

The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

Autumn 2002 Newsletter

[Home](#)

ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan, President & Honorary General Secretary.

Contact address: 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel/Fax 01753-818308.

DOXFORD HALL. As you can see from the front cover the 'Do' at Doxford Hall in Northumberland was a great success. The top photograph shows left to right; Charles Burgess (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders), Jim Charters (Northumberland Fusiliers), Geoff Bryden (RAOC/REME) and Stan Woods (Gordon Highlanders). Charles and Jim both worked in the same salt mine and met for the first time in 60 years. All four were taken prisoner at St Valery in June 1940.

Around 1,000 ex-POWs from both German and Japanese camps met at Doxford Hall at a celebration party as part of the Queens Jubilee on the 21st June. The event was organised and funded by Brian Burnie, a self-made businessman via his P.E.S. Associates Charitable Trust. The concept of the party came to Brian when he organised local children to plant yew trees to create the UK's largest yew maze for the millennium, once the maze was planted he invited local POW's to formally open the maze. So impressed was he by their comradeship, humour and enjoyment of the day, he decided to organise the Jubilee event. POW's travelled from Southampton in the South, to Aberdeen in the North and we even had two visitors from Australia.

Although the party was on the Friday, the party started at noon on the Thursday for around 100 people who took advantage of GNER's generosity to travel free to Alnwick, then were even entertained by an excellent singer named Christine who joined the train at Darlington. At Alnwick a guard of honour welcomed the guests before they went to host families in the local area for the Thursday evening. Friday started badly with England losing to Brazil in the World Cup, however, as 1,000 people descended on Doxford Hall the mood soon lifted.

The guests were treated to a full day of entertainment with music supplied by the Tyne Tees Regimental Band, local school children, a pipe band and regional singers. The highlight of the day was the Station Commander of RAF Boulmer being winched from a Sea King helicopter to deliver the first of 1,000 fish and chips for lunch.

As well as entertainment, I think everyone enjoyed the opportunity to meet fellow POW's who they had not seen for many years and there were many tearful moments. After a rendition of 'We'll meet again' Brian and Shirley Burnie closed the event to rousing cheers from the guests determined to show their appreciation for a wonderful day. Thank you Brian for inviting us.

SURPRISE THANK YOU. One of our members sent in a cutting from the Surrey Mirror; it was a readers letter send in by Mrs H M Reeves from Reigate. It was printed under the heading '**Touching thanks for war effort**'. It read *"My husband had the honour to march in the parade down the Mall on 4th June as escort to the National Ex-Prisoners of War standard. After watching the flypast we decided to have a meal before catching our train home. While we were having our*

meal, a young man came over to our table and asked my husband what his medals were for. He told him the Second World War. Later the young man returned and said; 'I am a Jew and were it not for men like you I wouldn't be here. I have paid your bill.' He placed it on the table, shook hands and left before we could properly thank him. Isn't it nice? Some people remembered."

BRITISH RED CROSS. Jack Driscoll in Torquay has sent me a copy of a Certificate of Appreciation that he has just received from the British Red Cross. When the Devon and Cornwall Ex-Prisoner of War Association wound up their affairs recently they sent a donation of £400 to the Red Cross. Just as they helped us in our time of need, the donation will go towards helping others in less fortunate circumstances. If anyone has a bit of cash to spare Mr Jim Morrison, the Fundraising Co-ordinator for the Devon Branch of the British Red Cross at Ermen House, Butts Road, Heavitree, Exeter EX2 5BD is the man to contact. (Tel 01392-273932).

OBITUARIES. Andy Lister in South Africa advises us that **John Graham** in Coatbridge, Scotland passed away on 31st December 2001. They had been friends since November 1939 when John was transferred from the Royal Scots to the Seaforths. **Richard Traylen** from Totnes, Devon passed away in July. He was a member of the Devon and Cornwall Branch. **George E Curtis** passed away on 24th April. His ashes were interred at Oosterbeek war cemetery at Arnhem on 10th September. **Frank Dawson** of Kings Road, Bradford passed away in June 2001. **Frank King**, formerly president of the Gwent Prisoner of War Association passed away recently at the age of 89. A Royal Navy submariner he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. Former Far East prisoner of war **Jack Sharpe** passed away at his home in Leicester aged 88. Taken prisoner in Singapore he was recaptured after an escape attempt and spent 14 months in solitary confinement in Outram Road jail. He weighed four stone when the war ended. We will remember them.

STAMPS AND SAE's. Thank you to all who have sent in spare stamps. They are much appreciated. Just a word about SAE's. If you are sending in a stamped addressed envelope can you either send one of A4 size, if you require copies of the newsletter or reports, or one capable of holding an A4 sheet folded in three if you are expecting a letter in reply. Many of the SAE's that arrive here are so small that we would need a degree in Origami to squeeze the letters in. If in doubt, just send a couple of stamps and we will provide the envelopes. Thank You from The Chief Clerk.

DONATIONS. We would like to thank the following for their kind donations, which will be put to good use: A.E.E.U. Retired members association £50, Mr Ian Anderson £5, Anonymous £10, Mr Roy Child £5, J Childs £5, Mr Wally Dobie £25, Mr Ray Eaton £15, Michael Hingston £50, W F Manley £15, Mrs Mary Mason £5, Mr William Nelson £20, Mr Paul Forden £5. Special thanks to Mr D A J Doyle of Amblestar Ltd for their £100 sponsorship towards our Headquarters Branch annual pilgrimage to the Menin Gate in Belgium.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for 2002 were due on 1st January. Would those still behind please pop a cheque in the post. I would like to remind members that the subscriptions run from 1st January for 12 months. If you join in the middle of the year we still list your date of joining as the 1st January and send you any newsletters you may have missed. We send out newsletters free of charge to widows.

NEW MEMBERS. Mr George Wilson and Mr Wally Dobie both RAF, and former residents of Stalag 4B, Mr T A Sample a former resident of Stalag 8B, Mr Bill Manley, Royal Artillery, who fell in the bag at Kalamata and went via Salonika transit camp to Stalag 20B Marienburg then to Stalag 18A Wolfsberg. Mr A Richings who was taken prisoner at Tobruk and was resident in Campo 70 and Stalag 4B.

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS. Mr Martin Daley, whose grandfather was in Stalag 20A Thorn, Mr William Nelson whose father was in Stalag 4B, Mr Paul Forden whose father was in Stalag 4G, Mrs June Benedict whose father Danny was in Stalag 21A/B, Mr Stephen Clarke, Mr Alan Davis, Mr Fred Kennington whose father was in Stalag 9C.

RECRUITING REQUEST. Let us find the other former prisoners of war out there!

QUARTERMASTERS STORES. Our Quartermaster Mr Charlie F Jago, MBE has the following association goods in stock. All items bear the association logo, except pens which have the association name. Please send your orders direct to him at 63, Norfolk Road, West Harnham, Salisbury SP2 8HQ. Tel 01722-333599.

Wall Plaque £24 plus £2 p&p, Association tie £10, Blazer badge £10, Lapel badge £4, Associate badge £4, Car sticker £5, Sew/iron on badge £5, Cuff links £4.00, Diary Large £1.50, (Planoramic Various colours), Diary Small £0.75 Various colours, Pens Named £0.45, Ladies Brooch £10.00.

Please add 27p per item for postage and make cheques out to National Ex-Prisoner of War Association. All items will be sent by return of post whenever possible.

VETERANS AGENCY. Formerly known as the War Pensions Agency, they have a free telephone help line on 0800-169-2277 or from overseas +44 1 253 866043. They have reminded us that NHS hospitals should give priority to war pensioners, both as out-patients and in-patients, for examination or treatment which relates to the condition for which they receive a pension. It is important that your GP and hospital know you are a war pensioner. You can refer them to NHS circular HSG(97)31 and Chief Executive Bulletin 112 (April 2002), or if you live in Scotland, to the Scottish Executive Bulletin HDL(2002)18.

BOOK REVIEWS.

ALL MY FATHERS CHILDREN by Margaret Metcalfe is subtitled 'A Personal Journey' and tells the story of her search for the truth about her father Douglas Webster Berneville-Claye. He is listed in our record books as Lt D W St.A Berneville-Claye of the West Yorkshire Regiment, prisoner of war number 35300 and resident at Oflag 79 at Braunschweig. We believe he was serving with the Special Air Service when he was taken prisoner in December 1942. What our records did not tell us was that he later donned the black uniform of Himmlers SS and was actually seen dressed as such on a railway platform by one of our members. Margaret has gone to a great deal of trouble to discover the true story. In her book she describes hardship and endurance, triumph over adversity, love and betrayal, loyalty and friendship, courage and defiance as well as treachery in wartime.

She has had to confront and relive painful memories from her childhood and was to discover fascinating and shocking details about the handsome, but flawed character who was her natural father. Self-published in softcover, 276 pages plus photo section. ISBN No 0-9542848-0-1. Copies can be ordered direct from Mrs Margaret Stoll at 'Foxhaven' 19 Rochefort Drive, Rochford, Essex SS4 1HT price £12 plus postage. Margaret notes that Berneville-Claye was captured in the Libyan desert on 22nd December 1942. Were any other members captured that day? If so please write to Margaret at her address above or drop a line to Phil Chinnery, newsletter editor.

'I REMEMBER' by Stanley Rayner. Stan was born in Selby, Yorkshire, the son of an ex-RSM who became verger of Selby Abbey. He was working at Sainsburys in Kingston Upon Thames when war came in 1939 and he joined the East Surrey Regiment. He fell in the bag at St Valery on 12th June 1940 while doing his duty as a despatch rider with 2nd/6th Battalion. Then followed the long trek to Stalag XXA at Thorn where he became POW number 16953. Together with three mates he was registered as a Harvest Worker and was sent on working party 365 to Burdins Farm and Market Garden at Quadendorf. The camp was registered to Stalag XXB at Marienburg and Stan spent the next five years there. Those who have wondered what life was like on a farm in those days will not be disappointed. There was even a farm dog, a beautiful alsatian which got on well with the prisoners but had a severe dislike for the village policeman. On 17th February 1945 Stan was one of around

2,000 men who began the long trek from Stolzenburg Camp to the west. They were probably the last POWs to leave Danzig before the Russians arrived. During this chapter Stan describes the joys of sleeping in a pig sty and his amazement at seeing a German officer put in jail by an Oberfeldwebel for stealing his troops rations. On 2nd May 1945 he was finally liberated by the Americans. A very good account of the Other Ranks in captivity.

ISBN No 1-873257-04-X. Softcover 215 pages with illustrations. A bargain at £4.50. Published by Tucann Design and Print, 19 High Street, Heighington, Lincoln LN4 1RG. Tel 01522-790009.

Editors Note; We understand that Stan is no longer with us and Tucann advise us that the book is now out of print. However, we have included this review as a tribute to the author and recommend that members look out for the book on their travels.

DESTINATION BUCHENWALD by Colin Burgess. The summer of 1944, when Allied forces were sweeping towards Paris, was the beginning of the end for Hitler's Third Reich. However, for a group of downed airmen evacuated from Fresnes Prison ahead of the advancing troops, the worst of the war was about to begin. In total 168 Allied airmen, including several from Australia and New Zealand, were transported illegally to the infamous Buchenwald concentration camp where they experienced first-hand the black heart of Nazism. Miraculously they survived the order for their mass execution, but not before members of their group had died through starvation, brutality and neglect. The author, Colin Burgess, has interviewed many of the survivors and carried out extensive research to create this gripping account of the full story – from tense days in the care of the French Underground through to the only recently resolved fight for proper compensation. This book, above all, is a story of comradeship and the fighting spirit among ordinary people in the face of tyranny and the most acute evil. ISBN No 0-86417-733-X. Softcover 184 pages with illustrations. Published by Kangaroo Press and available at 25 Australian dollars from the War Book Shop, 13 Veronica Place, Loftus, New South Wales 2232 Australia. Their website can be found at www.warbooks.com.au

Contact address: 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB. Email
PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHS. I am currently working on a project to display copies of all of our archive photos on the internet, so these images will be available to the public. If you have any photos at home of any of the various POW camps, or of groups of residents, could you please lend them to me for copying. All will be returned promptly. Thank you to John Pepper and Mrs B Rooke who sent in the photos from Stalag 8A. Also to Stan Ward for the Green Howards photo and Jim Harper for the Stalag 8B pictures. The Winter Newsletter will feature photos of camp bands and theatre groups.

Further to the captions to the photos on page 5 of the Summer Newsletter. Bert Martin tells us that Captain T Sylvester in the top photo was the brother of Victor Sylvester, the well-known band leader. The photo that was not included in that issue, which we are still trying to caption, was taken at Kloster Haina on 10th July 1942. Were you there then? If so please drop me a line.

CAMP PLANS. Thank you to Tom Jackson for the plans of Boei Glodok Prison, Batavia, Java and Dockyard Ironworks at Osaka, Japan, known at various times as Fukuoka 2 – Hiroshima 5 – Zentsugi 2. Thank you also to Bill Wetton for the two plans of Stalag Luft VI, Heydekrug in East Prussia. I have also discovered some camp plans in the 1953 book 'Escape to Freedom' as follows; Obermassfeld hospital, Oflag 9A/H Spangenberg castle, Oflag 5B Biberach, Oflag 6B Warburg, Oflag 7B Eichstatt. Are any more out there?

Thank you to Tony Foster for the colour copies of the 11 escape maps made by the Escape Committee of Oflag 9A/Z and the copies of the plates from the camp magazine, 'The Quill'. Does anyone have a copy of this publication?

ARCHIVE NEWS. I am very pleased to report that I have obtained seven more copies of the Red Cross newspaper 'Prisoner of War' including three of the Far East issues. If anyone has any odd issues at home that they would like to lodge in our archives it would help us to complete the set. Many thanks to Ted Burke in Australia who sent over some copies of 'Barbed wire and bamboo' the newsletter of the Australian Ex-POW Association. Copies of any newsletters from our fellow organisations are most welcome. I have also just purchased a copy of the 1945 book on Stalag 8A Gorlitz entitled '**Interlude**' for our archives.

RED CROSS CAMP VISIT REPORTS. I have received a couple of letters from members who have read through some of the Red Cross visit reports that were compiled after Red Cross representatives visited their camps. I have been told that those particular reports are totally inaccurate and could only have been compiled to show the Italians or Germans in a favourable light. If any member has read a report on his camp and is of the same opinion, please contact me with details.

BACK ISSUES OF THE NEWSLETTER. The following are still available: **2002** Spring and Summer, **2001** Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, **2000** Summer, Autumn, Winter. For each issue

required please send in four first class stamps with your address. We will supply the envelope. Send to Phil Chinnery, address above.

BACK ISSUES OF THE ANNUAL JOURNAL. Send an A4 size SAE with a £1 stamp on it to Mr Tony Talbot, Horizon Publications, 4 Ravenswood Avenue, Rock Ferry, Wirral CH42 4NX. Specify year required.

E715 AUSCHWITZ. Mrs Yvonne Wilson has sent in 8 pages of material on this arbeits kommando from a contact in Poland. If you would like to obtain a copy or discuss it with her please write to Yvonne at 24, Hereward Street, March, Cambs PE15 8LY.

E393 LAZISKA SPREDNI. I am trying to locate anyone who may have been with this working party in Poland at any time. It comprised three long huts and some of the men worked at an electrical factory about two miles away at Laziska Gorne. I have received a report claiming that most of the men were shot by the SS when the column in which they were marching was attacked by a Russian advance guard. It came from British prisoner of war 5048001 Gunner W Green, who was amongst 600 British prisoners of war evacuated from the camp in Upper Silesia. They spent the night of 25th February 1945 at the German camp for Russian prisoners at Tabinskin Grube, a coal mine. One the morning of the 26th the camp was evacuated, less Green and a few others who were unable to march.

The column of British and Russian prisoners of war, together with some Poles and Jews were marched towards Ratibor escorted by an SS armoured unit. As the column approached the River Oder the Russians closed in, whereby the SS indiscriminately shot all the prisoners in the column. It was later reported by a Russian prisoner who arrived from Ratibor that the Soviet authorities intended to take no prisoners in their attack on the town. Although Green did not witness the incident he was told about it by a French prisoner who escaped the massacre.

