The Evacuation of Stalag Luft III
Sagan Germany

by: Joseph E. Carter POW no.2945
It had begun to snow early, in the winter of nineteen forty-four, and forty-five. The ground was already frozen, and white, the snow in our camp (center compound) of Stalag Luft III, Germany, was about five inches deep.

As a result of the sweeping Russian advances during their winter offensive of nineteen forty-five, which had begun at the gates of Warsaw, Poland on January twelfth, nineteen forty-five, and had brought the Russians to the Silesian Borders. The POW's, (Prisoners of War) in the area of Sagan, Germany realized that release by Russian hands, or transfer deeper into Germany by the Germans was imminent.

After sketchy preparations and much cook stove speculation the consensus of opinion was to be that the Germans couldn't possibly spare enough men, needed to move 10,000 prisoners of war, the number in the Sagan area, and includes the center compound. But on Saturday, January twenty-seventh, nineteen forty-five the Russians had advanced to within forty-six miles of Sagan. There was increasing German air activity, and artillery fire could be heard in the distance. It was at this point the prisoners were quite sure no moves would be made, unless it was to the East, and in Russian hands, and this in only a matter of a few days. These dreams, however, were shattered on that very night. At eight O'clock in the evening of the twenty-seventh, we were ordered to fall out for appelle (German roll call and count). Not having been given any notice, or time to dress, some of the men had to fall out bare-foot, and others only partly dressed. We were held in ranks about an hour and at this time orders were issued to be prepared to evacuate the camp in ninety minutes.
After hasty preparations amid much confusion the prisoners were ordered to get what possessions they could carry in their home made packs and fall out at ten thirty. There was about thirty minutes of impatient milling about and then the departure time was changed to twelve O'Clock, mid-night. At this time the prisoners were told to return to the barracks, until further orders. Upon their return into the barracks, the interiors of which they had not hoped ever to see again, the prisoners began to do various things; some went to bed, to rest for what they knew would be difficult times, others began to systematically destroy all their personal things, such as clothes that could not be taken on the march that was about to begin, and to some the next most important item—Cigarettes, that would have to be left behind. Several began preparing and eating tasty foods, that had been saved for months, this was called "BASHING" (eating food you have wanted for a period of time, but couldn't afford). At this time several of the prisoners became ill, from over eating. The bulk of the others tried to make alterations on their crudely, and hastily constructed packs. These packs however crude they may have been, were to become all important. It was the only way we could carry more than what could be carried in our hands.

About mid-night, the German guards came into camp, there was another postponement. The guards took advantage of this, and began salvaging cigarettes, and soap discarded as excess by the prisoners, soon they were so loaded it proved awkward for them to walk.

At four O'Clock, on the morning of January twenty-eight, nineteen-forty-five, the orders to fall out were once again given, by this time the prisoners are becoming fatigued, irritated, and nervous, but being as patient as possible, were as ready as could be expected under the circumstances. By this time the barracks looked as if it had been hit by a cyclone. At four-thirty, after many false starts the procession finally filed
through the gates to enter a venture that led to an unknown destination.

In the camp vorloger (area outside and in front of the center compound, where German troops and food was kept) each man was issued one Red Cross Parcel, food to be eaten while on the march we were about to begin. At this time there occurred a most nearly tragic waste of food, the men had already packed their packs with food and rations saved from parcels issued to them over a period of time in the past. Since the column moved on so quickly, the men had to try to decide what they wanted and exchange from their packs the things (food) they didn't want while moving on. We were forced to frantically open the parcels just issued and get what was considered most valuable as of concentrated foods, such as "D"ration chocolate bars, "K"ration crackers, coffee, sugar, jam, cheese, liver pati, corned beef and cocoa. Can after can of powdered milk, spam, army meat and vegetable rations and margarine along with countless boxes of prunes and raisins could be seen strewn along the road. The German soldiers once again had a field day of scavenging, and probably ate better in the following days than they had in the past five years. This was for most prisoners the first view of the effects of actual war where the captor has less than the captive.

The prisoners were marched out onto the road leading from the camp area and here, witnessed the very pleasing sight (to most of us) a burning barracks in the North compound. Here we were left to stand in the cold, under full pack until six thirty that morning, it was during this time the emotional strain took effect on some of the men in the form of a mild diarrhea. It was here too, that we were told we are forbidden to break ranks for any reason whatever, except during rest periods, and anyone doing so would be at the risk of being shot. The guards had been given strict orders to shoot anyone that disobeyed these orders.
When they finally moved off most of the men were already suffering soldier pains from their packs and still hadn't gone more than one kilometer (3,281 ft). The march schedule was to be twenty minutes marching and five minutes rest period, and fifteen minutes rest after each hour. It devolved into thirty minutes of walking and five minutes rest. The fifteen minute period was given only twice a day and that was to allow for fast eating.

The weather was very cold, and the icy roads hampered all those except the more foresighted, who had made sleds. The men stood the going fine for the first few hours, but towards noon the chatter lessened, and a few of the men were unable to continue due to pulled or strained muscles and had to ride wagons following the caravan, this concession was grudgingly granted by the Germans only after much arguing.

One of the most impressive sights along the road was the refugees, old men, women, and children streaming to the West to avoid the Russian Army. Their plight was even worse than the prisoners, for they were colder, undoubtedly hungrier, and had no apparent destination. They just walked and walked, trying to stay ahead, and out of the way of the marching procession of prisoners, and of course away from the oncoming Russian troops.

At three O'clock in the afternoon, after nine hours of marching the formation arrived at the village of HALBEAU, a distance of seventeen kilometers from Sagan. Here the prisoners were given comparatively free run of the village. It was at this time, the Polish and French speaking prisoners found an opportunity to exercise their fluency of the language, as the village consisted mainly of conscripted Polish and French workers. The men took advantage of this and used their cigarettes and soap to trade for bread, (white) hot water, knives, sleds, and cigarette lighters. It was very fortunate that the men could get water from the workers, as the Germans had made no attempt to get any water for us, and for the most part for themselves, this was the first water they had, had on the march.
For the prisoners who traded for the bread, it was the first white bread they had had in over a year and a half. The snow began to fall more heavily towards evening and the wind had become very bitter. After standing in this weather for one and one half hours, the prisoners were becoming very miserable and still nothing definite had been said, relating to quarters for the night. At approximately five thirty the groups were counted and marched through the village to be quartered in a large Cathedral. This Cathedral seemed rather large but by no means provided even standing room for eighteen hundred men. After another hour about fifteen-hundred had crowded onto the main floor and into the belfries, a few were fortunate enough to find space to sit in a cramped position while others were forced to spend the night standing. Three hundred men were left without shelter, until the Priest was persuaded to open a small burial chapel. A very small building with a floor space that measured roughly thirty feet by thirty feet. In this space we managed to pack one hundred fifty men. The remaining men were eventually quartered in old school buildings, and seemed to have been the more fortunate of us all.

The doors and windows of the chapel were closed, and locked, in order that no one would be able to escape. No one was allowed to smoke (in order to preserve oxygen) or to go outside for any reason, after dark, by morning the air in the building had become so foul, and for the lack of oxygen in the air, matches refused to burn. Due to the crowded conditions, confusion, and darkness, many articles were lost and left behind in packing for the days march.

This being the first time outside the confines of prison camp for many of the men in over a years time, the experience we were now facing, seemed rather bitter, especially, after their many happy visions as to how they would feel and travel their first time outside the camp.

The men, which they reached at three thirty in the afternoon. By this time the men were in a condition to welcome a nights rest, and the promised hot food. After waiting in the cold for over an hour and a half for the Germans to decide what they wanted to do the lines moved off to some stock barns.
It was naturally disappointing as all their dreams of leaving had been based on the fact that they would be on the road to freedom, and home not being transferred by their captor.

At eight forty-five on the morning of January twenty-ninth, nineteen forty-five, the men were moved off, still in a southwesterly direction. The snow was still falling and the wind had become more intense.

The days schedule, according to the Germans was to walk eleven kilometers to FRIEWALDAU, and there a hot meal awaited the prisoners. The orders were to keep the formation in ranks of five and in an orderly fashion. Due to the large sled that had been added to the previous days number this soon became an impossibility and the ranks were strung out in a fashion that resembled nothing less than a disorganized rabble. A great majority of the men had braced for a large ready built sled in order to carry their packs. This with the promised short march and the promised hot food bolstered the morale more than a little.

In obedience to a direct order from General Vannaman (an American, and our Commander in Chief) there had been little or no attempt at escape. As a result of this or plain negligence on the part of the guards the discipline had become quite lax, and in some cases the guards and the prisoners were fraternizing to quite an extent. Consequently one of the guards, either lost his pistol, or had it stolen. In the fashion that the prisoners were more or less milling down the road, anything could have happened. To expedite its recovery the request was made for the man that had it, if it was stolen, to please fire the weapon three times in the air. The pistol was never found.

Having completed the eleven kilometers to FRIEWALDAU shortly after noon the formation, though ready to halt had to march seven more kilometers to the village of DOBERS, which they reached at three thirty in the afternoon. By this time the men were in a condition to welcome a nights rest, and the promised hot food. After waiting in the cold for over an hour and a half for the Germans to decide what they wanted to do the lines moved off to some stock barns.
Here they were left to spend the night in the hay-mows. Nothing more was said of the meal (hot food that was promised) or for that matter brew (hot water) facilities were not yet arranged. This left the men to make meals from their fast diminishing supplies of Red Cross Food. And this had to be done hurriedly in the cold and similarkness.

There was over three hundred men put in the section of barn that was in size about eighty feet long and sixty feet wide. This at its worst was palatial in comparison to the Chapel, and Cathedral. The only drawback was the fact that many valuable possessions were lost in the deep hay, and the lacking of latrine facilities caused a difficult situation with the men. The prisoners remained here in the barn all night and the following day and night. The weather was increasingly growing worse. But, to make this bearable the men could at least get hot water for brews. There was a house nearby, and the people living here was good enough to let us use a large cast-iron wash pot to heat the water we used. The hot food promise had turned out to be somewhat unlikely as the Germans promised for the final victory for its people.

At five forty five on the morning of Wednesday, January thirty-first, the men were awakened and given thirty minutes in which to pack and be in formation for the days journey. They were forced to pack in the dark, this in itself is quite a task, but as if this was not enough, the cold was so intense that to walk for five minutes with your hands exposed, they would become numb. Those who had gloves were very fortunate.

After having appelle, (roll call) and a hurried cup of coffee, or cocoa, the group was getting underway at seven thirty. The days destination was to be the City of MŒBEAU a distance of twenty nine kilometers from DOBERS. It looked as if this day would prove quite trying for everyone. The men with large sleds fashioned harness and organized groups of three to five men to pull in shifts, in order to provide rest periods for everyone through out the day.
The weather seemed a little milder, and the snow was breaking up on the road, making our footing very treacherous, and the sleds harder to pull. The Germans had stated that on arrival at their destination, they would definitely provide hot food. Most of the men judged this by their past performances and would readily except any food, hot or cold. As everyone was becoming dangerously low on food of any kind by this time.

The refugees had increased in numbers, and it seemed that each village the column passed through had been, or was preparing to evacuate within the next few days. Still the Germans said the prisoners were not being moved due to pressure applied by the Russians.

At five O'clock in the evening the columns reached MOSKAU. Needless to say this had been as miserable and gruelling a day for the majority as any in their entire experience. A great number were on their last leg, but even then only three men of the eighteen hundred, that made up our strung out group, were unable to finish the day under their locomotion. This was indeed remarkable, when one considered the fact that twenty-eight of the German guards had either deserted, or been forced to discontinue the march, due to the hardships. This number would surely have been tripled if they had been carrying any packs, particularly had they been as ill fitting as those the prisoners were carrying.

After waiting about for an hour or longer, during which time much trading with foreign workers was carried on, the men were finally moved off to quarters for the night. Some were taken to a pottery factory, while the remainder went to a brick factory. Those in the pottery factory had hot and cold running water, plenty of pots to be used for cooking utensils and a place to cook over the flues of the drying furnaces. It was here the prisoners had to stand guard over themselves, to keep the German people from going into their quarters and plundering and also, to discourage would be escapees. It was here too, the Germans held roll calls to determine the missing number, and disregarded counting the prisoners. Only five men. This they were told must last seven days, seven days being how long the train ride would be. We hoped.
Those that had been quartered in the brick factory had cold water only, but could use the flues to heat water or cook oatmeal, and soup mixtures, that had been unusable articals until now. This released some tension on the food supplies. The building was very warm which allowed the men to dry their wet clothing, and shoes, also to be able to sleep worm for the first time sense we had started the evacuation of Stalag. There was also a cold shower of which the men availed themselves, after having shaved. All this seemed like heaven, particularly when the Germans said that here they would catch a train for NURNBERG on the following day.

