

Russia Caring for Freed U. S. Prisoners of Germany

BY DANIEL DE LUCE.

MOSCOW, Feb. 19 (AP).—Many United States officers and men have been liberated from German prison camps by the Red Army offensive and measures for their repatriation now are being taken in co-operation with the Soviet government, Maj. Gen. J. Russell Deane announced Monday.

Deane, chief of the U. S. military mission in Moscow, said he had ordered an Army detachment, including a medical officer, to proceed to Lublin where some of the American prisoners have already assembled. Other groups of prisoners are known to be sheltered in Paga, suburb of Warsaw, and farther west.

From 200 to 400 officers, the ma-

jority of whom gained their liberty in the confusion of the German evacuation of Stalag Oflag 64 at Szubin near Bdygoszcz, are among the Americans now being cared for by the Poles and Russians.

Deane disclosed that U. S. Army Air Force bases in the Soviet Union had "paid off" in recent months by evacuation of at least 25 American airmen and the salvage of a dozen or more Flying Fortresses and Liberators which had been grounded behind the Russian lines on the Eastern Front.

"Even for this alone the bases we have maintained have proved useful," he said.

Under terms of the Allied agreement for repatriation of war pris-

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TELL ABOUT LIBERATION

Prisoners Freed Despite Frantic German Efforts

MOSCOW, Feb. 19 (AP).—Numerous American prisoners of the Germans have been liberated by the Russian offensive despite frantic Nazi efforts to march them westward.

Their numbers have not yet been estimated, but the fact of their freedom was reported Monday by three escaped American officers who hitch-hiked across Poland and part of Russia as the adventurous vanguard of the others heading home by more conventional means.

The three are Capt. Ernest M. Gruenberg, 29, New York, a doctor in the 101st Airborne Division; Lt. Frank H. Colley, 29, of Washington, Ga., a member of the 17th Field Artillery; and Lt. John N. Demling Jr., 30, Winston Salem, N. C., a member of the 30th Infantry.

These men along with numerous others are from the German Prison Camp Oflag 64 at Szubin, Poland, between Poznan and Bydgoszcz.

Gruenberg was captured in Normandy, Colley in Tunisia and Demling on the Anzio beachhead.

On Jan. 21, 1945, the Germans herded the American officers who were able to walk out of the camp and started them west just ahead of the drive by Marshal G. K. Zhukov's 1st White Russian Army group.

The sick and wounded were left behind, but they now are in safe hands.

Carried Own Belongings.

"We got out as best we could," said Gruenberg, who was an interne in St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Washington, D. C., before the war.

"Some of us built little sleds but most of us had to carry our stuff on our backs."

The officers said for several days before they hurried off they saw the road which passes the camp choked full of German civilians fleeing westward. There also were many Poles among them, apparently being forcibly taken to Germany.

"We strung in with them—us and our German guard," said Colley. "It was some scene and mind you, this wasn't a main road, but a secondary road."

Asked for an estimate of the number of refugees, Gruenberg said, "I would say there were thousands upon thousands of them."

"Did the German civilians mind you being mixed in their refugee column?" he was asked.

"Oh, a couple of women cursed us," said the doctor. "But the Poles let us hitch our sleds and carts to their wagon. They gave us a wink."

This strange column of frightened, fat German housewives, perpiring male civilians, minor members of the Nazi party, Polish slaves and several hundred U. S. officers in uniform slowed down near a manor estate on which had recently been living one Baron von Rosen from the Baltic country. The Germans had taken the estate from a Pole and installed the baron in charge.

Last Night as Captives.

"Our guards shoved us in the baron's barn," said Demling, "and with lots of other American soldiers we slept there for a night—a night which turned out to be our last in captivity."

While the American prisoners and German guards were resting at the manor, Marshal Zhukov's tanks were rolling westward rapidly.

"We heard all kinds of stories that the Russians were anywhere from a day to three days away," said Gruenberg.

Anyway, they were too close for the German guards and as the tanks rumbled nearer, the guards disappeared.

The Americans made contact with the Poles during the morning and were sitting in the estate's banquet hall, bolting down food and drink brought them by Poles.

"Off in the distance, we heard a lot of yelling," said Gruenberg. "This was followed by the unmistakable sound of tanks. We rushed to the window and looked out and there they were—the Red Army rolling up in Sherman tanks."

Was 'Beautiful Sight.'

