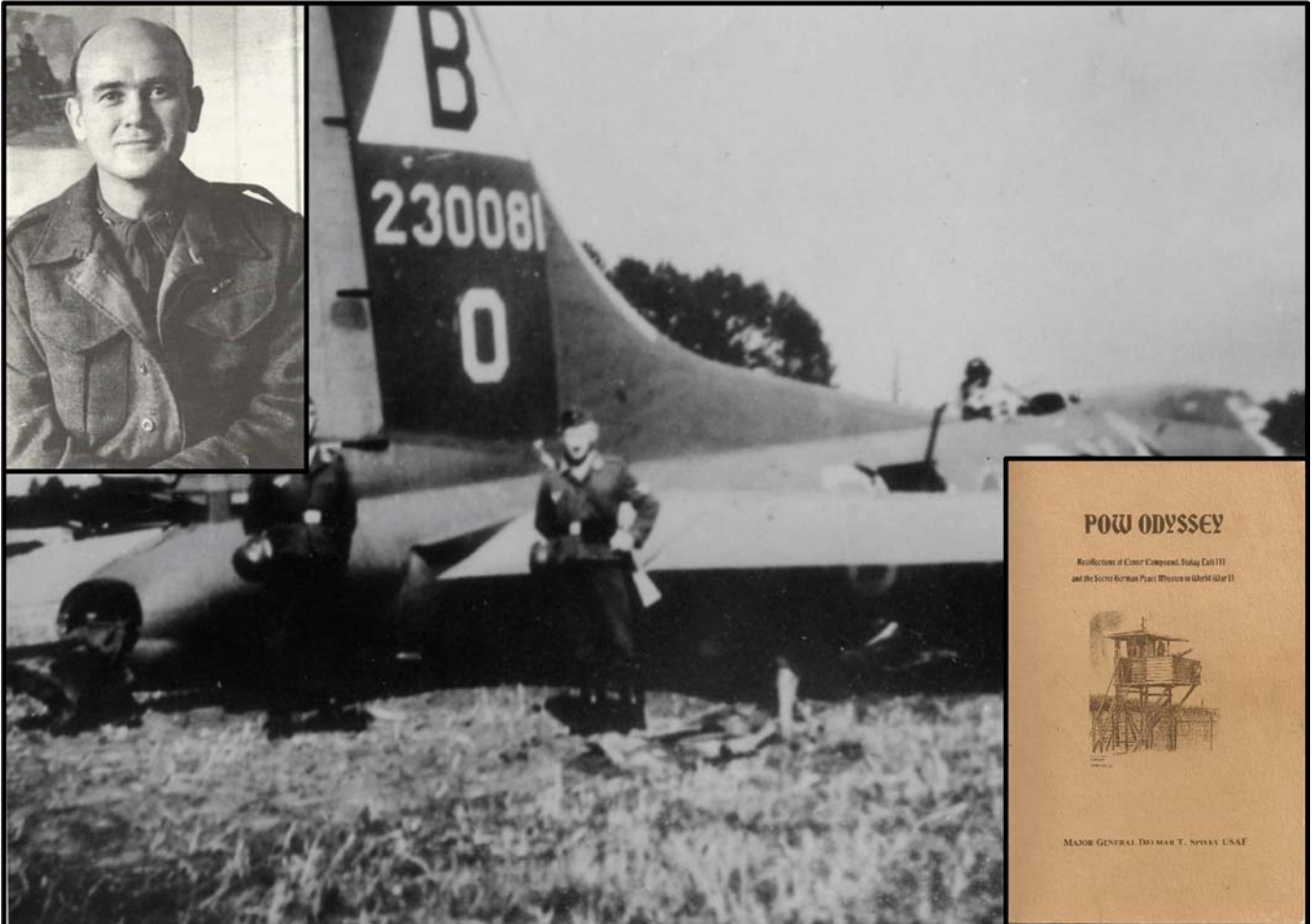


NORMAN LANE JR. MEMORIAL PROJECT

"FOR THOSE WHO FIGHT FOR IT, LIFE HAS A
FLAVOR THE PROTECTED NEVER KNOW."

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Maj. Gen. Delmar T. Spivey, USAF (Ret.) (1905-1982). *Top left*, then-Col. Spivey, 1942-1949. *Bottom right*, Maj. Gen. Spivey's account of his experiences as a POW during World War II, *POW Odyssey*, was published in 1984. *Background*, German soldiers at the wreckage of *USS Aliquippa*, the B-17 he was flying in as an observer when the aircraft was shot down on August 12, 1943.

