

# The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

## Spring 2006 Newsletter

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

Contact details 99 Parlant Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel/Fax 01753-818308.



Some of the residents of Campo 70, Italy in 1942. Sent in by Alan Downard.



Funeral of British prisoner of war in Poland in 1944.

Of late I have received many enquiries about whether or not the association has, along with other regalia an Electronic Ceremonial Bugle which could be hired or preferably loaned to next of kin for military funerals when a live bugler is not available. I have to report that, excellent though this instrument is, the cost of \$500 US dollars is rather prohibitive for the association to

bear, so to save further time and correspondence please be advised that 'No' is the answer at the present time.

**NEW FORMAT NEWSLETTER.** Frank Gill from Liverpool writes in to say "I write to express my thanks for increasing the format in the newsletter. I, like many of our colleagues suffer from impaired sight and find it most difficult to read normal print, but with your improvement I, with the help of my magnifier, was slowly but surely able to read through the very interesting, enjoyable and well laid out newsletter. Thank you for your assistance in helping so many of us who suffer this age related problem."

**ANNUAL REUNION.** The 2006 annual reunion will take place at Warners Holiday Village, Hayling Island as usual, between Friday 6<sup>th</sup> and Monday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2006. If you would like to attend please contact our Treasurer Mrs Freda Moores at 17 Wallace Close, Marlow, Bucks SL7 1TY. Tel 01628-473832. Members, relatives, friends, supporters of the association are all welcome.

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION.** The annual subscription for members of the association was due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Members will receive four quarterly newsletters during 2006 plus the annual Journal. The cost has remained the same over the years and we plan to keep it so for 2006. The annual subscription for full members who were prisoners of war is £5, with the exception of those living overseas who are asked to pay £10 to cover the extra cost of airmail postage. Associate membership is available to family members at £10 for the year. Please send your cheques, made out to NEXPOWA, together with your membership cards, to Les Allan at 99, Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Anyone joining us during the year will receive the back issues they have missed.

**NEW MEMBERS.** We would like to welcome Mr Eddie Foster and Mr Alan Robbins who fell in the bag in Tunisia in 1943 while serving with the North Irish Horse.

**DONATIONS.** We would like to thank the following members for their kind donations to our welfare fund. All donations are welcome, whether large or small. R V Allen £5, H J Arnold £5, Mr R Arnold £10, D Arthur £5, Mr D Avey £15, J Baker £100, Mr A Balmer £5, J K Banfield £20, Mr Bill Barratt £20, Mr S Barthorpe £5, N Beck £5, M Bentley £10, T Berry £5, P Best £5, L Bevan £5, D H Bond £5, T Burke £5, Mrs V M Care £5, T Carpenter £5, E A Cattermole £25, J Charters £15, A Cheyne £5, P Child £5, Mr K Clarke £5, C Cole £5, C Collins £15, G W Collins £5, J Crouch £5, J Cruttenden £10, R J Cuff £15, M Daly £10, R Dowding £25, A C Downard £15, G J Duffree £20, T East £5, Mr Ray Eaton £10, Dr Moira Elliot £20, L Elwood £10, J D Essom £25, D Evans MM £5, R Fennell £10, A J Foster £20, G H Francis £25, D A Freeman £5, A Gilbert £10, E J Gill £10, T Graham £5, Anne Greer £40, J W Greeves £5, R Haynes £5, J Hazell £5, C Hoare £10, Mrs B Holden £10, Mrs Holdway £5, E Holt £5, Mr Y Jaulmes £15, W J Jeal £100, A J Jenkins £5, G Jerrett £10, Jessop £10, D A Johnson £5, B R D Jones £5, Mrs C Lawrence £10, R Lee £5, J Lees £10, T W Lewis £10, L Mace £5, G Marsden £10, E Marshall £15, D Matheson £5, F McGauley £15, Mr E McNulty £5, Mr Eric Milner £5, H W Moore £10, Mr M Morecroft £20, Mr Norman Norris £45, Sheila O'Conner £5, M Orr £15, Mr L Parsons £10, E J Payne £5, Marjorie Peachey £5, W A Pearce £5, Mr C Poffley £5, C Quartermaine £5, G Robb £25, K M Salt £15, T Sankey £20, N Saunders £5, J P Savage £5, S Seal £5, W Sheridan £5, J Sinnott £5, Mr Fred Sivewright £20, E J Skipper £5, J Smart £10, G W Smith £5, J Smith £5, Mr Courtenay Smithers £30, J S Taylor £5, J H Thomas £5, G Thompson £5, Mr H Tooze £15, F J Vokes £15, F Walker £5, R Walsh £5, S Ward £5, H Warnke £5, B Warren £10, H Welch £20, G Wellard £25, S Whyte £5, Mrs G Williams £5, G Wilson £5, W D G Witt £10, W S Wood £10, D Woolerton £10, P Woolerton £5, D Worthing £5. Mr and Mrs Arthur Daw recently celebrated