Green was discovered by the Russians and sent to the port of Odessa from where he returned to England by ship. Around the same time other reports began to come in from repatriated prisoners at Odessa alleging that 2,000 British prisoners of war had been shot by the Germans on the eastern side of the Oder. On 4th April 1945 the Swiss Government was asked to investigate.

A THOUGHT ABOUT PERSONAL STUFF. I was sitting down the other day, working on a draft to update my last will and testament (I have just become a grandfather). After I had worked out who to leave all my credit card bills to, I turned my attention to my personal stuff – photos, letters etc and remembered a story that a friend at work had told to me. Apparently his father was taken prisoner in the desert and spent time in prisoner of war camps in North Africa, Italy and Germany. During all that time he kept a diary in which some very good artists had sketched or painted scenes from the various camps. When he died his wife threw the diary in the dustbin along with other papers, from where his son, my friend recovered them.

As the historian for the Association I am horrified to hear of such stories. I would like to take the liberty of suggesting to members old and new, that you might consider making it clear to your relatives what you would like them to keep in the family. If you think your wartime letters, medals or photos may end up in the dustbin please make arrangements for them to be lodged in our archives. If the day ever comes when we close down we will pass the archives on to the Imperial War Museum, so that these important items are preserved.

CAMPO 73 CARPI. Mr C J Quartermaine writes in; *"As an inmate of PG73 Carpi in its early days, I would be interested to hear from any member who may recall this camp from July 1942 onwards. I was captured by the Germans on 22nd June and after a stay at Tmini in North Africa I left Benghazi at the end of July. I got to PG73 in August 1943 and what a shock! The camp at that time was just earth, all we had was a ground sheet for cover. The latrine trench had just been dug and there was only one water tap. There was no food and after a week we could not stand up, we would just collapse. I think at this time the Red Cross took a hand in things and a hut was built for a lazaret for medical attention; the main huts came later.*

We were given injections for something but no-one seemed to know what for. We were supposed to have three, but after the second jab we were in such a state with abscesses on our legs and arms. It was a terrible sight, when they erupted all we had was a bit of rag or an old newspaper to clean ourselves. The third injection found its way into the latrine trench with the help of a New Zealand medic, otherwise we would have expired. There was still no proper rations, but we were given a spoonful of crude bitter olive oil for a fat ration and when our teeth began to fall out we were given rock salt to suck.

Things improved later on when a small canteen came into being and we could sometimes get an onion or a bit of pumpkin pie or a few books for sketching in. Letters and parcels did arrive later. In July 1943 a group of us were told we were being moved to another camp for repatriation. We found ourselves in Stalag 4B where I was given my German POW number before going to Stalag 8B at Lamsdorf."

CAMPO 65, ALTAMURA. Oscar D'Alcorn recalled his time at Campo 65 near Altamura, Apulia, Italy; *"This was one of the hastily constructed POW camps for men captured on Italian territory. It was designed to accommodate 8,000 POW's in four sectors of 2,000. Each sector had 8 blocks and the 5 accommodation blocks each held 384 POW's. A central corridor from one end to the other was traversed by 8 'Bays' each housing 48. The blocks and bays were all numbered and these formed part of the individuals address. The first intake arrived in late 1941 and were housed in Sectors I and II. When I arrived in late July after the fall of Toburk, Sectors III and IV were filled. I was put into Sector III. About a quarter of this sector were South Africans and there was some animosity. They grouped together and kept very much to themselves.*

The main camp mail office was a large wooden hut about 200 yards from the fence. Each sector sent a representative to work in this office and I was chosen as Sector 3's representative. We sorted the incoming mail and delivered it to the sector offices for them to distribute.

When the Italians knew that an allied invasion was imminent they decided to move all ranks of sergeant and above further north. This meant that three of us would be leaving the mail office. One of my friends made up a parcel of dirty linen and re-addressed it to himself at Campo 73 Carpi di Modena, convinced that he would be given a job in the mail room at the new camp. When he arrived he did not get the job, but was eventually summoned to collect his parcel. They had a much stricter regime there and parcels were opened in the presence of an officer. A young Italian officer opened the parcel and then gasped in amazement! 'Your people must be in a very sad state if that is the best they can do for you. Its disgusting – it stinks – get it out of here as fast as you can!' Well the scheme worked but it was a red-faced sergeant who rushed out of that office!

After the armistice Lieutenant Augusto Ricciardi, the Campo 65 senior interpreter and superintendent of the postal services, joined the allies as an interpreter and was given an honorary captaincy with the 9th Lancers. I met him in London twice soon after the end of the war but heard that he had moved to Belgium."

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ITALIAN WORK CAMPS. Mr V.E.Walker has sent in the first report that I have seen so far on an Italian work camp. I hope more will follow. *"We were sent to Ponzani Grazioso, Novara. Conditions*

were much better than at Campo 53 and 66 and we were treated reasonably well by the Italian staff. We slept on the floor of a small hut which contained a table, a few chairs and a small stove. Toilets were over a small stream. We had to cook our own food, improvising with whatever we were handed. Sometimes we were lucky, for one or two of the local people would throw food over to us. In the late 1980's I was in Galliate doing some research on the places I had been and purely by accident I came face to face with a lady, who as a child, had brought food to the camp and incredibly, she recognised me!

About seven in the morning we were marched to the rice fields by the Sergeant to work. They were owned by a local farmer and we would work right through the day, digging ditches until 6 o'clock with only a drink of Chitta which tasted like vinegar and water. After marching back to the hut we would cook our meals. Then we would talk for a short while and then fall asleep for we were very tired. Sometimes the Italian Sergeant in charge of us would doze off while we were working, with his rifle across his knees. He would say to us that if any officials came along we were to whistle! One night, on looking out of the barbed wire window we saw the Sergeant going up the road in civilian clothes with his suit case. The Armistice had been announced. In the morning we broke open the gates and made our way to the village where the villagers gave us a decent meal and veno. Returning to the farm the Pasteroni told us that we could stay on and work for him and he would let us know when the Germans were on their way. We accepted his offer and he provided us with a room with camp beds and many other pieces of equipment which we needed. One day, about dinner time while I was resting, a local girl who worked on the farm came running out shouting 'Tedesci! Tedesci! Germans are coming!' I immediately put my boots on and ran into the maize fields, which at that time of the year were very thick and tall. I came to a stream and saw some of the prisoners jumping across, but I fell into the stream and laid under a bush. I heard the Germans firing on the men who had jumped the stream and I saw some of them go down, but did not know if they had been shot or not. I stayed in the stream under the bush all night and then proceeded up stream.

I walked along the stream for a couple of days until I was exhausted. I was so very tired and cold and had nothing to eat. I came to a road over the stream and decided to give myself up to the Germans. I saw a hay cart coming towards me, with two men. I went out onto the road and put my hands up in the air to surrender. They were farmers and they took me to their home. I stayed with them for a couple of weeks and then joined the partisans, but that is another story."

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STALAG LUFT 1 DOCUMENTARY. We have been contacted by Carrie Barclay at Oscha Productions, Unit 4, Carrick Business Centre, Beacon House, Commercial Road, Penryn, Cornwall TR10 8AR. Tel 01326-378737. They are conducting research for a documentary about covert activities at Stalag Luft 1, Barth. Working with them is Roy Kilminster, 35 Squadron, Bomber Command who became their primary forger. They are trying to locate Flight Sergeant C R Whitcher (35 Sqdn), Flight Sergeant Arthur W Dunn, WO John R M Kemp (21 Sqdn), W/O D.L.Ashmead Bartlett (218 Sqdn), Sgt Jack W Eames (51 Sqdn), W/O F.M.Kerr (58 Sqdn), W/O Lesley H Hurrell (49 Sqdn), Group Captain David Marwood Elton (115 Sqdn), Sqdn Ldr D.J.Kilgallon, Group Captain Cecil T Weir (49 Sqdn) and Pilot Officer Fred A Carter (257 Sqdn). If you know their whereabouts or have any information on their fates please contact Carrie at Oscha.

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WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

If you can assist those seeking information, please write to Phil Chinnery, address in Historians section. We do not include members addresses on the website, only in the hard copies of the newsletter.

