



1982

## Edwin Tofte of Epping: Germany, World War II

Edwin Tofte

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# PRISONER OF WAR

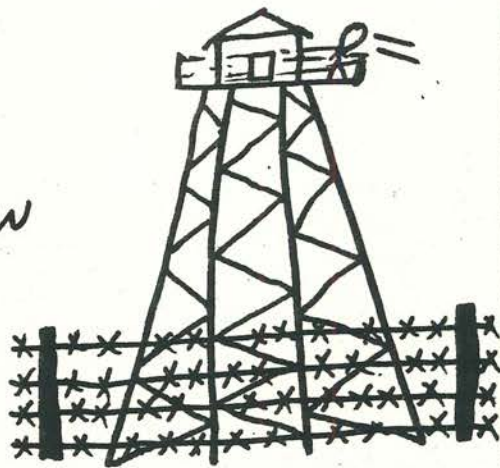
## A TRUE STORY

BY: EDWIN TOFTE

EPPING, N. DAK

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

BOOKLET PREPARED IN  
COOPERATION WITH:  
N. DAK EX-POW ORGANIZATION  
AND  
CHESTER FRITZ LIBRARY  
UNIVERSITY OF N. DAK.



EX-PRISONER OF WAR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name: *Edwin Toftle*  
 Current Address: *Rural Route #1, Box 34*  
*Spring, N Dak - 58843*  
 Address at time you went into service: *Route #1*  
*Williston, N Dak*  
*58801*  
 Birthday:  
*Aug 30, 1921*
2. Family: (spouse and children) *5 Esther (Wife)*  
*Gary, Connie, Beverly, Rodney, Judy - 6 children*
3. Work and educational experience prior to going into service?  
*Farm work - air craft work at Douglas*  
*N Dak. Santa Monica Calif.*
4. Dates and place of entry into service? *24th of Nov-1942*  
*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?  
*Brief training Camp Crocker museum for*  
*in signal corp, transferred into to radio oper*  
*Wreck*  
*AIR FORCE 3rd 57*
6. Unit, Country, time, area, weather, etc., at time event occurred which resulted in POW status?  
*760th Bombardment Squadron 460th Bomb group.*  
*target - air base*  
*weather - Hat P.m.*  
*Hit by flak at 25,000 ft.*  
*Plane caught on fire*  
*Bailed out at <sup>about</sup> 20,000*  
*Landed on flat top roof of power plant,*  
*out side of runway east.*

7. Describe military or other events that resulted in your POW status?

was questioned by German officer about our mission - gave them my name, Rank, + serial. #

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?

4 German soldiers climbed the roof + took me into some building + took my clothes off. sent me to a clinic in a convertible and put cast on my broken leg. Put me in a very small room for 6 days on bread + ~~water~~ water.

9. Were you able to hide or escape? <sup>NO</sup> If so, tell what happened. Where did you hide? Food? Clothing? Water? Weather? Sleep? etc.

10. How did your escape end? Returned to U.S. control? Discovered by enemy?

11. Could you describe in sequence the various places you were interrogated and the methods of questioning the enemy used?

two officers interrogated me during my solitary confinement during these six days while coming down in my chute + took my flight orders up. somehow my signature to these orders was found in my flight suit. they wanted to know what I signed my name to, but did not cooperate - they threatened but did nothing.

12. Did you have a weapon on yourself when you were captured? Did it effect your treatment? - I can not remember for sure

but I think they took my pistol, took my ration & cig -

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?

I do not think so.

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

Flight suit - took them away & put their clothing on -

15. What was your first food you received after your capture and what was your food from that date on? - After the 6th day

of confinement we rec'd Red Cross food. Last 30 days of being POW we had very little -

16. Did your nationality, religion, or race have a bearing on your treatment from the enemy? I spoke out in Norwegian

to a German guard on the 6th day of my solitary confinement and he asked me what I wanted. I told him I had to have help as my ankle was swelling and could not take the pain. He went to get help, they took me out to a hospital

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

German soldiers gave me kind consideration, but the officers was very ~~threatening~~ threatening.

