



1982

Joseph Scholand of Reynolds: Germany, World War II

Joseph Scholand

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PRISONER OF WAR

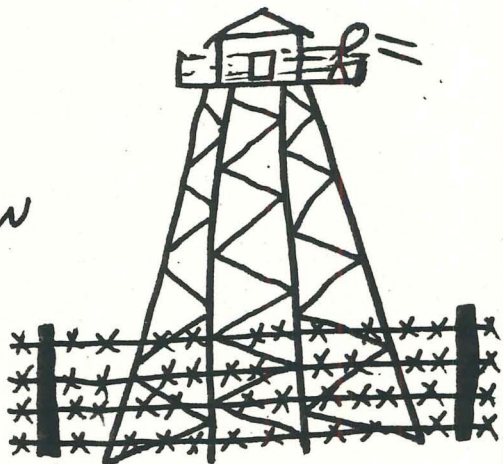
A TRUE STORY

BY: JOSEPH A. SCHOLAND

REYNOLDS, N. DAK

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

BOOKLET PREPARED IN
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William Schioland

Reynolds Ndak.

I regret to inform you report received states your son Staff Sargent Joseph A Schioland missing in action over Gelsenkirchen Germany since twelveth August of further details or other information of his status are received you will be promptly notified

Lt. Adjutant General

935 Am

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Reynolds Flier Reported Missing

REYNOLDS, N. D.—Staff Sgt. Joseph A. Scholand, a former resident of Reynolds and member of the United States army air corps, is missing in action, according to information received Sunday by his father, William Scholand, here.

The message came from the lieutenant adjutant general in Washington. It read:

"I regret to inform you report received states your son Staff Sgt. Joseph A. Scholand missing in action over Gelsenkirchen, Germany, since 12th August. If further details or other information of his status are received you will be promptly notified."

Staff. Sgt. Scholand entered service in May, 1942 and just a year later arrived in England. He was classed as a waist gunner with a bombing crew.

Reynolds Flier Missing in Action

REYNOLDS, N. D.—Staff Sgt.



Scholand
a gunner on a United States bomber.

Joseph Scholand, son of William Scholand of Reynolds, was reported missing in action following an air raid over Germany, his father was informed by the war department. He was

Freed in Germany

Imprisoned in Germany for 20 months, S/Sgt. Joseph A. Scholand was liberated by American soldiers April 11, according to word received by his father, William Scholand of Reynolds. Waist gunner in the AAF, Sgt. Scholand was shot down over Germany August 12, 1943, two months after he went overseas.



EX-PRISONER OF WAR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name: JOSEPH A. SCHOLAND

Current Address:

REYNOLDS, N.DAK., 58275

BOXX 14

Address at time you went into service:

~~0074/1/~~

REYNOLDS, N.DAK.

Birthday:

OCT. 12, 1912

2. Family: (spouse and children)

Wife: Clare M and 8 children. Four boys and
4 girls.

3. Work and educational experience prior to going into service?

12 years of grade and high school. Farmer, truck
driver, carpenter, pilot with private liscence.

4. Dates and place of entry into service?

June 7, 1942, at Ft. Snelling, Minn.

5. Summary of events from time of entry into service and until just
prior to capture or entering status as a POW?

Stationed at Las Vegas, Nev. for gunnery school.

Became part of a flying crew at Spokane, Wash. Trained
at Walla Walla, Wash, Rapid City, S.Dak. Returned to
Walla Walla, Wash., then to Bosie, Idaho, then to
Wendover, Utah, to Sioux City, Iowa, home on leave,
returned to Ft. Snelling, Minn., then to Ft. Wayne, Ind.
prepared for going overseas, flew to Bengor, Ma., Gandor,
~~Maine~~ Newfoundland, arrived at Perestwick, Scotland, then
to Grafton Underwood, England..

6. Unit, Country, time, area, weather, etc., at time event occurred
which resulted in POW status?

8th air force, 384th bomb group. Over Germany at about
8 a.m. The weather was clear and sunny.

7. Describe military or other events that resulted in your POW status?
Our B-17 bomber was set afire by enemy action, Our spare ammo stored in the radio room was burning, the was one incendiary bomb in the bomb bay was on fire, engine #1 and #2 were knocked out due to enemy flack, therefore we fell behind the formation and "all hell broke loose". I Bailed out of the burning aircraft at 29,000 ft.
8. Following your capture, describe what happened. How many men were involved? Where did you go? How did you go? What type of personnel (military or civilian) took control of you?
Before I bailed out of the burning B17 bomber, I noted that my parachute was damaged by a 20 M.M. bullet. It was a chest type chute, putting it on, I noted a large hole near one of the snaps. When I left the plane, I dropped a distance before pulling the chute and noted 11 chute lines instead of 24 which resulted in a fast decent and I was knocked unconscious with the impact of landing. I recall the decent from the plane to the ground as pleasant and peaceful, lying on my back, circling as a falling leaf. I awakened in Germany in a private home, with 3 German Guards and a German Dr. in attendance. The Dr. was bandageing the wound in my foot and other less serious scrapnel wounds. The Dr. was calling me names which I understtod. I landed in an open field, I don't recall being moved to the house.
9. Were you able to hide or escape? If so, tell what happened. Where did you hide? Food? Clothing? Water? Weather? Sleep? etc.
There was no chance to escape since I was badly wounded. It was daylight and my principle wound was through my foot which had shattered most of the arch bones.
10. How did your escape end? Returned to U.S. control? Discovered by enemy?
I didn't escape.
11. Could you describe in sequence the various places you were interrogated and the methods of questioning the enemy used?
From the private house, I was moved by stretcher to a hospital camp near Bonn, Germany. I was there for 13 months. Was then moved to Cologne, Germany, was there for 5 months. Next was moved to Gummersback, Gy. and were liberated from there.
The method of interrigation was in regard to where our bombs were dropped. I stated that I did not know . A German Commandant at the hospital camp asked the questions. Later I was informed that Our bombs had destroyed his house and he was not very happy with me. We were not friends.

12. Did you have a weapon on yourself when you were captured? Did it effect your treatment?

I was not armed.. We did not carry weapons. If captured with a weapon we would be considered as dangerous and could have been shot,

13. Were you at any time considered a civilian or an enemy spy or a wrong nationality? If so, how did this effect your treatment?
No, there was no question as to my status. We were called "air pirotos".

14. When captured or escaping, what clothing or equipment were you wearing? What changes did the enemy make in your clothing?

When I left the plane I was wearing heavy flying clothing. These were removed to locate and treat my wounds. I returned to camp in Coveralls and electric heated shoes, the kind used for flying when I bailed out. I was bedridden for several months. When I was ambulating, I was given a army type uniform which came to us from Geneva, Sd, sent by the International Red Gross.

15. What was your first food you received after your capture and what was your food from that date on?

The first food offered was a bowl of soup, served by a Russian P.O.W. At the time I heard dogs barking, I presumed it was dog soup. Several days later, the same food was offered, I didn't care what it was made from. Our food consisted of 3 thick slices of bread and a bowl of somekind of soup served once a day. We rationed our food to last all day.

16. Did your nationality, religion, or race have a bearing on your treatment from the enemy?

I am of German decent, Catholic by religion, and I believe that I rec'd a special assignment because I could speak German. I was retained at the hosp. camp as the American Man Of Confere nce, acting as interrpetter for the American P.O..W. as they arrived and passed through the camp. Also being in the Air Force gave me a status other than a regular soldier. (German Ediquet)

17. What was your impression of your captors? Were they arrogant, considerate, professional, troubled, confused, anxious, etc.?

At times, esp. at first, the guards were arrogant and frightening. Most of the guards had had a tour of duty on the Russian front so compared to that, being a guard at a hosp. camp was treat for them. Toward the end of the war, the guards became more pleasant and even friendly. They seemed to realize that Germany had no chance and that they would be receptive to the invading Am. forces. Many of these guards were old men who had served in W W 1. They didn't have any more to eat than we did. They were always concerned about their families and their homes being killed and bombed. The P..O.W."s at camp were employed if possible. One, a Polish Dr. was a wonderful man who cared for the wounded without thought of his status. The guards were angry, mostly at the German Gov. for their country being destroyed..

18. Were you alone or with others? How many? Same unit? Other units? Other services? Other nationalities, etc.?
I was the only American at the camp for some time. The Americans came to camp wounded, were treated and moved out to P.O.W. camps elsewhere. At the first camp, there were P.O.W.'s from Russia, Serbia, Poland, Belgium, France, Italy, Australia and Canada.. These were retained to operated the camp as cooks, Dr's gardener's, orderlies.. I don't know how many, or thir units.
19. At time of your capture, did you have higher or lower ranking persons with you? Did the difference in rank effect you?
I was alone when captured. I was hospitalized along with a Capt. and Lt's as well as men of lower rank, Our rank made no difference, Our common effort was to survive and recover, later, we hoped to be liberated and get home again.
20. Following your capture, how did you feel about your family at home, and at what point or time did you feel they probably knew about your POW status?
I was concerned'd about my 83 yr. old Father. Two months after mycapture he heard from the war dept. that I was captured, wounded but did not know where I was interned, nor the extent of my wounds.
21. When did you receive your first letter, package or information that your family knew of your capture?
It was about 4 months before I recieved my first lettet from home. The camp German censor, delivered my first letter personally. He had to ride by bicyle up a steep hill to the camp, I felt that he was happy to do this for me. After that I recieved mail and parcels when they arrived, even cigarettts.
22. In regards to your interrogation or questioning--was this conducted formally at a special camp or location? Did you have special or skilled interrogators? What did they want to know? How long were you there? Then where did you go?
I was first interrigrated while in bed, recuperating. He was a German Air Force Officier. Altho I was located at a german hospital camp, I was a prisoner of the German Air Force because they had shot me down. He was polite, he asked my name,rank and service number. I felt that he knew all about the 8th air force. I was at the hosp. camp until I was recovered, about 13 months. From there I was sent to Cologne for 5 months and from there to Gummersbach from which I was liberated..

23. How did you feel the war was going when you were captured?

I felt that the war progress was too slow, I didnt dream that I would be a prisoner for 20 months.

24. Did you think you would eventually get home?

I felt that I would get home. At times we were nearly blown up by our own bombs being dropped which nearly happened. While the bombing was going on, whoever could walk went to the air raid shelter, others simply stayed in bed.

25. Did you have an opportunity to observe the enemy in combat, training, camp, or moving from one place to another?

Yes, half of camp at Bonn was used for training german soldiers.. The other half was used for internment of the P.O.W.'s. The training appeared similiar to our training camps. During the german camp marches the men sang marching songs.

26. Did you suffer any injury at the time of your capture? What was done about your injury or illness following your capture?

I was wounded in the left footas well as smaller wounds in the right leg and both arms. Initially, my wounds were dressed. A week later surgery was done on my left foot.. The German Dr. planned to removed my foot which was badly infected, the Polish P.O.W. Dr. prevailed and my foot was saved bone fragments removed, and dressings changed as needed. It took 6 months to heal.

27. At your permanent camp or camps, would you describe your conditions. Food? Living area? Beds? Food ration? Health? Water? Weather? Number of men? Guards? Size and location of camps? Organization in camp by enemy and by U.S. forces?

The food was not adequate because there wasn't any more to be had. We survived because we recieved food parcels , One parcel per man from the Red Cross, which was sent from Geneva. We were 6 men to a room, our beds were covered with a burlap bag filled with straw which housed fleas. Delouseing fo the bags was done now and then. Our camp was small compared to the german Stalog Luft camps. The guards were mostly former Russian front duty german soldiers.. There was no P.O. W. organization in this camp, since prisoners were moved out as soon as they could walk. They were moved to other prisoner camps.

We each had a few blankets, our fuel during the winter was one bucket of coal issued each day. We saved the parcel boxxes for stove fuel, burning one piece at a time to get as much warmth as possible from our limited fuel supply. We took care of each other as much as we could, like, feeding sick or helpless P.O.W's. Russian P.O.W.'s orderly's gave the helpless kind service, they were yelled at alot by the german's .. We had cold showers and indoor latrines. We were fed by nationality, as the first served got the thickest soup. Once there was no salt, so we ate unsalted cabbage soup with very few cabbage leaves. That was a low time.. The weather was mild compared to N.Dak. The lowest temp. was 20 aboce zero, which was unbearable for sick men. A blanket count was taken now and then, one to a prisoner, we managed to get a few extra for the sick through barter, however, these were hidden when the blanket check was being made.. At bed time, we filled up on water, since there was no food to be eater until the next day's ration was distributed.

28. While in your permanent camp, did you know what was going on in the war? What did guards say about the ending of the war?

We were allowed a radio ^{which} was connected to the German radio.. The news we heard was the same as the Germans heard, the news was usually several days old, especially when the German retreat from Russia was being reported. The guards were as anxious for the war to be over as we were.

29. If you worked in camp or lived in work camps, please describe your daily transportation, work, food, punishment, etc.?

I was retained at the hospital camp as the interperator for the Am. P.O.'s, I distributed Red Cross parcels to the camp P.O.W.' and to Am. P.O.W.'s in other German camps.

Aquireing the red cross food parcels required a trip to the warehouse which was some distance out of the camp, so a guard went with us and we moved the parcels with a truck, which was a French Red Cross truck. At times we were exposed to low flying strafing by Am. and Eng. planes. We tried to estimate their arrival, while being straddled we hit the ditch or whatever cover available. I was not aware of any punishment for myself, however a Russian was picking dandelions too close to the barbed wire and was wounded. The dandelions were eaten as salad. It's possible that prisoners who were involved in transmitting news out of camp were removed, I know of no such incident..

Our personal laundry was done by a Russian orderly, usually paid with cigarets.

30. Was your camp or camps ever bombed or damaged by the enemy or friendly military action?

The hospital camp at Bonn was wiped out some time after I had been moved to Cologne, by the British Air Force. The camp had been evacuated, so no one was killed. When we heard planes we asked, Friend or enemy? Friends were Germans as they didn't bomb P.O.W. camps..

31. Could you describe your roll call or counting procedure in camp? We had "appell" every night, (head count). This was done in our quarters, we never stood outside for head count.

The German guard did the "appell"

32. What type of guards did you have? Age? Rank? Weapons? Number? Service, etc.?

Most of the guards were old men. They carried rifles, a few had pistols. Mostly they were German privates, a few corporals, the commandant was a staff/sargent and he rated a salute..

There were few guards, maybe 10, I'm not sure.. There was no need for more as we were all pretty helpless to escape..

33. Could you describe your camp? Size? Fences? Guard towers? Latrine? Ration distribution? Hours? Lock-up? Heat? Recreation, etc.?

To my experience, the camps were not large, One camp was surrounded by more barbed wire than around all the fences in N. Dak. A guard tower was located at the 4 corners of the camp. The towers were manned during the day and at night the camp perimeter was walked by guards. no outdoor light were used, indoors the lighting was electric, windows covered with blackout curtains. Our fuel was coal brigets and cardboard.. Also wood was used when available. The latrines were flush toilets, food was distributed once a day. There was no a.m.. roll call, head count was between 6-7 p.m. We aquired books and records from the red cross, limited sports equipement was aquired likewise.

34. Could you describe the men close to you or the men you knew best? How did you get along with them?

We were a transiet camp. Each prisoniers stay camp was determined by his wounds, when healed he was moved. We were good to each other, there was no room for quarreling or misbehavior.

35. Could you tell about epidemics or sickness in camp? What were the medical facilities? How were you medically treated in camp?

Since I was at a hosp. camp, there was no problem with epidemics. Sickness was treated with bedrest. There was a adequate medical staff which consisted of a German medical student, a Polish P.O.W. Dr., and two French Dr's. After the invasion on June 6, 1944, a Am. P.O.W. Dr. and 6 Am. medics attended us. The major problem was lack of medical supplies. Many of these we recieved from the red cross from Geneva. Rolls of paper were used for bandageing.

36. Were any prisoners killed in camp or taken from camp and disappeared?

Only one pow was injured, as previously mentioned, for reaching for greens too close to the barbed wire. He was treated and recovered.

37. Could you describe the ration or food distribution system? How much? Fresh, canned, stale, dried, etc.? Local foods, Red Cross parcels, parcels from home, trade with guards or civilians?

We recieved one red cross parcel per Am. pow, per week. In these parcels were some cigarettes which we traded to the germans for potatoes. The camp cook would make soup from these for all of us. From the Germans we recieved once a day, 4 slices of brown bread.. Also a cup of imitation coffee in the maorning, soup at noon, On Wed. we gat one small meat ball and on Sun. we got a small bowl of stew.

38. Describe the type of work or responsibilities you were assigned within the camp from friendly or USA prisoners?

As interpeter I recieved the red cross parcels and distributed them. There was no assignment from others.

39. What were some of the things that kept you going while in camp? Your health? Age? Faith in U.S. Armed Forces? Religion? Family? Aid from other prisoners?

Mail from home was very important..as well as parcels rec'd. There was a chapel at camp with Sun. services. There was a French and Polish Priest to say Mass on Sun. There was a strong bond between all of us. Perhaps this concern shared, made prison life bearable, as well as our faith in our country to winn the war and liberate us.

40. Did any prisoners become mentally sick or irrational in camp and were they removed?

The Am. pow's had no mental problems that required special care, there was a few Polish pow's that were watched, mostly for escape attempts. One polich pow scalled the enclosure but was returned unhasrmed.

41. Did you have any secret radios, newspapers or outside news sources in camp from which you received information? What information did the enemy give you?

The Am's had no source of outside information other than listen ing to the German broadcasts. The Polish pow's had a two way radio from which they commnicated with the English. The German news was old. The Polish pow's rec'd news of the defeat in Russia before the Germans heard on their radio.. The Polish pow's were very cunning in building and dismantleing their radio if a guard was approaching . .

42. Did you have any serious illness in camp?

I was sick with Dysentery for which I was given some black powder to mix in water. Also I had a few bad colds. This was about the extent of our illness. High temps were treated with sponge baths, I don't recall any particuliar med.

43. Did you have any riots in camp?

No.

49. When were you close to death or felt all was not worth living and you probably would die or be killed?

I felt that I was close to death before the surgery was done on my busted foot. My temperature was 104.5 degrees and I felt that I might not recover. After surgery there was days when I was very sick and in great pain, but I was encouraged by the concern and care that was provided.

I never felt that life was not worth living as I had too much to live for.

50. Could you tell about any special religious observances by the enemy or special occurrence when they relaxed or tightened security rules?

We were allowed to attend services on Sun. and on Christmas day the guards seemed to relax.

51. Would you describe in detail any particular holiday, if observed, by enemy or prisoners, such as, New Years or Christmas.

On Christmas 1944, we had pooled our food and had just finished what we felt was a pleasant adequate meal, which was shared by all the POW's at camp. Then the British bombers came over and dropped their bombs throughout our area. The British POW's were as angry as any of us because it wasn't necessary to bomb on Christmas.

52. How did you feel about food in camp? How did enemy food agree with you? What was food? What were utensils? What did you make to eat with? Pots, pans, cups, plates?

I have described our food before. It was prepared in a central kitchen and served from one cooking kettle. We each had a bowl, cup, fork and spoon.

53. Were you aware of any other American or Allied POW camps in your area? Civilian camps?

I didn't know of any pow camps nearby. There were some Am pow's in german civilian hospitals, to which I sent red cross food parcels. I don't know of any civilian camps.

54. In reference to your mind or yourself, how do you feel you held up in camp? Did you suffer periods of depression, crying, hysteria, headaches, loss of memory, etc.? How about the other men in camp? How do you feel you and others were able to live without nervous breakdowns?

I had enough to do to feel satisfied with each day. When there was time we read or visited with each other. I could speak german as well as almost every other prisoner except the Russians and with these we used sign language. The fear of being killed from our own bombs was the worst to endure. We were all of a similiar background in one way or ano ther. We had a strong hope that we would be freed and this gave us strength to endure the long anxious days and nights..

55. How do you feel other American POW's behaved or acted while in enemy hands? Please do not name an individual by name if you feel their behavior was not correct or up to the standards you set for yourself.

I feel that the Am POW's that I met were well behaved. During the battle of the buldge, we rec'd many frost bitten hungry, dirty exhausted Am. pow's. These men stayed only a few days. They y were not too pleased with our poor standards such as cold water in the sh owers, poor food, etc. I felt ashamed that the Germans had a chance to see our men in such poor condition and with a very bad attitude which did nothing to give our country a image of the strong ~~for~~ liberator.. These men were younger than I was and I felt that what they had just been through did somewhat justify their complaining to a fellow American.

56. Towards the end of the war, what were first signs that the war was coming to an end in our favor?

There was a change of attitude among the German guards, commandants, etc., It seemed they were not afraid of the invading forces and suggested that if questioned, would we put in a good word for them to the Americans and British.

The German children had a joke about the air force. The white planes were American, the black planes were the British and those you could not see were the German air force..

57. How did the enemy guards or administrative personnel treat you towards the end of the war or when it was apparent the enemy would lose the war?

It seems to me that the guards and etc. were relieved that at last it would be over. As I just stated, there didn't seem to be very much concern about fear of the enemy. The Germans who I knew were discontent with Hitler and when they knew he was dead I thought that they were relieved.

58. Could you describe how your POW status ended?

My POW status ended when about 6 tanks followed by infantry entered the small town where we were imprisoned. They just passed on through and we were free.

59. When or where did enemy guards leave? Did guards say or do anything at the end of the war?

The enemy guards were rounded up at the camp and removed. There was very little if any conversation with them, we had just been at the air raid shelter which was used by civilians as well as POW's and when we returned to our quarters we observed the process of removing the guards..

60. What did the American staff at the camp do at the end of the war?

There was no Am. staff. I gathered up my few belongings and just waited for someone to come along and move us out.

61. At the end of the war, where did you move? What was your food? Your health? Your morale?

We stayed in our area for 3 days. They trucked us to the air field at Geisen, Gy. We flew from Geisen to La Harve, France. During the three days of waiting, Polish and French POW's found food in the butcher shop, so we were able to feed ourselves. Our morale and health was good..

62. Could you describe some of the confusion that took place when you were liberated at the end of the war? Time, place, friendly or enemy forces involved, food, health, morale, POW discipline in camp, contact with U.S. military forces, etc.?

It took three days for our forces to provide transportation out of the area. Actually I was the only American involved. When we were trucked out there was one English POW, some Polish and French POW's, maybe 30 in all. After being loaded on the truck, after awhile the truck broke down so we just sat in the truck and waited for someone to come along and help us out. We were in danger of strafing; finally, another truck picked us up and we arrived at the airstrip. We were anxious to reach safety and to get some rest as we were very tired..

63. After liberation or the war ending, what happened? Did you move as an individual or group, go by foot, train, bus? Where did you go, to another U.S. camp?

From Geisen we flew to La Harve France. We were interned in a camp for 3 weeks where we waited for transportation. During this time we were visited by an Am. Officer who seemed very concerned about our welfare. He even brought us a pitcher of fresh whole milk. In our eagerness to taste the milk, the pitcher was up turned and we got none, it was a painful incident. I don't know the procedure for disposing of the allied POW's but the English and Am's were placed on a ship and went to Southampton, Eng. stayed there for a few days aboard ship, then sailed for home. The war was not over so we were concerned by the danger of enemy subs.

64. What happened at your camp prior to returning to the States? Did U.S. military officials interrogate you, examine you physically, give you food, clothing, etc.?

When we arrived at the camp in France, we were examined with physicals, issued some new clothing. The interrogation was concerned if we knew of any American graves. I had kept track of the Am's that had died at the POW camp I was in. My list included the names of French, Polish, Russian, and even a black soldier from So. Africa. My list was appreciated. Our needs were taken care of while at the camp waiting to be sent home.

65. How, when and where did you arrive back in the United States? Did you stay at some camp? Did you go home by train?

I arrived in the U..S. by ship , docked at New Port News, Va. Rec'd some money there and what ever else I needed to get home. This took a day. Boarded a train and went to Ft.. Snelling, Minn. We were liberated from the POW camp April 11, 1945 and I arrived home May 18, 1945

66. What things today remind you of prison life in your day to day living?

I am reminded of that time in my life when ever my foot hurts. I have a deep hollow scare under my foot that at times gives me some pain. Generally, I go from day to day not thinking about that experience too much. Of course, when I find a POW buddy we compare notes and share our feelings. I do recieve a pension which is some compensation for walking the rest of my life on a crippled foot..

67. Do you have an complaints about how you have been treated since your POW days?

No. I wish all service people were accorded the respect that our time of service did recieve. My sons in the service and the one who was in the service do not feel that same respect from most people as I did while in the service of my country.

68. Do you have a picture of yourself prior to being a POW, preferably a picture in uniform? Do you have a picture of yourself following the war? Do you have a picture of yourself and your family recently taken, or taken within recent years? Any or all of these pictures would be appreciated. They will be returned to you after we have made copies of them.

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69. Do you have any copies of telegrams from the War Department or the U.S. Government regarding your becoming a POW? Or your release, or war time status as a POW? These or copies of these would be appreciated. If you wish them returned, they will be sent back to you.

Enclosed - you can keep these clippings or they are only photostats. I have the originals - Joe Shelton