The officers described this as the most beautiful sight they had ever seen in their lives.

"The Poles went into ecstasy when they saw the tanks," Colley said. "They heaped their joy on us because the Russians were so busy rolling after the Germans that they didn't halt."

By that time about 150 Americans had gathered in the manor house.

"We all yelled, too," said Gruenberg, "and before long some Red Army officers came to see us."

"They shook hands with us all around and we toasted one another, Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin. Then the Russians told us how wonderful were American tanks, trucks, jeeps and food. It was some party."

The officers were asked what instructions they got from the Russians who dropped in to see them.

"They told us to stay put," they replied, "and that other units were coming up who would move us back. Then they saluted and said 'we're on our way to Berlin—so long' and ducked out to their tanks again."

By 9 o'clock that night, there had been a lot of American-Pusan-Polish solidarity cemented with liquor and the natural high

spirits of the occasion. The interpreter was Lt. Stanley Waldman, 1164 Williams Road, Cleaveland Heights, Ohio, who had taught himself Russian in a German prison camp.

"We kept looking out the baron's window at the passing scene," said Colley, "and there were many Shermans, Studebakers, Chevrolets, GM's Fords, half-trucks, and so on."

Colley said Zhukov's great stream kept up for hour after hour—tank after tank piled high with Russian infantrymen heading westward.

"We'd heard shooting off in the west and it was plainly rifle and tank fire," he said.

"Boy, those Russian-made tanks were something. I'd say they were about 1½ times as big as our Shermans."

The officers said that while they were at the manor house, they heard that a big column of British non-commissioned officers also had been freed by the Red Army.

"They were some distance from us in our general area. There also were reports of some Indians and Italian prisoners who had gotten away, but we didn't see them," the American said.

The next day, a large group of Americans went to the town of Exin and, while they were waiting for transportation Gruenberg and two American doctors, a captain Van Gorder and a Captain Radda, both of the 101st Airborne Division, set up a hospital with German medical supplies they found in a church.

The doctors worked alone until the Russians came in and set up a regular hospital with a woman major in charge. The Americans and the Russian doctors worked side by side until the Americans left for Moscow.

Scrawl Was Passport.

The woman major gave one of the American doctors a piece of paper on which she scrawled that he had treated Russian wounded and this document served as the Americans' pass all the way across Poland and into Moscow.

A. U. S. officer, Col. E. A. Gans of Hendersonville, N. C., scribbled his name on the piece of paper, too. Gans was with the others liberated.

A large group of American officers set out on their own Feb. 3, receiving what they described as "wonderful co-operation" from the Russians and the Poles all the way.

From Exin they took a train, using the woman major's documentation for transportation. It was gladly accepted. When they got as far as Gneissen they met other U. S. officers who had been liberated by the Red Army.

"We walked into a hotel and boy, it was a wonderful sight," said Colley. "A Russian lieutenant fitted us up with hot baths, shaves, haircuts, a marvelous dinner and warm beds."

Gruenberg said they received a hearty welcome at each stop they made on the way.

"About 20 of us rode in the caboose of a train as the guests of Russian officers," said Demling. "But we had to get out after a while because we ran into a place where the track was being changed from narrow gauge to Russian wide gauge."

"We got a good explanation. The Russians told us, 'we'll make it wide gauge all the way to Berlin,'" said Colley.

The Americans encountered a Russian general the following day who told them to go to the highway and hop a truck. They took his advice and continued their trip.

"He told us he had gotten his Studebaker in Iran, and had driven it right into Germany," said Gruenberg.

Poles Were Generous.

The officers slept at night in Polish homes and ate with Polish families, receiving generous hospitality everywhere.

Just outside Warsaw, they met a Red Army lieutenant, Morris Biderman of Kiev, who had once lived in the United States and spoke good English. He put them up at a Red Army mess.

"I never saw anything like Warsaw," said Gruenberg. "There were no buildings."

The officers finally decided it would be better to split up into small groups because they could move faster. They went this way through Warsaw.

They walked across a pontoon bridge over the Vistula River and then met a rousing reception from Polish Army girls in Praga.

Asked how they got along with the Polish girls, Demling said, "Oh, we just smiled and gave the old 'ne panem' treatment."

"Ne panem" means 'I don't understand.'

From Praga, the three officers went by train to Morzy, still using their hospital document. There they were entertained by railway workers with a rousing vodka party.

