

PRISONERS

BY DANIEL DE LUCE

MOSCOW, FEB 20--(AP)--THE RAPID ADVANCE OF RUSSIAN ARMIES HAS MADE POSSIBLE THE LIBERATION OF MANY UNITED STATES OFFICERS AND MEN FROM NAZI PRISON CAMPS DESPITE GERMAN ATTEMPTS TO EVACUATE PRISONERS FROM THREATENED AREAS.

FREEDING OF THE AMERICANS WAS DISCLOSED BY MAJ. GEN. J. RUSSELL DEANE, CHIEF OF THE U.S. MILITARY MISSION IN MOSCOW, WHO SAID HE HAD ORDERED AN ARMY DETACHMENT TO PROCEED TO LUBLIN--WHERE SOME OF THE LIBERATED PRISONERS HAVE ASSEMBLED--TO BEGIN MEASURES FOR THEIR REPATRIATION. OTHER GROUPS OF PRISONERS ARE KNOWN TO BE SHELTERED IN PRAGA AND FARTHER WEST.

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MEN FREED WAS NOT ESTIMATED, BUT BETWEEN 200 AND 400 OFFICERS ALONE ARE REPORTED AMONG THE AMERICANS NOW IN THE CARE OF THE POLES AND THE RUSSIANS. MOST OF THESE GAINED THEIR LIBERTY IN THE CONFUSION OF THE GERMAN EVACUATION OF STALIG OFLAG 64 AT SZUBIN, NEAR BDYGOSZ.

THREE OFFICERS FROM THE CAMP ALREADY HAVE REACHED MOSCOW AFTER HITCH-HIKING ACROSS POLAND AND PART OF RUSSIA.

THEY ARE CAPT. ERNEST M. GRUENBERG, 29, OF 418 CENTRAL PARK WEST, NEW YORK CITY, A MEDICAL OFFICER ATTACHED TO 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, OF 701 OAKLAND AVE., WINSTON SALEM, N.C., A MEMBER OF THE 30TH INFANTRY. GRUENBERG WAS CAPTURED IN NORMANDY, COLLEY IN TUNISIA AND DEMLING ON THE ANZIO BEACHHEAD.

COLLEY REPORTED THAT AMONG THE AMERICANS LIBERATED BY THE RUSSIAN OFFENSIVE WAS WRIGHT BRYAN, MANAGING EDITOR OF THE ATLANTA JOURNAL, CAPTURED IN FRANCE SHORTLY AFTER THE INVASION. HE ADDED THAT BRYAN HAD A MINOR FOOT INJURY AND THAT THE LAST TIME HE HAD SEEN HIM BRYAN WAS IN FRIENDLY POLISH HANDS.

CAPT. GRUENBERG, AN INTERNE IN ST. ELIZABETH'S HOSPITAL, WASHINGTON, D.C., BEFORE THE WAR, SAID THAT MANY OF THE ESCAPED AMERICANS NOW ARE FIGHTING ALONGSIDE THE RUSSIANS INSIDE GERMANY, USING BORROWED WEAPONS AND A "GRUNT AND POINT SYSTEM" OF SIGN LANGUAGE.

ONE OF THESE HE IDENTIFIED AS A "CAPTAIN DUNKLEBERG."

"I DON'T REMEMBER HIS FIRST NAME OR HOME TOWN BUT I BELIEVE HE'S FROM ALABAMA," HE ADDED. "ANYHOW HE WAS IN THE 321ST GLIDER FIELD ARTILLERY."

"STATEMENTS OF OUR LIBERATED SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN ALL ATTEST TO FINE TREATMENT BY THE POLES AND RUSSIANS WHETHER MILITARY OR CIVILIAN," DEANE SAID. "WITHIN THEIR POWER OUR ALLIES HAVE DONE EVERYTHING THEY COULD TO BE KIND, MERCIFUL AND FRIENDLY."

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ALL OF THE LIBERATED PRISONERS REACHING MOSCOW SAID THE GERMANS HAD PROVIDED ONLY A STARVATION DIET FOR ALLIED OFFICERS AND MEN ALIKE. THEY ASSERTED A SITUATION TANTAMOUNT TO MASS MURDER WOULD HAVE RESULTED IF RED CROSS PARCELS HAD NOT IMPLEMENTED THE DIET.

PRISONERS ESTIMATED THE DAILY RATION IN THE GERMAN CAMPS CONTAINED NOT MORE THAN 1,300 CALORIES, ALTHOUGH 1,800 CALORIES IS THE USUALLY ACCEPTED MINIMUM, EVEN FOR BED-RIDDEN PERSONS. UNDER THE GENEVA CONVENTION, THE GERMAN ARMY IS OBLIGATED TO PROVIDE THE NORMAL ARMY RATION TO PRISONERS BUT THOSE IMPRISONED IN POLAND RECEIVED WHAT CIVILIAN POLES RECEIVED WITHOUT OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPLEMENT IT THROUGH BLACK MARKET PURCHASES.

TWO-THIRDS OF A POUND OF BREAD DAILY WAS THE PRINCIPAL FOOD STAPLE. MEAT THEORETICALLY AMOUNTED TO ONE-FIFTH POUND WEEKLY BUT ACTUALLY THE RATION BARELY FLAVORED SOUP FOR ONE MEAL. BREAKFAST WAS A CUP OF HOT WATER. THREE MEDIUM-SIZED POTATOES AND A DAB OF MARGARINE ROUNDED OUT THE DAILY RATION.

OFLAG 64 HAS YIELDED THE LARGEST GROUP OF FORMER PRISONERS THUS FAR. IT WAS MOVED WESTWARD JAN. 21 BUT THE NEXT DAY SOVIET TANK SPEARHEADS ALMOST CUT OFF THE TRANSPORT COLUMN IN WHICH ITS PERSONNEL AND PRISONERS WERE MOVING. THE GERMANS THEN LEFT AMERICAN WOUNDED BEHIND AND MORE THAN 100 FROM THAT CAMP ALSO GAINED LIBERTY AT THAT TIME.

THE GERMAN HOSPITAL FOR ALLIED WOUNDED AT WOLLENSTEIN ON THE GERMAN BORDER WAS NOT EVACUATED AND ALL PATIENTS WERE REPORTED TO BE SAFELY IN RUSSIAN HANDS. A PRISON CAMP FOR ITALIAN OFFICERS, ALSO LOCATED AT WOLLENSTEIN, WAS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN INTACT.

UNDER TERMS OF THE ALLIED AGREEMENT FOR REPATRIATION OF WAR PRISONERS, U. S. TRANSPORTATION, LARGELY AIRCRAFT, WILL ENTER POLAND TO BRING OUT THE LIBERATED MEN.

"WE PROBABLY WILL ESTABLISH A CAMP WHERE PASSAGE WILL BE ARRANGED FOR OUR PEOPLE," DEANE SAID. "UNITED STATES OFFICERS WILL ADMINISTER THE CAMP AT COST, JUST AS THE RED ARMY WILL RUN A SIMILAR CAMP IN FRANCE."

(EDITORS: YOUR ATTENTION IS CALLED TO A STORY IN THE NIGHT REPORT BY EDDY GILMORE RELATING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE THREE FREED AMERICANS NAMED ABOVE.)