

EX-POW BULLETIN

the official voice of the
American Ex-Prisoners of War

501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization

Volume 81

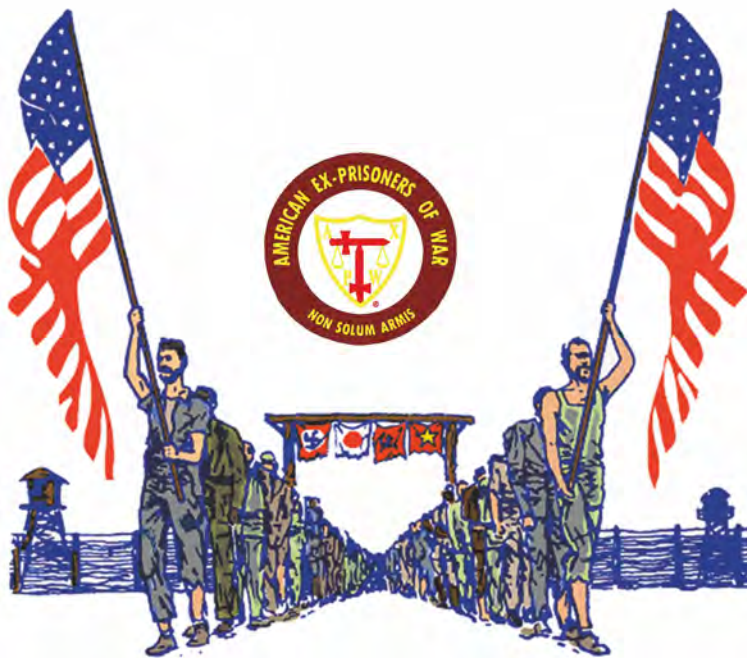
www.axpow.org

Number 10/11/12

October~November~December 2024

Gold
Transparency
2024

Candid.



We exist to help those who cannot help themselves



Veterans Day



HONORING ALL WHO SERVED

November 11, 2024

www.va.gov



October-December 2024

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Dear Friends,

As we near completion of our transition into a legacy organization, with our assets going to the National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville, we made the hard decision to end publication of the EX-POW Bulletin with the Jan-March 2025 issue. We have fewer than 600 ex-POWs in AXPOW. Costs for the Bulletin are the same as when we had 11,000. It is just not feasible to continue. We will still be posting important information and stories on our website. www.axpow.org. We all thank you for your support over the last 81 years. Cheryl Cerbone, Editor

Cover: WWI Veteran Joseph Ambrose marching in the parade celebrating the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC November 13, 1982.

Mea culpa:

In statistics on ex-POWS in the last issue, one important group was inadvertently omitted...those who served on the USS Pueblo (Ager 2). On January 23, 1968, the Pueblo was attacked in international waters by North Korean forces. Eighty-two surviving crewmembers were captured and held prisoner for exactly 11 months. There will be more in the Jan-March 2025 issue.

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Deadline for the Jan-March 2025 Bulletin is Nov.30.. Please send all materials to the editor at the above address.



The Officers and Directors of the American Ex-Prisoners of War wish you all a very happy holiday season. Beginning with Veterans Day and ending with a brand new year, we wish you the very best.

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E Pluribus Unum is the Latin motto on the Great Seal of the United States. It means “out of many, one” and refers to the creation of this country out of many states. It also reminds us that America consists of people from just about every country and culture on earth, and that all these people together make one great nation.

In these days leading up to our national election, we must be mindful of our Latin motto and the privilege of living in a land where we honor one another as fellow citizens and recognize with grace that each of us may have vastly different heritage, callings, purpose, and points of view. When the ballots are counted and victors determined, we who have worn the uniforms of this nation can always be proud our common service to this nation of *E Pluribus Unum*.

Commander Robert Certain



Wreaths Across America is scheduled for Saturday, December 14, 2024 at Andersonville National Cemetery. To purchase a wreath, please scan the QR code or go to the website link below. When you buy two wreaths at \$17 each, an additional wreath will be contributed to the cause. For volunteers interested in placing wreaths at the Cemetery, a brief ceremony will commence at noon that day, followed by the laying of wreaths at each grave. <https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/pages/151038/Overview>

 TAYLOR FAMILY FOUNDATION  Supported by **Food Depot**

from the CEO



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I send my best to all of the Ex-POWs and their families wishing you all had a safe and enjoyable summer. This is the second to the last AXPOW bulletin.

There has been a constant for all Ex-POWs since the 1940s. That constant has been the American Ex-Prisoners of War (AXPOW) veterans service organization. A place where all Ex-POWs feel welcome and a part of a special community. But few things remain unchanged for the better part of 100 years. That is true for AXPOW as well. Membership and surviving Ex-POWs continues to reduce dramatically. State chapters closed through the country. National conference attendance shrank to the point when only a few Ex-POWs attended. This has led to discontinuing the annual conferences. AXPOW activity has become simple participation by the Board of

Director "zoom" calls. The human resources and interest needed to continue AXPOW as a meaningful veteran service organization no longer exists.

There are so many aspects of how the AXPOW organization has served its veterans but to name a few: advocacy for veterans that qualify for VA earned benefits, helping veterans through the application process to receive their benefits from the VA, advocacy for the needs of veterans and their families to the decision makers in Congress for new legislation, educating the veterans on health issues, raise public awareness, celebrating and honoring all veterans, and establishing a place that all Ex-POWs could come together and share stories establishing the unique comradery with other veterans that lived their same experience.

As we have described many times before, what are the next steps. Over the coming months, the remaining services of AXPOW will be discontinued, including the Bulletin. There will be only one more quarterly bulletin. These steps will be taken by the management and Board of AXPOW. The website needs to be maintained. Ultimately, the AXPOW funds will be transferred and managed by the Friends of Andersonville for the purposes of enhancing the National Prisoner of War Museum at Andersonville National Historic Site in Georgia. The cornerstone of the Ex-POW legacy is and will always be the National Prisoner of War Museum. But the legacy is much

bigger and will continue. All of us can play an important part. For Ex-POWs, next of kin, Ex-POW families and friends it may be education and public awareness, documenting the Ex-POW stories, displaying flags and posters, visiting and enhancing veterans' parks, participation in parades, talking among family and friends the stories of the Ex-POWs, etc. The legacy is in large part what we make of it and look to where it can be enhanced. Take inventory what you can do as an individual, decide on the actions you can accomplish, and take action. Your contribution to the continuation of the Ex-POW legacy will be rewarding! Take this time to renew your focus.

We all have been directly involved in events that have changed our lives. They may be new sources of joy, love and happiness like the birth of a child in the family or conversely, the loss of a loved one. Other events are less extreme such as the closing of AXPOW. Regardless, we have all lived and adjusted to the change. For me and many others, the closing of AXPOW is one part of life's experiences received with a heavy heart. Please join me and many others in attending the AXPOW closing ceremony at Andersonville on April 9, 2025 on National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day.

As my father, PNC Charles Susino, Jr. closed his articles:

——Remember——

Charles A. Susino

Andersonville



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Greetings from Andersonville National Historic Site. National POW/MIA Recognition Day is September 20, and we are looking forward to a wonderful evening event. Our program will begin at 6 pm on September 20 with two short interpretive talks and a panel discussion. Featured panelists are former POW Wayne Waddell and Major Barwikowski, a SERE school instructor at Fort Rucker's SERE school. Fred Boyles will act as moderator for the evening. We hope you can attend in person, but the park will be live streaming the panel discussion on our social media, beginning at 7 pm.

The park received a grant to develop programs geared toward active-duty military and their families. Plans for the grant include an orienteering event and the development of a family team-building activity booklet.

In June Georgia State University's Center for Leadership in Disability came to the park and did an accessibility assessment of the museum, prison site, parking areas, and cemetery. The resulting report is providing us with a wealth of suggestions for improvements. The Center stands ready to assist us with project planning moving forward. We expect to have funding to repair the Museum water feature in the upcoming fiscal year.

The water-damaged veneer in the National POW Museum lobby has been replaced. It looks terrific.

Many potential donations have been reviewed over the past few months. One was a very large donation of World War II items, donated by the family of Edwin Follett. Some of that donation will go to museum collections and the rest will be used in a new traveling trunk for the education program. Park staff have already taken it on the road, to Middle Georgia State University. The college students, especially the Aviation majors, were fascinated by the items and learning that they were directly connected to a WWII pilot. The rangers are excited that with this donation they can tell a whole story of the aviator connected to the items, which included Follett's uniform hat, POW and Purple Heart medals, a picture with his plane, and a map of German POW camps.

As always, we appreciate your partnership and support as we work to tell the stories of all American POWs, connect the public to the history of civil war prison site, and to provide a dignified and commemorative burial ground for our veterans and their families.

Special Events

2024 marks the 160th Anniversary of Camp Sumter Military Prison. Beginning in January 2024, and continuing through November 2025, we will trace the history of the prison through social media posts and special programs.

Each month, we will highlight major events that occurred at Andersonville and the people whose lives were changed forever by their time spent at the prison.

We will also be doing Second Saturday's! Special programs will be held every second Saturday of a month. Please see the event calendar below for more details.

We hope you join us throughout the next several months as we remember the Civil War's most notorious prison.

Annual Events

Each year the park hosts a series of recurring events at the National Prisoner of War Museum, the historic prison site, or the Andersonville National Cemetery.

April: Avenue of Flags, National Former POW Recognition Day

May: Memorial Day, Avenue of Flags

July: Avenue of Flags

September: Avenue of Flags, National POW/MIA Recognition Day

November: Avenue of Flags, Living History Weekend

December: Avenue of Flags, Wreaths Across America

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Exhibits and Artifacts, the Heart of a Museum

Exhibits and Artifacts, the Heart of a Museum
The National Prisoner of War Museum is a rare and special resource in the National Park system. Of the 431 units of the National Park Service (NPS), only a few have museums. Most NPS sites have visitor centers as opposed to museums. That might seem like an exercise in semantics, but there is an important distinction between a museum and a visitor center. Visitor centers are buildings that provide information about a place of interest to guide the public on how best to appreciate the place they are visiting. Museums provide a much deeper visitor experience to share with the visiting public with objects displayed that tell a story.

Back in the 1990s, when planning was underway for Andersonville's Museum, there was a very deliberate and intentional effort to build a museum and not a visitor center. The driver behind this decision was the fact that Congress had defined by law the mission of Andersonville to tell the story of all POWs in American history. If the park had been established solely to tell the story of Camp Sumter, then a visitor center would have naturally suited the park. There are many features that museums and visitor centers have in common, such as a gift store, clean restrooms, and an orientation desk where visitors can speak to a park interpreter. Most visitor centers also offer a film to provide an orientation to the resource the public is visiting. One of the first visitor centers dating back nearly 70 years is at Colonial Williamsburg, and it has been the model of that approach.

