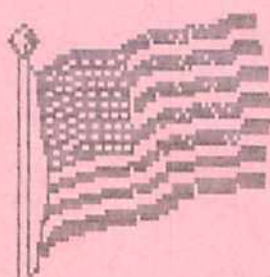
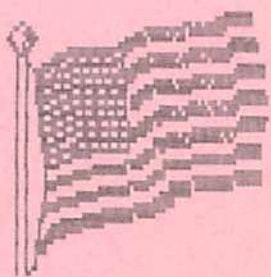


**A
VISIT IN
GERMANY**

BY

FRANK LEHNERT

DECEMBER 29, 1944



A VISIT IN GERMANY

by SGT. FRANKLIN J. LEHNERT

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This is a story that will be told many times by a youngster to several people in the future. This is dedicated to the USA, a country which he took for granted & never realized what it was or what it stood for. This toilet paper (on which the original script was written), Deutschland's best is a symbol of his love for the fatherland.

It all started on the morning of December 29, 1944 (now 50 years ago!). Memories of christmas dinner, my 19th birthday, late snacks and blouse decorations had disappeared when ole Sgt. Woodie bellowed out "listen for your names"!

This was a familiar sound the past two weeks. You see, the two weeks I had been with the Eager Beavers of the 368th Bomb Group was spent with a bunch of rookies like myself. They were all sweating out their first mission while I been going to ground school. But this morning Olson's crew was on the list. Excitement of a mission jerked us out of bed, but all cooled down when we were told we were only working in the drying room. Nevertheless we made our sacks and journeyed to the mess hall.

It was a cold damp morning, as are all mornings in England. As we bounced along, led by Hoppie, our mess kits jangled against our warm parkas. We were one of the last to hit the mess, so we had no line to sweat. We had french toast, syrup, butter, prunes, oatmeal, milk, sugar & grapefruit juice. as per usual oatmeal was half my breakfast with juice the other half. Little did this tail gunner know as he washed his mess kit that he had finished his last GI meal for a long time.

When the crew reported to the drying room to pass out equipment & serve as last minute substitutes, I was put on oxygen masks. The boys came in from briefing and Ben was the first familiar face. The skipper was going on number 3 and Lyle came along & was really sweating out number 1. Everything would be quiet until the navigators would come in from their briefing. So while we were waiting Les entertained us with some splendid card tricks. We were coaxing him to let us go back to the sacks when the telephone rang. He answered it and they said Sgt. Lehnert is flying with 031 at waist. I thought he was joking & led him on. Convinced, the anxiety of mission one sent me flying to stall 117. Gearbox helped me on with my stuff. Besides my harness, boots, flak helmet, little gave me trouble. After all my clothing was on, the harness man refit me. All set to go ..with more equipment than a chimney sweep. I was going to wait until the navigators went out, but they called from the plane and said I better hurry & get my guns in. The navigators came in & Joe seemed pretty happy for number 1.

We walked to the latrine together and he said "milk run, just over the line". I told him where I was flying, jumped on the truck and was off for my first action. I arrived at the ship and the only one around was the ball turret gunner who told me I was flying tail in place of my casino partner Rogers. Rogers got up

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with us , and to this day don't know why he didn't fly. (had heard that he did get sick). Before putting in my guns,I relieved myself country style in the woods,using a rag for paper.(could have been nervous).I put in the guns & while doing that, Hoppie the waist gunner, came out and wiped the frost from my window. I crawled up in the waist & put all my equipment on including the May West from the emergency bag. I refused a jelly sandwich and just laid down & relaxed.

