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two of our four engines useless and a bunch of holes throughout including a couple of small ones in me. We kept losing altitude and were unable to get over the mountains near Sarajevo, Yugoslavia and were forced to bail out. To this day I am sure only two other crew members survived the jump. Inasmuch as they were shooting at us as we came down in our parachutes I had a number of holes in me, consequently I hit the ground harder than normal and was partially paralyzed from the waist down.

Two partisans carried me into a farm house. After a while I was taken to the local jail and they later got their bounty. After a couple of days I was walking pretty good and was put in a 40 men or 8 horses boxcar along with a bunch of other prisoners. There was little, if any, room to sit down and we were locked in.

Occasionally we would hear planes overhead, but couldn't tell if they were ours or not. All we could do was to pray that they didn't drop any bombs on us. Finally we could see through the cracks in the sides and knew that we had come into Budapest, Hungary where we had dropped our bombs just days earlier. It was obvious we had hit the target. From the boxcar I was taken to the prison camp at Hszlbyai. I was put in solitary confinement, stone walls and a door with three slots in it. I estimate the cell was about 6 feet wide and 8 foot long.

The floor was covered with straw that reeked with the odor of urine and defecation. To make it worse I knocked over a bucket of same. Tumbling around in the darkness it was cold and damp as well. My captors had taken my flight jacket, ring and watch so I had no concept of time. I don't recall how many days I was there but I do remember them bringing a can of thin soup and a piece of bread periodically. Even though I never got my stomach full. The bedbugs did however fill theirs with my blood.

I was taken to a room with no windows, two stools and a small table and one dim light. After a while an officer came in with a guard who stood behind me. The officer spoke perfect English and sat down with a file in his hand and started asking questions. The only information I gave him was my name, rank, and serial number. The questions continued for what seemed to be hours. My answers were always the same. I don't know anything I responded. I would then get kicked in the back by the guard with the end of his rifle, as well as being threatened to be hung or turned over to the Gestapo.

Shortly after they left the room. The guard returned with cold potato soup, two pieces of bread, coffee and two cigarettes. I was about finished eating when the officer came back. My lighter was taken, so I asked him for a light. I'll never forget how good that American cigarette tasted. He then opened the folder and commenced to give me the list of answers to all the questions he had been asking me.

In fact he told me things about myself that blew me away, names of schools I had attended, and some of my teachers' names. The fact that I had played baseball and played the saxophone too. He knew that my dad was in the first world war. My aunt was a school teacher and my uncle was a farmer. Believe me this scared me more than all the threats, poking and jabbing.

Incidentally, later on while I was in prison camp a guard came to me and told me that my brother had died when the Barnum & Bailey Circus tent burned down, in Connecticut. After the war I found out he was in the tent, but obviously got out. My shoulder started bleeding again and I asked for a medic to look at it, as well as my knee. Instead the guard brought some antiseptic and gauze and back to the cell I went. A few hours later the guard returned

with a British jacket and a partial pack of German cigarettes that tasted real bad.

Off I went again following the guard. I got into a truck with 6 other airmen and ended up being stuffed into a 40 & 8 (40 men or 8 Horses) boxcar. Again no room, even sitting was a problem.

I don't recall how long I was in it, but periodically we were put on a siding to allow other trains to pass. It was at this time we were allowed to get out and relieve ourselves. Using whatever we could find to wipe our selves, usually our hands. In transit for those who could not wait a bucket was passed around. The bombing devastation along the way was enormous. On a few occasions while setting on a siding bombers did their thing in the area and I thought the boxcar would bounce off the track.

I knew we were heading north because it was getting colder and real damp, so much so that we would huddle together to, keep warm at night. Finally we arrived at a little station. They unlocked the boxcar, we got out and lined up and marched I guess a mile or two where upon we were faced with barbed wire. I knew this was my new home away from home. The realization hit me, that I was a full fledged kriegsgefangener, (prisoner of war) "kriegie"

For short, this was Stalag Luft IV located about 30 miles from the Baltic sea.

I had brought all sorts of little critters with me, all the way from Budapest like "fat" bed bugs, fleas, lice and their eggs nicely hidden in the seams of my clothing. Off with all clothing while they were being deloused I had a shower with lye soap. Really great. After more questions threats and warnings I was given back my clothes as well as two blankets, a coat, a shirt, a cap, and had my picture taken and given new POW dog tags.

I was welcomed into compound "C" one of four assigned to a room about 15 feet by 23 feet in which I had 21 other room-mates. The bunks were 3 tiers high with wood slats over which paper sacks with excelsior inside serving as a mattress.

Being the newcomer I was in the top bunk. The food received was usually ersatz coffee, black broat, bread with a great amount of saw dust in it, thin soup or stew with a few pieces of potatoes, (kartoffels), and maybe some pieces of kohlrabi, (turnip) and occasionally pieces of carrots and rarely a piece of horse meat. Hey, it was better than nothing at all. Occasionally we would receive a Red Cross parcel that we split four ways. We had two roll calls each day 9:00 am and 4:00 PM. After chow time we shut our windows and had to stay in for the night. If you should venture out at night you would be met by a dog or a bullet from one of the towers. The whole barracks had 200 plus men in it. There was one room that had a four hole facility and could be only used at night. Water was carried from a hand pump outside and I was allowed one partial bucket of hot water for bathing in a week.

Daytime was occupied with numerous 'must' duties, bartering for food, playing cards making things out of scrap and talk. One thing I made out of a piece of a handkerchief and thread was an American flag. If I had been caught I would be in deep trouble. I hung on to it all the way through, and many years later till the moths finally got it. Letters to and from home were permitted, but censored. Speaking of letters there were some we joked about, 1) Darling glad you were shot down before flying became dangerous, 2) hope you are being true to me, 3) From fiancée, I married your father, signed mother. The guards on occasion did not hesitate to use their rifle butts if they didn't think things were going their way. Generally we called them goons as well as other names such as: