boiled potato and piece of bread. At dusk we were ushered into barns, sleeping in the hay, all tight together, or sleeping with the livestock. On several occasions, we were <sup>ed</sup> ~~put~~ <sup>ed</sup> ~~through~~ another type of torture, ~~The~~ worst of all to my mind. As we <sup>ed</sup> ~~enter~~ <sup>ed</sup> ~~the~~ farm's ~~barn~~ complex, we <sup>ed</sup> ~~march~~ <sup>ed</sup> ~~passed~~ a pig being roasted on an open fire. It was for the officers to dine on that night. Our mouths watered. We were very, very



maggots. At first I could not eat, then I found a secret from the English POW's. They were in our <sup>lager</sup> ~~lager~~ at that time. We were a mixed American and English <sup>lager</sup> ~~lager~~. I traded for some ~~curry~~ <sup>curry</sup> powder, this would make the gruel palatable. I had put quite a lot of ~~curry~~ <sup>curry</sup> powder in each bowl, but I ate it. I ate it with closed eyes. I ate it to survive. The Russians began their advance even more. Our camp was beginning to <sup>be</sup> ~~get~~ more available to them, something the Germans did not want. So we again made ready for evacuation, we all made some sort of <sup>nap</sup> sack. It was again winter. So I also made a pocket in the inside of my big coat. This pocket would hold my log book and the painting. We were to march on the road. We had no idea of the torture this would be. Walk we did, in the freezing cold and snow. It was in February, the first week or so. I saw many blistered feet. Many POW's picked up sticks to use as crutches or walking aids. We walked from dawn to dusk. We went around cities, always staying in the country. We had little food: an occasional boiled potato and piece of bread. At dusk we were ushered into barns, sleeping in the hay, all tight together, or sleeping with the livestock. On several occasions, we were put through another type of torture, the worst of all to my mind. As we enter <sup>ed</sup> ~~the farm~~, the barn complex, we <sup>ed</sup> ~~passed~~ a pig being roasted on an open fire. It was for the officers to dine on that night. Our mouths watered. We were very, very hungry; we were being starved. Hatred grew. In the haylofts, shoes were stolen, stolen by the Russians and/or Polish POWs <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ were marching along with us. Thoughts also ran wild about escape or how we could steal part of that pig. On two occasions we had no barns to sleep in. We were put in an open field, about one thousand feet square. A pine forest had recently been felled. We did the best we could to keep warm. We used the deep snow to form windbreaks. Some of the leftover fir tree branches served as ground and snow cover to sleep on. We huddled together. Fires were

not allowed. In the morning a few POWs did not ~~awake~~; <sup>waken;</sup> they froze to death. My hands and feet were again frostbitten. A warm cup of ~~Hershadt's~~ <sup>ersatz</sup> coffee served as our breakfast, then back on the road. The log book was still with me. March, march, march, til finally at one barn we stayed two days. It was here that I could go no longer. I'd had enough; I was sick; I vomited from eating the snow, and melted snow for water. I was suffering a cold, malnutrition and was very weak. Come whatever; I was going no further. I had said goodbye to my crew members and friends and stayed behind. Those that stayed with me, about 75 in all, were finally put aboard a horse drawn wagon. We were taken to railroad boxcars. After (2) days we arrived at ~~Stalag~~ <sup>Stalag</sup> 357. I met up with my buddies again ~~that~~ <sup>who</sup> had been 42 days on the road across Germany, not far from the Rhine river. We all thought this, ~~is~~ <sup>that</sup> being an older camp, ~~is~~ would be better. They must at least have Red Cross food parcels. The Red Cross food parcel was normally designed for a minimum ration for (2) men for (1) week. Up to now we had approximately (5), sometime (10), men per parcel per week. This camp 357 did not even know what Red Cross food parcels were. They had even less than we had had.