As we took off at 0953, I only knew what two of my crew looked like, and no ones names. After an half hour, I was told to go to my position. I crawled back into the tail,plugged into intercom, opened the window, put the chute on top of the right ammo box and the flak suit behind me. We were still rendezvousing & I got my first look a big formation and England from the air. Flares were going toward the patchwork of land as we finally started toward the Rhine. The channel,France,oxygen checks melted into my gaze of the high group of our wing. We are over enemy territory brought my thoughts to fighters. We were almost on the I.P. when I saw my first flak. It was in the distance & therefore didn't worry me. We then test fired & both my guns jammed.The navigator said to "put on your flak suits". Being busy I slipped it over my right shoulder & fixed one gun. "Bombs Away" made me feel like number one was over & it wasn't too bad.But I was still praying that we wouldn't see any fighters as the right gun was still acting up.

My thoughts promptly changed when flak hit right outside my window.They say it is close when you can smell it & boy did I get a whiff! Brother that gunner was scared! But then came a terrific blast & it felt like kicker for State had kicked me in the right back side.I called the waist & told him I was hit. I was close to going out but finally caught my breath. After a debate, I felt my back & discovered no blood gushing out.Since the radio man called & reported a fire as we had been hit in the bomb bay also. I called waist & told him I was ok. I laid back & tried to clear my head. Then the pilot said to prepare to bail out. I was all cramped in the tail & had to tear off my intercom cords & oxygen to get turned around & get my chute off the ammo box. The waist gunner hadn't heard me & was back with first aid kit & chute. As I did this I noticed a gaping hole behind the right ammo box. Before I could get my chute on the plane went into a flat spin movement. I was going to try to dive out & snap on the chute on the way down, but the force glued me down to the floor. The plane's motion made me very sick as it had been my first flight in 2 months.

Resigned to that this is the way I would die,the plane crossed me up by leveling off. The waist gunner jettisoned the tail door and I put on my chute. It was so crowded that I had to snap it on upside down. This was my first chance to look toward the nose & boy was I horrified to see the radio room & waist a mass of flames! I expected it to blow any minute.The ball turret gunner was kneeling by the waist door, waist gunner in front of the tail door & I right behind him. I later found out that we were the only 3 left in the plane..we had been off intercom when the pilot gave the bail out call.

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It was plenty hot and all three of us sat there waiting for a bell or God knows what. I didn't know anyone had bailed out , so I still was hoping to get back. Suddenly the plane turned into the wind and the heat was so terrific I yelled "lets go". The ball turret gunner left the waist and I saw the silk go by the tail door so I figured he was ok. I gave the waist gunner a poke in the back & he decided to roll out. As a result he hung by his boot on the hinge. By this time molten aluminum was coming back & I had to close my eyes & work the his boot loose (couldn't be sure if he was in it or just a boot). I immediately dove out because the heat was terrific & I had been off oxygen for along time & was almost out.

The slip stream lived up to its reputation & tossed me like a feather in a typhoon. The wind quieted down and it felt like I was on a feather bed , 4 or 5 miles up. I could feel myself going out, so I pulled the rip cord like it weighed a ton. I was laying with my back to the ground when the pilot chute appeared dragging a mass of white behind it. Next I saw the cords tighten and I looked up to see the canopy...what a beautiful sight! I hadn't received any jerk at all & the harness fit perfectly. First I had to fight to keep conscious, but lower altitude brought me around. Then I got sick & heaved, but luckily not into the wind. I got a little on my jacket, but then I felt good. First I looked at the ground and it looked as if I would hit a river and it would take me a year to get down. I looked around & saw the burning plane disappear in a cloud. I saw one chute was above four level or below. The next move was to look at the surroundings & plan my escape.

A big bridge crossed what I later found out was the Rhine, and the rest was hills & woods on one side & a city on the other. It seemed to take forever to get down, and my hands hurt from cold & burns. All of sudden I looked down & the trees came zooming up to meet me. So I crossed my legs and arms and snap, crackle & jerk. Everything was stone quiet again like it was on the way down. I had broken through on a hillside of tall trees. My chute had caught on the top & held me 30 feet off the ground. There were absolutely no branches near me ,so I just dangled in mid air. I tried to hold the trunk with one hand & unfasten my snaps with the other. Because of my own weight & sore hands, I worked in vain. I was completely done in & just hung there. I relieved myself & to this day have never done that in a funnier position. I swung over to a pine tree about 10 yards away and climbed up and after terrific effort got 3 of the 5 snaps undone. But try as I did I could not get the 2 upside down snaps undone.

Just about this time I heard the Jerries coming. I tried to hide in the trees, but my chute gave me away. About 10 soldiers with burp guns captured me. They were commanded by a young Sgt. who I was able to talk with in French. They called up to see if I was a German pilot. I said "nix" & one climbed up with a knife..I really didn't know if he was going to use it on me, but instead used it to cut the cords to get me down. They asked for papers & I had a billfold of papers but handed them my dogtags. After a discussion the Sgt & a private walked me about 2 km A Visit in

thru the hills and woods to their headquarters in a small town. All the people acted like I was the first American they had seen. (For sure they were the first Germans I had seen!). I was taken to an office which contained 2 women secretaries, a large dog & a major. I stood around as the major was busy on the phone. I was very tired & hot & asked if I could sit down & take off my clothes. I took off my flight suit & sat down. The women seemed to be real excited about seeing an American, but I was so down hearted I didn't care. One gal gave me an English salute and I corrected her with the GI version. Finally a guard came in & the major & I went to a car. We rode about a mile, under heavy guard, to an office building on top of a hill.

Soon they brought three men out, one of which said "glad to see you kid". Afterwards I found he was my pilot & the others were the radioman & togalier. The togalier couldn't walk, so they put him & our equipment in a car & off they went. The rest of us started a 6km walk across the Rhine to Bingen, the town we had just bombed. During this long cold walk, I got an idea of what my new buddies were like. We crossed a huge combination rail & road bridge which had ten flak guns on it (very possible the reason we three were here). The road followed the river to a bend which was the site of the city. Around 6 o'clock we were walking just outside the city when a V-2 took off near us. One of the guards said "probably for London" & for us to move on.

As we walked into town the refugees of our bombing were coming out. My heart was glad to see the huge fires that burned all night. One thing that made me stop & think, was to see 2 nuns come along with all their belongings and never give us a second glance. A few called us names, but as a rule darkness kept us unnoticed. After a stop at the edge of town, we went to a building in the heart of town where we met Arnold, the togalier.

They put us in a 10x10 room with 2 guards and an elderly Sgt. who could speak a little English. Then we ate one of the 3 escape kits we had. The old boy got quite a kick out of the idea that it was enough to keep one man going for a week. The "old boy" as we called him, told us to lay down because the floor was our bed for the night. Woellner, the pilot asked me where I picked up my black eye. Astonished, I got up to look in a mirror. Besides burns on my hands, I had about 20 burn spots where the molten aluminum had hit me on my face. Besides that I had 2 nice slashes on my neck (one on the right side was from a piece of flak & the other was on the left side from a tree I came through..it has also ripped the left shoulder of my jacket. Beside being covered with molten aluminum my jacket had a hole in the right side where I had been hit. But till this day I don't know where I got the black eye!

We laid on the floor all night and got little sleep especially with my sore back. We also made a trip to the cellar as the RAF came over that night. The next morning two guards took us to a railroad station. Expecting to leave, they held us for a short while and Arnold did not go along. We had all our equipment & pack & finally got a car near the engine. We talked the guard out of one more escape kit. The trip was to Mainz. On the way we stopped & took

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cover as a P-51 circled. We thought we were in for it & left the train, but we were not strafed & the plane left. During this time we saw several other air crew POWs. All along the way we saw beat up towns. We arrived at the station which was in pretty good shape about 1 o'clock. The electricity was out, so we had to walk all the way through town to another station. This town had taken a terrible beating & the people were very hostile. They all cursed at us, called us gangsters & paid criminals, baby & women killers etc. We were carrying our chutes so they knew we were airmen.