18. Were you alone or with others? How many? Same unit? Other units? Other services? Other nationalities, etc.?

*So many of us in our unit plus several others too many of us to give immediate help to the injured.*

19. At time of your capture, did you have higher or lower ranking persons with you? Did the difference in rank effect you? *no*

*yes*

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? - *Had alot of time to think & worry.*

21. When did you receive your first letter, package or information that your family knew of your capture? *Did not -*

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? *6 days in solitary confinement*

*about 60<sup>no</sup> days in Hospital - about 3 months in stalag 3 ~~no~~ about 3 months & 8 days in 4  
about 10 days traveling by train from stalag  
3 to 4 -*

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

not very good

24. Did you think you would eventually get home? *No, we came back to base with holes in our plane each mission.*

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

*Just from our plane.*

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

*Broken ankle.*

27. At your permanent camp or camps, would you describe your conditions. Food? Living area? Beds? Food ration? Health? Water? Weather? *Good* Number of men? Guards? Size and location of camps? *Good* Organization in camp by enemy and by U.S. forces? *except for 6 days*

*of solitary confinement and last 30 days of war we had Red Cross food of Cig come to us reg, several barracks with many small rooms about 12x18 - 12 men to a room -*

*traveling from stalog 3 to 4 we were confined about 50 men to box car. with Red Cross food but no water so by the time we arrived to # 4 we were very sick.*

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? *Nothing said.*

29. If you worked in camp or lived in work camps, please describe your daily transportation, work, food, punishment, etc.? *Did nothing. The Germans followed the rules of Geneva Conference very well. I don't know how the privates were treated.*

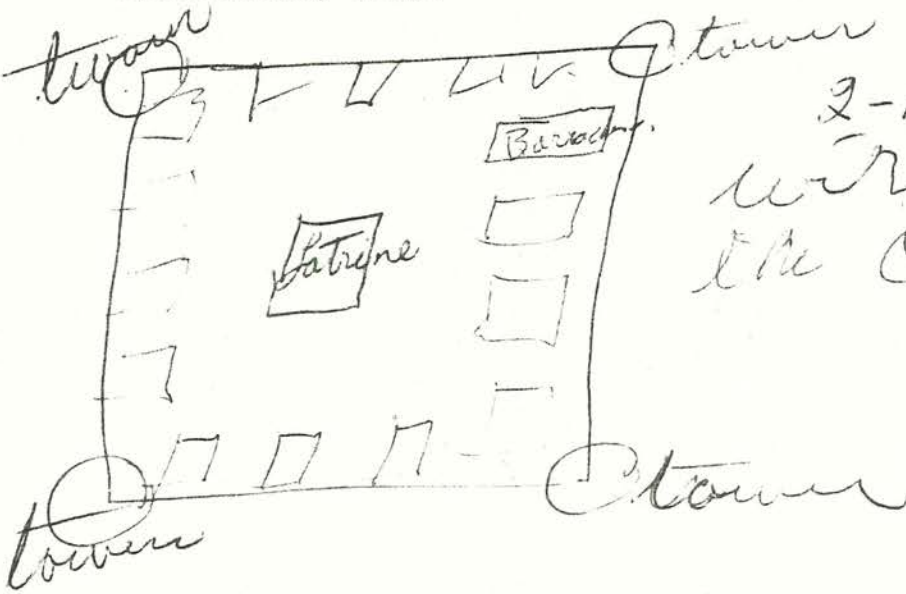
30. Was your camp or camps ever bombed or damaged by the enemy or friendly military action? *No but close enough so that our bunks shook at night.*

31. Could you describe your roll call or counting procedure in camp? *Guards checked on us every 30 often -*

32. What type of guards did you have? Age? Rank? Weapons? Number? Service, etc.? *- very quiet. Made their calls & said nothing -*



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



2-18 strand Barb  
 wire fences - around  
 the compound -

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

fine - no fights -  
 We worked to-gether on the  
 German language & mostly talked.  
 No rec.

35. Could you tell about epidemics or sickness in camp? <sup>no</sup> What were the medical facilities? How were you medically treated in camp? I

was taken care of in hospital prior to Camp -

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

One disappeared - He did not realize that there was an air raid -

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?

For 30 days of war we had soup - one loaf of bread between each room -

38. Describe the type of work or responsibilities you were assigned within the camp from friendly or USA prisoners? none

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?

*Communication with other prisoners -*

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

*Yes - Do not know what happened to them -*

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?

*None*

42. Did you have any serious illness in camp? *no*

43. Did you have any riots in camp? *no*

44. How did you first know that war was coming to an end? *When Russians came in & opened the gates & told us to go to town - some how we got immediate orders from General Eisenhower to stay in camp -*

45. What were some of the tricks you played on guards? *None*

46. What about escape procedures and methods used by you or others that you have knowledge of or direct information about? *None*

47. Were you ever bombed by friendly or enemy aircraft?

*8th air force came very close, at night - the buildings shook, and one night on the train.*

48. Describe any special train or ship trip you took while a prisoner?

*Train ride from 3 to 4.*

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

My parachute did not open right away. I dropped about 1000 feet. I cried out to God for help and ~~then~~ it opened. I believe my mother's prayers kept me alive.

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

nothing religious

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

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?

Red Cross parcels made up in small boxes of cheese, crackers, canned stuff etc -

Water fountain in barracks -

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

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?