Exhibits are an essential element of museums, but less so in visitor centers. Having worked in other NPS sites, most visitor centers have a few exhibits and a few items on display. In a well-planned museum, the organizers carefully organize exhibits

to tell a story. Exhibits generally have three elements. They are graphics, text and objects or artifacts. Graphics are photographs or illustrations that support the theme of the exhibit. The text is provided to tell a story or to explain what the visitor is seeing. The principal part of the exhibit is an artifact. One of the most prominent exhibits in America is the First Ladies Gowns at the Smithsonian's Museum of American History. Photos and illustrations show the First Ladies at the inauguration while the text offers more details about the dress and the story of that moment in history. But it's the dress itself that draws the visitor into the exhibit. I can recall how fascinating it was to see how small Martha Washington was by the size of her dress. It's no surprise that the First Ladies Dresses exhibit is the most popular exhibit at the Smithsonian that has been on display since 1914. It's easy to find a book that describes the history of the First Ladies Dresses, but they come alive when you can see them in all their splendor at America's most famous museum.



Colleen and Amy Fogle are seen here with items donated by SFC Robert Calahan (WWII POW, Stalag IIC) who donated his items from his period of imprisonment to Andersonville for posterity. Colleen is Calahan's daughter and Amy is his granddaughter.

The planners intended for the National Prisoner of War Museum to tell the story of all POWs through the common experiences they share. It is important to note that the museum planners worked closely with a committee from AXPOW in designing those exhibits. Each room follows a theme. In sequence they are who is a POW, capture, journey to camp, living conditions, communications, those left behind (the story of the families), privation, morale and liberation. Because many visitors are drawn to the site because of the story of Camp Sumter, the corridor has displays on the Civil War story.

friends, cont'd...

An essential element of any museum is its collection. Andersonville has a collection of 6,564 objects. That's quite a few, and the collection grows all the time. In 2024, the park has added twelve new items to the collection. There are 185 artifacts on permanent display in the National Prisoner of War Museum. That is roughly 3% of the items in the collection are on display. That is not unusual for most reputable museums to have less than 10% of its collection on display.

Another special part of our museum's exhibits is the audio-visual exhibits. These interactive displays allow the public to listen to hours of former POWs describing a vignette related to the subject of that themed room. I've watched young people who are especially drawn into these programs which are more relatable since they are like someone telling you a story.

Museums have standards of what they will collect. In the NPS, the Scope of Collections Statement defines this. This document lays out what the museum will collect and what items it will not collect. One of the most difficult things that museums must do is to say no to someone who desires to donate something to the museum that does not fit into the defined collection policy. I recall when a person brought a wonderful civil war musket to the park with the intention of donating it to the museum. The pristine condition musket did not fit into the park's collection plan because it had no connection to the Andersonville story. The term that is used to ensure that the object fits the theme is called provenance. Often collectors wish to sell artifacts to the highest bidder. Although Andersonville has purchased items in the past, that has been a rare occurrence. As wonderful as the Antiques Roadshow television program is, it has given a false impression to many that some item in one's attic is a priceless relic that may bankroll a family into early retirement. I recall getting a phone call a couple of times a year from some well-meaning person who wished to sell the O'Dea Print to the park. Thomas O'Dea was a soldier in the 16th Maine Infantry Regiment who survived Camp Sumter and in later life produced a lithograph in 1879 that measured 40" by 60" that showed Andersonville prison in detail. The caller was usually crushed when I would tell them that we already had

several of the prints and did not need to acquire another one.

A great addition to any museum is the temporary exhibit. The National POW Museum has four temporary exhibit cases that are in the main corridor of the museum. These exhibits are changed out three times a year and feature some special theme or new acquisitions to the collection. Some of the recent themed displays have been the anniversary of the Korean War armistice, the 50th anniversary of Project Homecoming (the return of the POWs from Vietnam), and an exhibit on Corregidor. Presently there is an exhibit marking the 160th anniversary of Camp Sumter. These temporary exhibits offer the opportunity to place objects on display that have not been seen by the public. Temporary exhibits also offer an occasion to place newly acquired objects on display. As a side note, temporary exhibits are very rare in visitor centers because exhibits are not the emphasis in that setting.



Cheryl Cerbone is seen here in September 2022 viewing one of the temporary exhibits in the National Prisoner of War Museum.

Personally, I have some favorite exhibits in the National POW Museum. What makes them special to me is how they tell a story. An example of this is the large O'Donnell Cross, also called the Cross of Cement. When I've told a visitor about the surrenders in 1942 in the Philippines and the Bataan Death March that culminates at Camp O'Donnell, it is an interesting story to tell. However, when it is told in proximity to the cross on display, the story becomes far more powerful. That is the importance of artifacts and how they can make the story come alive.

namPOW

news



Richard A Stratton
Atlantic Beach, Florida

Cook: Remarks, Stockdale to Pilots, 1965
Published by U.S. Naval War College
Digital Commons, 2017

Dr. Cook taught at the Naval War College from 2009 to 2016 and is the Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale Professor Emeritus of Professional Military Ethics at the College. He now serves as a distinguished visiting professor of philosophy at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Naval War College Review, Vol. 70 [2017], No. 3, Art. 9

In *Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot*, his collection of reflective essays published long after his time in Vietnam, Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale writes eloquently about the importance of the study of philosophy in helping him to endure the prisoner of war (POW) experience. While at Stanford completing a degree in economics, he found his most important questions being deflected by the economics faculty, often with the remark, "Well, we're getting into philosophy now." Exasperated by that reaction, Stockdale found his way to the Philosophy Department

and embarked on a course of reading in the subject, guided by Professor Philip H. Rhinelander.

As Stockdale was leaving Stanford, Rhinelander gave him a copy of the work on Roman Stoicism by the freed slave-philosopher Epictetus, which Stockdale read (he says) initially only out of respect for Rhinelander. But Epictetus's thoughts clearly stuck with him and, in the end, helped him find the resiliency and determination to endure the POW experience honorably. The key tenet of Stoic philosophy is the distinction between what one can control (only one's own actions and inner reactions to things) and what one cannot (the actions of others and the unavoidable circumstances life brings).

Although written well before Stockdale began his POW experience, this speech to his aircrews en-route to Vietnam demonstrates the degree to which he already was thinking about and articulating what they were about to undergo in Stoic terms. His discussion about moving up bomb-release altitudes or adding fuel reflects exactly the Stoic notion of accepting the mission one is given, realistically and uncomplainingly. His unflinching dismissal of "Hollywood answers" and straightforward recognition that, as military officers, his listeners do not get to pick, or even to some degree judge, the war to which they are assigned are a perfect illustration of recognizing what is within one's own powers and what is not. It recognizes that political decisions about where military force is used are "above the pay grade" of his officers.

Stockdale reminds his listeners, "[Y]ou [are] an actor in a drama that you'll replay in your mind's eye for the rest of your life." In other words, you are not the playwright, but how you perform in the play

rests entirely in your hands. In this remark, he is virtually paraphrasing Epictetus (*Enchiridion* 17): "Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it is his pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you; to choose it is another's."

So, in this short address, we see Stockdale the Stoic warrior attempting to impart Stoic wisdom to his aircrews. It is the perfect illustration of the "operationalization" of the importance of philosophy that he will write about years later with such eloquence. But already, here, he is attempting to help his aircrews steel themselves mentally to accept the war and the missions assigned to them unflinchingly, realistically, without illusions. He is, as the Stoics would say, leading them to live "in accordance with Nature" (*kata phusin*) by calling things what they are and calmly facing what lies before them.

Remarks of wing commander James B. Stockdale to the pilots of Carrier Air Wing 16 aboard USS Oriskany, at sea en route to the Gulf of Tonkin, on April 29, 1965, one week before they entered
namPOW, cont'd...

combat. Presented as found in the archives of the Naval War College. Excerpted version available in U. S. Grant Sharp, Strategy for Defeat: Vietnam in Retrospect (Presidio, 1978).

Having reviewed for you the terrain of Vietnam, the enemy's order of battle, the rules of engagement, and to some extent the modern history of the conflict and the evolution of America's strategy, I think I owe you in addition a

namPOW news, cont'd...

straight-from-the-shoulder discussion of pilots' mental attitudes and orientation in "limited war" circumstances. I saw the need for this last summer aboard *Ticonderoga*—after the start of the war had caught us by surprise and we had gone through those first, exciting days pretty much on adrenaline. In the lull that followed, as we prepared for a next round, I could sense that those fine young men who had measured up so well in the sudden reality of flak and burning targets wanted to talk and get their resources and value systems lined up for the long haul.

Like most of you, they were well read, sensitive, sometimes skeptical—those educated in the American liberal tradition to think for themselves—those who are often our most productive citizens and, just as often, our best soldiers. They realized that bombing heavily defended targets is serious business and no game—that it is logically impossible, in the violence of a fight, to commit oneself as an individual only in some proportion of his total drive and combative instinct. It has to be all or nothing; dog eat dog over the target. I think they were asking themselves, as you might—Where do I as a person, a person of awareness, refinement, and education, fit into this "limited war," "measured response" concept? I want to level with you right now, so you can think it over here in mid-Pacific and not kid yourself into imagining "stark realizations" in the Gulf of Tonkin. Once you go "feet dry" over the beach, there can be

nothing limited about your commitment. "Limited war" means to us that our target list has limits, our ordnance loadout has limits, our rules of engagement have limits, but that does not mean that there is anything "limited" about our personal obligations as fighting men to carry out assigned missions with all we've got. If you think it is possible for a man, in the heat of battle, to apply something less than total personal commitment—equated perhaps to your idea of the proportion of national potential being applied—you are wrong. It's contrary to human nature. So also is the idea I was alarmed to find suggested to me by a military friend in a letter recently: that the prisoner of war's Code of Conduct is some sort of a "total war" document. You can't go halfway on that, either. The Code of Conduct was not written for "total wars" or "limited wars," it was written for all wars, and let it be understood that it applies with full force to this air wing, in this war.

