

March 8, 1945.

Mr. Holman Willis,
Willis and Willis,
Roanoke, Va.

Dear Mr. Willis:

Your letter of February 12th received and I hope you will accept my apology for not sooner acknowledging it. There ~~has~~ been so many rumors and reports that I have hoped from day to day to be able to give you definite and authentic information.

I can well understand how disturbed Mrs. Peyton, of Staunton, Virginia, might be over the distressing information coming out of Oflag 64 as I was upset too. It is known that the Germans confiscated all the reserve stock of Red Cross food parcels and that the members of Oflag 64 went without these supplemental food parcels as well as next-of-kin food parcels for more than 7 weeks. The boys lost quite a lot of weight - some as much as 20 pounds while the general average was about 8 to 9 pounds each. With the lack of proper clothing and blankets and no food they had to stay in bed to keep warm. Along about December 12 or 13th the food parcels were permitted in the camp again; however one every two weeks instead of one a week. Also several letters indicated that they had received the next-of-kin parcels in December too which helped the food situation.

Information has been given that these boys were given 24 hours notice and broke camp January 21st and were marched about 25 miles over ice and snow the first day. They were billeted in community farm barns the first night and when the march was started in the early morning of the second day for some reason some two hundred or more were left in the barns. The main body of the members of Oflag 64 were marched on, the destination of which it is not known at the present. It is possible that all of these boys were cut off and liberated by the Russian advance and have not sifted back into Russia or the Allies; however, one persons guess is as good as another and we are hoping and praying that some word will arrive any time.

Incidentally, several Texas boys are known to have been liberated from Oflag 64, and one lady, Mrs. Poteet, received a message from the War Department last night that her husband, who lives in Fort Worth, had been liberated and had reached Moscow. This is encouraging, still it does not mean that all of them have escaped.

I am sure you will recall that Larry Allen was repatriated in May 1944 and that he spent several days with the writer in New York and gave me practically the same information and more than was carried in his Cosmopolitan story in the January issue. There is no doubt but that all the statements in his story are correct. In one of Amon Junior's last letters he said that it was too bad that Larry Allen wasn't there and then said, "but no one would believe him".

This about covers the data and rumors that I have been able to gather up and if anything news is received I shall be glad to pass it along and would appreciate your doing likewise.

Sincerely,

AGC:KD