

By Back Factory Bldg. (Tylek)

We had just been issued 9 days rations before entering the Bldg. and sometime during our stay there, and I believe it was the first night, someone stole John Herman's (he had it tied around his neck). He and I lived on my 9 days rationing for that 9 days. a little lean, that stretch was, to say the least. But we made it.

Another time while staying in a barn, John Herman and I found a hen's nest with 16 eggs in it. of course they must have been ok since the weather was so cold. I hated eggs growing up, and couldn't stand the thought of swallowing a raw egg except in a milk shake, as athletes in those days often did. John and I sucked 8 eggs each that day.

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by Henry (Hank as we called him) Healan —
early one morning, somewhere along the road,
John and I tumbled into Hank as his "Barn
Group" joined ours in foraging along the main
roadway. Hank had a toe-sack over his
shoulder. We inquired and he said it was
a turkey he had captured the night before
in the Cora, and if we would help him
carry it we would all share in the feast.
Of course, if you remember, the German Guards
would not let us have fires. Well we
carried this turkey hen among the three of
us switching off because we weren't strong
enough to do it by ourselves at all.

During our breaks we would gently set
the old turkey hen down beside the road
and rest. She never made a peep all day,
the Guards were up and down passing
us all the time, as you remember. That
night we were fortunate enough to be put
in a barn with stables in it on both sides
of a runway or open area up the middle.

The guard was walking up and down the open runway (this allowed for entrance to each stall or stable). The stalls were filled with hay. The three of us had one stall to ourselves. We dug a hole in the hay down to the bottom of the stall or to the floor of the stall. I crawled down in the hole with the turkey hen. Hank and Jim kept their eye on the guard. I cut the turkey's head off and skinned her, feathers and all. Took out the insides and we ate some of the small organs and a little white meat. We had a lot of turkey, she was in good shape. We put her back in the toe sack and carried all the feathers, skin and insides, etc that we had to leave behind with the hay in filling up the hole I had worked in.

We carried that turkey hen, I don't remember exactly, but 2, 3 or maybe 4 days.

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One evening about dusk after having been billeted again in our plush quarters (another barn), this one had a back lot with a high board fence around it. We strolled out and lo and behold we spied smoke coming over the fence from the next barnyard. We peered and it was a "Limer" sewing his tea. Remember, they let the British soldiers do this. We solicited his aid and agreed to share our turkey with him if he would cook her. So he did. All he could do was boil the turkey - but it worked and we feasted. That was my best and most nourishing meal I had while in Germany. We all thoroughly enjoyed it, and I think the British soldier, Lord Bless his kind heart and soul, enjoyed it also.

9/11

August 2, 1991

Dear John,

I hope that you will forgive me for taking so long to study the material that you were so kind to send me. On July 12th I started in a college class at Midwestern State University and finished with the final exam Thursday the 31st. Being a short 3½ week course as it was, I can't begin to explain the intensity of the amount of study and the time it demanded. It owned me until that final was complete. Therefore, I had practically no time for anything other than that course until Thursday P.M. So I immediately got into the material that you had sent me that afternoon. While I was reading through it things would come to my mind and I began to write, hence the 4 pages of written stuff I am enclosing with this letter and your material. I'm sorry that I can't remember any of the particular places that these events took place, but they were real. So, I mowed the yard Thursday A.M. and we left town for our daughter's home here east of Denton, Texas in order that we could take care of the two grand-daughters while their mother and daddy went for a train ride to San Antonio for the weekend. So here we are and I have been reading and trying to catch up on the 106th in order that I can get your material in the mail to you Monday when we get home.

John, this is all so interesting to me and you have done and are doing such a wonderful job with this. We will all be eternally grateful to you. And you say that it is something that you love to do and that it is so interesting to you, and I'm sure that it is, I can certainly appreciate what you are saying. You also have outstanding organizational abilities.

I am so fortunate. I have now made contact with some outstanding people like yourself, Paul Kotlarich, Gil Helwig, Robert Stafford, Roy Bigger, and now the two guys that I was closest to, John Hurman and now Jagodzinski. I had been trying to locate him and had reached a cousin in Detroit who finally got word through to "Jago" and last Saturday July 13 about 12:30 he called me. What a great moment of excitement and joy for me, and he seemed to enjoy it as well. I will enclose his address and telephone number to you before mailing this, since I have it at home. I immediately then called John Hurman and told him the good news. I'm sure they have enjoyed talking to each other by now. John has joined the 106th Association, he reported and now maybe we can get "Jago" to join.