*first 6 days I had so much pain in my leg I did not know much about anything except to cry out for help. Last 30 days we did not have Red Cross. we all divided equally what bread & rags the Germans gave us. we seemed to bear one another's burdens. I do remember tho, that the married men seemed to worry more than us singles.*

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.

*We were all in the same boat. very sober time and we all stuck together.*

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

*all of a sudden It seemed to happen*

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?

*The Germans disappeared very sudden -*

58. Could you describe how your POW status ended?

*no bitterness  
Happy to know that we had home to see.  
starved for basic foods -*

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

*no immediately*

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

*Had orders from Ike to stay put till they could send planes in to take us to France -*

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

*- they flew us into France + put us on a boat at LaHarve France + we were 7 days going home to good old U.S.A.*

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.?

*- we had orders to stay put till planes came to pick us up - some did not follow order and some got in trouble with Russian soldiers, some went out and over indulged on food & drink. Russian soldiers are very rude while drunk on vodka - German women & children would hover around our Camp for protection from the R.*

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?

*Went to France by plane.*

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.?

*they gave us clothing, Fed us fluids + put us in a delouiter tent type thing.*



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? *Home by boat.*

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

*Daily news + T.V. on wars +  
rumors of wars -*

67. Do you have any complaints about how you have been treated since your POW days? *No.*

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.

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.

*would like to have these  
returned*

70. Do you have any letters or copies of letters you sent home or received from home during war or during period you were a POW? These or copies of these would be appreciated. They also will be returned if you so indicate in your reply.

71. A few POW's were able to return to the U.S. or home with a few articles they may have made, been given or in some way secured in POW camp. Some of these could be: paper notes, camp regulations, clothing, cigarette lighter, insignia, hand made pans or pots, special cans used in camp, small tools, etc. If you have any of these, we would appreciate a picture of them. If you desire they could be sent with this report and we will take a picture of them and return them to you if you so desire.

Had a German bell but can not locate it. Will send it if I find it.

72. The above questions or suggestions are limited and you may write or explain many items not included; therefore, feel free to express yourself in any manner you desire.

Time has gone by very fast since war ended. am thankful for our Country and am glad to have had the privilege to serve. We trust that we can continue to keep the freedom we have here in U.S. God give us wisdom & strenght to keep this.

Sincerely  
Edwin Wolfe

Figur: schlank

Größe: 5,8

Schadelform: mittellang

Haare: blond

Gewicht: 68 kg

Gesichtsform: längl.

Gesichtsfarbe: braun

Augen: blau

Nase: gerade

Bart:

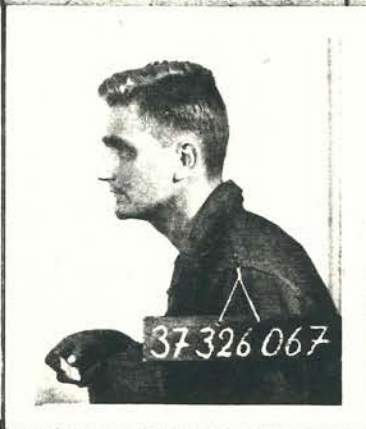
Gebiß: gut

Besondere Kennzeichen:

1. Fuss verletzt



Front



Profil

Rechter Zeigefinger



Fingerabdruck

K/0257

### WAR PRISONER INFORMATION

A Free Humanitarian Service Given by

"DAD MAC MANNIS' LISTENING POST"

"A Veteran of Both Wars Keeping Faith With His Buddies"

I have just received News from Radio Station DXJ, Berlin, Germany <sup>9-25</sup>  
 that Edw. M. Tillson Serial No. 37326067  
 is a Prisoner of War in Germany. The report indicates that he is (well) (~~wounded~~)  
 and is being well taken care of. Safe & Well

Please

May I have His Picture and a reply to this report? Thank you.

"Dad" MacMannis  
315 Victoria Way  
West Palm Beach, Florida

Beurteilung:

Lined area for reporting or assessment.

Bemerkungen:

W. A.  
gemeldet  
am 30 AUG 1944

WAR PRISONER  
NOTICE



THIS SIDE OF CARD IS FOR ADDRESS

Left  
Mrs ~~Jillson~~  
Rt 1 Williston  
N-D.

# Army of the United States

## HONORABLE DISCHARGE

This is to Certify That WINN H. TOFFE 37 326 067

760TH BOMB GRP 760TH BOMB SQDN 460TH BOMB GRP  
**ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES**

is hereby Honorably Discharged from the military service of the United States of America.

This certificate is awarded as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service to this country.

