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Joe Dolejsi of Bismarck: Germany, World War II

Joe Dolejsi

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PRISONER OF WAR

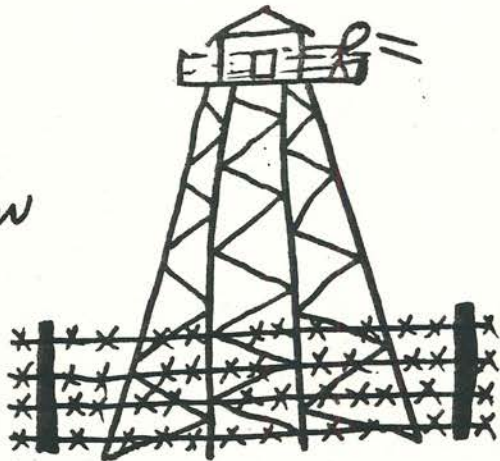
A TRUE STORY

BY: JOE DOLEJSI

BISMARCK, N. DAK.

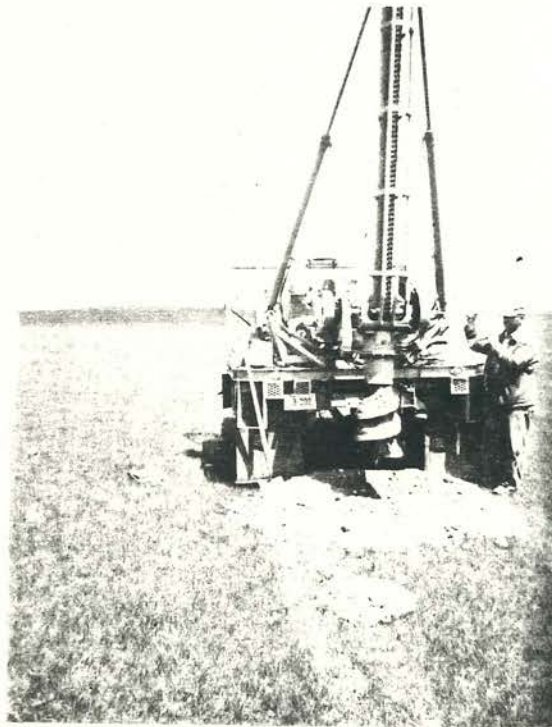
AMERICAN PRISONER IN EUROPEAN
THEATER OF WAR
GERMAN PRISON CAMPS
WORLD WAR II 1941-1945

BOOKLET PREPARED IN
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1917



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EX-PRISONER OF WAR QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name: *Joe Daley*

Current Address: *411- Shady Lane -
Bismarck N.D. 58501*

Address at time you went into service:

Maple N.Dak.

Birthday:

March 21 - 1921

2. Family: (spouse and children)

*Bea Daley. No children of my own.
Have four step children*

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

Farm work.

4. Dates and place of entry into service?

July - 7 1941 Fort Snelling

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

I was in the Infantry - as a Rifleman

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

95th Division - France. It was evening when we were taken prisoners, we were taken to a Deserted Town. That about all I recall. We were taken to Frankfurt Germany first and later to a Prison Camp. The name of the Town I do not recall.

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

We were in The Front Lines

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?

The whole Battalion was Captured. About 800 Altogether we did not know where we were going we just walked and walked. The military guarded us.

9. Were you able to hide or escape? If so, tell what happened. Where did you hide? Food? Clothing? Water? Weather? Sleep? etc.

No we did not try to escape. It would be impossible for barbed wire & guards.

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?

All they asked us - was Name - Rank - Serial Number

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

Yes - we had our Rifles. it did not make any difference in our treatment

13. Were you at any time considered a civilian or an enemy spy or a wrong nationality? If so, how did this effect your treatment?

No - we were treated as - Soldiers in Captivity

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

We were wearing our uniforms. We wore them until we got back to our own outfit, and were issued new clothes.

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

The first food we got was - heavy ^{dark} bread. Tasted like Sawdust! The food got better when we got to the Prison Camp.

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

No not any difference

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

We were treated Civilized. They never tried to bully us.

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

We were with others always. It was our own bunch.

19. At time of your capture, did you have higher or lower ranking persons with you? Did the difference in rank effect you?

Yes we had Sergeant - Corporal -

No the difference in Rank - did not effect us.

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?

My Family did not know I was taken Prisoner, until the War Dept. Notified them, I had written to a friend when he got my letter. He wrote to the War Dept in Washington DC. I told them my folks never received my letters that I wrote them.

21. When did you receive your first letter, package or information that your family knew of your capture?

We never got any mail.

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?

They took us to a Prison Camp. We were there until Thanksgiving. Then we were sent on work detail. Where we cleared away brush & trees. The interrogation was done when we first got there.

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

We were sure our side was going to win.

24. Did you think you would eventually get home?

We never gave up hope.

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

No chance to observe - They were very strict about that.

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

No we had no injuries or sickness. Outside of upset stomachs.

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

The food was better. We had meat & potatoes. One of our men did the cooking. The living area was small crowded - with bunk beds, so close together you could hardly walk thru. About 20 men to a room.

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?

The Guards never said anything. The French Prisoners were allowed to talk about with out Guards They kept us informed.

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

We had to walk to work. the food was the same - we suffered no punishment

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

No —

31. Could you describe your roll call or counting procedure in camp?

Guards Came in at 10 o'clock to see if everyone was there.

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

The Guards were in the 30's & 40's years old.
Their weapons were Rifles & Pistols
There were three Guards. Always.

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

The fences were all around - No Guard towers
~~Red Cross~~ We had wood stoves for heat
our Recreation was work

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

The men were all good - nice men - we all got
along fine

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

Some had flu. The stomach flu. The Guards took them to the doctor. And brought the Red Cross Packages back with them.

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

None disappeared we were all accounted for.

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?

Same as before. Potatoes & Sawdust bread. Meat. The Cook was one of our own men. We received no fruit. Only what the Red Cross sent along with Powdered Milk. Cheese & also - eleven pounds to a Package. we would trade with the Guards for bread.

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

Clear away brush & trees. and the work they had us to do.

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?

What kept us going was a little of each determination that we would get home again. our faith in God our health. Faith in the United States Forces, also aid from other prisoners. such as the French.

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

No - everyone was O.K.

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?

our only source of information came from the French people.

42. Did you have any serious illness in camp?

No - illness at all of any sort.

43. Did you have any riots in camp?

No - there were never any riots in camp.

44. How did you first know that war was coming to an end?

45. What were some of the tricks you played on guards?

Through the French, and we were told that the Russians were coming. we were told to March toward the American lines

Don't recall any tricks being played on anyone

46. What about escape procedures and methods used by you or others that you have knowledge of or direct information about?

no escape attempts of any kind or plans to escape

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

No - bombing

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

We went by train from one Prison Camp to another which took us at least two days

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

Never at any time.

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

No - we never heard or saw any such things

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

They celebrated Christmas. And we didn't have to work

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?

The food was the same - as before - we used our Mess Kits to eat with. The coffee was burned barley.

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

*The French had a Camp - but there were
no Guards. Period there*

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?

*No - We took one day at a time - No one seemed
to have any Problem -*

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.

They all behaved good - as far as I know

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

We knew from the first, our side would win.

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?

They treated us good - all the time, we were never treated badly -

58. Could you describe how your POW status ended?

The Russians came - so the Germans told us to go back to our own lines.

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

They just picked up & left.

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

P
Y

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

*We got back to our side. got (declassified)
got new clothes. went to camp - had physicians
and we made for a Boat back 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.?

There were alot of People waiting to get across on the Ferry. we had to go back away until the Russians came. They gave us permission to cross - Rastock was the place we were liberated from.

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?

We moved by foot altogether in a group French & all. till we got back to Saar. A C-47 Plane came & took us to Belgium
The War was over.

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 a Physical. Clothes. food - also Money.
No interrogation

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?

*We landed in New York. Got off the ship. and on to a
Army to Camp. had a steak Supper. we were there
two days. and were then sent home by train.
They gave us more money.*

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

Nothing reminds me of Prison life.

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

No Complaints.

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.

No such Copies

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.

My folks never received my letters

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.

We had to leave everything there. all we were allowed to take was our clothes.

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.

This should have been done years ago. When my memory was fresher.

Joe

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