

King, Walter C.
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about 11 a. m. we got soup, containing potato peelings and a sprinkling of barley, and each evening we got more of the same kind of soup. We seldom got coffee, and most of us would have starved had it not been for the Red Cross. This organization had supplies in Switzerland, but the Nazis had no means of transportation.

"I saw hundreds of trucks, planes and tanks, but the Nazis had no gasoline to operate them.

"After a stay of two weeks at Limburg, we were piled into box cars and headed for Hanover. Enroute American planes spotted us and began a bombing of the railroad. We were ordered to alight from the car, and shortly after so doing, the planes swooped low and strafed us, killing a number of the Americans.

"The remainder of the Americans ran to an open area, removed our shirts and lying on the ground with our backs exposed, formed human letters: 'P. O. W.' We were spotted from the planes, and we learned later that photographs were taken from the air, and later turned over to the First Army, together with our location.

"On March 28, following a push through by the First Army, we were liberated. When taken prisoner, I weighed 170 pounds, and when released from Nazi custody, I weighed 96 pounds."

From the time of his capture until the date of his liberation, Pfc. King stated that he did not have a bath. Asked why, he replied: "There was no water. The American planes bombed out all the water lines."

Referring to the condition of his body at the time of his release, he stated that the skin was in a terrible condition, portions of it peeling from his body.

At Filistine, Pfc. King added, Nazi guards beat American prisoners who could not understand orders issued in German. They always used the butt of the rifle.

At times, when he was unable to accomplish all that was expected of him, due to hunger, Pfc. King stated that he was the victim of Nazi wrath, always being on the receiving end of a rifle butt.

At Filistine, he said, an American prisoner, too ill and too weak to raise his head off the floor (their only bed), was shot in the back by the Nazi guard, the bullet piercing his heart and coming out of his chest.

"In the march through snow, from Filistine to Limburg, an American prisoner, a man about 35 years of age, fell out of line, being too weak to continue the journey. He was later picked up by other Nazi troops and taken to the line of prisoners. He was beaten into unconsciousness by the Nazi guards, because, they said, he was trying to

escape.

"We were obliged to carry the unconscious soldier to the camp.

"At Filistine and Limburg, I saw 50 Americans who died of starvation. They were human skeletons. These bodies were taken from the camp, thrown on a pile in one of the buildings, and later removed by Nazis, whose only means of transportation was horse and wagon."

Asked where they took these bodies, he replied: "I don't know."

Pfc. King wears the European theater of operations ribbon with three stars, indicating three major engagements; the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf cluster, and the Infantry Combat Badge.

At the termination of his furlough, Pfc. King will leave for a government hospital in Virginia.

May 18, 1945