Several days later our own elected camp commander and representative discovered that there were several boxcars standing on a siding in the railroad yards. They were loaded with personal packages for English POWs. These POWs had been moved and there was no way these parcels would be forwarded. He finally got permission from the Germans after signing to take responsibility to distribute these parcels among us. After dividing everything up in our usual way ~~of~~ <sup>by</sup> cutting or drawing cards, I received (1) cigarette and a package of pancake mix. This pancake mix was later to save my life. I decided to try to stretch the mixture by trying to bake a cake similar to the ones we used to bake in ~~Stalag~~ <sup>Stalag</sup> 4 and 6. In these we had saved prune pits for the inside. We

used crackers and margarine to make <sup>a</sup> crust; powdered our sugar cubes <sup>and them</sup> mixed with powdered milk and water to make a frosting. The meat of the prune <sup>nuts</sup> was finally chopped for a filling. This was all covered by finely chopped prune nuts and left to cool on a window sill. Though I did not have all the ingredients, I was going to bake in our stove some sort of cake. I did and I ate it. Did I ever get sick! Again vomit <sup>ing</sup> and diarrhea was my reward. At a time when I was sitting on a john, which was located at the entrance to the barracks, the guard came and took everybody out, they were going back on the road. The guard opened the john door and said, "Rouse", I said "Conkin" and he let me stay and be alone. They all left; I quickly got my things together and went out the back door. Here I noticed the guards in the tower, the only one I could see was looking the other way. They were watching those leaving for the open road. I quickly jumped the first guard rail and rolled into a ditch. Under the barbed wire, out and over the guard rail on the other side. I was in the next compound. I did this again into the next compound, as each compound was put on the road. Somehow I managed to go to the hospital area to see the doctor. As I was being interviewed by the doctor, I suddenly had to vomit. This was enough for the doctor to let me stay with the sick. After everybody <sup>one</sup> but the sick were on the road / <sup>who</sup> we that stayed behind were moved to a corner lager. We were to be left behind. The English were now moving our way; the Germans left only the older men as guards. ~~They were to be left to the English also.~~ After several days I took my place <sup>in</sup> at a turn ~~at~~ foraging for food. We were only allowed to go to the field directly behind the camp. This field contained rows and rows of piled up potatoes and <sup>Kohlrabi</sup> ~~caviradi~~ stored for the winter. They were kept from freezing by several alternate layers of straw and manure. We dug through by hand to obtain all that we could carry to share with our individual groups. That night as we were locked up / two important things happened. We

heard the German lines move back; we were now in no man's land. Around 3 a.m. an aircraft at very high speed, but going slow, made two flyovers of our camp. We estimated that they must be Spitfires or Typhoons. On the first pass, he dropped ~~4~~ <sup>1</sup> flares on two corners of our camp, ~~one on each corner,~~ very accurately. On the second pass, he marked the other two corners. Then we heard an artillery barrage. He had marked our camp. They knew we were there! Cheers from everybody.

The next morning we were all outside digging foxholes. After a time, two flights of <sup>British</sup> ~~English~~ Typhoons came over. There were two groups of four. The first group stayed circling high, while the second group peeled off and came down directly at us. We did not know what to make of it. Then we saw rockets being fired. They looked as though there were coming directly at us. We jumped into our foxholes. What the hell are they doing!?! The rockets went over our heads and into a clump of trees in a small valley behind the camp. Each plane fired its rockets. What are they doing? When the attacking flight were back up to the other flight, the other planes did the same thing and attacked. When the second plane in the group fired its rockets, they went into the trees and the whole large clump of trees vanished. An ammo dump was destroyed. After noon someone shouted "tanks!". They were far off in the distant fields. We climbed on the roof to see better. Then three explosions near the front gate of our camp - back to the foxholes again! Soon yells of joy were heard from near the gates. The guards came down from the towers; one was running around shouting he was not a Nazi. I ran to the main gate. As I arrived an English halftrack was poised at the gate - the Ninth <sup>Hussars</sup> ~~Hicazars~~! They were trying to get the key from the officers in the guardhouse. <sup>As</sup> ~~Had~~ they took prisoners, the halftrack moved forward and pushed down the main gate. We all ran out, happy to see them. We were given cigarettes and some personal

rations. I ran over and with the help of some of my buddies, I pried loose the padlock that was on the fallen gate; we were free!