Another story: In another small village, on our walk thru Germany, John and I were in another hay barn with a group of our guys when, shortly after sunrise the Guards rammed open the doors and shouting "Rouse, Rouse" along with expletives, I'm sure, etc, that I couldn't understand but got the message nevertheless since some had pitchforks and began jabbing them into the hay and throwing it every which way, and along with it many delicious looking german sausages and meats of all kind. Well we were all absolutely astounded and dumb-founded. As it turned out three guys knew exactly what it was about, and maybe another or two who had nothing to do with the crime. As best as I can remember these one, two or three who knew about it, but were not guilty, told the others of us who they were. It seems that these who were guilty had taken a loose board from the side of the barn and escaped into the next barnyard where the Captain's wagon was parked with all of the Guard's and his rations in it. They proceeded to eat their fill and then (what a crazy thing to do instead of waking everyone else up to share in the feast, if they were going to take all of them and since they could not eat all of them by themselves) they hid the remains, which was quite a lot, in the hay around the rest of us as we slept. Why they couldn't reason that at least by sharing with the rest of us that it would not only be better for us all but also eliminate the evidence by consumption. Anyhow, the Germans had the goods on us and we were immediately convicted. After finding out who they were we told the Germans but they would not accept that the rest of us were innocent unless the three would confess. Well, you guessed it right, the rats wouldn't confess so they lined us up to be shot. Finally, after much fussing and frustration, especially with us who were innocent, the Germans changed their minds and decided to march us

as a separate group from the main body of prisoners, and turn us over to the SS whose garrison was only one days march away. So we proceeded forth, a small group following behind the large main body, in the direction of the SS Garrison.

We all, probably, had heard it said that 'there is safety in numbers', and some of us were smart enough to know that we did not have the numbers on our side, at least John and I were so we began looking around for a better future. Some time in late morning or noonish, I believe it was, we stopped for a break and it was heavily wooded on the side of the road that we were resting on. There also was a fairly deep ravine running parallel to our road, so John and I crawled down, thru the grass, to the embankment to the bottom of the ravine and worked our way up to the main body of prisoners and got back with that group. We just had the good fortune to catch the Guards off guard in order to be able to make the move.

Well, we got to the SS Garrison (do you remember those we stopped in and the Hitler Youth Group were marching and chanting and some manning burp guns from the roof tops and other strategic positions? They always made my skin crawl) and from that day to this, I never heard of, or from, any of that group of condemned prisoners, what happened to them, if the SS eliminated them, as they had so blatantly threatened us, or what became of the issue or the prisoners. John and I knew only each other of those in the group and that could account, to some degree, why we never heard from or about any of them. However, I would have remembered the leader of the three culprits especially and probably the other two by sight and I never saw one of the group from that day forth. I have always wondered.

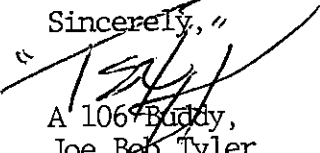
I realized while writing this that you might have remembered something about something strange going on at that particular time with one small group, and in the process be able to recall where it happened (what village). Although news somehow, had a way of making its way throughout the prisoner population, things could slip by the major part of the prisoners that involved such a small group and especially as large as that main body of prisoners was. Anyhow, that was a nail-biting experience.

John, in reading about all of your experiences and stops we made, and the names of the villages and towns, etc. it is so interesting and we were in the same group right through to the glorious day of April 13, and that is where we separated. John Hurman was taken out early, probably with the same group that you were because he was very sick also. He was flown to Fort Meade, Md. Hospital. I stayed behind, and as I related to Gil, I think, I had too much freedom and too great a hunger and I became very sick. I spent a lot of time in the Field Hosp. at LeHarve, France before being shipped back to stateside.

John, if there is any of the material that you sent me that I did not return and should, please tell me. I appreciate you so much and I certainly hope to be able to see you sometime in the not too distant future. Since I am working again this fall for the University football program, I guess I won't make it to Huntsville. I sure would like to. But when John said that he couldn't make it this year, I decided to not take a chance in asking. I am still working on finishing my quarters for Social Security eligibility and I need the job. This year will finish that up.

So, once again John, thank you for everything you have done for me and for all of the others, and I look forward to the day I can shake your hand.

Sincerely,"


A 1067 Biddy,
Joe Bob Tyler
2609 San Simeon Dr.
Wichita Falls, Tx 76308

P.S. Please keep in touch. You, and all the others, are my long-lost treasures, found again. I love all of you guys.