We were about half way through town, when an old man threw his bike at Woellner. That sure was a frightening walk! We got to where the other station had been & found out we had to wait till 5:30 for the train's arrival. So we sat by the tracks half frozen as all the people stood & cursed, spit etc at us. It sure made me sick to my stomach. It got darker and the people started crowding around us and we stood back to back expecting to get a knife in the back. One fellow said after he found we were Americans, that if we had been English they would have taken us out & shot us. Finally the train came. All afternoon I had been tearing up papers in my pocket. After a long wait, they finally put us on a car with a bunch of other POWs. As we rode along, I threw the papers along the track. We went from there to Frankfurt. On the way there the other boys gave us a piece of "goon" bread. That was our first taste of the sawdust, but it tasted like cake to us, since we hadn't eaten in 2 days. It was good to get with a large bunch of fellows. All the windows of a once large beautiful station had been bombed to bits. We walked down about 10 tracks and got another train. After a short ride we got off at Oberushal. We were the only ones carrying packs. My pack worked loose & became very hard to carry.

The short Lieutenant in charge carried it a ways & I took it again. We had only gone a short ways & I thought I'd drop. Just before I did, I gave it to another fellow and fell back with Arnold & other cripples. We finally got to the lager & they left us outside a few minutes. I was so tired I just dropped on my chute. They called us in and after taking our names, rank & serial numbers, put all four of us in a small room. They called us in one at a time & I was last. As soon as we hit the room we fell asleep. I was called out to another room & stripped completely. They took everything except my clothes & somehow my watch & ring. Then I was taken to room 9A. This was 6'x9' & in it was a 6'x 2 1/2' bed with wooden slats & a straw mattress, 1 jerry blanket. The rest of the room a small opaque window, 1 spiral heater, 1 milk bottle, 3 signs, a handle & a solid door. The signs were "Turn handle to call guard", "damage to heaters will cause cold rooms for all PWS" & "Scratching or marking on walls will be punished according to regulations". I had to put my boots outside & I hit the sack. The room was cold, but I got a good night's sleep. A guard woke me at 7:30, when the lights went on. He gave me a bunch of twigs & told me to sweep.

I crawled out stiff & cold and put my piggies into damp boots and swept out. About 8 o'clock they came in with 2 slices of bread, a spot of jelly & a bottle of ersatz coffee. It was the first food the goons had given us. The coffee was so bad I couldn't drink

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it. I ate the bread and that was it. All morning I read signs, counted nails & paced the floor. At noon they brought in some horrible soup. I found later it was good compared to the weed soup we got the next day. All that day was spent trying to keep warm, thinking, praying, and hoping. At 5PM they closed the shutters & darkness prevailed for an hour. Then they put a light on long enough to eat 2 slices of bread and margarine. It was a long night & morning. Then an english speaking Sgt. came to interview me. He explained to me it was for identification & not information. The only things I told him were things I knew he already knew. The height of this was when he asked me what religion I was. I told him Lutheran to which he replied " that's what I used to be". That afternoon I made a deck of cards out of straw & toilet paper, for a wild game of solitaire.

The next afternoon I was taken to another building & was interviewed by a good old major. After I was finished, he ordered a shower, shave and a sandwich instead of soup for dinner. The next day I got a razor and basin, so I washed & shaved. At noon I got cabbage soup which was good. After a big battle, I got a sandwich & an english movie book, which I has just begun when the guard brought a bowl of spuds & gravy. I about fell over, but found out the reason, as major called me in again right after & asked what place we had bombed. He got nowhere & sent me back. The interrogation was pretty fair except occasionally when he didn't like the answer he would kick me in the shins. That evening I was called out for shipping. We went to an interpreter & he gave us our stuff back. I got everything back except my jokes (secret papers, ha), license and such. They did give back the many little snap shots of Phyl. We went to the transit room in a group of 100. It was good to be in the midst of people again & talk with them. After 4 days of solitaire, I was about crazy. We slept with a room full of Limies and they sure were a crazy lot, and had lots of funny stories about their capture.