But freedom takes awhile. It would be another week before we were out. The English posted guards to protect us. They patrolled the barbed wire day and night. We were given some English rations and traded some American cigarettes for more. Some POWs left the camp to roam and find their own way back. Some stole cars and motorcycles. They borrowed some gas from the British and went off. I do not know where they ended up or where they have been. I do recall two GIs <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ were very drunk. They had stolen a motorcycle, borrowed gas, and came back to pick up some of their belongings and say goodbye. It was quite funny at the time because I can still see it - off they roared, dead drunk, weaving all over the road. The guy on the back had a guitar slung across his back. It wasn't long before they <sup>me</sup> ~~came~~ limping back - arms around each other and singing. They had smashed into a tree. The guy with the guitar still clung to the neck of the guitar with the broken strings dangling.

We were vastly short of food. The British guards had only enough for their own supply. They could not supply us. We had to forage the area. We drew cards to see who would go; I was one of them. We left the camp <sup>and</sup> ~~went~~ into the country away from town. After an hour of walking, we came to a farm. I was quite scared, as we had heard a story of others <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ had left the camp and were later found hanging from a tree. There were also mines all over the place. I stood guard <sup>at</sup> the entrance to ~~the farm~~ <sup>an animal pen, which was under part</sup> ~~(here the tape is garbled)~~ <sup>of the house. We had knocked over the door, saw people inside, but they would not answer</sup> ~~One of them handed me a small lamb and said this is your share.~~

I carried the lamb back to camp. It was for our barracks group, but nobody wanted to kill it. They said you got it, you kill it. Lacking guns, I finally had to put it in a foxhole and club it to death, not an easy chore. Lambs have

*the door. The others went in under the house. When they came out they carried a duck and about four chickens.*

hard, thick skulls. I was crying when I did it, but this was all we had to eat. After it was over, no one wanted to eat it and we agreed to trade it with a Polish group. It again became my job. I lugged it over to their part of camp and managed to get 4 chickens for it. Not a bad deal, really. The chickens were laying hens and we opened them up to find a dozen eggs in various degrees of ~~completion~~. *development.*

A team of newsmen showed up and began taking movies of the large groups. I never ~~or~~ <sup>or heard</sup> saw <sup>^</sup> about this again. After a while we were taken by truck to a forward airfield; field it was, just a flat field. We arrived, but there ~~was~~ *were* no planes. The field had already moved forward. We were taken to a town and occupied a building something like a YMCA for the night. Again, no food and we slept on the floor. The next day we tried for another field. This one was still in operation. As we waited in groups, and turned to embark on the <sup>incoming</sup> C47s, a British officer kept eyeballing me. I had on a pair of leaded wings which I had made from sandcastings and lead saved from the bottom of cans that attached the key. This officer finally came over to me and asked where I used to be stationed. I said England. He asked, "do you want to go back to England?" I said, "Certainly!" I had missed keeping a date fourteen months ago. He said, "you see the aircraft arriving with white stripes on them. They are returning to England, the others are going to France." He gave me a wink and moved off. The C47 pulled up in front of our group. This was what we were to get aboard. I noticed it had no markings, <sup>thus</sup> I knew it was going to France. I managed to slip into the next group and waited for the next plane. It had the stripes and I was headed for England!

It shook us all up quite a bit when we approached England. Evidently we were slightly off course and they let us know by firing three bursts of flack off our left wing. I got the pilot's autograph and we had previously gotten

the autograph of one of the soldiers in the halftrack that freed us. We arrived near Oxford, then we were taken by truck to the 91st General Hospital. We were deloused, showered, shaved, and given new clothes. When we were assigned to a ward building, we were told to eat in Mess Hall #1. After a week of eating steak, eggs, and a variety of other great foods, we were suddenly assigned to Mess Hall #2. They just discovered we were suffering from malnutrition and the #1 Mess Hall food was too rich for us. The next week was one of porridge, eggnog, etc.

