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Bernard Petterson of Binford: Germany, World War II

Bernard Petterson

PRISONER OF WAR

A TRUE STORY

BY: BERNARD PETTERSON
BINFORD, N. DAK

AMERICAN PRISONER IN EUROPEAN
THEATER OF WAR
GERMAN PRISON CAMPS
WORLD WAR II 1941-1945

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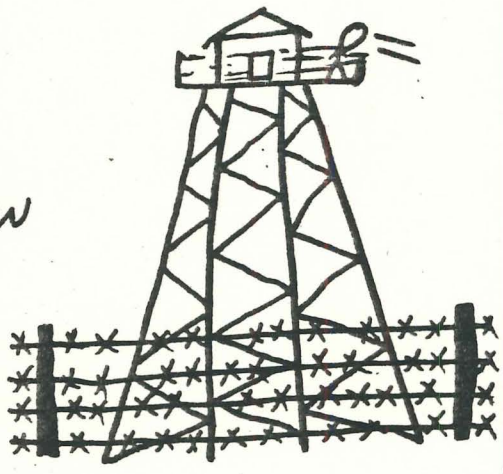
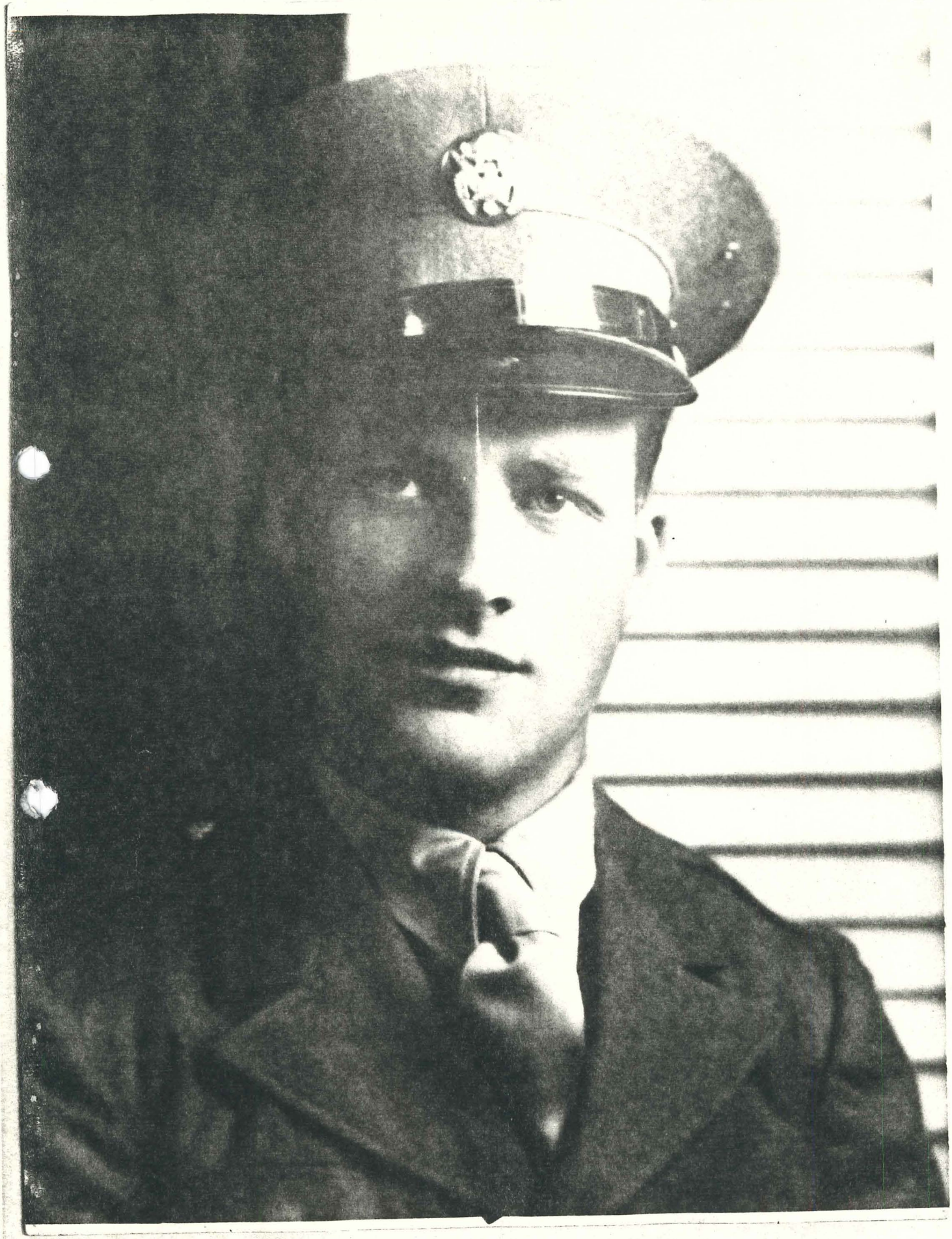




Sometime in the 1930's I read an account of a World War I P.O.W. in Germany. In a letter to his father, he commented on the good treatment, and he goes on to say, "We receive plenty of good food, especially baloney."

My name is Bernard H. Petterson. My home is Binford, ND, and I have resided here since my discharge in 1945. Finley, ND, is where I was born on June 14, 1916. I was drafted there and inducted into the army on August 14, 1942, at Fort Snelling, MN.

My wife Angeline and I were married on October 25, 1940. A daughter, Kersti Jan, was born January 29, 1943. She died of cancer February 1979 leaving two children of her own. A son, B. Anthony, was born July 23, 1946. He has a wife and two boys and farms near Binford. Another son, Leon, was born January 7, 1949. He was killed in a farm accident January 30, 1973.

I dropped out of school about 1932. My father died in 1934, but my older brother and I continued the family coal business until October of 1937 when I joined the C.C.C. I was discharged June 1938 and in October began working for the Great Northern Railway. This was my occupation upon entering the service.

I was assigned to Anti Aircraft, and upon completion of basic training at Camp Callan near San Diego, CA, I was sent to Port Orchard, WA, where I joined the headquarters battery of the 260th A.A.A., a Washington, DC, National Guard unit. My duties were messenger, officers' chauffeur, postal worker, and truck driver. Since there were only about 50-60 men in our unit we were one happy family. For instance, there were no separate rooms or quarters for N.C.O.s and everyone was treated equally. Also to make matters even better, my wife, having sisters residing in Tacoma, came to live and work there; which in effect, brought me within

an hour's bus ride from home. I never had it so good and still I complained (not too loudly) about not having enough to do.

Well come April 1944, we hauled all the guns and ammo to Fort Lewis, loaded the trucks on flatcars and boarded a train. We were eventually informed that Kansas was our destination, but it wasn't clear just where until we were met at Salinas by officers with crossed rifle insignia. In fact, as I later learned, the whole 4th army, of which we had been a part, was made infantry.

So we were given another six weeks basic. This time, right along with the master sergeants, some of whom had served longer than the cadre who were, however, veterans of the islands off Alaska.

Incidently, none of the preceding is accounted for on my discharge. The war department claimed that the records were lost some time after my capture.

Skipping the details of the next few weeks (which would be another story) my group finally arrived at a location near Metz, France. There I was assigned to Company A 38th Armored Infantry Battalion, 7th Armored Division, which was then attached to the Third Army.

It turned out that Fort Metz was not a good place to be for I, along with a large share of Company A and Company B including our captain and first sergeant, ended up in an Evac hospital for various reasons of which again there is no record.

I cannot recall exactly how long I was in the hospital, but when I rejoined my outfit, we were no longer a part of the 3rd Army but the British 1st; and it seems most of our fighting was in Holland. At any rate we ended up at Achen, Germany. While there we spent considerable time

resting and, I guess, preparing for the big push across the Rhine.

It was then I joined the mortar squad (60 MM) having been a member of the machine gun squad prior to that. I put in all the time I could learning the mortar gunner trade until I was confident that I would be adequately proficient when and if the need arose.

And it did. In the wee hours of one morning, I think the 17th of December, (the enemy campaign opened at 5:30 a.m. December 16th) we found ourselves in a convoy heading south. Incidentally this is the part where "A large group of U.S. artillery men driving south with the 7th Armored Division were captured by English-speaking Germans in American uniforms, then driven into the woods at Malmedy, and gunned down." Fortunately I never knew the details of this until after the war or my actions prior to being captured may have been different. What we did is occupy positions vacated by the "unseasoned 106th and the bone-tired 28th." These people had been under the most heavy assaults of the campaign, and their remarks as we met them coming out did nothing for our moral--such as, "You had better be good." Well, according to one account, the 7th Armored Division just simply disappeared. Maybe, in a way, that is true as I do not know of any action after the "bulge" in which they were involved.

Early the next morning I became a mortar gunner. What happened is that someone, against rules and regulations, fired a machine gun on a lone German, clearly out of range and apparently from a position that the enemy already zeroed in, as the first 88 round was right on target injuring several of the machine gun and mortar crew, some enough to be evacuated.

Details of what went on until we were told to "get out the best we could" and that we had accomplished our mission are too involved to set down here.

It was probably the night of December 20 when we smashed our radios and disabled the machine guns. I remember burying the sight for the mortar and lugging the tube to a sufficiently muddy spot to toss it into. We were to circumvent the town behind us which was occupied; we managed this, but when we reached the opposite outskirts of the town, there were sounds of battle in the direction we were to go. So the Captain said, "I'm going this way (indicating the direction which would take us back through the town). Which way are you men going?" I could never quite understand this attitude since he had a whole company armed with rifles, plenty of ammunition, and grenades. So we proceeded back through the town that we had just come around. It was very quiet and dark, not to mention scary; suddenly the rumbling of a tank on a street somewhere, then Otto shouting something to Hans. Everyone ducked into an empty building, a barn or something which happened to be handy. It appeared we would stay there until daylight. This to me didn't seem like a very good idea since even if we managed to leave the place before being discovered, there would no longer be the protection of darkness.

I had a friend. His last name was Scott--we called him Randolph; and although we were in different squads, we had spent time together during the course of the last months and would be side by side for the duration. I cannot say too much about this Gentleman from Carolina beyond that I lucked out when we became partners.

He concurred that we should leave these premises the sooner the better. So we did. Not alone however. A very large, tall boy with the scariest face I've ever seen tagged along as it were. Getting through the town proved more difficult than going around it as we were forced to scale at least three fairly high board fences. We made it through, obviously, and

after a considerable walk, found ourselves back where we had started. There were our machine guns and whatever else we had left behind. This, of course, resulted in creating a very depressed mood (up until then we thought we were getting somewhere), the like of which was to afflict us with increasing frequency in the days and weeks ahead. So, we struck out in what proved to be the right direction, wading through wet snow and half frozen streams until in my estimation (I had a watch but it wasn't running) about four or five o'clock. We sat down to rest. This was a mistake, for we fell asleep. When we awoke it was a bright clear sunny day, so we continued into deeper forest and stayed there the rest of that day and night. The next morning was also clear and bright. We observed several German soldiers posted at what seemed regular intervals just outside the perimeter of the woods with their backs toward us. There was also a small town less than a mile away; I think south of our position. We could see which way the Germans were marching toward the front which had to be west so we knew the way to go. It was a matter of deciding when.

Meanwhile two more men had joined our group. I don't know exactly what time, but now there were five of us. It seemed the longer we put off going for it the harder it was to leave. The nights were very cold. We huddled together using our coats as sort of a tent rather than wearing them; we seemed to keep warmer that way. Also two days had passed since we had eaten, and this probably contributed to our apathy and lethargic attitude.

Sometime during the early daylight hours of December 23 I found myself poking around in what appeared to be a likely spot where something edible may be found. Just exactly what this would be I cannot guess, but we were, after all, in territory once occupied by Americans. My rifle was elsewhere.

I doubt if I would have used it under the upcoming circumstances anyway. The other four were out of sight. Suddenly I felt rather than saw or heard someone approaching. Oh yes, there was this tingle of fear running through my being then, but I was also somewhat embarrassed by my comradesses. I turned and began ambling away, not more than a step or two. The Halt! sounds the same in German as it does in English, so I made an about face with my arms spread to confront one "soldaten" with a rifle and a man with a pistol--probably an N.C.O. who said, "Upgaven?" and I replied, "Ja ja." Actually they seemed like ordinary run-of-the-mill fellows and I was certainly put at ease by these questions: Any revolver? A. No revolver. They took my word for it. Any American cigaretten? A. Nein. They took my word for that too, but I doubt if they believed me when I denied having any comrades; for instead of taking my lead toward the town where I reasoned we must be going, we headed toward the spot where the others were hiding. We had almost past it when the big scary-faced guy comes charging out with his hands in the air shouting "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" I was embarrassed again by this display, not to mention a little disappointed; I said no one's going to shoot anybody. So we all marched off toward the town. Said my friend Scott, "I've thought of alot of ways to get out of this war, but this never crossed my mind."

At the first stop we were treated more like visitors than prisoners, and although there were one or two young men with rifles in evidence (these boys were also ready and willing to make small talk), security seemed quite lax. We were served apples and REAL coffee. Sometime during the day I was interrogated by a man in civilian clothes who claimed to have a sister living in Detroit. It was like talking to someone you meet on the street; it wasn't until later that I realized what this was all about.

This sounds like a tranquil situation, but as in a dream, there was violent action taking place only a short distance away. Our P40's were doing their thing, and then I took note that NOBODY was out in the open as one skimmed by so low that the pilot's face was clearly visible--speaking of mixed emotions.

Toward evening we were given a substantial meal consisting of soup, bread, butter--the same rations as the Germans themselves. Then we were all herded into a hayloft; there we viewed each other's pictures, that is, the guards and ourselves and expressed our mutual wish to have the war over so that we could all go home. Being warm and not hungry for the first time in days, we slept very well that night.

Come morning we were made ready for a further walk down the road. A sixth man, I don't recall which outfit, appeared from somewhere. It seems he had panicked when captured the day before and had spent the night with his hands wired together behind his back. This was the only deliberate act of cruelty that I ever encountered. This also explained why on the day before, an officer had come out of his quarters ranting about someone behaving so unreasonable in his presence. Our guard escort undid the wire and instructed him by demonstration to massage his hands, and although they were quite blue and swollen, they did eventually return to normal.

So we started what turned out to be about a ten kilometer hike. The road ahead seemed not to be ideal for travel, for on either side and also overhead, a hot battle was in progress between our dive bombing P40's and enemy anti-aircraft crews. As one plane crossed perhaps 500 feet up and not much farther than that ahead of us, it disintegrated completely, having been struck by an automatic cannon shell. These events seemed very unreal at the time and even now I feel as thought I am relating the experiences of another person.

Along the way we observed much use of horsepower--the four-legged type, and once we were requested to help push a vehicle that had apparently run out of fuel. All this, of course, was heartening, since with such equipment how long could the enemy last.

We arrived at the next gathering point, a building which I can no longer describe. There were 18 of us then somehow and we all huddled together on the bare wooden floor, sharing two loaves of bread--something that we would eventually get use to. The bread had the texture and taste of sawdust. This was Christmas Eve. In an adjoining room some guards were singing carols and hymns accompanied by an accordian. I went outside as I knew there was a guard there, and I had an urge to talk with him to hear the other side of the story as it were. He turned out to be a man in his early twenties and seemed grateful for the diversion. He informed me that he had recently completed a 1000 mile march and went on to describe conditions on the Russian front and the deceitful practice of the Russians in arming their "Doctors" (medics). I agreed that this was unfair. Of course, I couldn't mention either through discretion, or at the time ignorance, of some other people's unfair and atrocious tactics.

The details of events for the next week or so are not too clear in my mind. The flyleaf of my New Testament says: Ride and sleep into 25-walk from noon to 9-one can of spam for 18 (This was provided by a doctor; there were two in our company then.) Stay in very crowded ½s, ¼ bread, may-be marg. meat or jam. Also bowl of barley soup and ersatz coffee per day. Worked also the last night at this particular place. (Some of us were trucked to a warehouse that had been bombed, to salvage the contents. I had no more than filled my pockets with dried prunes when a couple others and I were bid to follow this civilian guard, a man in his late 40's who

spoke English with a British accent. He took us just inside the doorway of a vacant building where he treated us to cigarettes and we made small talk until it was time to leave. I can only think of him as being a nice compassionate fellow.

We were interrogated here and once previous to our arrival--a not too unpleasant experience; however, on one occasion, my gloves were confiscated and on another my galoshes and watch; otherwise, except for being handled more or less like cattle and the skimpy rations, I would say we were treated quite fairly if not indifferently. Having said this, however if we compare this treatment to the one we gave our counterparts in the U.S., the words to describe it would be pointless here. In fact, I considered their situation much more desperate than ours, which it was, and I really felt sorry for the people whose partially demolished towns we passed through. Incidentally, I will state here that even though our situation seemed quite hopeless at times, I never once doubted that I would live to tell about it. Also I couldn't know that in spite of the assurance by one of my interrogators that my wife would be very happy to learn of my capture, she was never given this information until after the war was over, and that none of the letters which we were allowed to write arrived at Binford before I did.

My Bible says: Dec. 29 walked 12 miles, had better ¼s but only 1/6 bread, 1 bowl soup, no salt, very little liquid. Now this must have been Bonn, and as I remember it, the quarters were better inasmuch as there was a lot more room; however, for about a week we slept on a concrete floor and were issued a piece of burlap to serve as a mattress. Fortunately, we kept our overcoats throughout.

By this time we had accumulated quite a large number of prisoners, perhaps hundreds, mainly Americans, but also members of the British army including Gurkas, Australians, and South Africans. There were members of our own air force, and I noticed that some of these were in no condition to be hiking but were limping along with some assistance. Although there may have been others from the 7th armored, I saw none. Someone did inform me at a later date that those we had walked out on were captured en masse; and as we arrived at our permanent camp, they were in the process of leaving. In fact our squad leader Sgt. Peter Kenny, who was among them, had inquired as to my whereabouts and welfare--a gesture that makes me sad that we have never been in touch since.

On January 6th we were issued a slice of bologna (an inch or two), some bread: altogether enough for a small dog. We then marched about ten miles to a place named Seaburg and were loaded into boxcars. As we were waiting to move, another train of boxcars filled with German soldiers passed, headed in the opposite direction. They called out to say how lucky we were to have the war over and how we had it made.

The doors were slammed shut and except for a foot-square window high on the wall there was no light and very little ventilation. This was a Monday. Our situation wasn't all that bad. To begin with we were only loaded to the car's standard capacity. Now, however, hunger and stress were beginning to show. As time dragged on I became fearful of what was happening to various personnel. It was difficult to tell night from day. I think we traveled mostly at night, and sometimes we would stand still for what seemed many hours. The door opened on one of those occasions. We were handed Red Cross parcels. Big deal. All the ready-to-eat items had been removed. We were left with such goodies as powdered eggs which

someone managed to do away with. On another stop we were allowed to leave the car for a few minutes. This, of course, was a great relief for reasons that need not be explained; but of almost equal importance, we filled our helmets with snow, for there had been no drinking water for two days.

On Wednesday we arrived at I think Limburg, which I understand, had been our original destination; however, there had been a bombing or maybe the war was getting too close, so instead of being unloaded, the inmates of Stalag IIA boarded the boxcar. Now, we were no longer merely crowded; we were in a situation where 12 people had to stand in order for the remainder to sit with knees drawn up to their chins. I took my turn at standing for what seemed several hours. Then I found a spot which I kept for the remainder of the trip using my helmet as a stool, turning it first one way and then the other, keeping my New Testament before me, and concentrating on it except when I managed to doze. There was one occasion when someone threatened intruders of his space with a knife; otherwise, it seemed most were resigned to tough it out. Dysentery, which fortunately didn't get to me until we arrived at our permanent camp, was affecting a large percentage of, as I recall, 70 men in a space meant for 40. There is a pretty good description of the car or one just like it in Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse Five."

January 14, a Saturday, we arrived at our destination, a very large camp at which, I believe, all the Allied Nationals were incarcerated--confined in separate compounds. The English, many of whom having been there since Dunkirk, seemed to resent our being moved in with them.

I do recall doing a great amount of shivering before being assigned to a "hut" as the barracks were called. They were filled to perhaps twice their capacity, and I spent the first few nights sleeping on a table.

There was a good news, bad news incident involving Scott and me. A German sergeant bit us follow him. I cannot remember what it was he had us do except that it had something to do with the kitchen.(I think there was one central kitchen serving the whole camp.) As a reward we received alot more pea soup than we could eat at one sitting, and being starved as we were, of course we used poor judgment and "pigged out." The English huts were arranged with living quarters on either side of a concrete laundry, wash room. In other words a common facility for two barracks with privies located at each end. The cramp hit me about midnight, and low and behold, the privy on my side was out of order. Then, heading for the other end, I found myself last in a line of about 25. Come morning I returned to retrieve my long johns that I had ditched beneath the concrete trough of the laundry. They were gone. This was the beginning of what was to be many trips to a latrine each day for the next four months with a handful of excelsior which was from our mattresses. Eventually we were assigned bunks somehow. They were of wood construction with slats running cross-wise as springs. Of course, there weren't enough to go around so Scott and I shared our body heat and a comforter which I had been lucky enough to win in a lottery, the only fair way that a few could be distributed among so many. It is probably the most appreciated thing that I will ever win.

It took me awhile to figure out what the English sergeant major was mumbling, but whenever he did I followed everyone outside where we would line up in rows of five to be counted. (What the S.M. was saying was "on parade" which is the equivalent of "fall out".) This lining up could happen several times a day for whatever reason I couldn't guess.

About a couple weeks later, we Americans were moved to a separate

compound. There the huts, in keeping the name, were merely shells with bunks for perhaps two-thirds of the inmates and a stove in the center for which there was no fuel. Scott and I lucked out again. We had a bunk while many others slept in rows on the floor. The latrine was a tile building located as a central facility for the whole compound; I will just ignore any questions dealing with sanitary conditions.

We were fed once a day--mainly turnip soup, about 8 to 10 fluid ounces, and, depending on how many loaves of bread were available, one fourth to one sixth per man. Sometimes we received as much as a teaspoon of sugar, a pat of margarine, and ersatz cheese which tasted rotten. We may have gotten as many as six Red Cross parcels while I was there. I am not sure. I know the first one had to be divided by seven. Ordinarily a parcel was meant for one person for a week. On another occasion it was divided by four--a windfall. I suppose the cigarettes were appreciated the most not only for smoking but also as a medium of exchange. For example: A loaf of "civilian bread" smuggled in by certain guards sold for 40 cigarettes and a haircut cost one or two depending on the supply. My partner, bless his heart, was a tobbaco chewer. He always let me smoke a few drags of his cigarettes claiming that this enhanced the flavor. Otherwise the only food we had was in our dreams at night and in our conversations when awake. We were lousy and flea-bitten, and due to lack of nourishment and unsanitary conditions, the bites never healed but continued to fester and itch. We were allowed showers maybe one or two times, perhaps as many as three altogether, once by mistake as I was in a group picked to go on a work detail but for some reason the order was changed. The showers were located in a building whereupon entering our clothing was placed in some sort of gas oven for delousing. We were allowed about five minutes for

showering which I guess was better than a sharp stick in the eye. From there we went to the room where our clothes were waiting and dressed. At one of these times, I had completed dressing except for my sweater. I remember reaching for it and that is all until a group of excited people were calling my name outside the building. I had apparently been overcome by the gas and in my weakened condition passed out. In spite of this I seemed to remain in a fair state of health.

On several occasions we were herded into Mulberg about four kilometers away for wagon loads of briquets for the kitchen, and once we were escorted (I do not know how far) to gather bundles of sticks and dead branches for what I thought was to be fuel for our huts. My bundle ended up in the German officers' quarters outside the camp. Well, we did have a change of scenery.

We attended services at the Church of England, twice as I recall, at Easter and again on a day of mourning for the death of President Roosevelt.

We usually had two daily newscasts--one via the German media and one which was clandestinely obtained by radio which the Germans could never find. I am sure there are people who are more in the know about this and maybe some day I will be let in on it.

Along about April we began hearing the sounds of artillery in the distance so we knew the time for our liberation was growing close. I recall my friend Scott remarking,"If I arrive home and find another man by my fire I will go find another fire." This Southerner had a philosophical view of the whole situation and a dry humorous way of expressing it. "Never," said he, "will I punish my children by sending them to bed without their supper."

Although there was one man in our group who began to whine and have

illusions of being treated unfairly, I knew of no one becoming mentally unstable to the point where he needed help. It seemed that most P.O.W.'s sort of set their minds in toleration toward the day when everything would be back to normal, and we reasoned that the tougher things got the closer that day was at hand.

On the morning of April 25 we awoke to see the fences laying flat and a Russian officer sitting a white horse. There were no Germans in evidence and all the represented nations' flags were flying above the main gate. And without the actual experiences such as we had gone through I do not believe one can fathom the true meaning of the symbolism behind, in our case, the Stars and Stripes. I am sure there were other tears shed besides my own.

Actually we were not that much better off in the hands of the Russians, as I believe they lived off the land mostly, and for a day or two we ex-prisoners roamed the countryside doing likewise. Within the week we were marched to a town named Reisa and were billeted in what I understood to be an engineer's school. Now these were exclusively Americans, all other Nationalities having gone their separate ways. We continued on a starvation diet. Why our own people didn't come for us even after the official end of the war on May 7 goes without explanation.

Well, Scott and I had had enough of this and one evening about six o'clock we took off in a westerly direction. As we stayed on the road, we met German soldiers lingering in the ditches seemingly undecided as to just where to go, but mostly we ignored each other. Whatever the outcome of our present situation we felt free at last!! And of course Scott came up with another gem: "If only our wives could see us now walking home with 5000 miles to go."

Along about eleven o'clock that night we came to the town of Worzen. There we knocked on the first door that looked as though it might be a likely place to be taken in. A young lady emerged. (The widow of a Submariner as she told us later) She took us to her home, brought us sandwiches and gave us a bed. Come morning she brought us breakfast, and when we made known our plans to leave immediately, she exhorted us to remain indefinitely. The reason being that the Russians were less likely to harass the women as long as Americans were present. Our homing instincts prevailed however, and as we progressed westward, we were joined by others not necessarily Americans, as for instance, a young girl with a number tattooed on her arm.

Sometime during the day we were met by an American truck, and I guess this is the part where we felt that the war was really over, for we were once again in the hands of someone who would not only tell us what to do and where to go but would treat us as fellow human beings in the process.

Our immediate destination was Halle. After a short time there getting deloused, bathing, receiving clean clothes, some proper food, we were flown to LaHarve, France, with an overnight stop at Riems. This was what at first looked to me like an impossible situation, for by then there were perhaps thousands of people--Americans, French, and English--waiting to leave; but as I watched with gaping mouth, plane after plane arrived at the field until, and I am quite sure I counted correctly, there were 150 C-47's circling, landing, and taking off.

I think we were at Camp "Lucky Strike" for about a month, presumably because of lack of transportation back to the States, but mainly, and this is strictly my opinion, we were being made more presentable to the folks back home. A highlight: General Eisenhower came by and inquired as to how we liked our vacation.

At any rate we eventually boarded a new Coast Guard ship and in six days arrived at Boston and were sent on our merry way by train. I was home then after approximately a year.

Later that summer I received orders for my wife and I and child, if we wished, to go to Hot Springs, Arkansas, for recuperation and orientation and possible reassignment. Since our records had been lost our reprocessing included an I.Q. test. Although I had scored a 130 three years previously, now the wheels simply would not turn for whatever reason I know not, probably lack of incentive.

At Camp McCoy, Wisconsin, on the way home, I was processed for discharge. Although there were three precious years out of our lives, I am proud of having done what I had to do. I have no real complaints about treatment by the war department beyond they're being somewhat chintzy at times. I am now retired from a career as a rural mail carrier due at least in part to my service.

I maintain that this is my country I was defending and will again if required. After having contributed my small part in a successful campaign to conquer those who would destroy us, I can feel nothing but pride and no way would I trade the experience with anyone who for whatever reason escaped the duty.

Bankolt, March 7th.

Dear Bernard, Angeline and Children.

We were very glad to hear from you. It is very nice that you are at home now. Your wife and children will be happy.

We have also such a bad weather. Lots of snow and rain, just the weather to be ill. We will be glad when it is summer again.

Yes clothes and several other things are very hard to get here, but we hope that it is getting better after some time.

You must sure sent us a picture of your wife and children and of yourself. We will sent you a souvenir from Holland after some time.

We also not hear anything from the other boys, we hope they are at home now too, I stop now and hope to hear from you again soon.

The very best to you from

Anna. Catrien and Pieter.

Banholt the 1th of Oct. 45

Dear family Bernard,

We were very glad to receive your letter and we saw that you with the help of god are back at your wife and nice child.It must have been a happness for your wife to see back after so long her husband ,because,as we know,it was very hard in Germany for the Americains.

After you left us,we had here 88 soldiers,but we most liked you all nine Very often we spoke them about you all.We received two letters of Franck Martinck and one from Charles.We think they all are back in America.from Henny we heard nothing,what is a ptij for us.We always prayed for you,that you could return,what has succeedded.

Dear Bernard,we thank you and your wife for the fine and good packet,especially for what was in it.We have a bracelet make of silver Dutch money-coins. I had the hope it was ready to send your with this letter,but it was not so and it took too long to wait with writing. e send the bracelet with a souvinir of Holland as soon as it ts ready.

Dear Bernard here in the surrounders(only half an hour at foot) is a large cemetery of Americain Soldiers,there cones also a flying-ground'We liked very much you should come by aeroplane,it is easy,not?

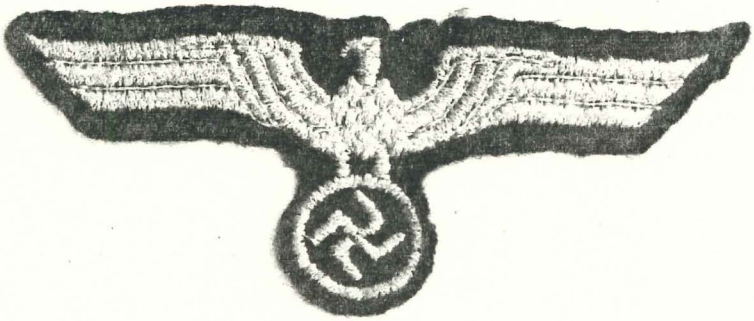
Bernard Johnny Jacobs we heard nothing,we hope he still is in life. Dear bernard we often thought at the days you allwere here.All people spoke a long time about the soldiers who posted home in November.

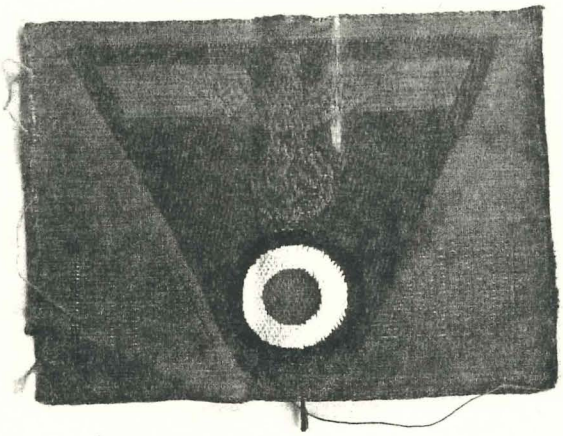
Be so good and write us if you heard nothing about the other boys,from Henny,mekky,Johnny,Charles,Franck and Boschke.
Bernard,send us a picture of you,your wife and your little nice child.

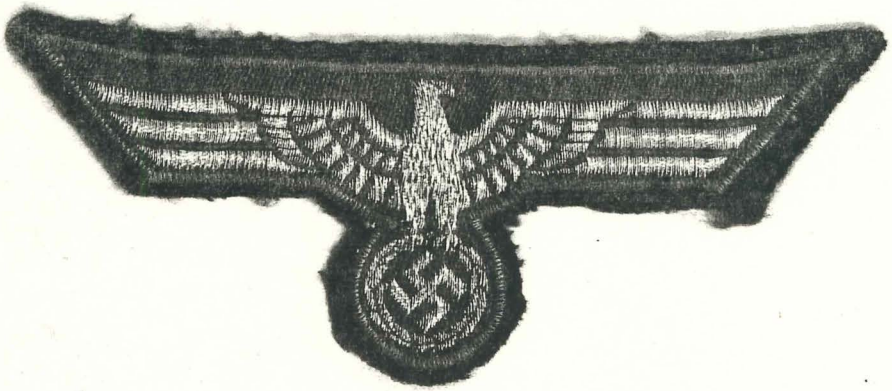
Now I end with writing and send you and your wife,which we want very much to see,many kind regards oversea.