The Germans issued food to us for the first time since the march started, when they gave each man one-fourth of a loaf of bread (black). The hot food was still only a promise, although they now call it hot barley.

Wednesday night and all day Thursday, was spent here, during which time the men rested themselves for the coming journey. We knew that by way of all the promises the Germans had made to us that, there would not be any train for us to board.

Thursday, the announcement was made, that the General (General Vannaman) had talked to authorities (Brass) in BERLIN by telephone and that consequently the men had ceased to be wandering children and that NURNBERG was definately their final destination, tomorrow they would board a train, be given hot food, and they were issued one third loaf of black bread per man again.

By this time the weather had taken a decided change, as it had gotten wormer and rained, the snow had now nearly all disappeared. After waiting all day on Friday, the men were told they would not catch the train here, another promise gone bad, but must move on to SPREMBERG a distance of eighteen kilometers from MUSKAN. At approximately five O'clock in the evening of the fifth day from SAGAN, THE men were finally given the promised hot meal, which was less than a cup full of cooked barley per man, this was a pitiable portion, but none the less welcome. Later in the evening one Red Cross parcel was issued for every five men. This they were told must be made to last seven days, seven days being how long the train ride would be. We hoped.
Now that they had, had the pitiful small hot meal, that had been promised so long, the men wondered, would the train ride, be as elusive, and disappointing? From all inclinations it was going to be dangled ahead of them in a very exasperating fashion, just as the promised hot meal had been done before.

Due to the thaw, sleds could not be pulled, therefore the men had to start carrying their packs on their backs. This was not a happy thought, everyone was pretty tired, and disgusted by now.

Some food larders had been bolstered by trading with the German guards, some of the men have tossed disinsection to the wind, and are out bidding each other for bread (black), onions, potatoes, and other articles. The only ones that profited by this behavior is the German guards, whom are now getting the exorbitant price of one can of soluble coffee, or one "D"ration chocolate bar for a loaf of bread weighing one Kg; whereas during the early part of the journey the price for the same amount of bread had been as low as three cigarettes.

On Saturday, February third the men were wakened at six O'clock in the morning, and were under way by seven thirty. They were taken through the center of MUSKAU and found it a very pretty and clean city.

The men were holding very good formation, now the sleds are gone, and seemed in very high spirits after their well-earned rest and the change in plans, that called for a walk of only twelve kilometers. The day promised to be considerably warmer and a greater percentage of the men had added their overcoats to their packs.

We walked three kilometers through the city and hit the open road at about nine O'clock that morning, the pace though supposedly being set by the sick men, was very lively for those on the end of the line who had sore feet. Some of the prisoners feet had frozen from being, more or less exposed to the snow, and not being able to take care of them, even in a partially correct manner, and others from not having correct foot wear.
Things went very well until one pm, the day was very eventful. At this time Air Raid sirens sounded in the area of the columns and shortly after, bombs could be heard exploding in the direction of DRESDEN. They could be heard in a nearly continuous rumble for a period of thirty-five to forty minutes. This seemed to greatly bolster the morale of the men.

After having marched a total of twenty-one kilometers since morning the column arrived in GRAUSTEIN at three o'clock in the afternoon and found that SPREMBERG was still eight kilometers walk. Here they were told they would spend the night, and proceed to SPREMBERG on the morrow. They were also told they would be given a minimum of one third loaf of bread, one half pound of margarine and two Red Cross food parcels for every three men, when they boarded the train. This being a German promise didn't serve to raise the morale too much.

The prisoners were divided into groups of one-hundred fifty men and each group was quartered in small barns on private farms. Here they managed to get the tenants to furnish them hot water for brews and by giving them a goodly portion of cigarettes, and soluble coffee, they managed to spend a rather comfortable night here, and were given one fifth loaf of bread per man.

The prisoners were roused at 5:15 on the morning of Sunday February 4, and were on the road to SPREMBERG eight kilometer march. By 7:00. On arrival here they were told they would get another hot meal and catch the train. By noon they were at SPREMBERG after a comparatively short and easy hike. Here they were quartered in garages adjoining an Armoured Tank School. At 2:00 pm in the afternoon they were given their hot meal of about one cup of lukewarm, watery, foul-tasting soup made from grain. It was here some men were stealing bread, blood-sausage, and dog-biscuits from a German wagon. The driver, upon discovering his loss seemed to consider it as one huge joke, and proceeded to give the remaining food to those gathered about the wagon.
This of course lent an air of suspicion to the situation and the men were afraid they had stolen their own food, because there would have been no end of fuming and screaming on the part of the guard, had it been his own food as he had claimed. This was never solved.