I had written my girl upon arrival and one day I got a call from the gate; I had a visitor. I rushed to the gate in my PJs to find my girl and her father. We went back to my ward and talked. I showed them my log book and told them how I had kept it with me through all hell. We took in a movie at the hospital theatre and then said goodbye. Later I was transferred to London to await shipment home. I called my girl at her work place, as they had no phone at home. I had asked her to marry me. She said yes, and I got a furlough. I went to see her, got special permission to get married, got married at the register's office and went on a honeymoon to Leon Sea. When I returned from my furlough, I found out that my papers had gotten all mixed up. ~~X~~ The officer in charge of us was surprised to see me. If you had not returned, we would have assumed you fell overboard. You are supposed to be on a ship headed for the US! Later I was on a ship, a Liberty Ship. I was in charge of 7 POWs. The second night out we ran into bad weather, so bad that they took off the mine watch. I thought we had had it when as we went over a great sea swell, the props left the water, the ship ~~X~~<sup>dd</sup> shuttered and it made a loud noise. Certainly we had hit a mine! But no, we were lucky. Later we arrived at Norfolk, VA. We spent several nights in a mosquito infected barracks without mosquito netting. We were eaten alive. It was too hot to even get under a

sheet, let alone a blanket we had. I called my Mom and was soon aboard a train headed for Ft. Devins, MA. This is where I had enlisted. The route would take us through my home town of Norwich, CT. Although I was again in charge of a group and had the travel orders and all the records, etc., I managed to put someone else in charge and jumped the train when it stopped in Norwich. I had my own travel orders which said I was to report at noon the following day. I visited my Mom at work, ~~then~~<sup>+</sup> went to my Grandmother's house where we lived. My Grandfather had died while I was a POW. They sent me a telegram at the time about this; the mails were not getting through. The next day they drove me to Ft. Devins. After several days, I had a 72 day furlough. I was supposed to report to Atlantic City, NJ, for discharge, but while I was on leave a telegram came that said I should report to San Antonio, TX instead. After my leave I took a train to San Antonio, we did not fly much in those days. I was there for 2 weeks and discharged. Another train brought me home. I waited for 8 months for my wife to arrive here. The SS Washington brought her to New York City with thousands of other war brides. I was, at this time, going to Art School and working in New York City.

Many years passed. I finished ~~Art School~~ and then ~~Photography School~~. I worked for different art firms and ad agencies in New York City. When I moved to New Jersey, I became ~~Art Director~~ with a Newark ~~Engineering~~ firm. Later I was ~~Art Director~~ at a local ad agency and then went into my own business.

In 1980 I lost my wife to cancer. I was lost for several years. I remarried and then decided to do what I always had in mind to do with my log book. I wanted to donate it to the Air Force Museum ~~in Dayton Ohio~~<sup>at</sup> Wright Patterson Air Force Base <sup>Dayton, Ohio.</sup> I made arrangements to do this, made a trip, ~~I had been there before~~ and donated the book. I also had special permission to go inside a B17 they had on display and take pictures. The B17 was not a combat



version and it was mostly stripped down. I am sorry to say that the museum backed down on its word to display the log book. The padlock which I also donated is on display. The book is in the Library and can be seen by anyone wishing to go there and ask to see it. As one reporter from a local paper put it, "The log book is still a prisoner".

As for me, I'm still in combat, still fighting the memories and thoughts of POW life, of what I've been through and of what my comrades suffered. I am still in combat, still fighting, fighting for my rights from the VA. It seems there is always those in charge that never saw combat, never knew the life of a POW. Many of them were not even old enough to be in service at the time. How can they understand? I have been forced to retire now, due to ailments of POW life. I will continue my combat until the VA realizes what we Vets went through. I only wish I could liberate my log book, to put it on display in the way that would help those in present and future generations realize what we went through to save freedom.

This a true story, written by Calvin Brend, 371 Wadesworth Avenue, S. Plainfield, NJ 07080 201/757-5760. Army Air Corps Serial #11103371. Social Security #047-14-8769.