What I am saying is that national commitment and personal commitment are two different things. All is not relative. You classical scholars know that even the celebrated "free thinker" Socrates was devoted to ridiculing the sophist idea that one can avoid black and white choices in arriving at personal commitments; one sooner or later comes to a fork in the road. As Harvard's philosophy great, Alfred North Whitehead, said: "I can't bring half an umbrella to work when the weather- man predicts a 50 percent chance of rain." We are all at the fork in the road this week. Think it over. If you find yourself rationalizing about moving your bomb- release altitude up a thousand feet from where your strike leader briefs

it, or adding a few hundred pounds fuel to your over-target bingo because "the Navy needs you for greater things," or you must save the airplane for some "great war" of the future, you, you're in the wrong outfit. You owe it to yourself to have a talk with your skipper or me. It's better for both you and your shipmates that you face up to your fork in the road here at 140 degrees east rather than later, two thousand miles west of here, on the line.

Let us all face our prospects squarely. We've got to be prepared to obey the rules and contribute without reservation. If political or religious conviction helps you do this, so much the better, but you're still going to be expected to press on, with or without these comforting thoughts, simply because this uniform commits us to a military ethic—the ethic of personal pride and excellence that alone has supported some of the greatest fighting men in history. Don't require Hollywood answers to "What are namPOW, cont'd...

we fighting for?" We're here to fight because it's in the interest of the United States that we do so. This may not be the most dramatic way to explain it, but it has the advantage of being absolutely correct.

I hope I haven't made this too somber. I merely want to let you all know first of all where this wing stands on "Duty, Honor, Country." Secondly, I want to warn you all of excessive caution. A philosopher has warned us that, of all forms of caution, caution in love is the most fatal to true happiness. When that Fox flag is two-blocked in the Gulf, you'll be an actor in a drama that you'll replay in your mind's eye for the

namPOW news,
cont'd...

rest of your life. Level with
yourself now. Do your duty.

Footnote: No one came forward with reservations. By the time Oriskany returned to San Diego in December 1965, its pilots had earned a record total of military decorations for Vietnam carrier deployments. Of the 120 pilots addressed in this talk, thirteen did not return to the ship: eight were killed in action, one is still unaccounted for, and four—including the speaker—spent seven and a half years as POWs in Hanoi.

Cook, Martin L. (2017)
"Remarks, Stockdale to Pilots, 1965," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 70 : No. 3 ,
Article 9. Available at:
<https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol70/iss3/9>



Beak Stratton at Admiral James
Bond Stockdale's funeral.

1923-2005

pow/mia

Mary Schantag, Chairman
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One Step Forward Two Steps Back

These clips are all from recent headlines.

"Family of Austin Tice marks 12 years since journalist was taken in Syria

...A Texas native and former U.S. Marine, Austin is an award-winning freelance journalist and photographer ...

In the summer of 2012, ... Austin traveled to Syria to report on the civil war. On August 14, ... the journalist was detained at a checkpoint in Damascus.

Aside from a brief video after his capture, little has been seen or heard of him since.... " (August 14, 2024, By Liam Scott, Voice of America)

"Wife of U.S. Taliban detainee Ryan Corbett pleads for help — and attention — from White House

...The individuals also said Corbett was severely malnourished and suffered from blackouts and fainting episodes, was rarely allowed to shower or go to the bathroom, and was being held in a basement cell with almost no sunlight or exercise.... " (August 9, 2024 / CBS News /Olivia Gazis, Sami Tousafzai, Haley Ott)

"Ryan Corbett, a husband, father, and humanitarian, has been held without charge by the Taliban in Afghanistan since August 10, 2022. ... he is in deteriorating health. Ryan's family has been fighting for his release in silence, but decided to go public because of fears for his life, ... " (<https://www.freeryancorbett.com/>)

" 3 newly freed Americans are back on US soil after a landmark prisoner exchange with Russia

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and Russia completed their biggest prisoner swap in post-Soviet history on Thursday, with Moscow releasing journalist Evan Gershkovich and fellow American Paul Whelan, along with dissidents including Vladimir Kara-Murza.

Negotiators stitched together a 24-person deal that required significant concessions from European allies, including the release of a Russian assassin, and secured freedom for a cluster of journalists, suspected spies, political prisoners and others. Under the deal, Russia released Gershkovich, a reporter for The Wall Street Journal who was jailed in 2023 and convicted in July of espionage charges. Also released was Whelan, a Michigan corporate security executive jailed since 2018, also on espionage charges he and Washington have denied, and Kurmasheva, a Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty journalist convicted in July of spreading false information about the Russian military. " (AP News, By Eric Tucker, Dasha Litvinova And Matthew Lee, August 2, 2024)

pow/mia cont'd...

Today (16 August 24) the AP reported, "YEKATERINBURG, Russia — U.S.-Russian dual national [Ksenia Khavana](#) was convicted Thursday of [treason in a Russian court](#) and sentenced to 12 years in prison on charges stemming from a \$52 donation to a charity aiding Ukraine. Khavana, a 33-year-old former ballet dancer, reportedly obtained

U.S. citizenship after marrying an American and moving to Los Angeles. She had returned to Russia to visit her family.

Meanwhile, POW/MIA families are in limbo:

"US expresses frustration that North Korea is blocking efforts to recover remains of American casualties from Korean War (CNN, By Haley Britzky, August 14, 2024)

It was a topic at the DPAA family meeting.

"Families of Service Members Gone Missing in Action Get Answers at Annual Briefing

There are about 126 U.S. service members still unaccounted for from the Cold War, and 7,465 U.S. personnel still unaccounted for from the Korean War. McKeague said about 5,300 of those who remain missing from the Korean War are suspected of

having been lost in North Korea. Right now, McKeague said,...there's been no contact...since 2019.

The DPAA is holding one-on-one meetings with families of service members lost in the Korean War and the Cold War.

"What's interesting is that of the 434, there are 172 of them that are first-time attendees, which is an extraordinary number," McKeague said." (DOD News, Aug. 15, 2024 | By C. Todd Lopez)

When will our Americans Citizens be brought home?

The most comprehensive of those still held, sourced with news links, was found on Wiki:

Name	Detained	Days in detention	Reason for detention
Africa			
Marcel Malanga	19-May-24	91	Involvement in 2024 DRC coup attempt
Tyler Thompson	19-May-24	91	Involvement in 2024 DRC coup attempt
Benjamin Reuben Zalman-Polun	19-May-24	91	Involvement in 2024 DRC coup attempt
Afghanistan			
Paul Overby	17-May-14	3746	
China			
Kai Li	01-Jul-18	2240	espionage 07/01/2018
Mark Swidan	13-Nov-12	4296	Assisting the transportation and payment of technicians to manufacture methamphetamine
David Lin and Friends	2008	5844	contract fraud and sentenced to life in prison
Iran			
Shahab Dalili	2016	2922	"Aiding and abetting" the U.S.
Russia			
James Vincent Wilgus	7-Nov-16	2841	Indecent exposure
Thomas Stwalley	6-Jul-18	2235	intent to distribute marijuana
Eugene Spector	19-Feb-20	1642	bribery and espionage
Marc Fogel	15-Aug-21	1099	marijuana possession
David Barnes	13-Jan-22	948	child abuse (custody dispute)
Michael Travis Leake	6-Jun-23	439	intent to distribute drugs
Robert Woodland	5-Jan-24	226	intent to distribute drugs
Ksenia Karelina	27-Jan-24	204	suspicion of treason
Gordon Black	2-May-24	108	theft and making threats
Afghanistan			
Ryan Corbett	10-Aug-22	739	
Syria			
Austin Tice	14-Aug-12	4387	
Majd Kamalmaz	15-Feb-17	Deceased while in detention, May 2024	
United Arab Emirates			
Zack Shahin	01-Mar-08	6014	
Accused of bribery and embezzlement //			
Designated arbitrarily detained per the United Nations Working Group ruling of March 2023 which ordered his immediate release, found that Zack Shahin was a victim of kidnapping, failure of due process, faulty trials with no evidence, arbitrary detention, and much more.			

Impressions of an Itinerant Internee: My Varied Lodgings in STIC by Martin Meadows-PART 2

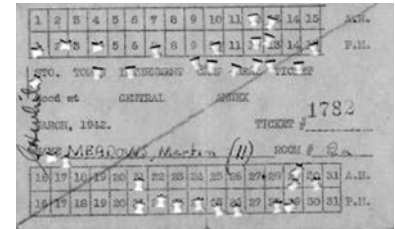
PART 1 APPEARED IN THE JULY-SEPT 2024 ISSUE.

On another occasion, on a daily visit by my parents during the limited visiting hours, my mother told me that on the previous night they had attended the camp's very first "floor show," or entertainment program; it had been emceed by entertainer de luxe Dave Harvey, and presented on a stage constructed at the north end of the west patio of the Main Building, where internee families — including mine — later were to erect the sawali (straw-like) huts that would serve as their makeshift kitchens (depending on the availability of charcoal). I was extremely upset at having missed the show, and I insisted that she describe the various acts that internees had presented. (According to the Internews of 29 January 1942, the first floor show was scheduled for that night.) And lastly, near the end of my hospital stay, a nurse told me that finally it was time for me to get out of bed, for the first time in weeks. She asked if she could help me stand, I said no, tried to get up, and promptly collapsed back onto the bed. But within a few days I had regained much of my strength, was discharged, and happily departed.

(3) As I accompanied my parents out of the hospital into the unaccustomed bright sunshine, little did I realize that I was about to do the equivalent of jumping from the housing frying pan into the lodgings fire. My parents took turns eroding my weakening peace of mind as they proceeded to

inform me where I was to reside next, and why. First my father explained that, because of my lengthy absence and the continuing influx of "guests" into the camp, he had been unable to save my space in Room 37 — it had been taken, the room was filled, and it could not accept me. Moreover, my parents did not want me assigned to a room on my own, where I would be a complete newcomer among adult strangers in unfamiliar surroundings. As I absorbed that news, my mother then applied the coup de grace: To my horror she said that she had managed to wangle entry for me into her above-mentioned Room 2A, despite strong objections from her roommates to having an eleven-year-old male in their room.

However, the determined opponents of my intrusion were not to be completely denied — indeed, they had succeeded in imposing terms on my entry into their hallowed precincts. I would be allowed into Room 2A on two conditions. First, my bed had to be placed at the southwest corner of the room farthest from the hallway entrance (in a space which was in a sort of niche, under a window at the very front of the building). And second, a sheet had to be hung between my bed and the room, so that while in my corner space I could not see beyond it, and the women would not have to be concerned about my presence. Still, that left unanswered the highly sensitive question of how my comings and goings would be handled — after all, it was unthinkable that a potential voyeur should be permitted unrestricted access to the room, let alone to prowl around it. That issue was not resolved until after I had moved in, at which time the opposition decided on an understandable and not unreasonable — but to me extremely mortifying — procedure, detailed next.