January 10, 2024

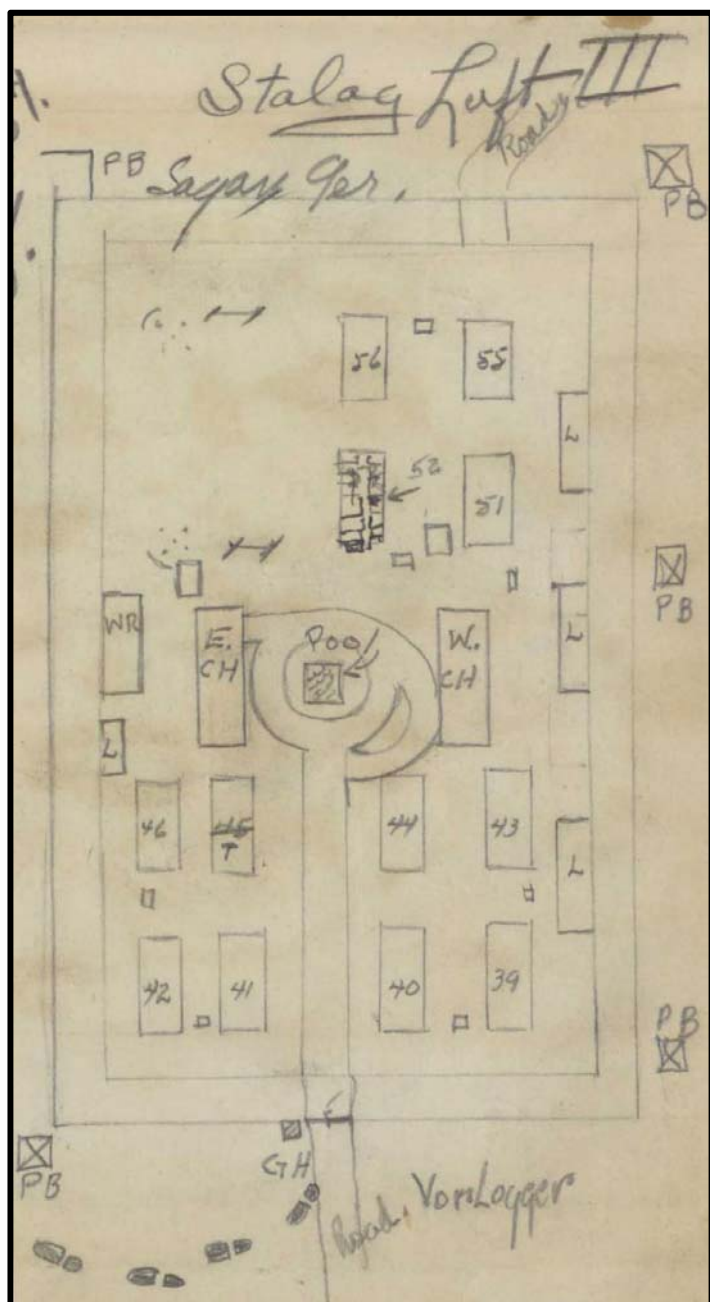
Maj. Gen. Delmar Spivey, USAF (Ret.) (1905-1982) received his commission with the West Point class of 1928. After graduating from flying school in 1930, he transferred to the Air Corps. In 1943 then-Col. Spivey was serving with the Army Air Forces (AAF) at Maxwell Field, Alabama, as Operations Officer for the Southeast Training Command. In July of that year he arrived in England, specifically to observe firsthand the effectiveness of the AAF's aerial gunnery training program, in combat. On August 12 he was flying his first mission as an observer aboard a B-17 heavy bomber. Soon after releasing her bomb load over the target, Gelsenkirchen, Germany, *USS Aliquippa* was hit by flak. Col. Spivey became one of the highest ranking AAF POWs in Germany that day. On September 4 he arrived at Stalag Luft III in Sagan,

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Germany, and he remained a POW there until late January 1945. By mid-September 1943 the colonel had assumed command as Senior American Officer (SAO) of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III, and he served in that capacity for most of his time as a POW. Maj. Gen. Spivey's book, *POW Odyssey: Recollections of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III, and the Secret German Peace Mission in World War II*, was published two years after his death, in 1984.

