

Americans Escape When Nazis Move POWs From Path of Reds

BY LEIGH WHITE.

MOSCOW, Feb. 20 (CDN). — A column of weary American prisoners being evacuated on foot from Stalag 64, near Szubin, Poland, to safer quarters inside Germany were permitted by their German guards to pass the night in a stable near the village of Echzin.

The next morning, at dawn, they were marched off again in the direction of Germany, but in the confusion about 20 of them were "lost."

This happened on the morning of Jan. 22.

Last Saturday three pale and very thin young men in dirty, faded American uniforms turned up at the U. S. military mission in Moscow. They were the first of the Americans who "lost" themselves at Echzin—indeed, the first of our prisoners liberated in Poland—to be seen in this front by our military mission to Moscow.

The others are in Warsaw, Siedlice, Lublin and dozens of other places in Poland. Twelve American bombers and a group of 125 men have been detached from our Ukrainian air base to locate all of

them and bring them to some concentration point in Russia, whence they will be repatriated as soon as ocean transport is available.

The three officers in question were interviewed by correspondents Tuesday in the office of Maj. Gen. I. R. Deane, chief of the U. S. military mission to the U. S. S. R.

Capt. Ernest M. Gruenberg, New York City, of the Medical Corps, was captured last summer after he and his unit had parachuted down and landed 23 miles outside a town in the "drop zone" during the invasion of Normandy.

Second Lt. John M. Demling Jr., Winston-Salem, N. C., was captured a year ago this month on the Anzio beachhead.

Second Lt. Frank H. Colley, Washington, Ga., of the 17th Field Artillery, was captured two years ago this month at Faix Pass in Tunisia. Demling is 30; his two companions are 29. Before the war Demling was a traveling salesman dealing in women's wear, Colley a graduate fellow in history at Duke University. Gruenberg went straight into the Army after his internship at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington.

All three became close friends

in Szubin, and when the Germans went into their flop, they agreed to stick together. They must have made a pretty good combination, too, because without any money and without any valid documents, they managed to hitchhike more than 1,000 miles in the midst of war in exactly two weeks time.

Other Americans will probably be turning up everywhere in the next few days.

Among those who were in Szubin with the three who arrived today was Wright Bryant, former managing editor of the Atlanta Journal, who was captured while serving as a war correspondent in Holland. Bryant was left behind because he was suffering from tick ulcers, but he is believed to be safe and free somewhere in Poland.

At the Crimean conference, the matter of prisoners was taken up with our Soviet allies and the following agreement was reached:

The American, French and British military missions to the Soviet Union will be permitted to locate and assemble their respective prisoners in camps which they themselves will administer until such time as their men can be brought back to Russia.