Martin Meadows March 1942 meal ticket while in Room 2A

Whenever I wanted to enter the room, I first had to knock loudly on the side jambs of the entrance (there was no door, only a curtain), announce myself, and request permission to enter; whereupon whoever inside heard me would shout "Man coming in," await clearance from those inside, and give me the okay to enter. I would then — with eyes (supposedly) fixed on the floor in front of me, never (well, rarely) casting surreptitious glances sideways — hurriedly weave my way the length of the room, ducking under mosquito netting and dodging beds (and even an occasional lightly-clad woman heedless of my presence), on the way to my curtained niche in the far corner. The same thing happened in the morning — I would get dressed behind my sheltering screen, call out that I was ready to leave, have someone shout "Man leaving the room," await clearance, and hurriedly stride out.

In view of this humiliating situation, as far as I was concerned the less contact I had with the room the better. Thus I strictly limited my entries and exits: I entered at night, left in the morning, and stayed away from the room all day. And I tried to be as inconspicuous as possible when I entered the room, doing so whenever there were few people around in the hallway to see me; when leaving, though obviously there was no way to tell whether the coast was clear, I tried to slink out quietly. This routine was so embarrassing to me that I never told any of my friends where I lived, and I avoided

civilian, cont'd...

discussing the matter with them. This was not always easy to do; among my friends at that time — a few of whom included Henry Sbitski (who was killed just after liberation), Joe Browne, Kenny Lane, and David and Paul Schafer — there were some pretty persistent (and perhaps pretty suspicious) interrogators.

It should be understandable, therefore, why I felt compelled to lead a virtually nomadic existence; in effect I lacked a “home base” to which I could retire whenever I wanted, for whatever reason — just to take a siesta, for example, was out of the question, in my mind. (I kept my toiletries not under or by my bed, as everyone else did, but in a small cupboard my father had obtained and had placed by the inner corridor wall — by the west patio — near Room 2A, next to a card table where we ate our meals, while sitting in our rickety cloth folding-chairs.) Fortunately, by some miracle I never found it necessary to leave the room in the middle of the night; I have no idea what I might have done had that been necessary. I doubt that I would have wanted to awaken everyone by shouting out, as I did in the morning; probably I would have tried to sneak out, in which case there could have been quite a commotion had I happened to encounter a woman in the darkness.

I do not know what the women of Room 2A felt about such an awkward setup; I assumed at the time that they must have been quite displeased, but now I suspect that most of them must have become used to it. As for me, needless to say I never had occasion, or desire, to interact

with other room occupants (except for my mother, obviously). One of the residents was a Polish girl about my age (named Gisela Golombek, as I recall), yet I never exchanged so much as one word with her, and it never entered my mind to even attempt to do so. The only exceptions to my non-fraternization policy occurred outside the room, when I was occasionally present while my mother conversed in Polish with some of the room’s other Polish occupants; among them were two whom I came to know slightly, named Stanislaw Wiland and Janina Wiczewska. As a result, I learned a few words of Polish (now long forgotten); and Mrs. Wiczewska once even gave me as a souvenir a tiny version — barely an inch long — of a pocket knife (which I still have, incidentally).

(4) Considering the circumstances described above, in retrospect I am still somewhat surprised that I was able to survive as well as I did my enforced residence in the midst of what I perceived to be a roomful of hostile women. No doubt the resilience of youth was an important reason; however, there was an additional factor involved. It was an episode that occurred in May 1942, as revealed by my invaluable cache of meal tickets. My May ticket is devoid of punched dates during the latter half of the month, and thus I assume that was when I temporarily escaped from the clutches of Room 2A. And that happened because, even after I had left the hospital in mid-February, my parents had continued to be concerned about my health, and they had decided to try to do something about it.

My parents therefore asked our pre-war physician, Dr. L. Z. Fletcher, to write a letter supporting their request to the

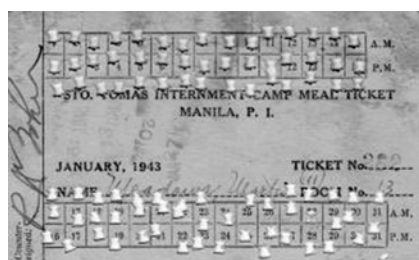
camp commandant for medical passes for my mother and me. They claimed that I needed to fully recuperate from my illness, and that this was possible only outside the camp. Dr. Fletcher’s letter helped to persuade the commandant to grant us passes to leave STIC for a couple of weeks. We spent the entire period with family friends, a Jewish non-enemy-alien (non-interned) family, the Sharrufs, who I think had acquired Filipino citizenship years earlier, and who were kind enough to put us up. Regrettably, I do not know how our visit to the Sharrufs was arranged, but that did not concern me at the time; the only thing that mattered was that I was away from Room 2A, and was enjoying the additional bonus of an improved diet and living conditions. But when the pleasurable interlude ended, I returned to Camp STIC to endure the indignities of Room 2A, a fate which was to continue for another five tortuous months.

(5) My meal tickets indicate that 2A was my room assignment for nearly nine months, from the time of my February departure from the camp hospital through October 1942. At that point something unexpected and welcome happened, probably as a result of dual pressures being exerted on the camp’s internee authorities. On the one hand, my parents had been trying to have me and my father move together into a different room; and on the other hand the women of Room 2A must have been demanding that camp leaders move me, especially as I would soon reach the advanced age of 12, dangerously close to teenager-hood. Whatever the explanation for the move, two spaces had become available in a room on the first floor of the Main Building. We moved in time for my November 1942 meal ticket to show that I was now a resident of

civilian, cont'd...

Room 13. (I did not regard the room's number as unlucky, since anything was preferable to Room 2A — anything that would enable me to terminate the furtive and secretive existence I had endured for so long.)

[Note: my mother replaced me in the space I had vacated under the window in Room 2A; it was nearly a fatal move, as explained below in (9), second paragraph.]

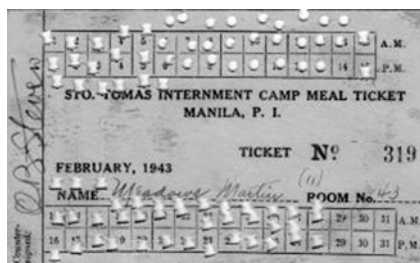


Martin Meadows January 1943 meal ticket while in Room 13

Room 13 was located at what I recall as the somewhat dingy first floor rear area on the east side of the building. It was situated close to the camp kitchen and thus also to the serving-line, where internees stood in line to await their next meal. One of the positive features of the room, to me, was that it housed a few other youths whom I knew. On the other hand, even in comparison with the detested Room 2A, in certain respects Room 13 was second-best — specifically, it was more crowded, more stuffy and less bright. (After all, my bed in Room 2A had been isolated and thus uncrowded; it was directly under a window; and the sheet that served to enforce my isolation had also masked the room's interior dimness.) My new room was so

crowded, in fact, that I could access my bed from only one side, for the other side directly adjoined another bed. Still, I did not really mind the crowded conditions, grateful as I was to have finally escaped from Room 2A. (The bed adjoining mine, incidentally, was that of teenager Bill Phillips; due to our proximity, we were able to carry on muted conversations at night without disturbing any of the other residents.)

(6) I am unaware of the circumstances that led to my next change of rooms. All I know (thanks once again to my meal-ticket record) is that by February 1943, after a mere three months in Room 13, my father and I literally had risen in the world: to be specific, we went from the drab first floor rear to the (relatively) more attractive third floor front of the Main Building. This time we moved into Room 43, which compared much more favorably with our previous billet — it was brighter, more airy and not quite as crowded, among other advantages. We were fortunate, therefore, that Room 43 was where we were to reside for the remaining two years of our sojourn in Camp STIC. And the extent of that residency helps explain why it receives considerably more coverage herein than does that of any of my previous rooms.



Martin Meadows February 1943 meal ticket while in Room 43

Room 43 differed from other rooms in the Main Building mainly because of its two distinguishing features, both of which reflected the fact that it must have been used for chemistry and/or physics lab classes. First, at the front of the room, adjoining the north (corridor) wall, there was an elevated platform (presumably where experiments were performed); and at one end of the platform was quite a luxury for the room's occupants — a sink with running water (cold, of course). Its presence meant that they did not always have to trek for all their ablutions to the distant opposite end of the building, where the crowded lone third-floor men's bathroom was sited; on the other hand, of course, it also meant that often there were lengthy queues at the sink. And as to the room's second distinguishing feature — beyond the narrow strip of concrete floor surrounding the platform, there was a series of perhaps ten wooden steps, rising from floor level to the top tier, which was flush against the other three walls of the room; thus, as in a movie theater, students would have had unobstructed views of the platform.

The presence of that second feature — namely, the steps or levels — had several significant negative consequences for the room's occupants. One was that it forced most of them to place wood blocks (or anything comparable) under the (usually) two legs of their beds closest to the platform, in order to keep the beds level instead of sloping downward. A second one was that they had to be extremely careful when walking through the room, particularly at night in blackout conditions. Additionally, the wooden steps served not only to provide shelter for many forms of insect life, but also — since insecticides were not available — to protect them from

civilian, cont'd...

direct human attack (i.e., by hand or foot). Most notable of these creatures were the huge Asian cockroaches, which I could hear flying around the room at night (and occasionally colliding with my mosquito net).

On a more personal note, though, the steps had beneficial consequences for my father and me (and a few others), because of where our beds were located. Luckily we had been assigned spaces on the top tier, which positioned our beds squarely against a wall (for the record, the room's east wall). This gave those of us with placements on the top level two major advantages over the room's other residents. For one thing, it meant that we had more privacy, because we were not entirely surrounded by other beds. For another and at least equally advantageous thing, the topmost level was so much wider than the other tiers that we did not need to use blocks to keep our beds level (and, by the same token, neither did we need to keep checking to make sure that our beds were not in danger of slipping off of one or more blocks).

[Note: The effects of the steps, both negative and positive, were eliminated toward the end of 1944; when the camp kitchen began to run short of firewood for cooking, Room 43 had to be evacuated for most of one day so that its wooden levels could be torn out to be used by the kitchen (as I have described in "[A Little-Known STIC Episode](#)," Philippine Internment, 20 August 2016)] Room 43 had other characteristics that merit attention. For instance, its location, almost in the middle of the third-floor front of the Main

Building, had two notable consequences for its occupants. First of all, the room was almost directly under the building's large clock tower; thus the clock's loud tolling every fifteen minutes could well be intrusively audible, and all the more so in the relative silence of night — or at least until one got used to the sound. (On the other hand, the clock's on-the-hour tolling would tell you what time it was if you were awake — potentially useful information if you did not have a timepiece.) Moreover, the room overlooked the main plaza, thus providing its occupants an excellent view of almost the entire front expanse of what had been (and would again be) a University campus. Too, the room was large — so large, in fact, that it had two entrances; thus, despite the platform, the room had a large number of residents (and a wide variety of snorers), at times ranging into the mid-60s, depending on the size of the camp population.

