“AP News Service” in Prisons Plagued Axis Authorities

Germany and Italy — Glad to Be Rid

Of “Disturbing Influence”

By Larry Allen

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For four months I never saw a bar of soap, or had a towel, or a thin khaki torn naval uniform. Chilblains swelled my fingers to the shape of sausages. The only food was a small plate of yelowish liquid called pumpkin soup and a little roll of hardtack bread that fitted into the palm of the hand.

I constantly protested and fought for my release. Although my fingers were so swollen it was difficult to hold a pen I made myself a news bulletin board, read and translated Italian newspapers and ran a full-fledged AP news service for the thousands of prisoners who passed through the camp.

Next, I was transferred to Camp No. 21 at Chieti, one of Mussolini’s political prisoner concentration camps, converted into use for war captives. A great high brick wall surrounded the concentration area. Behind that were repeated strands of barbed wire and constant patrols of carabinieri.

Jammed in Chieti

In Chieti, men were jammed like sardines into red brick barracks buildings, slept upon hard wooden boxslats and sackcloth filled with straw.

My AP news service went on the camp streets in Chieti the same as elsewhere. It was always first with the news as fast as I could hear it over the Ital­

ian loudspeaker. The Berliner immediately objected to the headlines of news presentation, for they didn’t always appeal. They banned my news service published was traveling into all the surrounding Polish villages.

Larry Allen shown just after he set foot on American soil on D-Day, after his long internment in Axis prison camps.

came for five weeks in May of last year when the Italians, not yet convinced whether I was a first lieutenant or a rear admiral, sent me to a British officers’ camp, No. 49 at Fontanelletta near Milan. But it was too good to last. I was returned to Chieti and later transferred to Sulmona by the Germans.

The Italian armistice found me at Sulmona with about 1,200 British prisoners and five other Americans. On Sept. 28, we were ready to attempt escape. A number went out but the German guards moved them down with machine-gun fire. A British officer who was going through the wire just ahead of me was shot. That ended my escape there.

Those of us who remained were loaded on a train—100 to a boxcar—and shipped to Bolzano in Northern Italy. I found an opportunity to jump from a coach in which I was riding with officers and lie alongside the tracks without being seen until the train passed by. I was re­

captured by the Germans after getting within 30 miles of the frontier of Switzerland.

Taken to Oflag 64, in the Polish Corridor, 100 miles of the Baltic Sea, I again started my AP news bulletin board, flash, bulletin, feature and photo service.

The German high command ordered the headlines of German withdrawals and evac­

uations on the Eastern front. One day a delegation headed by the German mayor of a nearby Polish village presented news bulletins and remarked to the German camp command that he didn’t know so much was happen­ing to the German army on the eastern front.

The German camp command threatened with a bread and water diet and isolation. But I proved to the Germans that the news dispatches were only a true and accurate translation of the defeats the Germans themselves admitted in their daily war communiques.

With the appearance of each bulletin the Germans sent a representative to try to find some flaw in the translation. My news service literally made it a minefield for the Germans, for word of what news my AP service published was traveling into all the surrounding Polish villages.

In the meantime, as in Italy, I consistently badgered every visit of a camp official by Y.M.C.A. representative and men representing the Swiss protecting power for my release as a civilian and non-combatant newspaperman.

“Glad” to Release Him

Out of a clear blue sky on May 8, 1944, the German camp command told me it had an order from the German high command directing my release and repatriation to the United States.

“We are glad to get rid of you,” said the senior camp official.

Meanwhile, powerful friends in Sweden also had appealed to the German government for my release.

On May 17, I arrived with a thousand British and American sick and wounded at Barcelona, where I boarded the Gripsholm for the United States.

Young Editor Comes Through on D-Day

John Edwin Pope was named telegraph editor of the Athens (Ga.) Banner-Herald Monday, June 5.

It is his job to edit thousands of words received by the after­

noon daily from the Associated Press, write headlines and draw up a “dummy” for the front page.

On the second day of his new job, John Edwin was confronted with one of the biggest stories in modern history—the Allied invasion of Europe. He went about his business—like a veteran, other editors said.

John Edwin is 16 years old.