Wendy Edwards sent in the above photo (hard copies of the newsletter only) of her father William Harfield, Royal Fusiliers (back row, second from left) and mates at Stalag 20B Marienburg. Captured in Brussels on 18th May 1940, he was in Stalag 20A Thorn from May to November 1940 and thence to 20B until January 1945. He was in working camps at Gotenhaven from July 1940 to August 1941 promenade building; then to Neumunstberg, farm working until October 1941. Then farm working at Shamehorst until May 1942 and Damerau until January 1945. Two of the others in the photo may have had the surname Hamilton and Cardwell. If you recognise any of the faces in the photo or were at any of the camps, please contact Wendy.

Mr Fred Kennington in Stockport would like to hear from anyone who may have been at Stalag 9C, or who may have known his father Robert, a former resident who was captured with the 7th Royal Northumberland Fusiliers at St Valery.

Associate Member John Clinch from Kent is researching the stories of the soldiers of the 51st Highland Division who were captured at St Valery and escaped on the march to Germany. He would like to hear from anyone who has information, particularly of soldiers who escaped into the Flemish countryside and moved on to Brussels.

Member Joe Pointing from Stroud recently visited the Airborne Museum at Aldershot and was informed by the Curator that he was the last surviving Other Rank from 3rd Para Bn to have served at Arnhem. If you were in 3rd Para at Arnhem please drop him a line.

Mr Len Murphy in Grantham (and the editor) would like to hear from anyone who may have some details of the First World War Ex-Service Prisoner of War Association.

Mr John Anderson in Mexico Beach, Florida, USA would like to find two medics who he knew at Stalag Luft 4, 'C' Lager, Barracks 1. They are William Stevens from Burley, Leeds and Kenneth Warren from Plymouth.

Mr A Richings from Bristol would like to hear from anyone from his party of 50 who worked in a quarry at Klinga in East Germany. Attached probably to Stalag 4B, the party spent three years there. The words at the entrance to the quarry were 'Hart die arbeit, Hater die ville' and his nickname was 'Cushy'.

Mrs Mary Mason in Abingdon would welcome contact from anyone who trained with the 1st Bn, Queen Victoria's Rifles at their Drill Hall, 54 Davies Street, London W1, especially 1936-40, who may remember the Peett brothers, in particular Harry Peett who was subsequently captured at Calais in May 1940 and resident at Stalag 8B.

Valerie Wilson in Surrey would like to contact a Canadian ex-POW named Harold G Scharfe. He served in the Essex Scottish Regiment and was a resident of Stalag 8B (August 1942), Stalag IID (June 1944) and Stalag 357 (September 1944).

Mr Wally Dobie in Swindon would like to hear from anyone who remembers him or who was in Campo 73 or Stalag 4B. Wally was an LAC Radar Mechanic in the RAF, who worked at a unit on top of the heights just outside Tobruk and was taken prisoner there in 1942.

Mr William Nelson in Ayrshire would like to hear from anyone who knew his father Andy Nelson of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. Taken prisoner in March 1944 at Anzio he was a resident of Stalag 4B.

Mr Paul Forden in Stockton on Tees would like to hear from anyone who was at Stalag 4G, especially if you knew his father Gunner Harold Forden who was taken prisoner at Tobruk.

New member Mr Bill Manley would like to hear from anyone who may remember him from Stalag 18A Wolfsberg. A member of the Royal Artillery he was taken prisoner at Kalamata and sent to the Salonika transit camp and thence to Stalag 20B Marienberg and then to Wolfsberg. He lives at 6, Maule Close, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 7BJ.

PHOTOS IN HARDCOPY ONLY

Mrs June Benedict, Ground Floor, 4 Elliot Terrace, Plymouth, Devon PL1 2PL would like to hear from anyone who may remember her father William 'Danny' O'Shea, RASC. **(Photo Left)**. He had been mentioned in despatches before taking up residence at Stalag 21A and B. If you were in the same camp please drop June a line.

ROYAL AIR FORCE NEWS.