* * *

AAF 2nd Lt. Joseph "Ed" Carter, from Texarkana, Arkansas, was the copilot on Capt. James Pedersen's B-17 crew, who flew their first combat mission from Framlingham Airfield, Suffolk County, England one week after Col. Spivey's last mission. But on October 8 Lt. Carter, Capt. Pedersen, Lts. Owen Burgess and Harry Gorden, and two of the six sergeants flying *Blood, Guts and Rust II* over Bremen, Germany also joined the "Caterpillar Club" after their B-17 was shot down. None of the four sergeant-gunners survived.



Over the three days and two nights, October 13, 14, and 15, 1943, Lt. Carter was a member of the "40 and 8 Club," traveling the approximately 350 miles from Frankfurt to his new home, Stalag Luft III, in a railroad car designed to carry 40 men and eight horses. This and other valuable information comes from the illustrated journal and diary (totaling about 240 pages) that Lt. Carter kept during his 15 months as a POW there. From the two time lines, it appears that Col. Delmar Spivey had been SAO of Center Compound at the POW camp for about one month when Lt. Carter and the other five surviving members of the Pedersen crew arrived.

Center Compound became an American POW compound soon after Col. Spivey's arrival. Lt. Carter's journal includes a sketch of Center Compound, which is shown at left. The south perimeter corresponds to the top of the sketch. The individual barracks, or blocks, are numbered 39-56. Lt. Carter's home was Block 52, which is indicated by an arrow. The fire pool ("Pool") is in the middle of the compound, and there are cook houses ("CH") for the east and west sections of the compound. Latrines ("L") and a wash hut ("WR") are also indicated. Block 45 was used as a theater ("T"), and the gate at the north (bottom) perimeter led to the *Vorlager*, which had a bath house, coal shed, and other common facilities/stores. Sentry posts ("PB" and "GH") are also indicated. Note the locations of Block 51, next to Lt. Carter's Block 52, and

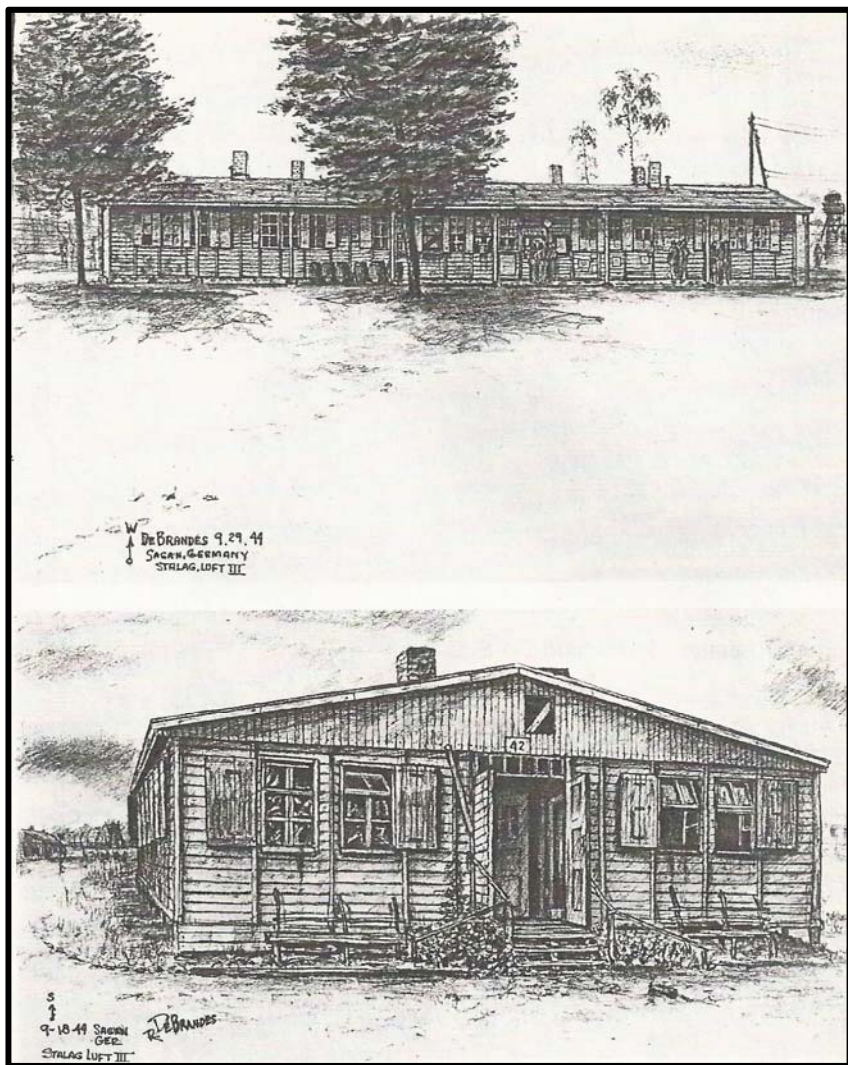
Block 42, in the northeast corner of Center Compound.

In *POW Odyssey*, Maj. Gen. Spivey describes the layout of the individual block, or barracks, there:

The new prisoner immediately observed that he was living in a wooden hut composed of two large rooms, each about 30 feet by 65 feet, with two Nurnberg stoves for which there was never enough coal. There were usually six combines [see below] in each of the large rooms. Beds and lockers were arranged so that a kind of aisle was formed down the center of the room. Each combine became an integral unit, as independent as possible of the other combines. In each end of the barracks [e.g., Block 52] there were two small rooms. One on each end was used for cooking purposes. There was a small cast iron cooking range on which the combine could cook its one hot meal per day at the allocated time, about one hour. . . . Usually all coal allocated to the barracks was burned in these two stoves during the day. The second room at one end of the barracks was an indoor night latrine. . . . At the other end of the barracks opposite the small kitchen was the barracks' or block commander's room, which he usually shared with three or four others.

The beds within the combines were double-deckers of the crudest construction. Later on, all were converted to three-deckers, reaching up to the ceiling.

The combines took on a truly communal aspect. These organizations of eight to ten men pooled all their resources in order to forge a living unit in which they could find a way of life more nearly like that which they had formerly known. The combine was the basic unit of our military organization.

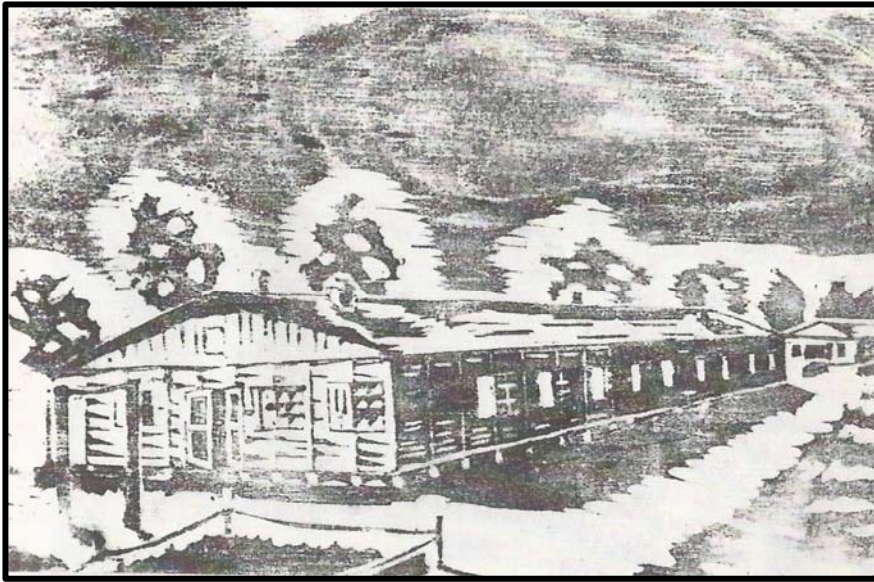


From Col. Spivey's description, there might be 12 combines, each of perhaps 10 men, and possibly four men in the block commander's room. This gives an estimated total of 120-130 men per block, or barracks.

* * *

POW Odyssey includes several sketches which were made by two POWs in Center Compound, Richard de Brandes and John E. Welles. First Lt. De Brandes was shot down and captured on June 20, 1944, while 2nd Lt. Welles was taken prisoner on August 12, 1943, the same day as Col. Spivey. Lt. De Brandes made watercolor paintings, while Lt. Welles made woodcuts. The first of these, shown at left, gives two views of Block 42, in the northeast corner of Center Compound, as painted by Lt. De Brandes. The two paintings are dated September 1944. The lower image represents the north end of the barracks, while the upper image gives

the view of the long east side of the same barracks. Lt. Welles' representation of Block 51 is shown below.