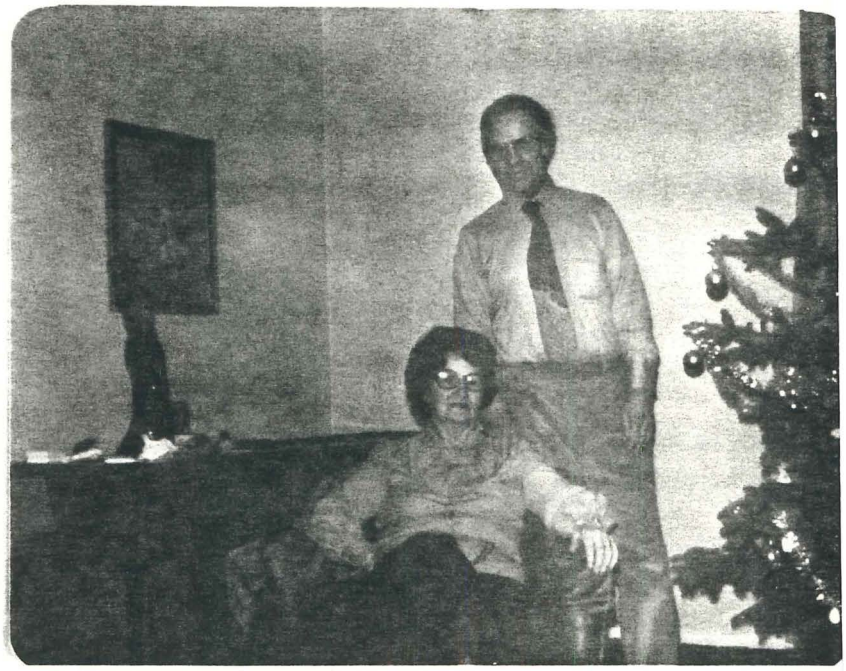
Pieter,Catharine and Anna Hoeters.

Banholt 74.
Holland.









Husband Of Fargoan Reported Prisoner

PFC. Bernard H. Petterson Binford is reported a prisoner Germany according to a letter ceived from him and a war department report to his wife, who, with their daughter, is visiting her mother, Mrs. Mary Dahlin, 304 Fifteenth av S. Pvt. Petterson, son of Mrs. Bessie Petterson of Finley, was listed missing Dec. 21 in Belgium. He served with the Seventh mored division, First army, ctered service in August,

Petterson

CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable symbol above or preceding the address.

WESTERN UNION

1204

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS
DL = Day Letter
NL = Night Letter
LC = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
Ship Radiogram

The filing time shown in the date line on telegrams and day letters is STANDARD TIME at point of origin. Time of receipt is STANDARD TIME at point of destination

FJ N 23/22 6 EX DUPE MSG DELD FM JAMESTOWN CFM

WASHINGTON DC 529PM MAY 20 1945

HQMESVC

ARC COOPERSTOWN NDAK

MAY 18, 1945 BERNARD H PETTERSON, 37300307 REQUESTS MRS ANGELINE PETTERSON BINFORD BE NOTIFIED HIS LIBERATION.

MARGARET SHOTTON NATL HS

830AM

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

THE

President of the United States of America.

Awards this

Certificate of Appreciation

to

Bernard G. Petterson

in grateful recognition of five years of service to the Nation as an uncompensated member of the Selective Service System.

Awarded at Washington, District of Columbia,

this 1st *day of* September, 19 65.

SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

William T. Gray
GOVERNOR

John L. Burris
PRESIDENT

LaClair A. Hellberne
STATE DIRECTOR OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

Lewis B. Hershey
DIRECTOR OF SELECTIVE SERVICE

WAR CLAIMS COMMISSION

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

APR 15 1953

Mr. Bernard Halfden Petterson
Binford
North Dakota

WCC Claim No. P-20518 E -2

Dear Sir:

The Commission wishes to advise you that your claim for compensation under Section 6 (d) of the War Claims Act of 1948, as amended, (Public Law 896, 80th Congress, July 3, 1948) has been adjudicated and an award in the sum of $ 205.50 has been determined.

* This award covers the period from 23 December 1944 to 8 May 1945 inclusive, at a daily rate of $1.50, during which period it has been established that the enemy government held you as a prisoner of war and continually failed to comply with one or more of the Articles of the Geneva Convention of 1929 relating to labor and/or humane treatment of prisoners of war.

Your prior claim for $1.00 per day benefits in violation of the provisions of the Geneva Convention relating to food was adjudicated and an award made to you for the period 23 December 1944 to 10 May 1945. This award included payment from the date of your release or liberation on 8 May 1945* to your return to American Military Control on 10 May 1945, inclusive; a total of 2 days.

The Regulations of the Commission provide that benefits to prisoners of war cannot be paid beyond the date of their release or liberation. Accordingly, since you were overpaid $ 2.00, for the period indicated above, in the adjudication of the first claim, this sum must now be deducted from the award made under Section 6(d).

Therefore, the Treasury Department is being advised to issue to you a check for $ 203.50, which represents the adjustment between the overpayment heretofore made to you and the award made on your claim for compensation under Section 6(d) of the War Claims Act of 1948, as amended.

Very truly yours,

Frank W Barton

Frank W. Barton
Director, Claims Service

* Date of cessation of hostilities.

WCC Fm 341
Rev. 12/52