



I DON'T SEE MANY MORE OF THESE.

# Die Deutsche Arbeitsfront

Gauverwaltung Mark Brandenburg  
Kreisverwaltung Jüterbog-Luckenwalde

Der Kreisobmann

Luckenwalde, den  
Adolf-Hitler-Straße 1  
Haus der Deutschen Arbeitsfront  
Fernsprecher: 2734, 2735

April 29, 1945  
Luckenwalde, Germany

Dear Dad,

I have been a free man for a week now but still no sign of the Americans. It certainly is a swell feeling to have no barbed wire around us or having a lot of Germans telling you what to do. I will have to wait until I get home before I can tell you how much I hated them. I have so much to say that I really don't know where to begin so I will start with the beginning. As you probably already know we left Dflag 64 on January 21st when the Russians broke through at Moscow. We had about 1500 American officers there on that date and we received the order to start marching West. We were allowed to take with us only what we could carry. About 100 sick officers were allowed to remain in the hospital where they were captured by the Russians the next day. Also a few officers hid themselves in old tunnels but only a few were allowed to do so and they took with them a three week's food supply. None of us had any idea that the Russians were so close or many more would have escaped. Anyway we left the camp on the morning of January 21st and marched 20 kilometers to the small Polish town of Exin (EXIN) and were there bedded down in barns and stables. I slept in a stall with a cow and about midnight I started having a calf so I had to leave. That night a lot more officers escaped and in the morning there were about 100 officers too sick and exhausted to march any further so they were left there without a guard. The Russians picked them up that day I think. We marched another 20 kilometers that day to Natzhalt or ~~W~~ Wirsitz (WIRSITZ). The Russians were very close to us because we could hear machine gun and artillery fire. My right leg started bothering me and I was carrying such a heavy load that I really didn't care what happened to me. The next morning we woke up to find out that all the Germans had deserted and we were alone. The Russians had us nearly surrounded and the Polish civilians told us to wait and the Russians would soon be in the town. They were all around us and we could actually hear the artillery shells going over us. Naturally we all thought we were free and would soon be on our way home so I found me a nice room in some German's home and made myself comfortable. We slaughtered a lot of pigs and started preparing big meals. John Jones was our cook. In the afternoon after 12 hours of freedom a platoon of Lithuanian SS troops marched into town. Apparently the Russians had been driven back and the Germans decided to get us out. They lined us up on the road and told us to prepare to march 6 kilometers to another

(DGER) Pardon this German typewriter.

town called Charlottenburg. At this time a lot more officers took off and hid in houses and straw stacks but before leaving the Germans fired machine guns into the straw. This brought quite a few officers out from hiding. My leg was so bad and the snow so deep that I decided it was best to stay with the main group. When we marched out of the town John Jones was complaining about the big meal he was cooking and had to leave on the stove. When we got to Charlottenburg we were again placed in a big barn and I had to sleep in a grain bin but it was very warm. The Lithuanian SS troops were pretty friendly and that night a lot more officers ~~found~~ escaped or hid to wait for the Russians. The next day we went to a town called Lobsen (LOBSENS) where the German commandant told us that Simmler himself had sent the SS troops to guard us since so many officers were escaping. Again when we left the next morning the Germans fired machine guns into the barns in case anyone was hiding. All that day we could hear machine gun fire and big tank battles and thought that the Russians might overtake us. I'm glad we didn't see any Russian airplanes because 1100 men marching across the snowy fields and roads would have made a perfect target and there was no way of knowing we were prisoners. That afternoon we crossed the Polish German border and it seemed to cheer the Germans up a lot although the Russians were right behind us. That night after 23 kilometers we reached Flatow (FLATOW) and I was so exhausted that I went straight to bed in a barn but first I took off my shoes for the first time in three days which was a mistake since they were frozen stiff the next morning. So far in 5 days the Germans had given us only black bread for rations and if we hadn't had Red Cross food parcels when we left Oflag 64 I doubt if any of us could have marched for 1 day. We spent the entire next day in this town and I was very lucky being able to trade four cigars for a big slab of bacon. I split this with St. Peaslen from Gnni who was marching next to me. The German commandant, a Colonel called us all together and told us that the Russians had broken diplomatic relations with America and Britain and that if we escaped we would probably become Russian prisoners. This was a typical German propoganda trick. By this time there were so many officers who were sick, exhausted, frostbitten, and had frozen feet that the Germans got two railroad flat cars and put them on it and shipped them to this camp at Luckenwalde which is 54 kilometers south of Berlin. The next day we marched to Jastrow (JASTROW) and when we arrived there the snow was over a foot deep. I was limping pretty badly and knew that I wouldn't be able to go any further the next day. About that time the Germans announced they had two bog cars and would take 120 officers and the American doctor told me that I could go. We marched back down to the railroad and they put 60 of us in each bog car but with 10 German guards it made a total of 70 in each car. It was so crowded that half of us stood for three hours while the rest sat down and at the end of three hours we changed places. Of course the Germans took all the room they needed. If we got into the bog cars there were two very old women laying dead in the snow. Refugees were everywhere trying to escape before the Russians arrived. That was the last I saw of the other 800 officers except for 200 who were put on bog cars two days later. The rest marched all the way to Stettin and were then shipped to Hammelburg (HAMMELBURG) near Würzburg (WÜRZBURG) where they were later liberated by the American third army. The train we were on



