

Senator Tom Connally,  
U. S. Senate Building,  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Tom:

Germany holds about eighteen or nineteen thousand Americans as prisoners of war. As I understand about one-half of them are pilots and most of these boys are officers. Meanwhile, there are several thousand who have been prisoners of war for from a year to eighteen months. Many of these boys went through training schools, military academies and received commissions, ~~and~~ went overseas and were unfortunate in being captured in the early stage of the war.

I understand there has been considerable discussion as to whether these prisoners of war should not be entitled to promotions. Although, I am the father of one of these youngsters, I am not looking at the matter from a purely selfish standpoint. I feel these boys should have some recognition. To be more specific, in my son's case (which I am sure is an average case), he spent three years in the Culver Military Academy in artillery. After graduating he took a six weeks training period given by the War Department in actual experience with the heavy guns at Fort Knox, following which time he was given a Commission as Second Lieutenant in the Officers Reserve Corps to become effective at the age of twenty-one -- three years later, December 23, 1940.

At that time he had just finished two and one-half year in the University of Texas and was permitted to complete his third year of college. He entered the Service July 1, 1941 and ~~spent about~~ <sup>underwent</sup> ten months training at Fort Knox ~~as well as~~ <sup>and</sup> four or five months <sup>of intensive</sup> vigorous training on maneuvers in Louisiana, Arkansa, Alabama and Mississippi after which they returned to Fort Knox. He was moved to Northern Ireland where he trained four or five months and then to England for about two months before being transferred

to Africa at Christmas time in 1942. He was in action about thirty days *for the repairs* and was missing in action as of February 14, 1943. He remained behind the German lines for nine days and was captured on February 23rd, 1943, taken to Italy by plane and later transferred to a camp near Kassel in Germany. The Germans paraded these boys around, about 2000 of them, in Rome and Berlin for the purpose of building up the morale of the Germans -- displayed the American equipment they had captured, etc.

Later on they were transferred to Oflag 64 in the Polish Corridor about 100 miles South of Danzig. ~~They were very badly mistreated as there was no excuse for them to have been captured at that time -- at least that many of them -- had the proper authorities in the American or British Army been on the alert. They had a very thin line and had not expected the Germans to attack. When the incident was investigated it showed the American Intelligence Department had pulled a very bad boner as you may recall from the press reports at that particular time. There was considerable criticism and some of the high ranking officers who were in charge and permitted these boys to be captured in this particular battle were relieved of their duties and returned to the States. In this particular battle the Germans had 76 big V 6' tanks which were used for the first time during the War. They simply rode rough shod over the thin line held by the American forces in the First Armored Division. As a matter of fact Rommel and his division drove through the American lines about fifty or sixty miles. Of course, that part is neither here nor there. The thing that has happened is the fact that there had been no promotions of any of these officers during the previous ten or twelve months.~~

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In For example, /Amon Junior's *Am* case there had been ~~one~~ promotion in the 91st Field Artillery: First Lt. Pirnie had been moved ~~up~~ to a

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captaincy. Amon Junior and two other Second Lieutenants with Captain Pirnie had charge of Battery B. The night prior to the battle Captain Pirnie sent Amon Junior up on the top of Mt. Leusado ( about 500 feet high) ~~manix~~ stringing a telephone wire up from where he reported to Captain Pirnie the progress of the battle which opened up early next morning and at which time about 2000 Americans were captured.

Amon will have been a prisoner 18 months the 23rd of this month and is still a Second Lieutenant. The other boys in his ~~Battalion~~ *Battery* who were not captured have been moved up to First Lieutenants and Captains and ~~Majors~~. The thought occurred to me that in a sense of fairness to all of these American officers who have had to suffer the hardships of German interment for 18 months, have lost 30 to 40 pounds should automatically be promoted. As a matter of fact in Amon Junior's case, Col. Chas. Summerall, Commanding Officer of ~~Battery B~~, ~~9th~~ Field Artillery, recommended Amon Junior for a promotion to a ~~First~~ Lieutencancy about three weeks before the battle in which he became a prisoner of war. He has now been a way from home about 3½ years. All of his friends, many of whom did not go into the service for almost a year after he entered, have been promoted to First Lieutenants, Captains, Majors, etc.

I understand there is a rule or regulation that does not permit any officer to be promoted during the time of his interment as a prisoner of war. ~~Notwith~~ Notwithstanding this, I feel that these boys should have special consideration and I wonder how you feel about it, or whether any effort has been made to take care of them, <sup>whether</sup> ~~what~~ the government is going to sit back disinterestedly and permit them to almost rot in prison camps without the courtesy and recognition of the promotions

*would*  
they have been entitled to had they had a better break which they were  
~~entitled to had they received the protection and sufficient advance~~  
~~information to enable them to better prepare for the battle?~~

Incidentally, the enclosed A. P. clipping appeared in this morning's Star-Telegram concerning a statement from Senator Chavez of New Mexico regarding the American Prisoners in the Phillipines.

Again, please do not consider that I am making this recommendation purely from a selfish standpoint. On the contrary, I feel it is a recognition that all of the prisoners of war should be entitled to.

I will appreciate having your views concerning the matter.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely,