

# The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

## Summer 2006 Newsletter

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Sent in by J L Russell,  
on the back the caption 'Stalag 17A Kaisersteinbruck bei bruck 1942-45 to Ginger best  
regards Reg.'  
Do you recognise anyone?



Stalag 20A Thorn. Date unknown. Do you recognise anyone?  
Corinne Ludford writes in to tell us that her father James Ludford is the man second

from left in the back row .



### ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan, President.

Contact details – 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel 01753-818308.

Greetings to all members old and new. The most important item of news concerns our plans to erect a permanent memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum. It will be similar to the memorial recently unveiled at Fallingbostal. Fund raising has already begun and donations can be sent to me at the above address. A more detailed description of the planning can be found on the back cover.

### **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. P.S. Anyone joining us during the year will receive the back issues they have missed. If you have recently joined the association and have not received your back issues please contact Phil Chinnery, address in historians section, who has plenty of spare copies.

### **NEW MEMBERS.**

We would like to welcome the following two new associate members; Mrs Margaret Haughton and Mrs Betty Davidson.

### **OBITUARIES.**

We regret to report the passing away of the following members; **George S Cook** of Campletown, **Mr J F Michie** of Fort William and **Mr J E Cutts** of Walmer, Kent. Mrs Iris Winsor in Hastings has informed us that her husband **Cliff Winsor** passed away on 6<sup>th</sup> February. John Coles tells us that **Harry Rose** died on 22<sup>nd</sup> April at St Annes on Sea. John was his room mate in Hut 45 at Stalag 4B in 1943/45. **Walter Jeal** passed away on 10<sup>th</sup> June in Norfolk. He was a generous donor to our welfare fund and his widow tells us that he loved to hear all the news in the newsletter. Betty Herschel the secretary of the

North East branch tells us that **Ambrose 'Army' Hunter** passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> January. He served with the Tyneside Scottish/Black Watch and was a former resident of Stalag 8B. **Stanley Herschel** passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> February. He served with 232 Field Company, Royal Engineers and was taken prisoner at Arras in May 1940. Also a resident of Stalag 8B, Stan was a founder member of the north-east branch. His family are returning to Dunkirk to scatter his remains with his fallen comrades. **Mr Haydn Warnke** in Swansea passed away in hospital on 14<sup>th</sup> April. He bravely fought his illness until the end, amazing senior cardiologists with his instinct to survive. **We will remember them.**

**Major Bruce Shand**, the 89-year old father of Camilla Parker-Bowles, the Duchess of Cornwall, died at his home in Dorset on 11<sup>th</sup> June. He had been unwell for several months after a long battle against cancer. He was an officer in the 12<sup>th</sup> Royal Lancers during the Second World War and won the Military Cross and Bar and was then wounded and captured at El Alamein in 1942. He was a resident of Oflag 9A at Spangenberg.

### **DONATIONS.**

We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to the welfare fund; C Ackerman £10, A Anderson £10, E A Cattermole £25, R Child £5, B Clark £20, W Clasper £5, C Courtnay £5, W Crighton £15, Dignity Funerals Ltd (Gerald W Burden), Mr Fred Dillnutt £10, P L Felton £5, H L Giles £10, T Grant £15, E J Haines £5, D Hanson £10, J Harper £20, S Harris £10, A Holden £10, J R Johnstone £10, M Jones £20, Julie Kavanagh £5, A L Lindsay £5, D Nelson £10, W F Manley £10, E Mitchell £20, G Moor £15, D A Mowatt £5, A Roebuck £5, R J Saunders £5, Murdo Shand £5, F Shatcliff £10, A Simpson £5, J Underwood £5, C Vaughan £5, M Watts £15, Barbara Webb £15, S Wilkins £5, R Williams £5, Mrs Iris Winser £5, J Wort £15.

### **HISTORIANS NEWS by Philip Chinnery**

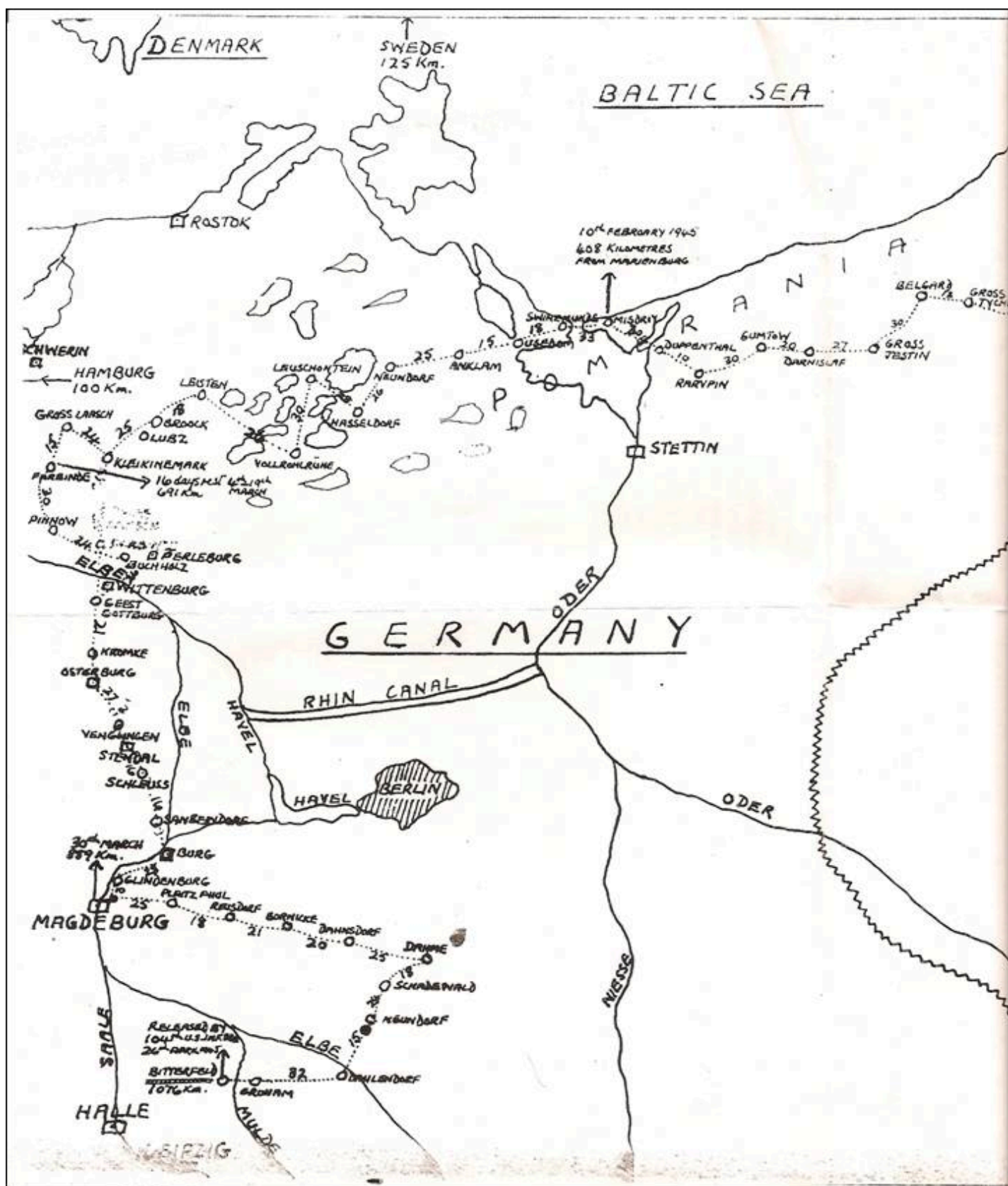
**Contact address; 60 Carnarvon Drive, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1PX.**

Member Harry Jiles has sent in two clippings from the Daily Mail regarding Sergeant Major Charlie Coward who was resident in Stalag 8B. Both tell completely different stories about his time in captivity. Did you know him and if so what are your recollections? We will include the clippings and any recollections in the next newsletter.



Photo above was taken at Campo PG70 in Italy on 21<sup>st</sup> June 1943. Sent in by Bob Clark who is sitting second from the left in the front row and who was taken prisoner one year earlier at Tobruk. On his right is Tom Curry from Chester-Le-Street. On his left is Donald Ferguson from Bobs regiment the 4<sup>th</sup> Durham Survey Regiment. Our records list the camp location as Pietrafitta (Perugia). Does anyone have a more exact location? Bob went on to Campo 53 then to Stalag 4B in Germany. Thence to Lamsdorf and Stalag 8B in Poland, ending up near Katowice before starting the march back to the west in January 1945.





Len Mace has sent in the above copy of a map given to him by the son of one of the POWs who was a guest in Stalag 20B Marienburg. Len left arbeits kommando 57 of Stalag 20A on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1945 and marched north, his route being almost identical to that above. They were finally released by American troops on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> April, the day after President Roosevelt died. If any readers travelled the same route or can remember any of the places, please send some details to Phil Chinnery, newsletter editor and we will mention them in the next newsletter.



took part in and survived the Great Escape and then the forced march to Bremen. Truly a real-life adventure story, written with accuracy, pace and drama. ISBN No 1-904943-411. 224 pages plus 16 pages of photos. Price £9.99 in paperback. Published by Grubstreet Publishing, 4 Rainham Close, London SW11 6SS. [www.grubstreet.co.uk](http://www.grubstreet.co.uk)

### WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

If you think you can help please write to the researcher directly or contact the editor Phil Chinnery at 60 Carnarvon Drive, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1PX.

1) I am researching my Grandfather's family tree and I know that he was a P.O.W in Stalag 18A in the Second World War. His name was Frederick James Bowman and he was in the 11th Hussars and based at Somerset Barracks in Shorncliffe in Kent. I have looked at the website for Stalag 18 and found his name on the roll of honour. It lists him as a Sergeant in the RAC and his POW number is 3162 and he was sent to work camp 940/GW which I believe was in Trieben. Any information you can help with would be most gratefully received as my own Father has since died and did not know any details about my family background. Thank you for your time in reading this, Yours hopefully, Carolyn Evans (nee Bowman)

2) My name is Christian Arzberger and I am Austrian. I have got your e-mail address from Mrs. Edith Petschnigg. My sister in law Claudia Arzberger, found a photograph from her grandfather. His name is Bert Johns and he was prisoner of war in Austria during WW2 and was forced to work in Wenigzell / Styria. Before the birth of Claudias mother, he left Wenigzell. Nobody heard from him since this time. Claudias grandmother is still alive. My sister in law, her sister and her brothers are interested in information about Bert Johns` fate and possible relatives in Wales. Can you help us? Bert Johns was born on August 25th 1915 in Wales.

3) I wonder if you can help? I read on your web site that you have access to records for men serving in POW camps in Germany and surrounding countries in WW2. I'm looking for information on my father, 4868054 Private James Joseph Bennett who served as a lorry driver with the Royal Leicestershire Regiment in WW2. He was captured in North Africa and sent, via Italy, to a POW camp in East Germany. He was transferred to Colditz - Oflag IVC where he underwent an operation for appendicitis by a French doctor? (no anaesthetic). He was placed in solitary on a couple of occasions for trying to escape (couple of funny tales handed down). After he was released, he was on guard duty at the Nuremburg trials. He was contacted about 10 years ago by an ex-officer POW, but I heard nothing more. My father died in 1995 and I'm really looking to confirm this information and obtain any other data that might be available. His army release book doesn't tell me much I'm afraid. Thank you Peter Bennett.

4) My father in law was a POW from July 1944 to May 1945. He was in Stalag VIIIB. He worked in a mine. He can't remember what the name of the mine was or what his E number was. I was just trying to find out for him. His name is Pte. Albert Carr 83039.

He was with the Essex Scottish in Kent. He would like to talk to some of the other men he was with in the company or in the camp. Thank You, Sherry Carr.

5) I wonder if you can help. My Father died in 1976 and as per normal, we never ask when they are alive but wonder afterwards and then it becomes an obsession! Sound familiar? The story is:- RAF, Warrant Officer (Sgt) K. Fenton, No. 1053472, shot down on 1st July 1941 in Blenheim IV V6258 XD of 139 (Jamaica) Squadron of 2 Group, Bomber Command, from Horsham St. Faith and ditched 60Kms NW of Vlieland. Other crew were Sgt A. A. Fuller (observer) and R. W. McDonald. (Wireless operator and air gunner). Noted in 'Blenheim Strike' by Theo Boiten as 'among one of very few crews to survive a Blenheim crash in 1941'. Member of the Goldfish club. The Dingy was spotted by 3 Stirlings (N6013 MG-A piloted by J. Kinnane, N6005 MG-G piloted by D.T.Witt and N3655 MG-? piloted by B.K.Madgwich) from 7 Squadron who reported his position. Two aircraft returned but Kinnane's aircraft was shot down with no survivors whilst trying to ensure a rescue. The situation was however, reported in and (High Speed Launch) HSL 108 left Greston but upon arriving at the scene, the boat itself was attacked during which ACI W. T. Guilfoyle would be killed. Other crew members were Captain W/O W. F. Jackman, Engineer LAC A. B. Raybould, Air Gunner AC2 R. E. Daggett, Sailors LAC G. P. Drayson and A. G. Overill and cook W. H. Hales all who ended up in POW camp (The Son of A. G. Overill wrote about this situation in Flypast, August 2000 and I am trying to make contact). I also believe that Captain Jackman was at my Father's funeral in 1976. My Fathers crew ended up as POWs in Stalag IXc (Bad Sulza, 10 July 1941-29 April 1942), Stalag Luft III (Sagan, 1 May 1942-18 June 1943) and VI (Heydekrug 20 June 1943-18 July 1944) and finally Stalag 357 (Thorn (Poland) 19 July 1944-8 August 1944 and Fallingbomel August 1944- 7 April 1945). Ken Fenton, Prisoner No. 39204. I believe that the crew of the HSL also followed a similar route. My Fathers log lists out the following but I do not know the connection.

McCairns (mentioned in his liberation questionnaire), J. Jones, S F Roughton, Harry Mahoney, Lionel Raymond Silver, Stan Pannis, W W Hall, R Evans, W H E Harwood, P Balson, Walter Kershaw, Gordon Bottomley, A Bonye, Joe Walker, Norma J Smith, R Duffield, R MacDonald, John Woolston, Arthur Thomson, D A MacLeod, N M Campbell, Harold E Bennett, Malcolm Gillies, W M Hard (Al's brother), E G Caban (mentioned in the F540 for his last mission), H A Hard, E G R Daggett. Sagan opened April 1942.

His liberation record states under escape attempts that 'Yes, numerous attempts e.g. tunnels - succeeded once in quitting camp with F/Sgt McCairns at Stalag IXc - recaptured Weimar by police next day. F/sgt McCairns re-escaped - was unsuccessful - he was re-captured one or two days later - method - impersonated Belgians and walked through gate in early morning. Why would they move around so much and how can I find out more? I am aware of the forced marches from Stalag Luft 6 to Stalag 357 but I am trying to make some sense of the dates. Considering the last dates, would he have been marched out of Fallingbomel or liberated there? Fallingbomel was liberated on 2nd April so there is some sense there. How would he have got back to England. How can I find out what flight he was on? I believe that he made friends at the end with a German Guard who gave him his binoculars and that later with friends, he found a German Lorry which was dumping stuff in a lake that they took and drove back to be liberated but otherwise, I know nothing. I do know that upon arriving home, he walked from Selby home to Drax in



Yorkshire. Any information would be appreciated as to how I can find out more and I would love to hear from anyone who was involved either directly or through their parents.

6) Hello from Australia. I have a photo of a Prisoner of War from WW1 - Chemnitz. I had initially been told that the photo was of my grandfather Joseph THOMPSON however a check of the Medal Card Index proves it to be of George CAMPBELL No 8252 Pte Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. The photo was sent to a Mr John KELLY in Dewsbury. I have had the following series of records checked -National Archives (PRO) film references were (burned series) WO363/C163 and C164, and misfile film No 21, (unburned series) WO364/602, 4913, 5084, and 5803. The Ministry of Pensions WW1 retained sample records at the National Archives (record class "PIN"). The WW1 British POW - record class WO161, all sub-indexes to named personnel. These records have all drawn blanks. Apart from the International Red Cross are there any other avenues of research that could be undertaken? My dilemma is probably obvious - was George CAMPBELL and Joseph THOMPSON one and the same person? Did Joseph THOMPSON simply acquire the photo and 'create himself a background' etc. There are no known (THOMPSON, CAMPBELL, KELLY) family links at this time. Unfortunately (a long story) no one knows whom Joseph THOMPSON's parents were, or when and where he was born. There are literally hundred's on the 1881, 1891, Census. I am obviously trying to sort 'lore' from fact. I would also like to know if you are able to provide a report on the Chemnitz POW Camp, what would be the nominal fee and how this could be paid. Thanks in advance, Mrs Teresa Shean.

7) I am currently researching the life of my great uncle. His name was Warrant officer Edward Callander D.F.M. He was shot down over Laon 6/5/42 on a bombing raid to Stuttgart. He was eventually shot on 7/3/44 by the Gestapo for escaping from Hydekrug 5/3/44. I hope you can help me with any information on his POW Life. Any info no matter how little would be fantastic. I am also informed he tried to escape twice. I have seen the account of his second escape in the original book "Escape From Germany" by Aiden Crawley. Regards John Brenan

8) Mrs E Walker, sister of 2574989 Signalmans N V Howe would welcome any information on the following; Holding camp Benghazi June 1942; Taranto, Tuteurano, Gravina and Officers Camp Chieti in Italy; Camps 8B, 344 Lamsdorf and E3 Blechhammer, Silesia 1943-45; Route of march to the west. If you can help please write to West View, Nether Siltan, Thirsk, North Yorkshire YO7 2LB.

9) Mr Fred Dillnutt, 1 Farm Road, Rainham, Essex RM13 9JU asks "Could anyone supply me with the names of the RAF escape committee in 1944 at POW camp Stalag 4B Muhlberg and the name of the member who in November-December 1944 made a dummy run through the sewers of the camp in preparation for the escape of Fred Dillnutt and MacGregor travelling as Swiss engineers. The member who made the dummy run on return became very ill so the escape was aborted for health reasons."

Gustrow camp during WW1. The residents of this hut appear to be eying up their next meal.

10) Mr B Mitchell, 127 Watling Street, Grendon, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 2PH would like to find anyone who knew his uncle, Private Walter Mitchell who died in Stalag 20B at Marienburg on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1941 after being captured at Dunkirk whilst fighting with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Royal Warwicks. If you were in the camp in 1940 or 1941 please drop a line to Mr Mitchell.

11) Ann-Marie Simpson, 'Ridgeway' 13 Chancel Close, Brundall, NR13 5NA would like to hear from anyone who knew her late father Cpl John Walter Bransgrove of the 9<sup>th</sup> Bn, Rifle Brigade. Captured in North Africa in May 1941 he was at Sulmona by August 1941. After a period of escape in 1943 he was sent to Germany and was in Stalag 357, Stalag 8B and 20A Thorn. Note from editor - If Ann-Marie emails some of her fathers photos to me, we will include them in a future issue. (Email address is [PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk)).

12) Geoff Spencer, 7 Deans Meadow, Dagnall, Berkhamstead, Herts HP4 1RW was in various camps in Germany including Stalag 4A at Hohenstein near Dresden which he left in early 1945. He would like to hear from anyone who was in the camp during the last months of the war. He is keen to know how the camp was finally liberated and whether the bombing of Dresden had any impact on life in the camp.

13) Bjoern Mueller of Inselbergstr.59, 98599 Brotterode, Germany writes in to ask: "I'm a German researcher for the crash of Lancaster DS852 of 426 Squadron. This aircraft was shot down on the Nuernberg raid in the night of March 31, 1944. It crashed near my hometown Brotterode in Thuringia. Five men became POW and two lost their lives. Now I am looking for the fate of the surviving crew members especially in which POW camps they were. The names are: R G Douglas, RCAF; H J Vincent RAF? E G Wey RCAF

J/24034; D. T. Stewart RCAF;

H E Sjoquist RCAF. Only about E G Wey I could find information with the help of Commonwealth War Grave Commission. He died of sickness at Stalag Luft 1 on 3rd March 1945. Hope you can help me on my search !

14) Angela Marsh has emailed us regarding a tankard in her possession that may have belonged to British prisoners of the Japanese. Inscribed on the tankard are the following names. If you recognise any of them please contact Phil Chinnery, the newsletter editor.

L J Lockett; H De Tremay/Fremay/Frembry 21/2/32; H B Whissell; Frouke Relnieus; Kathleen Melville/Medville; A.G.I Strong; R Turner; H Bragg; Ronald H?; Noutson/Noulson. Inside the tankard at the bottom is a picture of a hanged man with the words 'The Last Drop' underneath.

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#### **BOOK REVIEW.**

**'WARTIME LOG for British Prisoners'** by William Manningham. The book is a moving account of the capture and imprisonment of a British Merchant Seaman during the Second World War. Throughout the war the author kept a diary in which he painstakingly recorded every detail of his captivity. Enroute to Sierra Leone Manninghams ship was attacked by the German Raider *Vir*. He and his crewmates were captured and imprisoned below decks for the entirety of the tortuous journey to Germany. Life aboard the *Vir* and other German ships is described in astonishing detail. Squeezed into the tiny hold like sardines in a tin the crew are helpless as other Allied ships are attacked and sunk by the raider. Eventually Manningham arrives at the infamous Milag Nord POW camp. His book sheds light on every aspect of the lives of ordinary prisoners, from the monotony of the food to the intermittent brutality of the camp guards. The author also describes how captives broke the tedium of camp life by organising sporting events and theatrical productions. The book includes rare artefacts from Milag Nord including photos, camp money and records of Red Cross parcels. Published by Melrose Books, St Thomas' Place, Ely, Cambridgeshire CB7 4GG. Phone 01353-646608. Website [www.melrosebooks.co.uk](http://www.melrosebooks.co.uk) Price £9.99

### **BOOK REVIEW.**

**'Guests of Hitlers Reich'** by James Coulter. When, at the outbreak of war in WWII, in response to an appeal from his bishop, Devonian churchman Geoffrey Kestell-Cornish volunteered to become an army chaplain, he was not to know that virtually his entire career as such would be spent as a prisoner of war behind the barbed wire of the notorious prison camp Stalag 8B at Lamsdorf in Poland – an unwilling guest of Hitlers Reich. In 1944 he was transferred to a POW working camp at Sosnowitch from whence his story really begins.

In January 1945, with the Red Army making rapid advances into Poland, the inmates of camp E538 were unexpectedly 'raused' by their German guards and forced to evacuate what had been their home and shelter for most of the long years of the war. This was not liberation but the start of an epic journey of some 400 miles on foot from Poland through Czechoslovakia into Southern Germany, constantly urged along by their ever-watchful guards anxious to avoid their liberation (and their own capture) by the advancing Russians. In the bitter cold and snow of a Central European winter with fast disintegrating boots and sleeping where they could, raw turnips from the fields were often their only sustenance. Some did not survive the ordeal and found their last resting place along the route. When at last the longed for day of liberation arrived and the band of ragged, footsore and lice-infested POWs could watch their guards being disarmed by an advanced party of Pattons Army, most were too exhausted even to raise a cheer.

Written in pencil in a tattered school exercise book, Padre Geoffrey Kestell-Cornish's day by day account of the long march is a poignant tale of dogged courage and



endurance in the face of grinding adversity when the human spirit was often tested to its limit and beyond. He died on Christmas Day 1996 aged 93.

Published and distributed by James Coulter in paperback format, with 97 pages, 12 black and white photos and a map at £8.25 from booksellers or by post within the UK at £9 from the publisher James Coulter, Farthings, Newland, Landkey, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 0ND. ISBN No 0-9521043-1-8.

Copy of the letter sent to all returning WW1 prisoners of war by The King. This copy sent to Private E Johnson of the 1<sup>st</sup> London Scottish.