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was composed of refugees from East Prussia and Germans from Poland. Some of these people were on coal and flat cars and since it was snowing and was about 10 degrees above zero many of these people died from exposure. I actually saw wounded German soldiers riding on top of coal cars so we were fairly fortunate to be in box cars. It took us 8 days to come to Luckenwalde, a little more than 400 kilometers. During this 8 day period we received no rations of any type and the only food we had was what we were able to get of civilians and German troop trains going to the front. They would give nearly anything for tobacco. We spent two days in the big Tempelhof railroad yards in Berlin on on either February 3rd or 4th at noon we were bombed by 1250 heavy American bombers. I can easily say that I don't want to be under anymore American bombers. We arrived in this camp on February 5th and have been here ever since. There was no room and they put us in some old Russian barracks. The food situation was very bad and our daily ration consisted of watery soup and five potatoes for lunch and in the afternoon we received five slices of black bread. Most of us were so weak that we had to stay on our bunks most of the day. Later on some Red Cross food parcels arrived which made things a lot more bearable. The camp was very crowded as it was but later on about 4000 American enlisted men arrived from Stalag 3b at Crankfort on Oder. They had to sleep in big tents on straw since there was no more room left. The 550 American officers from Oflag 64 were living in the same compound with 1800 RAF officers and 650 Polish officers. We slept in triple deck wooden bunks with straw as a mattress. Since we were only 33 miles from Berlin we could see all the bombings and there were quite a few of them. For one straight period of 37 nights the English raf was over Berlin every night. The night raid on Potsdam on April 13th or 14th was the biggest we had ever seen.

On February 13th the Germans attempted to evacuate the British officers to another camp because the Americans were approaching the Elbe River. At this time the Germans weren't thinking that the Russians would get here so quick. The 1800 British officers were loaded into box cars here but no locomotive could be found and every day in this area the railroad yards were bombed. Finally after waiting two days for a locomotive they came back to camp. We all thought the Americans would soon arrive but instead the Russians broke through the German lines South East of us. The

Americans and Russians were South of us and it was impossible to go North toward Berlin so we knew there was no chance of the Germans getting us out, but didn't know what to expect since the Germans always do what you don't expect. On April 20th we heard that the Russians had broke through East of us but we didn't know where. Apparently the Americans had been stopped on the Elbe. We saw many flights of American bombers hitting railroad yards South and West of Berlin. At dusk we saw large fires burning to the South of camp. The Germans said it was the Russians in Jüterbog (JÜTERBOG) which is 18 kilometers from us. Also we began to hear artillery and a little machine gun fire. We all went to bed expecting big things the next day. As usual the British bombers were over camp that night and we saw them bombing Berlin. Saw two planes go down in flames. On Saturday April 21st we were awaked by heavy artillery and machine gun fire very near to camp. The Russians were within 5 or 6 miles of camp - and German planes were continually over camp strafing and bombing the Russians who were on the South side of Luckenwalde. About eleven in the morning we noticed a lot of the Russians who were prisoners in camp breaking into some of the food supplies. This was the first hint we had that the German guards had deserted the camp. I can't blame the Russians for what they did because the Germans had treated them terribly. I have seen many Russian prisoners fall down because they didn't have the strength to stand, and then the Germans would kick and beat them. That is why I can't feel sorry for the Germans in the town here. I will have to wait until I get home before I tell you about that. Anyway when the Germans left us without guards we immediately took over the entire camp according to prearranged plans. General Ruge, Norwegian General was in charge of the whole camp. The camp strength at the time the Germans deserted was 15,908 prisoners as follows:

572 American officers

1178 Norwegian officers

689 Polish officers

1333 RAF and Dominion officers

2268 Russians, the Germans do not recognize Russian officers

4359 American enlisted men

366 Serbians

1725 French

2356 British soldiers

208 Italians

834 men in hospital.

The Germans were still in Luckenwalde although the Russians were in the other end of town. There was still a large supply of Red Cross food parcels in town and the civilians were trying to break into the warehouse. I went down town with a detail of men to see if we could get any of them up to camp. There was a little firing going on in town but the biggest battle was South of town. I saw a lot of young SS troops and some Volksturm men but there weren't too many Germans left in town. They were all fleeing North toward Berlin. The civilians were confused and hysterical and were fleeing to the woods and looting homes of the people who had already left town. We were able to take one load of parcels to camp but since the shooting in town was getting closer we didn't come back that night. So far I had seen no Russians although they were



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fighting in the Southern part of the town. The Germans had all the roads blocked with big barricades and we were stopped several times by German soldiers wanting to know what we were doing in town. Once I thought they were going to take us with them towards Berlin but we talked them out of it and besides they had enough to worry about. We finally got back out to camp. It wasn't a good night to sleep since the Russians were shelling the woods around camp and German planes were everywhere and once they strafed part of the camp but no one was hurt. Finally went to bed and was awaked at six on the morning of April 22nd by a lot of shouting. A Russian major had entered the camp and we finally knew that we were finally free. You should have heard all the yelling and cheering. The Russian major immediately took General Ruge, the Norwegian and the American Senior Officer, Colonel Herte to the town to meet other Russian officers. On the way to town they met a German Armored Car on the road and were fired upon. Colonel Herte jumped out in a ditch but the Russian major and the General kept on going. Colonel Herte walked back to camp and we later on found out that the Russian and the General arrived safely in town. About nine o'clock a column of Russian tanks entered the camp and received a royal welcome. The tanks immediately tore down all the barbed wire fences and went into the woods to continue fighting the Germans who were still in the woods. All the Russian prisoners immediately left camp to hunt Germans and they found quite a few in the woods. I didn't see too many German prisoners. A lot of women were trying to get in the camp but we wouldn't let them in. That same day I came down town to live in the Red Cross food warehouse with a Captain and a Canadian Flight Lieutenant. We have been here ever since then and it is our job to get supplies up to camp. I am living in a German Hauptmann's room and am very comfortable. We have been here a week now and still no sign of the Americans or of us leaving. The Russians think we may go home through Russia but we want to go to the American lines which are about two hours from here. Right now I am in the Nazi Party house and we have just shipped 15 typewriters up to camp. Yesterday we sent up over 65 good German radio sets. It is certainly a pleasure to listen to America and England. For the last 26 months it was forbidden for us to listen to anything but German broadcasts and you know what they were. We can hear the battle of Berlin going on and continual streams of Russian tanks and trucks are going through town towards Berlin. Most all of the equipment is American. Russian airplanes are everywhere but no German planes can be seen. There are a lot of German prisoners through town every day and quite a few have been beat up and have no shoes but they deserve it all. The town is pretty badly shot up and all the homes and stores have been looted. We have water, gas, and lights but no trains

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are running yet. Right now we are waiting to find out what will be done with us. I have a lot more I would like to tell you but it will have to wait until I get home. I will try writing again soon. Give my love to everyone and I'll soon be seeing you.

Lots of love,

Amos Jr

April 29, 1945,  
Luckenwalde, Germany

Dear Dad,

I have been a free man for a week now but still no sign of the Americans. It certainly is a swell feeling to have no barbed wire around us or having a lot of Germans telling you what to do. I will have to wait until I get home before I can tell you how much I hated them. I have so much to say that I really don't know where to begin so I will start with the beginning. As you probably already know we left Oflag 64 on January 21st when the Russians broke through at Moscow. We had about 1500 American officers there on that date and we received the order to start marching West. We were allowed to take with us only what we could carry. About 100 sick officers were allowed to remain in the hospital where they were captured by the Russians the next day. Also a few officers hid themselves in old tunnels but only a few were allowed to do so and they took with them a three weeks food supply. None of us had any idea that the Russians were so close or many more would have escaped. Anyway we left the camp on the morning of January 21st and marched 20 kilometers to the small Polish town of Exin and were there bedded down in barns and stables. I slept in a stall with a cow and about midnight she started having a calf so I had to leave. That night a lot more officers escaped and in the morning there were about 100 officers too sick and exhausted to march any further so they were left there without a guard. The Russians picked them up that day I think. We marched another 20 kilometers that day to Ratzhalt or Wirsitz. The Russians were very close to us because we could hear machine gun and artillery fire. My right leg started bothering me and I was carrying such a heavy load that I really didn't care what happened to me. The next morning we woke up to find out that all the Germans had deserted and we were alone. The Russians had us nearly surrounded and the Polish civilians