To-day a very serious blow came to the spirits of the prisoners, when they learned that in compliance with German orders General Vannaman, Col. Spivey, Col. Kennedy, Capt. George, and Lt. Brown were leaving them. It was rumored, but never confirmed they were going as a representative staff to BERLIN.

Colonel Smith had now become Senior American officer and as he was untried the men were lacking faith in his capabilities. It was at this place that one of the reputedly brutal, and cural Storm-troopers, traded his insignia of Rank and Division to a Jewish boy for a few cigarettes. At 4:00 pm, the prisoners once again slung their packs in order to move a distance of 3 kilometers to the Marshaling yards, where they were to catch the train, that had been promised.

They reached the yards at 4:30, and it was suspected they were to be transported by the famous French 40 & 8 boxcars (40 Men or 8 Horses) these as known by most of them, was the worst type of transportation, but was welcome after having walked a total distance of 95 kilometers (311,695 feet, or the equivalent of 59 American miles) in the past seven days.

The men were told they would be in route three days and three nights and they would be given bread, margarine, and Red Cross food parcels the following day. Things were looking better, but were soon to take a decided turn for the worse as they learned when they boarded the train, that instead of the customary 40 men there was to be 50 men to each car. The cars were boarded, or more aptly, packed by 5:00 in the evening.

Putting 50 men into the space provided for 40 may not seem to be overcrowding conditions too badly, but when one realizes that the floor space of these cars when equally distributed among 50 people, allows each one to occupy a space that measures 4 square feet in area. This is not taking into consideration the space occupied by packs. The men arranged themselves by seating 13 along either side, 3 on either end, and 18 men sitting back to back in the center of the car.
Shortly after getting on the train they were issued one fourth loaf of black bread, and one fourth can of blood sausage per man. This was to last us, as far as we knew, till the end of the war. We knew it couldn't last much longer.

The train got under way at eight fifteen in the evening, and the men found their conditions more crowded with the addition of one German guard. It goes without saying, that no one got any decent rest, and their night was made even more worse when the guard closed all windows and doors and even refused to allow the men off the cars to perform the necessary duties and functions of nature.

The following day they found they were only twenty kilometers further along the road and had four hundred more to travel before reaching NURNBERG.

During the first day the men contrived to make more room by slinging four foot by twelve foot blankets from the roof in hammock style, this allowed some of the men to get off the floor and give some relief.

The train continued traveling at its small pace all through the first day and into the evening, by mid-evening they had traveled a distance of less than seventy kilometers, this in less than twenty-four hours.

The Germans had made no attempt to furnish the men with any drinking water, but promised there would be some hot brew upon arrival at CHEMNITZ later that night, they could however, draw water from the enging boilers, but the Dr. had advised against drinking it, as it contained soap and soda, besides being dirty. This checked the men for a short time, but eventually some became so thirsty that they had to drink it and except the ill effects.

During the second night the train increased its pace a trifle and they were due in CHEMNITZ at ten in the evening, where the hot brew awaited them. The train arrived at CHEMNITZ at ten thirty, and simultaneously with its arrival the air raid siren sounded. It was at this time the Germans showed no desire to be found sitting in the marshaling yards of so large a rail center, and the train got under way immediately for open country and began making unbelievably good speed. After the progress of the first night and day, the following morning found them at the city of ZWICKAU.
Many of the men, by this time, were suffering the effects of cold diet, boiler water, and conditions of filth, and had developed cases of dysentery. These men, though miserable enough in this condition, were made more so when the guards refused to allow anyone off the train, to take care of natural functions of the body.

After spending a short time here the Germans gave them some lukewarm ersatz coffee that was next to being undrinkable, but it was warm, and the weather was rather cool.

It was here the men were told they would be at their destination the following day and that NUREMBERG was not their destination, but they were going to MOOSBURG, home of Stalag VII A, an enlisted men's camp and notoriously the worst prison camp in Germany.

Their spirits were however raised some when they were given one food parcel for every four men, and were told they would receive the same issue again upon completion of their journey. They also received a boost to their morale, when they reached the city of PLATNEN, and saw the results of a bombing on the railway yards, and station.