"We heard about the Crimea conference all the way. It was all good news, too," said Gruenberg.

Still carrying as credentials only the doctor's hospital scrawl, they reached the Russian frontier and after scrutiny of this marvelous document, they moved head Wednesday, Feb. 21.

The bill would make it unlawful to discriminate against persons of Mexican or Latin American origin in businesses catering to the public.

The public hearing March 5 will be before the Senate State Affairs Committee.

Russia Caring For Liberated US Prisoners

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owners, U. S. transportation, principally aircraft, will enter Poland to bring out the liberated Americans.

"We probably will establish a camp where passage will be arranged for our people," Deane explained. "United States officers will administer the camp at cost, just as the Red Army will run a similar camp in France."

Statements of our liberated soldiers and airmen all attest to fine treatment by the Poles and Russians, whether military or civilian. Within their power our Allies have done everything they could to be kind, merciful and friendly."

A number of prisoners from the United States, British and Canadian Armies have arrived in Moscow in the past few days after hitchhiking by train and truck nearly 1,000 miles. Plans for large-scale movement still are in process of completion, however.

All the prisoners reaching here confirmed the old charge that the Germans provided a starvation diet for Allied officers and men alike. Without Red Cross parcels there would have been a situation tantamount to mass murder, they said.

The Germans drew no distinction between American Jews and non-Jews, except to forbid Jewish medical officers to treat any patients.

1,300 Calories Daily.

The released prisoners estimated that the daily ration provided by the Germans contained not more than 1,300 calories, although 1,800 calories is commonly accepted as the minimum necessary even for bedridden persons.

Under the Geneva convention the Germany Army is obligated to provide the normal army ration to prisoners. However, those confined in Poland received what civilian Poles received without an opportunity to supplement it by black market purchases.

Two-thirds of a pound of bread daily was the principal item of food. Meat amounted to a theoretical one-fifth of a pound weekly, but the actual total was hardly sufficient to flavor the soup for one meal.

Three medium-sized potatoes and a tiny dab of margarine rounded out the daily ration. Breakfast was a cup of hot water—nothing more.

Barracks Unheated.

It is estimated that 85 per cent of the prisoners in Szubin's Oflag 64 suffered chilblains from temperatures only five degrees above freezing in their unheated barracks.

The Germans supplied no clothing to prisoners and eventually discontinued the practice of giving a new arrival two thin blankets for bedding. One small face towel was issued weekly for individual use and a second one was refused if the first came back "too dirty."

Oflag 64 has yielded the largest group of former prisoners known thus far. It was moved westward Jan. 21. The next day Russian tank spearheads nearly cut off the transport column in which its personnel and prisoners were moving.

The Germans left American wounded behind, and more than 100 other prisoners from that camp also gained their liberty.

The German hospital for Allied wounded at Wollenstein on the German border was not evacuated and all the patients were reported to have fallen into Russian hands safely.

A prison camp for Italian officers, also located at Wollenstein, reportedly was taken intact by the Red Army.

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ROAD SHOWS HERE THIS WEEK

'Touch O'Texas,' Worth; Dancers at Auditorium

BY ELEANOR WILSON.

Two more road show attractions, Ligon Smith's "Touch O' Texas" stage show opening Thursday at the Worth and Veloz and Yolanda's "Dansation" with matinee and night performances in Will Rogers Memorial Auditorium Saturday, will afford Fort Worth audiences diversified entertainment this week.

Veloz and Yolanda dropped out of the roadshow circuit for a while to devote their time to taking care of their two small children. Billed as the world's most famous dancing couple, they lost none of their ability to weave magic with their smooth dancing during their absence from the stage, according to advance reports on their performances.

Among the 20 dance routines Veloz and Yolanda have chosen to present here are the lovely Viennese waltz, "Memories of Vienna," rhythmic numbers to the jazz classics "Darktown Strutters' Ball" and "Alexander's Ragtime Band," and those south of the border favorites — the tango, rhumba and their version of the latest South American dance, the samba.

GLAMOROUS LADY.

Dark, sleek Yolanda is only five feet, two inches tall but her erect figure and stage presence makes her appear much taller. Her foot is so small that she must have shoes made from a plaster cast of her foot. The dancer wears out a pair of dancing slippers every 50 miles she dances and never wears the same pair of slippers in more than one dance in an evening.

She will wear 11 original evening dresses during the couple's performance here, each costing from \$500 to \$1,000.

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