told us to wait and the Russians would soon be in the town. They were all around us and we could actually hear the artillery shells going over us. Naturally we all thought we were free and would soon be on our way home so I found me a nice room in some Germans home and made myself comfortable. We slaughtered a lot of pigs and started preparing big meals. John Jones was our cook. In the afternoon after 12 hours of freedom a platoon of Lithuanian SS troops marched into town. Apparently the Russians had been driven back and the Germans decided to get us out. They lined us up on the road and told us to prepare to march 6 kilometers to another town called Charlottenburg. At this time a lot more officers took off and hid in houses and straw stacks but before leaving the Germans fired machine guns into the straw. This brought quite a few officers out from hiding. My leg was so bad and the snow so deep that I decided it was best to stay with the main group<sup>1</sup>. When we marched out of the town John Jones was complaining about the big meal he was cooking and had to leave on the stove. When we got to Charlottenburg we were again placed in a big barn and I had to sleep in a grain bin and it was very warm. The Lithuanian SS troops were pretty friendly and that night a lot more officers escaped or hid to wait for the Russians. The next day we went to a town called Lobsens where the German commandant told us that Himmler himself had sent the SS troops to guard us since too many officers were escaping. Again when we left the next morning the Germans fired machine guns into the barns in case anyone was hiding. All that day we could hear machine gun fire and big tank battles and thought that the Russians might overtake us. Im glad we didn't see any Russian airplanes because 1100 men marching across the snow fields and roads would have made a perfect target and there was no way of knowing we were prisoners. That afternoon we crossed the Polish German border and it seemed to cheer the Germans up a lot although the Russians were right behind us. That night after 23 kilometers we reached Flatow and I was so exhausted that I went straight to bed in a barn but first I took my shoes for the first time in three days which was a mistake since they were

frozen stiff the next morning. So far in 5 days the Germans had given us only black bread for rations and if we hadn't had Red Cross food parcels when we left Oflag 64 I doubt if any of us could have marched for 1 day. We spent the entire next day in this town and I was very lucky being able to trade four cigars for a big slab of bacon. I split this with Lt. Beasley from Ennis who was marching next to me. The German Commandant, a Colonel called us all together and told us that the Russians had broken diplomatic relations with America and Britain and that if we escaped we would probably become Russian prisoners. This was a typical German propoganda trick. By this time there were so many officers who were sick, exhausted, frostbitten, and had frozen feet that the Germans got two railroad flat cars and put them on it and shipped them to this camp at Luckenwalde which is 54 kilometers South of Berlin. The next day we marched to Jastrow and when we arrived there the snow was over a foot deep. I was limping pretty badly and knew that I wouldn't be able to go any further the next day. About that time the Germans announced they had two box cars and would take 120 officers and the American doctor told me that I could go. We marched back down to the railroad and they put 60 of us in each box car but with 10 German guards it made a total of 70 in each car. It was so crowded that half of us stood for three hours while the rest sat down and at the end of three hours we changed places. Of course the Germans took all the room they needed. As we got into the box cars there were two very old women laying dead in the snow. Refugees were everywhere trying to escape before the Russians arrived. That was the last I saw of the other 800 officers except for 200 who were put on box cars two days later. The rest marched all the way to Stettin and were then shipped to Hammelburg near Wurzburg where they were later liberated by the American third army. The train we were on was composed of refugees from East Russian and Germans from Poland. Some of these people were on coal and flat cars and since it was snowing and was about 10 degrees above zero many of these people died from exposure.

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I actually saw wounded German soldiers riding on top of coal cars so we were fairly fortunate to be in box cars. It took us 8 days to come to Luckenwalde, a little more than 400 kilometers. During this 8 day period we received no rations of any type and the only food we had was what we were able to get of civilians and German troop trains going to the front. They would give nearly anything for tobacco. We spent two days in the big Templehof railroad yards in Berlin. On either February 3rd or 4th at noon we were bombed by 1250 heavy American bombers. I can easily say that I don't want to be under anymore American bombers. We arrived in this camp on February 5th and have been here ever since. There was no room and they put us on some old Russian barracks. The food situation was very bad and our daily ration consisted of watery soup and five potatoes for lunch and in the afternoon we received five slices of black bread. Most of us were so weak that we had to stay on our bunks most of the day. Later on some Red Cross food parcels arrived which made things a lot more bearable. The camp was very crowded as it was but later on about 4000 American enlisted men arrived from Stalag 3B at Frankfort on Oder. They had to sleep in big tents on straw since there was no more room left. The 550 American officers from Oflag 64 were living in the same compound with 1300 RAF officers and 650 Polish officers. We slept in triple deck wooden bunks with straw as a mattress. Since we were only 33 miles from Berlin we could see all the bombings and there were quite a few of them. For one straight period of 37 nights the English RAF was over Berlin every night. The night raid on Potsdam on April 13th or 14th was the biggest we had ever seen.