April 5, 1991

John P. Kline
5401 U. 147th St. West
Apple Valley, MN 55124

Dear John;

I apologize for taking so long to get back to you, but I have been so excited about all of this since the day that you called me. I hardly know how or where to begin this letter. In the first place, thanks for calling and I will forever be indebted to you for sending the material. Congratulations, you do a great job as Editor of the Cub. It is most interesting, especially since one feels that they have so much in common with everything and everyone in the publication. The most interesting of all to me; however, is your diary. I have always regretted that I did not keep a diary of each days activities, my thoughts at the moment, experiences with each and every friend and buddy. Your 1943 picture looks so familiar to me that I bet I knew you somewhere along the line. I had, and still have, forgotten so much. Your diary has brought a lot back to mind, however. It seems that we were in all of the same places after being captured on Dec. 19, 1944 right up to that glorious day of liberation April 13, 1945. That day I distinctly remember, hallelujah! I think it was the 36th Division wasn't it. I remember that the Jeep that rolled into the barnyard where I was had I Co., 106 Div. markings on it. The other vehicle was a Sherman tank. That is where our trails seemed to split, you were moved out with the sick and I stayed behind and we were moved later, back to Corp Reserve. I got sick later, from eating (trying to catch up) and spent 3 or 4 weeks in a field hospital back in LeHarve, but that is all too long a story to tell right now. I have just been amazed at the experiences that you related in your diary seem so familiar to me. We could have been in the next bunk (or platform) from each other. I can never thank you enough for sending me this diary.

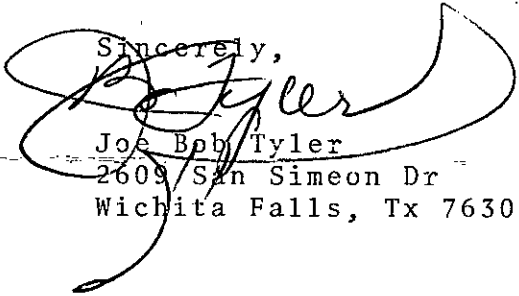
Because of you I have found a few of the guys that I have thought about and wondered about for all of these years. I had a long conversation with Paul Kotlarich, I called him and got his answering machine, he called me the next morning. I tell you I am so excited about it, still. Because of the "old roster" you sent me I called and found John J. Hurman, one of my dearest and closest friends, ever. Thank God, he is alive and in good health. They took him out with the sick also when we were liberated. I haven't seen him since that day. He remembers you, in fact, he told me to ask you if you remembered him yelling to you to get out of a window when we were bombed in Koblenz. Just as you did, a bomb dropped close by and the window blew in. John was a squad leader of the 3rd squad, 3rd platoon. Joe Benigno was his Section Sgt. John Hurman was one of the finest young men that I have ever been privileged to know. His address is 100 12th Ave. Baltimore, Md. 21225; telephone 301-789-1245. Another that John and I buddied with so much was Alexander Jagodzinski but we have no trace of him yet. Alexander, or "Jago", as everyone called him, was from Detroit. I am so sorry to hear that Henry Healan has passed on. He was my first gunner, I was squad leader of either 1st or 2nd squad, Sgt. Whitman was the other. I will have to ask Paul, he was my Section Sgt.

One morning as we fell out in our barnyard groups into the main column, John and I meshed right into "Hank" (Henry Healan) and he had a toe-sack on his shoulder. We inquired about it and he said that it was a turkey that he found in the barn and she (it was a hen) was alive. He asked if we would help him carry it and we readily consented since the thought of any type of meat, other than the horse meat we got occasionally, made our mouths water. We carried the hen all day, scared to death every time a guard got close that she would attract their attention (the old hen never made a sound, if it had been a gobbler our tails would have been cooked good). That night we were fortunate enough to be in a barn that had stalls with a walkway down the center of it. The stalls were filled with hay, just what we needed. As the guard paced up and down the center aisle, we dug a deep hole to the bottom of the stall and I got down in it and cut the poor turkeys head off. We then skinned and dressed her, ate some of what we could raw, then sacked her up again to carry until we could get a chance to cook the rest. Remember, they wouldn't let us have fires. - They would let the British, however. - I don't remember exactly how long it was, but it seems that we carried the carcass and meat for a few short days (it sure wouldn't spoil in that weather). At some barnyard stop we spied smoke coming from the next barnyard. Sure enough, it was a British soldier brewing his tea. We made a deal to share with him if he would boil our turkey. He did, and we ate the most delicious and nourishing meal that we had the whole time that we were the German's guests. The barley soup ranked high also, we just didn't get enough of it.

John, I also got and answered a letter from Roy Bigger and I have talked, by phone, to Robert Stafford. I don't know if I can or not, but I want to make the Reunion. I am going to send in my membership dues to Gil Helwig (I remember him very well) and I hope that we can get John Hurman to join, if he is not already a member. I find 106th guys in the bulletin also. If you hear anything about "Jago" or Robert C. Duff of Georgia please let me know.

Once again, thank you very much. You are doing a great job, keep up the good work. I will stay in touch with you.

Sincerely,


Joe Bob Tyler

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P.S. Do you need me to return any of the publications that you sent me? I'm still reading them.