The next day we walked to the station and after a long wait and travel we arrived at Wetzlar about 4PM. Then we walked to camp...this a God's send. We were issued clothes & toilet articles & given a 3 minute shower. At the time it was better than strawberry shortcake in July. The best of it all was that we had our first decent meal. We got 2 slices of bread, 2 cups of cocoa, pea soup (that tasted like banana cream pie but at home would be like dishwater). We were put in barracks with 24 to a room & top notch conditions. We stayed there almost a month. Meanwhile Woeller & navigator Pollard were shipped to Barth. We had a crackerjack Col. Stark for a C.O. The Limies & permanent staff were giving us a holy hosing on our 1/2 Red Cross parcel issue. We were still getting food, but it was a joke the way the dividing went on due to the small quantities given. We had plays, variety shows, Goon Olympics, pictures & church all in the mess hall, which was colorfully decorated with comic pictures, planes & GIRLS. We griped at roll calls, walks etc, but we did not realize how lucky we were. So when our names came up to be shipped to Barth, we were happy.

We went through a light search & marched to the station. They put us in a prison car & gave us a red Cross package

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for 2 men. We stayed in Wetzler all night. The next day we found out we were going to Nuremberg. We were a bit disappointed but the rumor had it that it was an officers camp so we didn't mind. Our spirits were high as we had been eating good & felt good.

We arrived at Nuremberg late in the afternoon. We were instructed to eat all the food, so we ate all we could & had milk & sugar left. I put the two together & ate all the way to the lager. Nuremberg had been hard hit & downtown was completely destroyed. It was a center for Hitler Youth activities and while we marched we saw huge buildings & stadiums. It was about a 6km walk & with full stomachs the lager made a swell sight. Our hopes dream dimmed as we saw the Wehrmacht green on the gate guard. After great confusion we were taken to a shower room. Since none could speak english, it took a long time to explain the delousing procedure. We were then shaved, showered & searched. A gloomy future stared us in the face when we heard we were the first airmen to come to this camp. We then marched into the darkness not knowing what a future we had in store. We were put into barracks of poor, filthy, demoralized infantry non-coms. They were from the 99th that was captured in Luxemburg Dec. 1944. Our butts were good sponges until they ran out. Arnold & I sacked it together as we had but one Jerry blanket apiece. During the night I heaved twice and the GIs twice and once I didn't make it. This was a result of my milk & sugar conglob.

The next day we found out why the infantry boys were so low in spirit. They were sleeping in filthy barracks with little or no bathing facilities and they felt plenty sorry for themselves. We washed, shaved, took walks etc. This sort of brought the infantry boys out of a rut as they soon followed our example. They glared at us as we lit up a butt, and would immediately yell "butts". I met several swell guys, but most of them were a disgrace to their mothers. The main conversation was food & I added several extras to my own menu. We were issued metal bowls & spoons which the dirt constantly hung to. Each morning we were given a bowl of Jerry tea & a spoonful of jelly. At noon & evening we had dehydrated cabbage soup & if you were lucky, you'd get a piece of horse grizzle. Twice a week through saving meat rations, we were given a fair stew. Between supper & dinner we were given 1/6th of a loaf of bread and some margarine. The Belgians loaned us some Red Cross and we got 1/4 Canadian parcel. We traded with our next door neighbors, the Russians. We got bread for cigarettes & soap. We also got salt, sugar, sauerkraut, potatoes & souvenirs. I acquired a cute hope chest for 30 cigarettes and am now sweating getting it home in one piece. All in all we were pretty chummy with the "rushskis" & neither Jerry or fence could keep us apart.