Three other aspects of the room directly affected me, one positively and two negatively. On the positive side, it housed other youths. At the room's other end from my placement were the Robinson brothers, Harry and Tommy (and their father); however, the numerous intervening beds between us did little to enhance our interactions. At my end of the room, though, also on the top tier and by a window, there lived (along with his father) a teenager named Eric Sollee, who became a good friend of mine. Eric worked in the camp kitchen, and occasionally he would bring back a few precious goodies for me, usually in the form of a handful of peanuts. The two of us often passed time by playing the card game Casino; in fact, we played it so often that our

cumulative scores (we kept a running tally) eventually totaled well into the thousands of points (at least six or seven thousand points each, as I recall). At one time, as I have recounted in "[A Little-Known STIC Episode](#)," Eric and I had discussed the possibility of trying to cause the bed of an extremely annoying individual to topple off its blocks at night; but our plot was forestalled when the room's wooden steps were torn out for firewood, as already mentioned.

[Note: In his post-STIC life, Eric was an NCAA All-American fencer at Harvard, and later became a renowned fencing coach at MIT.]

Of the two negative aspects of room 43, one affected only myself, while the second also affected the room's other occupants (and indeed all third-floor residents). With regard to the first one, in Room 43 (unlike the situation in Room 13) I had space on both sides of my bed, yet I still used only one side — I avoided the other side as much as possible because of the individual who occupied the space there. As I have stated elsewhere, in an item posted on 19 July 2015 by Maurice Francis, my neighbor, who was known to his roommates as "Skipper" Wilson, was a red-bearded former seafarer who rarely showered or washed. His bed literally was crawling with bedbugs, as were even his mosquito net and his towel; and the latter was draped over one of the lines from which our mosquito nets were suspended, so that bedbugs were able to make their way to my bed via those lines. Thus the positive aspect of having more space than I had in Room 13 was at least partially if not entirely negated by Wilson's presence.

civilian, cont'd...

[Note: Our room monitor, Henry Pile, told me that he could not move Wilson out of the room. According to Cliff Mills' research, Wilson's full name was Henry Bernard Wilson, he was 47 years old at the time, and he had served in the Merchant Marines before WWII. All information concerning Wilson appeared in several emails that Maurice Francis posted on 19-20 July 2015.]

As for the second negative aspect, it stemmed from the third-floor location of Room 43. This meant that (like all third-floor residents) I had to climb the stairs usually several times a day to get to my room (which of course there was no reason to avoid, as had been the case when I lived in Room 2A). This became much more of a problem after the Nipponese military took control of STIC early in 1944 and began to impose a starvation diet on internees; by the latter part of 1944, because of severe malnutrition many if not most third-floor residents found it increasingly difficult to climb the stairs. And that fact, it should not be overlooked, also negatively affected the educational process, because (as was noted earlier) most school classes were held on the fourth floor; and that required some students and teachers to undergo a laborious climb of as many as three flights of stairs.]

[Note: I described a stair-climbing incident of late 1944 in "SSS (STIC Seasonal Story)," posted by Maurice Francis on 27 October 2013. It was late in the evening, and of course a total blackout was in effect, very strictly enforced, since American bombing in the Manila area had started in September 1944. Most internees

were in their beds by that time, somewhere around 9 or 10 p.m. After talking with friends on the first floor, we broke up and I started up the front stairs to my room on the third floor. I had reached the landing between the second and third floors and was just starting to climb the last flight of stairs to the third floor. Suddenly I heard a strange noise, one hard to describe, sort of a sliding/grinding/whirring sound, coming from above me and to my right. I looked up toward the window, located about midway between the landing and the third floor, far out of the reach of anyone whether in or out of the building. The moonlight shining through the opening clearly showed that the window was sliding downward, though fairly gradually — that is, it was not loosely falling. Given the situation — it was very dark, I was alone, no one was anywhere nearby — I froze in my tracks, eyes fixed on the moving window. Then the window actually began to slide upward, making the same sound. Panic stricken, I snapped out of my paralysis and dashed up the last flight of stairs. Everyone was in bed by then, and I quickly got in bed myself, relieved to be "safe" in the midst of many slumbering roommates. The next morning I looked closely at the window in question, but it appeared "normal," and there was no ladder on the outside. I never did find out what might have caused the episode, and I never told anyone about it (before this account) to avoid being mocked.]

(7) Room 43, to repeat, proved to be the final formally assigned stage in my residential tour of Camp STIC. However, my lodging there was interrupted on two occasions, one which was pleasurable in nature and one

which absolutely was not. The former transpired in the form of a brief enough period that I am unable to determine conclusively from my meal tickets when it occurred. All I know for sure is that it took place sometime during the latter part of 1943, while the camp was still under civilian control. I was among a small group of four or five youths allowed to leave camp for a short visit (probably for only a weekend, I believe) with an American missionary family. As I recall, it was the family of Dr. Hugh Bousman, who made it a practice to periodically host small groups of STIC youths for a few days. He was one of several missionaries who had been released for a time from STIC, and who were later re-interred. The enjoyable visit provided only brief surcease from STIC (though enough to qualify it for inclusion on this itinerary).

(8) As for the distressing interruption of my stay in Room 43, it was caused by a badly broken left elbow, which forced me into the camp's Santa Catalina hospital. The break resulted from an accident on the very same day — 10 October 1943 — when, by an improbable coincidence, my parents had been released from the camp. They and other Jewish internees (adults only) had been allowed to attend Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement services at the Manila synagogue, Temple Emil, thanks to the non-Nazi-influenced civilian commandant (one of his last such acts, before the Nipponese military took over the camp). Upon my parents' return to STIC, a friend of mine told them where I was; and I well recall their looks of shock when they found me lying in a Santa Catalina hospital room, awaiting a doctor's attention. (At one point my mother said to my father in

civilian, cont'd...

Yiddish, no doubt to avoid alarming me, that my arm looked badly broken; but I understood what she said, and, to reassure them, mistakenly told them it probably was only dislocated.)

After the above-mentioned Dr. Fletcher checked my arm, fortunately he was able to gain permission to take me by auto to a Manila hospital (name forgotten, possibly St. Luke's). Permission was granted on the grounds that it was necessary for him to set my elbow under the hospital's fluoroscope; and he was able to do so successfully, thus preventing my left arm from being permanently deformed. But the break was so bad (compound fracture and dislocation), and my arm was so painful and swollen, that I was forced to spend time in Santa Catalina hospital. My October 1943 meal ticket enables me to determine exactly how many days I was hospitalized, because it lacks punches for the four days from October 10 (the date of Yom Kippur) through October 13. (Some of my critics might use this episode to contend that I must have had much to atone for, considering the date of my break and the nature of my punishment.)

(9) After being released from the hospital I of course returned to Room 43, where at last I was to complete my STIC pre-liberation meanderings. I use the term "pre-liberation" because there is yet one more room to account for, one in which I had to sleep for several nights after the camp had been liberated. The reason was that Nipponese artillery from across the Pasig river began to shell STIC on February 7, just

after General MacArthur had completed a tour of the camp and had departed, earlier than originally scheduled. (Thus there is a legitimate question as to whether or not the timing of the shelling was purely coincidental.) As a result, and in light of numerous internee casualties (cited below), camp authorities strongly urged internees in certain areas of the Main Building — to be specific, those in rooms on its front and its west sides — to sleep in a particular area (described below) on the first floor of the east or safer side of the building, opposite from the direction from which the shelling was originating. (Technically speaking, by this time we were now ex-internees rather than internees.)



Martin Meadows January 1945 meal ticket while in Room 43

Some internees criticized the advice, and even decided to ignore it; but my parents and I had no intention of doing so, for a very good reason. When the shelling started, my mother had arisen from her bed and left Room 2A to look for my father and me — just before a shell exploded on the window shelf directly above her space (where I had slept three years earlier). The shell's heavy cap (which I still have) went through the middle of her bed and lodged in the cement floor underneath, from where I later retrieved it. But more to the point, as it turned out the bombardment lasted several days, and it killed either 17 or 19 internees (sources

differ) and wounded dozens more (these numbers do not include the victims who were not internees, mainly GIs as well as Filipinos working in the camp). It was unquestionably safer, therefore, not to sleep in the designated sections of the Main Building; and my recollection (with meal tickets no longer relevant) is that I spent two and possibly three nights (perhaps February 7-9) away from Room 43.

The area in which internees were directed to sleep was not a room in the usual sense of the word — it was a University library, whose walls obviously were lined with volume-filled bookshelves. I do not know whether it was the University's main library, but in any case it was unusually hot, stuffy, airless, and dark — features which were all largely attributable to the fact that it had no windows. And of course it was grossly overcrowded, with both men and women as unwilling temporary (and part-time — at night only) occupants. Furthermore, there was no way to string up mosquito netting, a fact which provided mosquitoes with field days (or rather field nights). On top of all that, internees who didn't bring any bedding with them had to try to sleep on makeshift substitutes for beds, such as chairs, tables, and of course the floor.

[Note: One other thing I recall from my library interlude is worth a comment, to reflect the tenor of the time. As I was trying to get to sleep my first night there, I overheard two men discussing current events. One said to the other very confidently (for some reason the gist of his assertion has remained stuck in my mind to this day): "Mark my words, [General Omar] Bradley is going

civilian, cont'd...

to achieve great things." The speaker did not mention the name of another WWII general who did achieve great things.]

Given the conditions that prevailed in the library during the several nights it was over-populated by both male and female internees, it is easy to imagine their huge sense of relief when the Nipponese shelling at last began to lessen. It had not yet ceased entirely when the library's temporary denizens were given the all clear and thankfully were again able to sleep in their customary quarters. And, as for me, having resumed full-time residency in Room 43, I prepared to finally terminate my Camp STIC itinerancy, while awaiting — for almost two months after liberation — transport to the United States and the start of a brand new journey.