Mr Michael Hingston in the British Virgin Islands would like to trace some former comrades of his uncle, Sergeant Gordon Slowey who was with 44 (Rhodesia) Squadron at RAF Waddington when he was taken prisoner in April 1940. He was shot down while mine laying in the Baltic Sound, together with F/Lt F G Dutton, Cpl W P J Watson and Cpl W R Davidson. Gordon went to Oflag 8A, Watson to Kopernikus, Thorn and Davidson to Stalag Luft 3. Do you remember any of them?

Mrs Christine Dean in West Yorkshire would like to trace 927841 Sergeant H B Arthur Langmaid, the observer on 14 Squadron Blenheim Z9614 which was shot down 40 miles south of Fuka on 1st August 1942

BOOK REVIEW – **ESCAPE TO FREEDOM** by Tony Johnson. The author was a wireless operator/air gunner in a Wellington bomber during the war. When he arranged to meet his new girlfriend, Joyce, he could not have known that he would be unable to keep that date until the end of the war. Shot down over Germany on his next mission, (16th April 1943) with 427 Squadron,

RCAF, he parachuted to safety. In spite of a valiant effort to evade capture, he was eventually apprehended and sent to Stalag Luft 4 and 6 to sit out the rest of the war. But Johnson had no intention of remaining a prisoner and looked for every opportunity to escape. Eventually that moment came and he was free for a short time before recapture. 'Escape to Freedom' tells the story of his experiences in the RAF, his imprisonment and the treatment suffered by him and his fellow prisoners at the hands of the Germans, before he finally escaped and made his way home to England and to the girl who had waited for him. Published by Pen and Sword 2002. ISBN No 0-85052-984-1, hard cover, 197 pages incl photos. Price £19.95. See flier accompanying this newsletter for ordering details.

FAR EAST NEWS.

Member Alan Toze wrote a book entitled 'In Defence of Singapore' some time ago and all 3,000 copies were sold. We are trying to obtain a copy for our archives, so if you come across one please let us know. One of the 20 plates from the book is reproduced below. (Hard copy of newsletter only).

Alan was a resident of Korea POW Camp No 1 at Keijo (Seoul) in the south of the country. Because of his architectural training he was detailed to survey and draw up plans for the area of land the Japanese gave them for producing food. Working on the land was much more pleasant than road building. He was there from 1942-44 and was then moved to Japan to work in a coal mine. Recently he has been contacted by relatives of some of the other prisoners, because he drew portraits of dozens of them. This is proving very rewarding, especially for the families of those who didn't survive and to all intents and purposes disappeared without trace.

STALAG 8A GORLITZ, Lower Silesia. The photos on this page have been sent in by Mrs Rooke, whose father L/Cpl Stanley Poston is the Military Policeman in the centre of the front row, top photo and third from the left, back row on the middle photo. Do you recognise any of the others? (Hard copy only).

Photo below; Some of the 173 men at Arbeits Kommando 12403, a coal mine at Fellhammer in the Waldenburg District. Are you one of them?

Left. Stalag 8B Football Team taken at Lamsdorf. Front row left hand end Jimmie Brookes, Royal Artillery who worked in the cook house. Recognise any others? Sent in by Len Murphy.

Left. Green Howards at Arbeits Kommando E535, Stalag 8B sent in by Stan Ward. Top row L

to R; Unknown,
Unknown, Preston, Stan
Ward, G.Lane, Cpl
Needham, Unknown,
Unknown, Unknown,
Catterson, Paddy Brown
from Whitby. Bottom
Row L to R; Cpl
Unknown, Jim Devitt
from Driffield, Caley,
Unknown, CSM Moore
from Whitby, Unknown,
Verrill, Unknown, Walter
Greenwood.

Left. The occupants of Room 7,
Arbeits Kommando E711A at
Heydebreck 25th December 1943.
(BAB20/Stalag 344). Back row left to
right; H.Press, H.Melnuish, L.Murphy,
F.Cowan, F.Bateman, A.Marshall,
Wordsworth, G.Stretch, Walters, Sgt
G.Cox. Front row left to right;
Unknown, J.Webb, G.Morris,
E.Durton, Unknown, Judges, A.Smith,
A.Condliff. Sent in by Len Murphy.

END.

[Back to Top](#)

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