Four days later Korf (Glen) moved into the barracks next door. He had just missed the Christmas parcel at Dulag as they were unloading them as he marched out of camp. We went on detail in the Italian compound & found out how filthy they were. They were shipped out & brought back several times before they left for good. While we were with the infantry, one of the privates died from malnutrition & hard labor.

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More airmen arrived each day from other camps that were being evacuated. They had more Red Cross than we had ever seen. They had beaucoup cigarettes which raise prices. The Jerries decided to make it a Luftwaffe camp, so we were transferred to the airmen's compound. We were placed in barracks 86, which was so full of limies that we had to sleep on the floor. Our chow was little or nothing & our moral was at an all time low. Our fellow Kriegies kicked in with some Red Cross that kept us thru our first day at our permanent camp. Abel was barracks chief & Korf was bay chief, so I had friends in power. Arnold & I slept on the table and the rest of the time was spent sweating out our meager ration of chow. Finally we had a chance to move and we three were anxious to move to barracks 77. Conditions were not much better but our moral was higher. This was due to an old motto of the Krieges "trust & fair play". After long suffering the good old Red Cross saved us with a 4/5th parcel. This raised our spirits sky high. This brought about the Lehnert/Korf combine which had previously worked on menus, bets & dates. Due to the combines, we could eat good & have delicacies. This has brought us thru long roll calls and other miseries up to date. During this time I met Lt. Widmer a fiend of Dr. Williamson. This account brings us up to date in Kregieland on March 6, 1945.

March 13th we finished off the parcel. It was a sad moment as we swallowed our last salmon sandwich and no idea of when we would receive our next parcel. After 12 days of unbearable weather which caused me much discomfort in frost bite, it warmed up & was a very nice scummy day. Despite a cut in rations, we hitched our belts another notch & went out to dig slit trenches. Our camp was visited by a Jerry captain & a Red Cross representative. Knack-Brot entered the scene last week for the first time as did a consolidated kitchen. The only moral booster was news that the Allies had crossed the Rhine, which seemed to bring the ending of the war nearer.

March 21 was the end of a fairly good week. Red Cross came in with a full parcel which made a big difference in the food problem. Weather was pretty good, but my feet still gave me a lot of trouble. A good system was brought in and now relationships between officers & enlisted men was permitted. Bob made pans for us & cakes came more often. I talked with several teachers & got the poop on teaching. Bombing increased & we dug more shelters. The war looks good but it looks like we'll spend Easter in Germany. Today was climaxed by a huge washing which resulted in clean clothes except for pants. A new sack position made night trips easier.

March 28..in the past week excitement has been terrific. Preparations for leaving are almost complete. Saving food & making traveling packs are next. Sammy & the German news have given us the latest news which made us believe we would be home soon. The weather has been beautiful. We have received British, French & American parcels in the past week. Church service such as Palm Sunday weren't as good as possible, but were very thought straining. Yes, today is Phyl's birthday & we ate our Easter cake which we had scraped & saved for over a month...it was so rich we got sick! We

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have been eating terrific as we expect to move soon. The toe trouble is clearing a bit & today we got a shower & an American parcel. Korf was sick last night, but today we both feel better. Next week I hope to write this from an American camp.

April 4th-with the 7th Army near, we take off today. The past week has been rushed & then quiet from sickness to hunger. We went to holy week service & climaxed by sunrise outdoor service. We received a Limy parcel & shoved off to see Germany by foot.

April 8-five days have found us 80km away & still going. Here in an open field outside Nuestadt we ate on a 2 hr break. We have had several bad points such as strafing, long hills, rain, sleeping in same, & the long hauls. But we also had beaucoup food, new wagons, parcels, good weather etc. The war seems endless, but we feel the end can't be far away. We are in good with the guards & should eat good now. They say we will never reach our new camp, but we go until the next time.