CONCLUSION This memoir now concludes where it began — outside the walls of STIC — with a brief description of the living conditions that we encountered upon leaving STIC. After being transported by open-air trucks to the badly damaged Pier 7, we boarded the troop ship S. S. John Lykes, anxious to embark on what proved to be a lengthy voyage. Counting from the day we boarded on March 27 until we arrived on May 2 at the Los Angeles port of San Pedro, the trip lasted 37 days and involved stops en route at Leyte, New Guinea (Hollandia) and Honolulu. Ironically, it could well be argued that the sleeping quarters on the ship were at least as bad as, if not worse than, those found in STIC. I am not aware of the situation that prevailed in the women's quarters; however, the men slept in a large hold, which was extremely hot and stuffy, with its portholes covered by heavy black material; but at least mosquito nets were unnecessary. The hold was filled with rows of mostly five (some had four) vertically-stacked bunks. My bunk was in the middle of one such stack — two men slept above me and two men slept below me. (In the bunk below me was my father, who from there could help me into and out of the middle bunk when necessary.) Yet despite these conditions, I do not recall that I ever felt anything comparable to the various negative emotions — discomfort/frustration/you-name-it — that I had experienced in the course of my STIC odyssey. All of which perhaps supports the contention that (as Einstein might have phrased it) everything is relative.

I would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance, in the preparation and presentation of this account, of (1) Sally Meadows, who read and improved many earlier drafts; and (2) Cliff Mills, not only because of his technological wizardry with graphics, but also because it was his idea in the first place to insert graphics. I would like to extend to both my most sincere thanks and appreciation. — MM

Updated on 23 March 2022



STIC after liberation, 4 February 1945. Circled is Martin Meadows

Last call to attend!

CPOW Reunion

Courtyard Marriott Norfolk, VA
(next door to the MacArthur Memorial
Museum)

Oct. 11-13, 2024

Contact Daniel Doolan - doolan@sonic.net
707-327-6886

CPOW

Civilian Ex-Prisoners of War

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Christmas in Captivity

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www.iwm.org.uk

'Joyeux Noel'

Millions of prisoners were taken captive during the Second World War and their experiences varied according to many factors – from where they had been captured to their nationality, race and whether they were a civilian or serving in the military.

Though separated from friends and family and living in tightly controlled conditions, some prisoners were able to find ways to mark Christmas and New Year, using their creativity and comradeship to get them through. Explore these items from IWM's collection to find out more about how POWs celebrated Christmas.



Three French POWs smile for the camera as they hold up their special Christmas offerings at Stalag Luft III, Sagan, December 25, 1942.

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Christmas, cont'd...

Sharing a Meal

Flight Lieutenant Paul Cunningham's Lancaster bomber was shot down over Scholven-Buer in Germany during a raid on June 21-22, 1944. He survived the crash but was captured and sent to Stalag Luft III. This Christmas menu from 1944 records the meal enjoyed by Cunningham and his fellow prisoners, largely based on the shared contents of Red Cross parcels.

F/LT	QUAILE	F/LT	YOUNG		
F/LT	DAWES	F/LT	CUNNINGHAM		
F/LT	LANGDON	F/O	PUTTICK		
F/O	MITCHELL	F/O	JAMES		
LT	HANLINE	LT	SNYDER		
F/O	MOYER	LT	STILLINGS		
				<u>DINNER</u>	
				POTAGE à la JULIENNE	
				SAUMON SUPÉRIEUR	
				TURKEY AMÉRICAIN RÔTI	
				SPECIAL STUFFING	CHEF DAWES
				POMMES RÔTIS	POMMES CRÈMES
				CAROTTES	TURNIPS
				CHRISTMAS PUDDING + CREAM	
				BISCUITS KRIEGIES avec FROMAGE	
				CANDY + NUTS	
				CAFÉ	
				<u>SUPPER</u>	
				HOT SAUSAGE ROLLS	
				ASSORTED SANDWICHES	
				TREACLE TART	
				HOT CHOCOLATE	
				XMAS EVE HOT MIDNIGHT SUPPER	
				BREAD + BUTTER OFF RATION	

Menu

BREAKFAST

RAISIN JUICE

BARLEY-PORRIDGE, HONEY + CREAM

FRIED-BREAD + SPAM

TOAST + BLACKBERRY JAM

TEA

LUNCH

COLD HAM

WELSH RAREBIT

TARTINES KRIEGIEUX + CAFÉ à LAIT

TEA

ASSORTED SANDWICHES:-

(Cheese, Crab + Lobster, + Spam

Pâté, Peanut Butter + Jam)

CHRISTMAS CAKE

TEA

Christmas menu from 1944 POW camp

© IWM (Documents. 19672/B)

Christmas, cont'd...

Christmas in Colditz

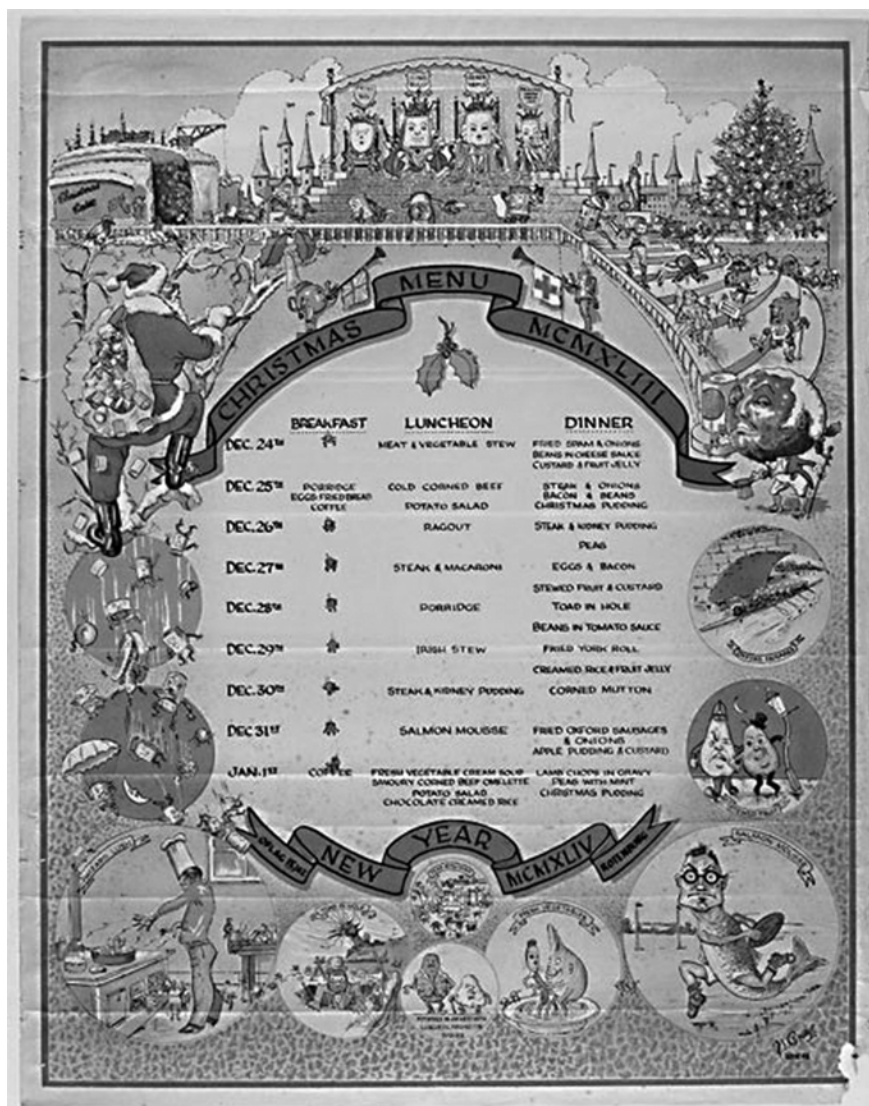
Colditz Castle was a high-security prison and was the place the Germans sent their most difficult POWs—many of those held there had previously attempted escape from other camps. In this photo, prisoners pose for a photograph together in front of a Christmas tree.



Christmas, cont'd...

'Breakfast, Luncheon and Dinner'

Food is often at the center of Christmas celebrations. Prisoners held at Oflag IXA/Z in Germany created this beautifully illustrated poster advertising the Christmas and New Year menu at the camp—in one drawing, a pear in a policeman's uniform arrests a "stewed fruit."



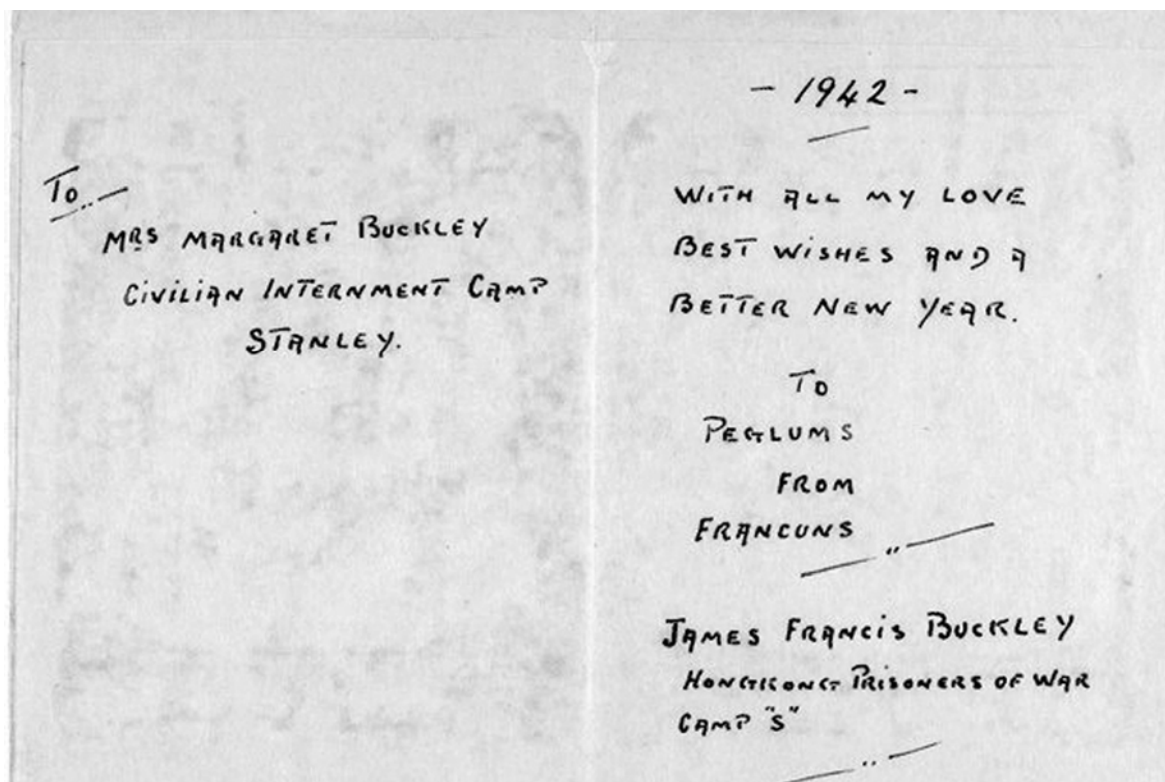
Illustrated poster made by POWs in Oflag IXA/Z, Rotenburg, advertising Christmas and New Year meals in the camp.