their Diamond Wedding Anniversary and in lieu of gifts they invited guests to consider donations to be shared between the Air-Sea Rescue and NEXPOWA. We are honoured to be held in such high esteem and are of course delighted to receive £264 as our share of this kind gesture.

A few newsletters ago we suggested that members might like to consider leaving a donation to the association in their wills. We have just received a letter from one of our associate members who would like to remain anonymous. "At the time I thought this was a good idea but then had second thoughts. I'm 57 years old and have no immediate plans to 'pop my clogs' (God willing and touch wood). It would therefore be hard to imagine how a donation on my demise would help any of my Dads ex-POW pals. Therefore please accept the enclosed donation in memory of my late father Alfred, an ex-resident of Stalags 5B, 6A, 21A, 21C and from 1941 20B." The donation was for £1,000 and we would like to thank our anonymous member for his generous contribution to our welfare fund.

**OBITUARIES.** We regret to report the passing away of some more of our lads. Vincent B Gibson passed away in Yorkshire last June. His wife Peggy is keeping up his membership. Ray Eaton has informed us that Ernie Parrish of Aughton, Lancs passed away on 4<sup>th</sup> December. They were together in the same working camps in Italy and Germany. Frederick Charles Harding passed away on 6<sup>th</sup> December. Charlie was a member of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and was taken prisoner at Hazebrouk in May 1940. John Stark, 86, passed away peacefully in Tadworth, Surrey in December and friends and relatives kindly donated £340 to the welfare fund in Johns name. John was a former resident of Campo 54 and Stalag 4B. Edward McNulty of Accrington, Lancs passed away and friends and relatives sent in £215 in donations in his memory. Gerald Gear of Figheldean, Salisbury also passed away and friends and relatives donated £504.56 in his memory. Mr Ambrose Hunter passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> January. His sister Doreen will maintain the family link with us and has become an associate member. Mr W C G Witt of Christchurch, Dorset has also passed away. We will remember them.

**GENERAL SIR ANTHONY FARRAR-HOCKLEY** has passed away at the age of 81. He was the adjutant of the Glorious Glosters who found themselves surrounded by the Chinese Army at the Battle of the Imjin River in Korea in 1951. Most of the battalion was taken prisoner and marched away to prison camps in the north of Korea, along the border with China. Farrar-Hockley however, decided that captivity was not for him and he swam away from the column as the prisoners crossed the Imjin River at the start of their long journey. Eventually he was recaptured, but he escaped a number of times and was an inspiration to all who knew him. He wrote and worked as a defence consultant after retiring in 1982. He is survived by his second wife Linda Wood and two sons from his first marriage.

**DUNKIRK VETERANS.** For many years the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships have invited our members to attend two of their annual events. This years events are at Henley on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and at Kingston in September, date to be announced. For further details contact Rupert Gandy, Larchwood, 8 Allnut Close, Watlington, Oxon OX49 5JR. Tel 01491-613408.