April 12-we are now 20km from Moosburg (near Munich) and now have a day & half layover. I have been very sick. Up until now we have had very little trouble with the wagon & the march wasn't too bad. We crossed the Danube & saw some very beautiful country. We have seen some huge bombings & many American planes. They look like they are watching over us. We received a 11/18th parcel from the Belgium government. We have slept warm & eaten plenty. My French has come in handy for some good trades. I went on sick call and am laying in a barn loft trying to get better.

Finally on April 19th we got to the top of a hill & looked down on the city of Moosburg. We got to camp, took a shower & were assigned to a tent. Conditions were terrible, but we had lots of RC parcels. We kept our carts as we were expecting to march again. We thought they were going to take us to the Alps & lose us. But underground radio assure us we wouldn't leave our present camp. We settled down to 10 anxious days of waiting. We thought the day would never come, but at 10Am on the 29th, Patton's tanks rolled over the hill & into & out of town. After they had made a bridgehead across the river they came back to free us. SS troops were in the woods right outside our fence. So the artillery backed up & shelled over heads for a couple hours. The infantry then moved in & liberated 26,000 prisoners, the largest number liberated at one time.

Due to bad weather we were kept in Germany for 9 days. The food wasn't much better as the kitchens were so far behind the advancing troops. Those 9 days were some of our darkest. On May 8 we were put on GI trucks & taken to Regensburg to get a plane. The people sure acted differently on our trip thru conquered country. We flew to England and after one night stay at an RAF base, we went to London May 9th. VE day. Hospitals followed which put us in shape & headed us for the grandest country in the world for keeps!

Sgt. Franklin J. Lehnert 15121900
8th Air Force Tail Gunner

P.S. After 50 years I would have written a great deal more detail about things that I still vividly remember. But thought this should be kept as originally written, by a brash 19 year old & written under extreme conditions. I would like to dedicate this to my wonderful dad who copied all this & carried on a letter chain with the other parents of my original crew, several of which saw me shot down. Also to my beloved Phyllis who wrote to me every day, not knowing if I were dead or alive for almost two months when I was MIA. I'm sure that the many prayers of all my relatives & friends was the reason God saw fit "to bring me home"

From the book "War and Rememberance"

The redoubtable 99th Infantry Division of Major General Walter E. Lauer had reached the Isar on April 26th, and took the town of Moosburg, where they found a Stalag chockfull of Allied Prisoners of War (Patton was sending Colonel Chas. Odem, the Surgeon of the Third Army, to the camp to assure himself that the POWs were getting the best medical care).

Many of the prisoners with us were from the 99th (Checkerboard Div) that were captured in the Battle Of The Bulge 12/44.

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November 11, 1993

Dear Russell,

I really have enjoyed the Echoes & the articles published brings back many memories. A couple years ago I had an reunion experience that I feel was quite unusual.

After I was discharged, got my degree in Pharmacy & started raising our family, my wife & I got involved in Round Dancing, which is a part of the Western Style Square Dance movement. We became teachers & were fortunate enough to travel to almost all the states & 7 foreign countries while in this movement.

One day came a letter from New Jersey from Joe Jaeger who was the navigator on our crew. I hadn't seen or heard from him in 48 years when I flew as a replacement crew member with another crew & was shot down & taken prisoner. Joe & his wife had become round dancers & had heard of us through the dance publications & were planning to come dance with us in Pittsburgh where we were doing a festival.

When I found this out I called our waist gunner, Henry Reppy who lives in Pittsburgh (had only seen him once in that time) & asked him & his wife to join us at the festival.

Needless to say we had a great reunion & the festival chairman introduced everyone & told the story to everyone present. Joe by the way, was the lead navigator on the longest raid of the war.

I think the fact that western round dancing was the cause of a 48 year reunion is really unique.

Enclosed are a couple pictures that you might want to use. I have no copies of these & would appreciate your returning them (enclosed envelope).

Thank you & keep up the good work!

Best wishes,