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Christmas, cont'd...

'To Peglums'

War separated loved ones, but people were sometimes able to find a way to communicate their feelings and seasonal wishes. James Buckley was held in Shamshuipo camp, Hong Kong. He sent this handmade card to his wife Margaret in 1942.

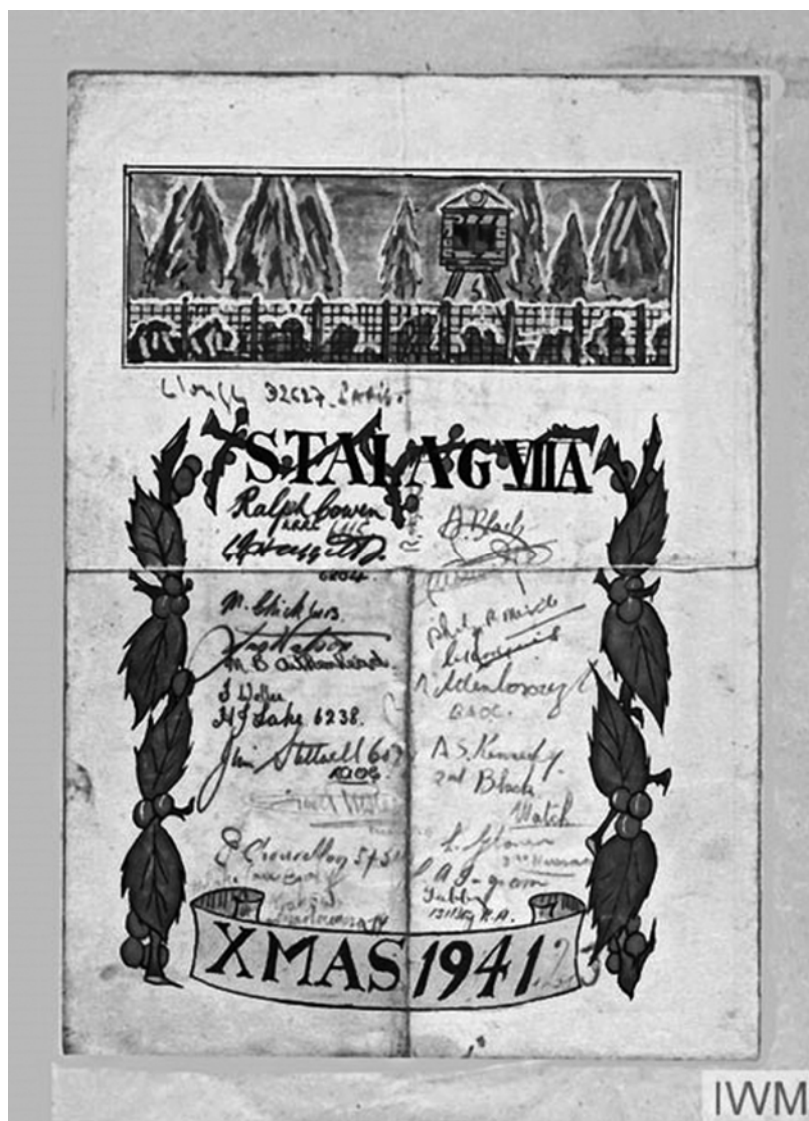


Handmade Christmas card sent by James Buckley to his wife, while a POW in Shamshuipo camp, Hong Kong.

©IWM (Documents.17928/A)

From All German POWs of This Station'

Despite being imprisoned on British soil, German soldiers were able to exercise their creativity in the camps and designed this Christmas card.



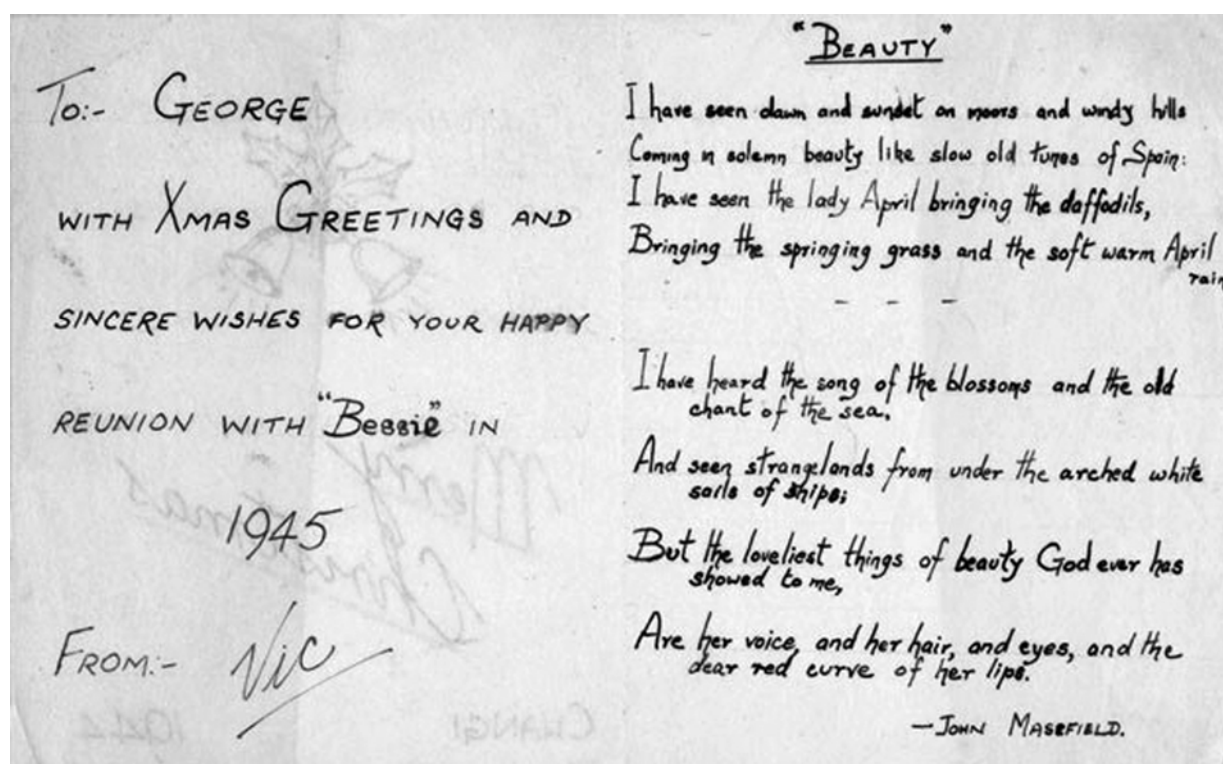
Handmade Christmas card from German prisoners of war still held in Farnborough, Hampshire in 1947.

©IWM (Documents.8587/A

Christmas, cont'd...

Xmas Greetings

George Charlton was a Staff Sergeant in the Royal Army Medical Corps who was imprisoned in Singapore from February 1942 to the end of the war, mainly in Changi camp until March 1945 when he was moved to the prisoner of war hospital at Kranji. He returned to the UK in October 1945. This handmade card was addressed to him at Christmas 1944.



Handmade Christmas card from Changi prisoner of war camp, Singapore, 1944.

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Unwavering

Chapter Ten

ENDURING ICONS

the authors are available to present at organizational, clubs, and book groups either online or live and in person.

Contact: unwaveringbook@gmail.com.

Ever so carefully, Stanley and Virginia Bates crack open the door to their daughter's bedroom, grimacing as it creaks. Peeking inside, they smile as they spy twenty-one-year-old Carol sprawled across her bed, fully clothed and sound asleep. A plump, baby-faced ingenue with blunt-cut blond bangs and piercing eyes, she is covered with checks and bank deposit slips.

Carol was up late the previous night, as she has done many nights over the past year. She is throwing all her energy into rallying Americans around the nation's POWs, some of whom are entering their sixth year of captivity in Southeast Asia. Politics is a passion inherited from her mother, Virginia Bates, who is proud of her daughter's dedication, but unhappy that Carol has dropped out of college.

With her friend, Kay Hunter, Carol is the brains behind a wildly successful nationwide campaign to raise awareness about the missing and captive men. The pair is selling aluminum and copper cuffs engraved with the name of an individual POW or MIA. Millions of people around the country sport the bracelets as a visible sign of their concern for and support of the men. Sales are exceeding

expectations. Money is rolling in faster than it can be processed. Carol is astonished as 30,000 envelopes and packages filled with order forms, cash, checks, and letters of support pile up in their office daily. The two gals can barely keep up.



Carol Bates, the brainchild behind the wildly successful POW and MIA bracelet campaign, working the phones in the VIVA office, circa 1972. (Photo courtesy of Carol Bates Brown.)

After mail starts to disappear from the post office and neighbors find pilfered bags burning on their front lawns, the duo hires a Brinks driver to deliver mail bags to the bank. They also hire a fulfillment company to ship the coveted bracelets. As sales keep garnering publicity and orders, the bank account grows fatter.

The campaign and its success lead to questions from POW and MIA wives. "We were very skeptical about this idea of there being bracelets," Sybil Stockdale admits later. "I remember we [initially] voted that we were not going to support the thing...and we told them that if they wanted to use anyone's name, they would have to get permission [from the family]." Pat Mearns was also wary. Where was the money going? she wondered. And how about their own organization, the National League of Families? "VIVA was making so much money and the National League had so little," Carole Hanson recalls.



Alice Stratton, looking over a stack of POW/MIA bracelets. (Photo courtesy of the Stratton family. Image originally published in the Palo Alto Times, circa 1971.)

VIVA, or Victory in Vietnam Association (later called Voices in Vital America), is the organization sponsoring Carol and Kay's activities. Carol, a Republican since the age of six, is attracted to the campus group formed in 1967 in Los Angeles. Its members are more wary of the spread of Communism than most of their contemporaries. VIVA activists supported ending the war in Vietnam by winning it.

Concerned about surging violence and unrest on college campuses, Carol and Kay want to do something positive for U.S. soldiers fighting in Vietnam and tap into local Republicans. California is a Republican state with Ronald Reagan as governor. Sam Yorty is mayor of Los Angeles, the largest city in the state, where the circle of Republican influencers is small but powerful. Many of old Hollywood's royalty are part of the GOP, including John Wayne, Charlton Heston, and Jack Benny. Carol and Kay get to know these celebrities and other notables, including local personality and fervent anti-Communist television talk show host Bob Dornan.