On February 13th the Germans attempted to evacuate the British officers to another camp because the Americans were approaching the Elbe River. At this time the Germans weren't thinking that the Russians would get here so quick. The 1300 British officers were loaded into box cars here but no locomotive could be found and every day in this area the railroad yards were bombed. Finally after waiting two days for a locomotive they came back to camp. We all thought the Americans would

soon arrive but instead the Russians broke through the German lines Southeast of us. The Americans and Russians were South of us and it was impossible to go North toward Berlin so we knew there was no chance of the Germans getting us out, but didn't know what to expect since the Germans always do what you don't expect. On April 20th we heard that the Russians had broke through East of us but we didn't know where. Apparently the Americans had been stopped on the Elbe. We saw many flights of American bombers hitting railroad yards South and West of Berlin. At dusk we saw large fires burning to the South of of camp. The Germans said it was the Russians in Juterbog which is 18 kilometers from us. Also we began to hear artillery and a little machine gun fire. We all went to bed expecting big things the next day. As usual the British bombers were over camp that night and we saw them bombing Berlin. Saw two planes go down in flames. On Saturday, April 21st, we were awakened by heavy artillery and machine gun fire very near to camp. The Russians were within 5 or 6 miles of camp and German planes were continually over camp strafing and bombing the Russians who were on the South side of Luckenwalde. About eleven in the morning we noticed a lot of the Russians who were prisoners in camp breaking into some of the food supplies. This was the first hint we had that the German guards had deserted the camp. I can't blame the Russians for what they did because the Germans had treated them terribly. I have seen many Russian prisoners fall down because they didn't have the strength to stand, and then the Germans would kick and beat them. That is why I can't feel sorry for the Germans in the town here. I will have to wait until I get home before I tell you about that. Anyway when the Germans left us without guards we immediately took over the entire camp according to prearranged plans. General Ruge, Norwegian General, was in charge of the whole camp. The camp strength at the time the Germans deserted was 15,908 prisoners as follows:

572 American officers  
 1178 Norwegian officers  
 689 Polish officers  
 1333 RAF and Dominion officers  
 2268 Russians, the Germans do not recognize Russian officers.

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kept on going. Colonel Herte walked back to camp and we later on found out that the Russian and the General arrived safely in town. About nine oclock a column of Russian tanks entered the camp and received a royal welcome. The tanks immediately tore down all the barbed wire fences and went into the woods to continue fighting the Germans who were still in the woods. All the Russian prisoners immediately left camp to hunt Germans and they found quite a few in the woods. I didn;t see too many German prisoners. A lot of women were trying to get in the camp but we wouldn't let them in. That same day I came down town to live in the Red Cross food warehouse with a a Captain and a Canadian Flight Lieutenant. We have been here ever since then and it is our job to get supplies up to camp. I am living in a German Hauptmann's room and am very comfortable. We have been here a week now and still no sign of the Americans or of us leaving. The Russians thik we may go home through Russia but we want to go to the American lines which are about two hours from here. Right now I am in the Nazi Patry house and we have just shipped 15 typewriters up to camp. Yesterday we sent up over 65 good German radio sets. It is certainly a pleasure to listen to America and England. For the last 26 months it was forbidden for us to listen to anything but German broadcasts and you know what they were. We can hear the battle of Berling going on and continual streams of Russian tanks and trucks are going through town towards Berlin. Most all of the equipment is American. Russian airplanes are everywhere but no German planes can be seen. There are a lot of German prisoners through town every day and quite a few have been beat up and have no shoes but they deserve it all. The town is pretty badly shot up and all the homes and stores have been looted. We have water, gas and lights but no trains are running yet. Right now we are waiting to find out what will be done with us. I have a lot more I would like to tell you but it will have to wait until I get home. I will try writing again soon. Give my love to everyone and I'll

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soon be seeing you.

Lots of love,

(Signed) Amon Jr