

Dispatch 103  
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STARTELEGRAM FORTWORTH TEXAS

PARIS -- Three pairs old shoes coming back to Texas soon -- shoes that three Texas lieutenants wore on "death march" from German prison camp in Poland to Luckenwalde prison south of Berlin.

Quote Eyem going have my old shoes bronzed way people do babys first pair of shoes -- only eyem going have heels leaded and conk first person eye hear saying lets not be beastly to the hun unquote Lt. John T. Jones Jr. (0382050) of Houston promised. Lt. Robert T. ~~MARRYXX~~ Henry Jr. (0407744) and Lt. Amon G. Carter Jr. (0402537) both FortWorth agreed would do same.

Old shoes put away now, three lieutenants ~~XXXX~~ outfitted new uniforms seeing Paris since outcame Luckenwalde May 5 and report soon kriegie camp at embarkation port to prepare return to states.

Years from now those old shoes will recall to all three that bleak morning Sunday Jan. 21, 1945 when moren fourteen hundred American prisoners started down icy road from Oflag 64 at Szubin Poland. During previous month ~~XXX~~ some few Redcross parcels finally had been getting through to them and prisoners had gained back little waight from German prison starvation diet, were in fair condition when started march. Szubin oflag was permanent setup, recreational facilities had been provided, now as march began men bitter because weather was about 15 above zero.

Quote was so cold snow squeaked when we walked on it unquote Jones recalls. Quote First night out ey e slept on pile green horse manure courtyard country inn but was warmest place available unquote.

Noon first day occasional sound artillery audible and midnight second night German guard detail deserted prisoner column/<sup>upon</sup>~~XXXXXX~~ close approach of Russians. For twelve hours prisoners free but decided stick together awaiting Russian advance. Third day guard company Latvian volunteer SS troops appeared armed with automatic weapons, immediately ordered march resumed. Prisoners nearing exhaustion cold hunger fatigue straggled onward, cheered by occasional surreptitious aid Polish peasants who sneaked bread cheese hot milk. quote seventh day on really started blizzard burrrr unquote Jones puffed cheeks and shivered at recollection quote during five or ten minyute rest halts shoes would freeze stiff if didnt keep feet moving. Weather such unable use canteens because contents freeze solid even when



w--2--wear, fortworth startelegram (Dispatch 103 May 12,1945)

protected inside clothing. Quote For hours eyed march along thinking of nothing but comfortable bed at home with white sheets on it. Thinking disconnected and we spoke only in monosyllables. Eyed play sort of little game, marching/ with head down, watching heels man ahead, trying get my feet into his tracks before snow could fill them unquote Jones remembers. Trek difficulty increased because road clogged refugees going same way, all trying cross Oder River ~~XX~~ ahead Russian advance. After column formed in morning to resume march SS guards would go back with tommy guns, shoot up barns where had been sleeping as precaution against any escapees hiding in hay.

Seventh day young Carter among 120 placed in boxcars because acute frostbite <sup>then sent to Luckenwalde</sup>, Jones and Henry continued on road total sixteen days to ~~XXXXXXXX~~ Ruhnow in Northern Pomerania near Stettin where boxcarred Jones because arthritis left leg Henry because totally exhausted. Entrained five days to Luckenwalde. Total ration per man five day train trip onehalf litre ersatz coffee, half litre pea soup, onetenth can bully beef. Crowded 60 or 65 to boxcar, half stand, half lying down taking in shifts.

Carter arrived Feb.5, Jones Henry Feb.10, thereafter food rations gradually lessened quantity quality, men allowed one blanket each, initial tiny coal ration soon withdrawn. Quote damn lucky had early spring Germany unquote Jones mentioned significantly. Jones said all could do was talk, play cards, exchange recipes imaginary meals hoped to get when reached home.

Jones narrative flashes back to capture near Sidi-bou-zid Tunisia at beginning German breakthrough Kasserine Pass where was tank platoon leader armored regiment first armored division. Afternoon Feb.14,1943 German Mark Four tank 77 millimeter shell hit Jones tank set it afire. Jones ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ jarred severely by concussion, hair eyebrows forehead below tank helmet singed off clothes ablaze assisted by corporal tank commander from Kentucky dragged driver and assistant driver out, both badly burned. All lay in ditch two hours until found by German tank. Quote Germans went out captured American ambulance and ~~XXX~~ sent get us unquote Jones related. Quote Afrika Korps captors sent three men burned most badly to hospital immediately, gave us best treatment at hands Germans during moren two years



imprisonment. unquote. Five days later flown to Naples in Junkers  
KXK transport plane, then after fourteen days KXKXK trained to  
Moosburg, there seven days until shifted to Rotenburg, another  
lapse two and half months before moved to KX Poland.

