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WILLIS AND WILLIS  
ROANOKE, VIRGINIA  
MOUNTAIN TRUST BUILDING

HOLMAN WILLIS  
HOLMAN WILLIS, JR.

February 12, 1945

Mr. Amon Carter,  
Fort Worth, Texas.

Dear Mr. Carter:

I have not heard from you for quite a long time and thought you might be interested in a letter which I am today writing to the wife of Colonel Lawrence W. H. Peyton at Staunton, Virginia, who called me the other night greatly disturbed because of some letters that had been received by a friend whose son was interned in Oflag 64. It is doubtless true that during five or six weeks the Red Cross parcels were not coming these boys were in pretty desperate straits. You doubtless saw the statement published by Larry Allen about the miserable and inadequate food that was given these prisoners by the Germans. As you know, Larry Allen was interned at Oflag 64 but being a civilian correspondent was later released.

As I pointed out to Mrs. Peyton, we at least have the consolation of knowing that the Red Cross parcels arrived prior to December 10th and though these prisoners probably suffered some hardships in being moved they at least were not starved and emaciated when they started. It seems that the Red Cross usually kept a reserve supply of about 4,000 parcels ahead in the camp; and, if the Germans permitted them to take any part of this food, particularly the concentrated food with them, it would help greatly.

If you get any information that may be of help, I would highly appreciate your letting me have it.

Thanking you in advance for this, I am

Sincerely yours,

*Holman Willis*

HW:P  
Enc.



February 12, 1945

Mrs. Lawrence W. H. Peyton,  
Staunton, Virginia.

My dear Mrs. Peyton:

We have received several letters from Keith written during the period from the latter part of October up to the 10th of December, in which he told us that the Red Cross parcels had not come through and indicated a desperate lack of food. As I told you over the telephone we had a letter written by him on the 10th of December in which he said the Red Cross parcels had finally come and that Angels from Heaven would not have been more welcome.

It is entirely possible that the despondent letters received by your friend in Staunton from her boy in Oflag 64 were written during the time when they had little food. Keith said several things in these letters which indicate that many of the men in the camp were in pretty bad plight. Others, however, received the parcels sent them from home.

I am enclosing to you a copy of a letter of date, December 24, 1944, from Keith which indicates that they received their Red Cross Christmas parcels before Christmas and they evidently were faring well. It appears from this letter that the choir, which consists of quite a number of men, will be able to carry through their Christmas program.

Miss Lena Vines called me and later came to see me and said that on the night of Monday, February 5th, between 11:00 and 11:15 P.M., Station WOR in New York City, broadcasted a talk by Mr. Van de Vanter in which he stated that General Patton's son-in-law, who is a prisoner in this camp, had gotten a message through in which he said - "We had been moved but we are safe." I immediately wrote to the station sending a stamped envelope requesting that they send me a copy of the broadcast so I could find out more about this statement, that is whether it was merely a rumor or not, but have not received it. Knowing that you would be relieved to know that if the boys were moved before the camp area was overrun by the Russians they at least had been well fed for several weeks before, I am writing



while waiting for the copy of the broadcast which may or may not come through. In fact, you may have heard it. We did not but are taking the statement second hand as you observe. While of course we had great hopes that the Russians would recapture the prisoners in Oflag 64, we have always seriously doubted it because all the men in this camp were officers and the Germans are apparently anxious to capture allied officers. As you know there are various reports of French, Polish and other private soldier prisoners who have been released. A friend of mine who came from Washington a few days ago, told me that he talked with a flyer who with four or five other flyers was released by the Russians from the Germans and immediately flown out of Russia. He said that the Russians gave them the very best of treatment. I am sure that if you hear any news of value, you will be glad to let us know it promptly.

Assuring you of our deep sympathy for you and Colonel Peyton, I am

Sincerely yours,

HW:P

P.S. Since dictating the above Miss Vines called my wife to say that you had heard that John had been moved to a point South of Berlin. If you have an opportunity I should be glad to have any details of this you may be able to give.

H.W.