The girls attend tapings of his new television show and tag along to political fundraisers and rallies.

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A fighter pilot who survived two ejections, Dornan feels a connection to the POWs and those missing in Vietnam. His fate could have been the same. After reading about Carole Hanson and her missing husband, and realizing that she was a southern Californian, Dornan invited her on his show. The Marines sent a chaperone to monitor what she said.

At the time, Carole was on a lonely quest to publicize inhumane treatment of American captives. She was giving away bumper stickers with the slogan, "Don't let them be forgotten—POWs and MIAs!" She wrote an open letter to 250 newspaper editors across the country. Carole was gaining traction with local media, but it was not enough. Her frustration deepened. Where was any public condemnation of the North Vietnamese, she wondered. Of the hundreds of elected officials she wrote, only twenty responded. She was convinced the North Vietnamese were susceptible to world opinion. Carole believed that, if she could spark outrage at the treatment of America's military men, she could change the tide of public opinion. Dornan's show gave her access to his Los Angeles viewers, but she needed to increase the size and scope of her national audience. Dornan vowed to help.

In late 1969, he introduced students Carol Bates and Kay Hunter to wives Carole Hanson, Pat Mearns, and Patty Hardy. They brainstormed how sympathetic college students could help the women's cause. Would petitions help? Letters to Hanoi's leaders? Knocking on the doors of Capitol Hill? Speeches on campuses? Media interviews?

Carole and Pat were nonplussed. They had been doing all that for more than a year, without garnering much attention.

The two students were moved by the wives, as was VIVA's adult advisor and board chair, wealthy Los Angeles socialite Gloria Coppin. She had been searching for a meaningful issue for VIVA, an opportunity to do more than bake cookies for soldiers.

VIVA was making headlines, standing up to so-called "peaceniks" demonstrating on campuses in southern California. But VIVA activists were outnumbered by the antiwar movement sweeping through college campuses. Enter Gloria with her Rolodex, checkbook, and free time. She was a game changer for VIVA. In many ways, she fit right in with the college co-eds. Photogenic and hard-working, she toiled around the clock, sometimes staying awake for days. She opens the doors to her spacious Brentwood mansion for Carol and Kay to use as office space, funding and mentoring them.

The idea for a bracelet campaign sparked in Gloria's kitchen. Bob wears a bracelet, a simple band of aluminum airplane scrap given to him in 1966 by a Montagnard tribesman in the Vietnam central highlands. The Montagnards were an Indigenous minority who fought alongside American Special Forces, raising the ire of the Communist People's Army. Around a campfire in the Kontum region, an elderly village chieftain placed the bracelet on Dornan's wrist and told him, "Please, sir, do not stop wearing this brace- let, and thinking of my suffering people, the Montagnard, who are being murdered and killed by the Communists. Do not take it off, till my people are free." Dornan vowed he would not.

It's a vow he still honors. He told Gloria: "When I work so hard and go without sleep, and think I can't go that extra mile, I jump in the shower and I'll often hit my arm against the shower, and I'll feel that bracelet and it will remind me that someone is suffering more than I and it'll keep me going." Impressed, Gloria shared the anecdote with Carol and Kay. They were immediately inspired. Why not go to Vietnam and find more bracelets? They could invite citizens to wear them, *to remember the POWs*.

But who will fund the coeds' trip? "My parents were absolutely horrified," Carol recalls.

Carol and Kay strategized. What if they made their own bracelets, *like* Bob's? Gloria remembers their pitch: "These two girls called me with the obvious answer, which I hadn't thought of at the time. Why can't we do this same type of thing for the prisoners of war?" Gloria embraced the idea wholeheartedly.

They wanted Bob's help. They write their idea for a nationwide campaign to support the POWs. At the taping of his Saturday night television show they shouted it from the audience. Bob was excited: "What did you just say? That's a fantastic idea."

Along with Bob, and Gloria, the girls called a metal shop in Santa Monica that engraved horse harnesses. Dornan suggested flattening the aluminum for easier engraving. On the phone with manufacturer Jack Zeider, they decided to include the missing or captive man's name, rank, and loss date. Zeider agreed to make prototypes in both nickel-plated aluminum and copper, a popular remedy for arthritis.

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One question loomed: What should they charge? Carol suggested \$2.50, about the cost of a student movie ticket. They searched for startup funding. Ross Perot rebuffed them, as did Howard Hughes. Eventually, Gloria's husband, the owner of an aircraft parts manufacturer, donated enough metal for the first 1,200 bracelets. At a Salute to the Armed Forces dinner dance in Los Angeles on May 7, 1970, where Governor Ronald Reagan was the keynote speaker, Bob Hope and actress Martha Raye were announced as co-chairs of the bracelet campaign. Perot's wife received the first one.

Sales explode. Demand increased from 500 a week to 1,000 and, shortly thereafter, to an astounding 40,000 per week. Zeider hired 120 college kids and some Vietnam veterans to work around the clock creating bracelets, charging VIVA fifty cents for each one. With a 500 percent mark-up, cash started rolling in to VIVA's headquarters.

Nearly five million are sold. John Wayne wears a bracelet. Sonny and Cher wear bracelets. Princess Grace of Monaco and her daughters wear them. Johnny Cash, Fred Astaire, Billy Graham, Gov. George Wallace, and President Nixon wear them too, vowing to keep the bands on their wrists until all the men return home.

The plight of men like Steve Hanson and Art Mearns is now *personal* for millions of Americans. The campaign rallies the nation behind the men like no other tactic.

Cora Weiss is alarmed by the campaign's popularity. In a speech to the like-minded Quaker military watchdog organization National Action/Research on the Military Industrial Complex, or NARMIC,

Weiss does not hold back. Her venom toward the POWs and their families is palpable. "The bracelet campaign is an insidious campaign and I think should be attacked head on," claims Weiss. "I think it's insidious for two reasons: one is that everybody who buys it pays \$2.50 to \$3.00 and it's a tax-exempt organization that collects the money and normally it's very hard to get an exemption and they not only don't pay taxes on all the income they get, but what do they do with the money?" She doesn't stop there.

"In the beginning they used to claim that they gave [the money] to the families. But what are they doing handing out money to families of career men who are earning tax free enormous amounts of money each year, and have practically all their special needs taken care of at no expense?"

Weiss explains that families receive a bonus from the government every year that their POW is a prisoner. That, she says, comes on top of "not bad" pay.

She is adamant that the campaign is unsubstantial: "The second thing they're doing is maintaining the myth that if you wear a bracelet you're doing somebody good. Helping to bring the guy home, helping to make him or his family feel better. All of that's a lot of nonsense."

YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN (1972)

The board of directors of the National League has a lot to cover. Bob Brudno and Carole Hanson glance at the agenda. Bob has taken the train from Philadelphia, and Carole has flown in from Los Angeles for a quick turnaround. Arms folded, they review an image laid out on the table of a

silhouetted POW. The prisoner's head is bowed, as if dejected. A guard tower rises behind him. Above his head is the acronym "POW*MIA." Below is a strand of barbed wire with the phrase, "You are not forgotten." The flag is the brainchild of MIA wife Mary Helen Hoff, who recognizes the need for a symbol for the POW and MIA issue. Appealing to their patriotism, she contacts the largest manufacturer of flags in the world, Annin Flag-makers. They had just designed flags for the newest country members of the United Nations. Sympathetic to the cause, Annin agrees to design a flag for the National League.

The flag's commercial graphic artist Newt Heisley, explains, "I used to fly within range of the Japanese, and I wondered how I would hold up if I ever got captured. When I did the design, I thought how easy it would be to forget these guys." Heisley is a World War II veteran, and a pilot who flew missions in the Pacific.

Hired by Annin, he has poured his heart into the design, using his twenty-four-year-old son as the model.

Heisley pitches his design to the board. Sketched in black and white, Heisley intends to add color—to make it less somber, yet still able to inspire empathy. Bob and Carole review the design, assuming it will be one more useful tool in the National League's larger campaign, along with bumper stickers, the VIVA-produced bracelets, billboards, commemorative stamps, and Christmas cards. The board of directors approves. "We were playing on victimhood, trying to win hearts and minds," Bob admits.

A banner emblazoned with the design is first presented to Secretary Laird. As Annin begins

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manufacturing the flag, the image becomes ubiquitous. It is *the* symbol for the League—and for the nation—of American commitment to bring home POWs and resolve the fate of all the wartime missing. Other than Old Glory, it is the only flag that flies over every federal building and post office, as well as the White House and the Capitol. The image is on every- thing: T-shirts, belt buckles, coffee mugs, hats, ornaments, bumper stickers, blankets—even face masks.

Unlike the bracelet campaign that reaps a fortune for VIVA, the POW-MIA flag generates no income for the National League of Families. Bob remembers, "I recall no discussion about getting it trademarked since all we wanted was to see the war end." And Carole admits, "We didn't even think about trademarking it. We were novices."

Once the war was over, it was assumed the POWs would come home and the missing would be accounted for, making the flag obsolete. Today, you cannot drive five miles in the United States without seeing one.



Each day, the ubiquitous POW and MIA flag flies above every federal building in the United States, including the White House, the Capitol, and each U.S. post office. It is an enduring symbol and a reminder to "leave no man behind." (Photo courtesy of Leah Spiro.)



Contributions

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Thank You!



taps



Please submit taps notices to:
Cheryl Cerbone, 23 Cove View Drive, South Yarmouth, MA 02664



MCNISH, Tom, of San Antonio, TX passed away July 19, 2024. A 1964 graduate of the USAF Academy, Tom flew 45 combat missions in the F-105 during the Vietnam War. Shot down in 1966, he was captured and spent 2,373 days as a POW in North Vietnam. While a prisoner, he decided to study medicine when he returned home. He spent the remainder of his military career as one of a select few Pilot Physicians (practicing flight surgeons and combat ready fighter pilots) in the Air Force, flying T-38s and A-10s. After retirement, Tom remained active in the veteran community. He

spent many years as Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Former Prisoners of War, to advise and make recommendations to Congress and the Veterans Administration for compensation, health care, rehabilitation, and memorial benefits. Those who knew him will remember his wit, patience, diplomacy, judgment, character and his careful analysis and synthesis of any problem. His dedication to duty was legendary and he never failed to make any situation he was involved in better after his contribution. He was a wise and gentle man and a consensus builder.

Tom was a wonderful combination of warrior and diplomat who loved his country unconditionally. Tom loved his family more than anything and is survived by his cherished wife Yona, their three children, nine grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.



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Thank you to Mary Hoffmann Rumer, daughter of Edward & Theresa Hoffmann for this great picture. It hung in their home for 53 years.



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Christmas 1944



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