Henry picked up narrative with his capture at Rapido River  
crossing Jan. 23, 1944, where was member 141st infantry 36th division  
as battalion adjutant commanding headquarters company. Day of  
crossing assault in face entrenched German positions barbed wire  
mortar fire artillery heavy small arms outfit was surrounded, cut  
off when footbridge behind was blown out by German artillery fire.  
Smoke fog hanging heavy over swift river. Quote assault began before  
daylight morning Jan. 22, we ~~was pinned down by fire~~ <sup>pinned down by fire</sup>, soon  
after ~~we~~ got light footbridge behind us was lost and there  
we were unquote Henry recalled. Quote dug in and tried hold. Shell  
landed foxhold next mine, caved in mine knocked me cold. Men dug  
me out and moved to another foxhole ~~near~~ near river bank where  
shells landing splashed water on me. That night Germans pulled  
counterattack, capturing majority ~~of~~ our unit. I hid in foxhole  
until morning Jan. 23. Those of us remaining hoped get across river  
under cover fog ~~but~~ but as fog lifted small arms fire began sweeping  
area again, several more mortar barrages, goons closed in and pried  
us out. We were sacked, after one night in stable, then trucked to  
Fresonie where interrogated. Second day we raised row about insanitary  
conditions so officers were moved out to Spoleto, four days afterward  
boxcarred to camp Muhlburg Germany, there ten days and drew first  
Redcross parcel, half to each man. Next move by boxcar to ~~the~~ Szubin  
Poland where Jones Carter already prisoners. Unquote.

Looking back now on death march from that camp Poland <sup>Henry</sup> says Quote  
didn't really think could happen way it did but way men suffered  
and divided what had brought fellow officers close together unquote.

All three remember kind Polish peasant farmer who allowed them  
milk cows one night providing first milk two years. Henry had hoarded  
half box chocolate mother had sent in parcel and mixed in hot milk  
that night.

Carter remembers <sup>most vividly</sup> of that trip from Poland <sup>XXXX</sup> being locked in  
boxcar in Berlin Templehof station two days during first ~~big~~ mass



daylight Allied bomber raid and night <sup>morning</sup> raid.

Quote blockbusters whistling so close everyone tried falling to floor crowded boxcars but no room to fall unquote Carter said.

Of his imprisonment four camps Germany one Italy Carter says quote up to few days ago we wanted go <sup>home</sup> ~~back~~ and guard German prisoners but after Jones Henry and eye visited German camp near Paris last night ~~XX~~ we are so mad might not be good idea after all unquote.

Carter observer 91st armored field artillery battalion ~~XXXXXX~~ of first armored division was cut off Faid Pass Tunisia Feb. 14, 1943, during Rommels breakthrough. He and fellow officer hid in cave week. Quote we peeled green off cactus, ate insides. ~~XXXXXX~~ First seven days we attempted beat way back yank lines and almost made it. Could hear artillery, see our tanks in distance. Then Arab patrol came along, beat us, tied us up and turned over to Germans. Had ~~XXXXXX~~ scarf tied around neck, about twenty Arab women ~~XXX~~ grabbed started pulling with my neck in middle. They finally cut it with knife -- ~~XXXX~~ scarf not my neck. unquote. Taken Tunis then flown Italy few weeks later moved by train Moosburg Germany, then successively Rotenburg, Szubin before Luckenwalde. One amusing incident trek Poland to Germany he says was quote night cow had calf in stall where we been herded to sleep unquote. Carter brought out May 5 by Frank Conniff, INS war correspondent, in jeep with two GIs, Jones Henry hundreds others evacuated quickly from camp which had contained moren four thousand <sup>American</sup> prisoners.

Three Texas kriegies now becoming restless get home and joined this correspondent Mothers Day greetings to their mothers.

Robert Wear