Given at A. F. SEPARATION BASE SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA /s/ Nelson H. Fox

Date 19 OCTOBER 1945

### ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION HONORABLE DISCHARGE

1. Last Name - First Name Middle Initial <u>Toffe Winn H</u>			2. Army Serial No. <u>37 326 067</u>		3. Grade <u>T/sgt</u>		4. Arm or Service <u>AUS</u>		5. Component <u>AUS</u>		
6. Organization <u>460th Bomb Grp 760th Bomb Sqdn</u>			7. Date of Separation <u>19 Oct 1945</u>		8. Place of Separation <u>AAF Separation Base Cal</u>		9. Permanent address for Mailing Purposes <u>Rt #1 Williston No Dak</u>		10. Date of Birth <u>30 Aug 1921</u>		
11. Place of Birth <u>Belndahl No Dak</u>			12. Address From Which Employment Will be Sought <u>See 9</u>		13. Color Eyes <u>Blue</u>		14. Color Hair <u>Brown</u>		15. Height <u>5' 9"</u>		
16. Weight <u>160 Lbs.</u>			17. No. Depend. <u>0</u>		18. Race White <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negro <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>		19. Marital Status Single <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) <input type="checkbox"/>		20. U. S. Citizen Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
21. Civilian Occupation and No. <u>Farmer 3-06.10</u>											

#### MILITARY HISTORY

22. Date of Induction <u>17 Nov 42</u>		23. Date of Enlistment		24. Date of Entry Into Active Service <u>24 Nov 42</u>		25. Place of Entry Into Service <u>Ft Snelling Minn</u>	
26. Registered Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		27. Local S. S. Board No.		28. County and State <u>Williston No Dak</u>		29. Home Address at Time of Entry Into Service <u>See 9</u>	
30. Military Occupational Specialty and No. <u>Radio Oper Mech Gnr 757</u>				31. Military Qualification and Date (i. e., infantry, aviation and marksmanship badges, etc.) <u>None</u>			
32. Battles and Campaigns <u>Air Combat Balkans Rome-Arno Normandy No France</u>							
33. Decorations and Citations <u>Purple Heart Air Medal Good Conduct Medal EAME Theater Medal</u>							
34. Wounds Received in Action <u>Austria 26 Jul 1944</u>							
35. Latest Immunization Dates Smallpox _____ Typhoid _____ Tetanus _____ Other (specify) _____				36. Service Outside Continental U. S. and Return			
Date of Departure <u>26 Jun 44</u>		Destination <u>Italy</u>		Date of Arrival <u>1 Jul 44</u>			
Date of Departure <u>13 Jun 45</u>		Destination <u>USA</u>		Date of Arrival <u>20 Jun 45</u>			
37. Total Length of Service			38. Highest Grade Held				
Continental Service			Foreign Service				
Years	Months	Days	Years	Months	Days		
<u>1</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>T/sgt</u>	
39. Prior Service <u>None</u>							

40. Reason and Authority for Separation

AR 615-365 RR 1-1 and ltr liqs AAF subj: AAF Separation Bases Dtd  
6 Sep 1945

41. Service Schools Attended

None

42. Education (Years)

Grammar	HighSchool	College
0	0	0

PAY DATA

43. Longevity for Pay Purposes			44. Mustering Out Pay		45. Soldier Deposits	46. Travel Pay	47. Total Amount, Name of Disbursing Officer	
Years	Months	Days	Total	This Payment				
2	11	3	\$300.	\$100.	NONE	\$91.15	\$390.59	J. A. MILTON JR. COI

INSURANCE NOTICE

AC.

IMPORTANT If Premium is not Paid when due or within thirty-one days thereafter, insurance will lapse. Make checks or money orders payable to the treasurer of the U. S. and forward to collections Subdivision, Veterans Administration, Washington 25, D. C.

48. Kind of Insurance			49. How Paid		50. Effective Date of Allotment Discontinuance	51. Date of Next Premium Due (One month after 50)	52. Premium Due Each Month	53. Intention of Veteran to		
Nat. Serv.	U. S. Govt.	None	Allotment	Direct to V. A.				Continue	Continue Only	Discontinue
X			X		30 Oct 45	30 Nov 45	\$6.50	X		

54.

55. Remarks (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)

Right Thumb Print

Lapel Button Issued  
Adjusted Service Rating Score 75 (2 Sep 45)

56. Signature of Person Being Separated

/s/ Edwin M Tofte

57. Personnel Officer (Type name, grade and organization-signature)

/s/ G R Krause  
G R KRAUSE 1st Lt AC 1040th AAF BU

I hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of the original service discharge of Edwin M Tofte as recorded in the office of the Clerk of the District Court in and for the County of Williams and State of North Dakota.

Dated May 3 1949

*[Signature]*  
Clerk of District Court.

CERTIFIED COPY  
of  
HONORABLE DISCHARGE  
of

Edwin M Tofte

from the

ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES  
as recorded in the office of the Clerk of  
the District Court in and for the County  
of  
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA

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