**MEMBERS LETTERS.** A comment from Courtenay Smithers in Australia "I think any politician who decides to start a war should be put out there at the front leading the men – like the Kings of old did. Maybe there wouldn't be too many takers and we'd have fewer wars." In the last newsletter Courtenay was looking for old muckers from arbeits commando E902. Gordon Jerrett saw the request and has been put in touch with Courtenay; "I was also on the march out of E902 in January 1945. I did witness items 6, 7, 8 and 9 at Ratibor and also the shooting of Russian POWs. I was a late arrival at E902, getting there in November 1944. I was gathered into the net

in Normandy in July 1944, so thankfully I didn't have to endure POW life as long as many others."

From Richard Vincent; "In June 1940 about 100 British POWs were sent from Stalag 20A Thorn to Danzig. The camp was part of the old fortifications, overlooking the city, a fine view. In December the camp was closed and we were sent back to Thorn, a very cold train journey. One day in the summer we were told that a German Padre was coming to hold a religious service. I expect it was a Sunday. All the camp attended except one who was a Jew. This was not a funeral, rather a notable occasion as I never remember seeing or hearing of any Padres in the German Army. Do any other POWs know of any German Padres coming to any camps to take a service?"

### **HISTORIANS NEWS by Phil Chinnery.**

Contact address 60 Carnarvon Drive, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1PX.

I have received a letter from Peter Donnelly, the Curator of The Kings Own Royal Regiment Museum in Lancaster, regarding the dispersal of records by the Ministry of Defence. They were held in the records archive in Hayes, Middlesex, which has now been bulldozed to build flats in its place. "The museum, like many other Corps and Regimental Museums, has received the enlistment and transfer books for men of the Kings Own for the period from 1920 to the Second World War. These books contain very basic details of everyone who served in the Kings Own, including name and number. The details are held in numeric order and each volume is separately indexed. We intend to produce an overall index, however this will take some time to achieve. They will be a great aid to us in answering family history and other enquiries." Peter can be contacted on 01524-64637.

**HEROES RETURN.** George Hawkins has recently returned from a trip sponsored by Heroes Return to Krakow in Poland to visit Stalag 8B Lamsdorf and working party camp E72 at Beuthen, now called Bytom, where he worked as a POW in the Hohenzollern coal mine. He told us "I was captured just before the fall of Dunkirk and returned via the long march. Stalag 8B is no longer there, the whole site is overgrown with trees and apart from a cemetery and a Russian memorial to 40,000 Russians buried in a mass grave, the only building standing is a small museum displaying mainly Russian pictures of POWs in various dire situations. Ana Wickiewicz the curator, who spoke excellent English was pleased to hear my story of internment and took copies of the photographs I had taken with me. One of these was of the burial of Private Frank Wallace, a New Zealander who died at Beuthen and was buried in a cemetery at nearby Schomberg. The curator told me that POWs who had been buried in local cemeteries were, sometime after the war, exhumed and reinterred at the Rakowicki cemetery in Krakow. I visited the cemetery and found Frank Wallace's new grave marked with an appropriate Commonwealth headstone. The 300 plus graves were in a reserved area with a central memorial cross.

The Hohenzollern mine has not worked for many years and except for the main shaft, which apparently is in a dangerous condition, the site is derelict and guarded by security guards who restricted our movements. I was unable to recognise or place any of the surface buildings. The actual site of the POW camp, now devoid of any recognisable artefacts was off limits. All very disappointing, but my family who were with me were pleased to share a nostalgic day with me. I had hoped to talk to some of the local people who had worked in the mine and perhaps remembered POW's working there, but I was unlucky and only found one and he couldn't understand me, although he indicated that he had worked in the mine. It was a marvellous experience and my family and I were given a warm welcome by all and sundry, in particular our taxi driver who took us to where ever we wanted to go and knew the best reasonably priced eating places. Krakow is a lovely city and well worth the visit."

**DOUGLAS BADER.** One of the more famous, or perhaps notorious officer prisoners of war was Douglas Bader. Flt/Lt Trevor Dosset (retd) has written in from Canada with a short account of Douglas's unfortunate mishap when he was shot down on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1941. Trevor did not see Douglas get hit, but they were both on their third mission of the day. He told us; "I finished my sketchy training toward the end of 1940, mostly in Oxfordshire. I say sketchy because it was 'Blitz Time' a little further south, and hardly the place to be in bright yellow Harvards and Miles Master I's. I must say, the chaps who were teaching us did the very best they could, but I ended up with one hour and fifty minutes night instruction, which included one circuit and landing solo. We were told to learn all this night stuff when we got to our squadrons. I found myself posted to 222 Spitfire squadron at the end of December 1940. Douglas Bader was a flight commander and we were based at Coltishall in Norfolk, as was Stanford Tuck's Hurricane squadron (257). We were soon joined by 402 Canadian squadron and shortly thereafter, number 71, the first American (Eagle) squadron. As soon as I joined 222, Douglas was promoted to Squadron Leader to command 242 (Canadian) Squadron. We soon moved down to 11 Group and were involved in the first of the offensive sweeps and escort missions to Northern French targets with little bombers like Hampdens, Beauforts and even Whitleys. The resistance was quite heavy during these daylight operations. We were operating at around fifteen to eighteen thousand feet so the 88mm flak was quite effective – and of course, after the bombers turned north, heading for home, the Messerschmitt 109's came down on us from 'high out of the sun' as well. Douglas, meanwhile was being his usual aggressive self and quite rightly fighting for what we called 'Big Wings'. These were formations of up to 150 Hurricanes and Spitfires in a 'Beehive' shaped group around the bombers as close as we could manage without risk of collisions. It took a bit of effort to rendezvous at first but we got it sorted out. On the particular day, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1941, we were escorting five Blenheims to bomb the railway marshalling yards at Hazebrouck, and then drop some stuff on the fighter base at St Omer. To me it seems improbable that Douglas became the victim of one or more Me109's. He was very experienced and was flying at the head of our formation – which would have protected his rear. Maybe someone saw exactly what happened but I never heard (and perhaps Douglas himself never knew what hit him).

At Around that time, on another mission, at roughly the same height I was flying just behind my flight commander, maybe forty feet behind and forty feet below, in 'finger four' formation, weaving fairly closely around the bombers. Suddenly my leader was taken out by an 88mm shell, or something similar. In a split second later it would have been me, and I'd have never known what hit me. My unfortunate leader, it happens, had only recently joined the squadron and had been married to one of the beautiful and statuesque young ladies who performed (quite legally and with great dignity) completely nude at the Windmill Theatre in London. By coincidence Judy Dench has just completed a movie called Mrs Henderson which recalls that same subject. I'm sure she is totally unaware of this incident, as is the author of the play, I'll bet. I'm now in the process of writing to Judy, just for the record. My late flight commander had brought with him to the squadron a highly bred Chow dog with a purple tongue. His widow never showed up to claim him, but after I'd left the squadron in the spring of 1942 I happened to see a picture of him with a couple of pilots, in a newspaper photo." If any of Trevors old flying comrades would like to get in touch with him, please drop a note to our historian Phil Chinnery.

**IN THE BAG IN NORMANDY.** An account sent in by Gordon Jerrett. "I served with 1/5<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Welch Regiment, landing in Normandy about two weeks after the invasion. We had relieved what was left of a company of the Gordons, about 24 I think and three of us were taken about 400 yards in front of company lines and told to keep watch to our front. We saw nothing, but heard plenty of mortars, artillery and machine guns some distance to our right. Although we had some nasty moments with missiles dropping around us, we managed to get through to the 23<sup>rd</sup> July OK. About two o'clock in the morning I left my two comrades and went to collect our rations. As I approached where our lines were supposed to be I heard Germans talking. I belted back to my mates and we wondered what we should do. We decided to wait until dawn and then get into the ditch alongside the road and hope to get back to friends. But

Jerry thought otherwise and six privates were having a search for us. They spotted us and threw a grenade – no damage. The one of them fired a burst with his machine gun and hit Colin in the cheek and put two through my helmet. So we packed in and were taken back to the German HQ where we were interrogated by an officer who threatened to shoot us. If he wanted to frighten us he certainly succeeded.

Our first holding camps were at Falaise, Alencon and Charteris. At Charteris we were now in a camp of thousands, British and Americans. We were then marched to the rail sidings and put into box cars, fifty in each. We were only given four gallons of water and some bread. We suffered badly in the July and early August heat. We were in the train for four days and were given four gallons of water every morning. We arrived at Stalag 12A where we were finally registered as POWs. The stalag was in the Black Forest, but here again overcrowding was more than a problem. Water was only turned on for about two hours a day, so we were always thirsty. We could not mix with any long time prisoners, but we did at least have half a Red Cross parcel each, which really helped as our bread ration was one loaf of bread to six men plus half a litre of soup sometimes. After about ten days we were on the move again, back on the train, fifty to a box car again. After five days of travel we arrived at Stalag 8B at Teschen at the end of August and could now mix with older POWs who could give us the low down on how things were. By this time we had lost Colin who had been taken to hospital in Calais, but Ray was still with me and we became life long friends.

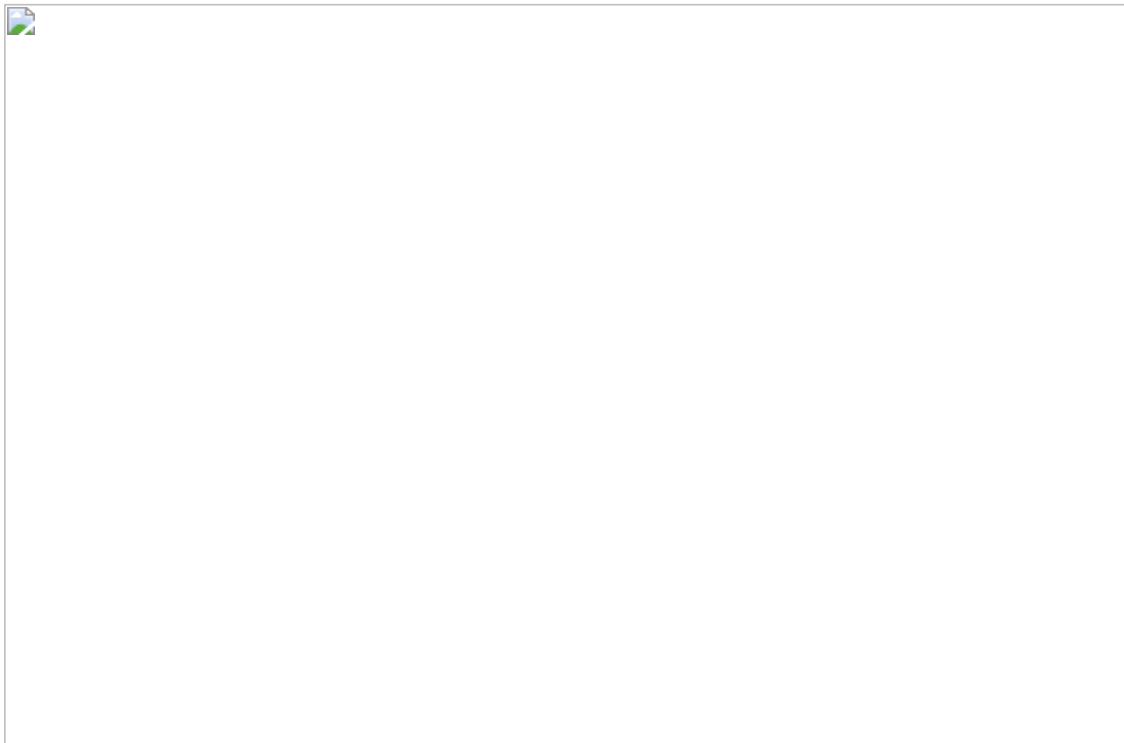
After a couple of weeks there was an outbreak of diphtheria in the camp. Ray was taken to hospital and a couple of days later I had a sore throat. The doctor diagnosed diphtheria and I ended up in hospital for three weeks. After that a group of us were taken out on working parties in Teschen, picking up and cleaning bricks. In mid-October I and several others were sent to arbeits commando E902, a coal mine. I was kitted out with rough working clothes and made my trip down the mine. Now I have to be honest and although I am a Welsh man I don't know whether I was most frightened down the mine or in the front line! I was working with a civilian miner as were all POWs. It was hard work, on, if I remember correctly, five small potatoes and half a litre of thin soup and one loaf of bread amongst six. The showers when we came up to surface were often cold and the fires in the barracks rooms were often out due to lack of coal. So we often used to put coal in our pockets to light a small fire to at least get a little warm. Sleep was a wonderful thing and I dreamt mainly about food.

At 5am on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1945 we were roused out of our barrack rooms and lined up for roll call and told to take one blanket and what clothes we had. We were given half a Canadian Red Cross parcel each and then in bitter cold we started the march, over frozen ice and snow. Sliding and slipping, taking short steps to help stay on our feet. These steps gave us a great deal of pain, a real agony, in our groins, that lasted a couple of days. At Ratibor I saw partisans being shot by a German officer and further shooting of Polish political prisoners by I think the SS, who arrived on motor cycles with side cars. I saw the bodies of Russian POWs shot through the head and left to lie on the road with whatever clothing they had pulled over their heads. One of the guards told us that over 120 Russians had been shot in the first 24 hours.

After about 18 hours we had our first halt, but only for 15 minutes. Some sat on a fallen tree, but I knew that once I sat that would be it, I would not move again. After the break we started the march again, but six of those who had sat on the tree had died in those few minutes. I lost count of time, but after the second day on the road I learned that we had marched for 36 hours. We crossed the River Oder and were allowed into a large factory with a covering of straw on the floor. We had been given at our first stop a can of frozen vegetables, mine was peas. But at the warehouse we had nothing to eat so fell back on what was left of our Red Cross parcels. Water was in short supply so we stuffed snow in our mouths. What do I remember of the march after that? Many more days of walking uphill and down dale. At times in a sort of trance. Seeing frost settling on the shoulders of those in front of me, like fine diamond dust. Being shouted at for not getting into a farm or warehouse fast enough. On one occasion being thrown into a snow drift for arguing with a bully of a feldwebel. In Czechoslovakia the long drag up a mountain, starting well before first light and ending well into the following night.

Some days we had soup, some days a little bread. Cattle cake and sugar beet were good. On one occasion a few of us managed to get into a cow shed. After getting some milk I went to

sleep leaning on a cow and it was the first time I had been warm for weeks. The Czech people were very kind. At the risk of being shot they would throw bread to us as we passed through the towns and they had little enough themselves. We carried on across Czechoslovakia and got within 15 kilometres of the Austrian town of Vienna. We seemed to be going every which way. Even the guards had no idea what was happening. Eventually we arrived in Bavaria. March had arrived and the warm weather. Of course we were all infested with lice. But we arrived just outside a Bavarian village where there was a stream of melted snow. We all stripped off into the cold water and had a good if quick bath. Then started trying to delouse our clothes with burning sticks run up and down the seams of our clothes. The relief was only for a short time. On with the march, crossing the Danube at Regensburg. A week or so later we were strafed by the American Air Force, but fortunately after the first plane fired on us they realised who we were. A couple of guards were wounded but no POWs. On 24<sup>th</sup> May 1945 we were finally released by General Pattons army and I got back to my family on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1945.”



ABOVE PHOTO and one on the front cover show the funeral of one of the men of arbeids commando E579, who died of natural causes while working in a coal mine in Niwka in Poland in 1944. The unknown soldier was given a good military funeral and was buried with dignity. Sent in by Reg Dowding, ex-Grenadier Guards.

**WAR CRIMES IN NORMANDY.** While many of our members will no doubt be aware of the 1940 murders of British and Commonwealth prisoners of war, it may come as a surprise to learn that similar incidents also took place in Normandy, following the D-Day landings on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944. The first recorded incident involved some of the British paratroops dropped behind the beaches and they may have become the first casualties of D-Day. In the early hours of 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 a company of the 716th Engineering Battalion of the German Army was stationed in the village of Herouville, just east of the River Orne and slightly to the north-east of Caen. Company headquarters was stationed at a farm which had been a former training stables for race horses. Around one or two o'clock in the morning members of the 6<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division began to descend in the area. Considerable confusion seems to have been caused as the Germans were

caught very much unprepared and the standard of efficiency in the unit was not very high. It appears that during the night some ten or eleven paratroopers were taken prisoner and brought to the farm. The first, possibly an officer, was taken to divisional headquarters but at least six others were shot by a German NCO by the name of Finkenrath. Following a war crimes investigation, both the NCO and his superior officer Kaptain Molters found themselves in custody in 1948. Their subsequent fate is not known.

One notorious incident involved the capture and murder of two dozen men of the Canadian Royal Winnipeg Rifles, whose bodies were discovered in the grounds of a chateau vacated by the Headquarters of the Reconnaissance Battalion of the 12<sup>th</sup> SS Panzer Division (Hitler Jugend). The findings of the court of enquiry were that one Canadian officer, 23 Canadian soldiers and two British soldiers met their deaths at or near the Chateau d'Audrieu near Pavie, Calvados, Normandy on or about 8<sup>th</sup> June 1944. That they were murdered by the German Armed Forces, in violation of the well recognised laws and usages of war and the terms of the Geneva Convention of 1929; also that one of those soldiers, Private Cold, was at the time of his death a stretcher bearer wearing the emblem of the Red Cross, and, as such, entitled to special protection by the enemy.

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



PHOTO ABOVE; Some of the men from arbeits kommando BE8 from Stalag 4D at Bitterfield Hospital between 15<sup>th</sup> March 1944 and 28<sup>th</sup> April 1944. Back row left to right Eric Payne, Slater, Street, Barlow.



If you can provide answers to any of the requests in this section, please drop a line to Phil Chinnery, 60 Carnarvon Drive, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1PX.

Request 1. I am trying to find any POWs, or stories by POWs, who had served in camp E3, a subset of Stalag VIII B, at the Blechhammer industrial complex in Silesia Poland. I am trying to confirm a story I had heard regarding the smuggling of a radio into the camp. Thank you, Mel Laytner.

Request 2. I have a request for any information you might be able to provide on my father who was a POW in Germany WWII. I am Rod Macey aged 68 now living in Tasmania Australia and son of Frederick Samuel Macey born 2 Nov 1906, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset and died Poole in 1965. My mother was Iris Kathleen Mary known as Molly now deceased, they married in 1932 at which time he was a private in R.A.M.C at Crookham Aldershot. He was at Crookham, Netley (Victoria Hospital), Colchester and then Weedon Norrhants at out break of war his British Army number was 7261543 and was taken prisoner in Crete in the early war years along with Australian forces. Not to go on too much, but I recall him coming home to our house with two Australian Army Chaps who I have no information on but they must have been very good mates. Hope you make something of this. I have been meaning to further my investigations but spurred on last week by meeting a fellow lawn bowler from another club who was Australian Army and taken in Crete but in a different Stalag to my father we intend meeting up soon to have a chat but as I said it inspired me to do some "net searching" and hence my contacting you. Regards Rod Macey.

Request 3. My father, Jack Hartley, (Ernest John) was a company runner. He was from Stretford in Manchester and was in the Worcester Regiment. (Army Number 4197225) His first action at 20 was at Dunkirk where he was wounded badly in the leg by shrapnel. In the confusion his ambulance drove into the German lines in Cassel and he was taken prisoner. He spent some time in hospital where the skill of the German surgeons saved his leg. Then, he was moved into hotels to recuperate, including a large one in Le Touquet. Eventually he spent some time recovering in a hotel in Belgium before walking into Poland. He spent the war from April 1940 to April 1945 in Stalag XXa in Thorn or in Stalag XXb in Marienberg. As a POW, he often worked in a cheese factory. He was a very good singer and good at football so joined in these activities in the camps. He was liberated by the American 9th army and crossed Europe to the Belgian coast where he experienced his first flight, skimming the waves, lying in a gunner's cockpit. (He never flew again!!!) I have several photographs of this period of time and the following words are written on the backs of these.... Stalag XXb 384 Gepruft 7 & Gepruft 12. Elbing (I am not sure what these mean.) I recently travelled to Poland and discovered the location of Fort 12a in Torun. It is a wasteland now but even so it was very moving to be there.

I would like now to go to Malbork to see if I can discover the location of Stalag XXb but feel I have less information about dad's time there and feel less secure about what to look for. I do not know if dad was liberated from XXb. I have contacted all the usual channels and been to the National Archives. Unfortunately, it appears that dad did not fill in a POW questionnaire upon his return to the UK even though the army sent him to recuperate at Preston for several months. Dad died three years ago. Do you have any additional information about Stalag XXb that would be of help to me? Thank you! Mrs Jacquie Lowes.

Request 4. I am trying to locate information on my uncle Murdo Glencross, Stalag VII A 17638, he passed away not long after coming home. I have a photo of a good friend of his who came to visit him on the Isle of Harris in 1946, and would dearly love to contact this family, his name was George Edward Lee, he was in the same camp an English man. As we are in Australia it is difficult to know where to get information. This may not be something you can do but it is worth a try. Yours sincerely Dinah Beesley.

Request 5. I am hoping that you may be able to help me trace a soldier who fought in WW2, though the information I have on him is fairly sketchy. My husband and I live in Slovenia and have a very dear elderly gentlemen friend there who is 98 years old and would love to know what happened to an English soldier he was imprisoned with. The main problem is that he can't remember the man's surname. All we know is that he was known as Eddy! However, we do have some other quite specific information that may help in tracking him down:

- They were in prison together in Maribor, Slovenia, (Stalag 18D) for a short period in 1944.
- Eddy was half British and half Slovenian, his mother being from Ptuj, Slovenia.
- Eddy was at least 10 years younger than our friend, so he would have been around 25 years old in 1944, possibly younger.
- He was an officer, not a regular soldier.
- Our friend, Luka Grobelsek, remained in prison until the Germans freed all prisoners so that they could join in the fighting. Eddy, however, escaped with the partisans before this happened. He also received regular parcels from the Red Cross beforehand.
- Luka has a photograph of Eddy, with some inscriptions that may be helpful (attached).

We have no idea how to go about finding out what happened to Eddy, but we're hoping that this information may be enough. It would be fantastic if you could help us but, if not, we'd be really grateful if you could point us in the right direction. It would certainly make Luka very happy indeed! Looking forward to hearing from you soon. Clare Saracine.



ABOVE PHOTO taken at Stalag 344 Lamsdorf. Sent in by Alan Downard who is in the middle row second from left.