By this time more men had been stricken by dysentery and there was about ten men ill to each car. The third night, was probably as miserable a night as could have been imagined by the most diabolical of individuals, as each car had been stricken with sudden cases of stomach disorders, and had one been able to observe, he would have seen men reaching at the door of every car on the entire train. There was an average of ten such cases on every car. This sickness was attributed to the blood sausage, constant cold diet, boiler water, and filthy conditions.

It was during this night one of the guards refused to allow anyone to open the door, even in cases of illness, and as a result one of the men, being unable to control it any longer sprayed the guard with vomit.

In just ten days, these men had been reduced from the finest of physical specimens to a state where they were living nearly like sick, and uncouth animals, still they maintained their spirits. This was again aided by the U.S. Air Forces as during the morning
Air raid planes could be heard flying overhead, this was a sight the prisoners seldom witnessed, but always welcomed.

On Wednesday, February seventh, the train reached Münch on Wednesday morning, and the men were given the other portions of food parcels. Here too, it was possible to buy comparatively clean and hot spring water from foreign workers, at the price of one cigarette per cup.

At approximately two o'clock in the afternoon, the train left Münch for Moosberg, a distance of forty-eight kilometers, on what the men fervently hoped to be the last leg of their journey and they would soon have decent quarters and warm food, and too reaching the end of the filth, that had been becoming worse as they moved about, from place to place. Their dreams were of better and cleaner food and quarters were soon dissipated when they saw their new camp. Their barracks was nothing but sheds in which they were forced to accommodate over three hundred men in a space that half that number would have found crowded. Two of these barracks had wooden floors while the others had only mud floors and straw on which to sleep.

There were two water faucets to supply the needs of nearly two thousand men, and in order to get a drink or wash the face and hands a minimum of one and one half hours had to be spent waiting in line. This change from the conditions of the train was however welcome.

The daily rations here consisted of one cup of hot (thin) soup at noon, one twelfth Red Cross parcel, one sixth loaf of bread, one cup of ersatz tea, and about one spoonful of sugar per man. The mere fact that they were given anything, astounded most of the men and the quantities seemed almost fabulous.
Life was made even more bearable when they learned that the "Snake Pit" as they had so aptly termed their new camp, was only temporary, and that within three days everyone would be sent through a search, have their belongings de-loused, be given a shower, and moved on to a new camp.

This was too good to believe, but was surprised when the Germans furnished a boiler for hot water and allowed an orchestra of British prisoners to come into camp and entertain them.

The prisoners were moved from the "Snake Pit" in groups of thirty, taken to be searched, where all German property, such as german made clothes, german cigaretts, and in some cases, german knives, and tools, were taken, and other brands of cigaretts in excess of three hundred, and contraband articals were confiscated. It was here that Red Cross forms notifying Geneva of their where-abouts were filled out.

After completing their showers and getting their clothes from the delouser they were moved off to their new camp.

If their spirits had been raised by events of the past few hours they certainly took a great tumble, when they saw their new barracks. The barracks were building of stuco, divided into two ends that measured sixty feet in length and thirty feet in width. In this space they expected one hundred ninety two men to eat and sleep. There were five, twenty five watt light bulbs on one side of the building and none on the other. There were no cooking facilities, and the fuel ration wasn't enough to remove the chill of the room, which was perenially damp, dasle, and cold. The only good point of the place, was the buildings had running water inside.

The cooking problem was soon to be solved by the making of margarine stoves, wood burners, and wood burning blowers.

The daily ration here was the same as those in the "Snake Pit". Even though this is a small quantity of food the men knew they could eke out an existance, meager as it would be, until the end of the war which they felt would be, surely by the middle of Summer. Then on their return home they could make amends for all these things.
Cigarettes here were at a premium and it was soon learned that with enough of them a person could buy any thing available in the area.

It was rumored that soon the men would move to the Officers camp at NURENBERG but not much faith could be put in the rumor, because at this stage of the war the Germans were putting out all kinds of good sounding rumors.

Now after thirteen days, the prisoners had completed their tasks, been subjected to endless hardships and emerged a wiser, but none-the-less high spirited bunch of men and were now rapidly adjusting themselves to their new conditions, to await the end of the war and to re-enter into a life of democracy, and freedom.
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