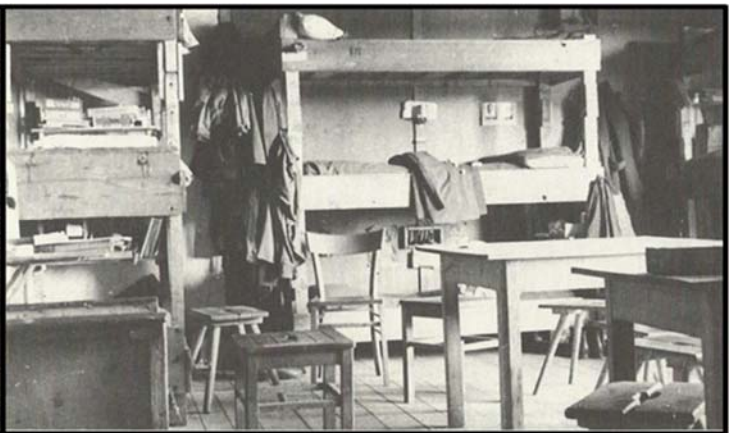
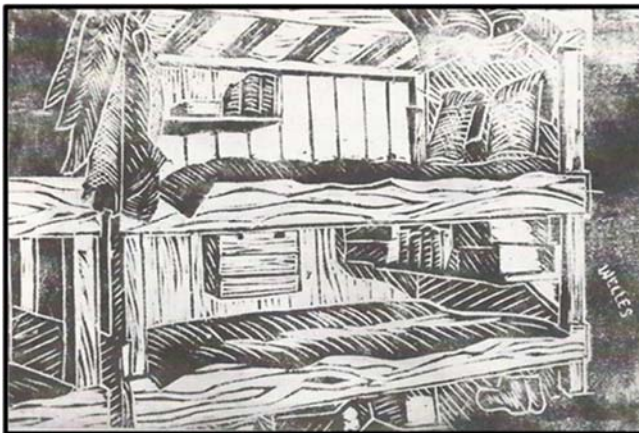
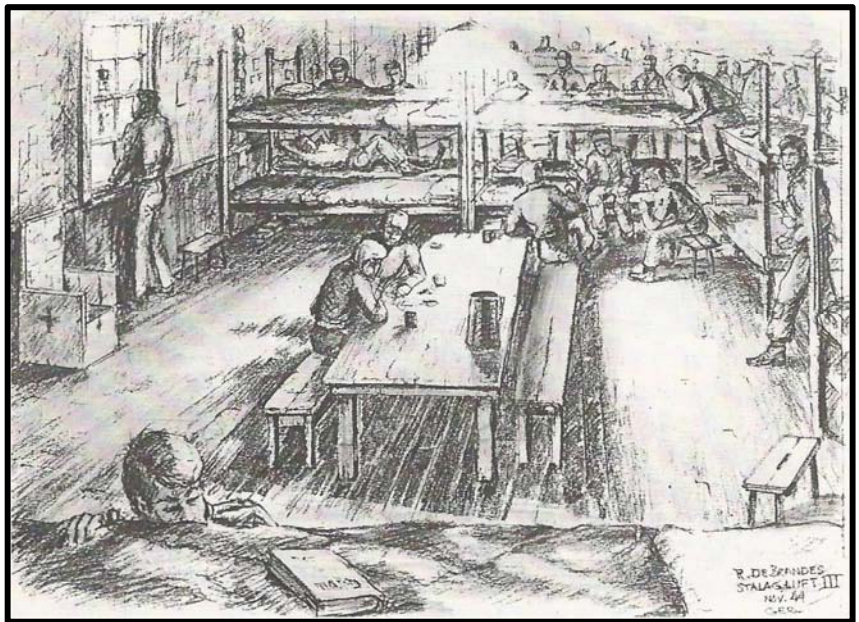
Judging from Lt. Carter's diagram, the view is of the north end of Block 51, and Block 55 is shown in the distance. Block 52 would be to the left (east) of Block 51 in this picture.

Lt. De Brandes also painted a picture of the barracks interior, presumably of Block 42 but unconfirmed, and this is reproduced below. There are at least six bunk beds and a table and benches in the foreground, and there are nine men in this view. There are additional bunks and

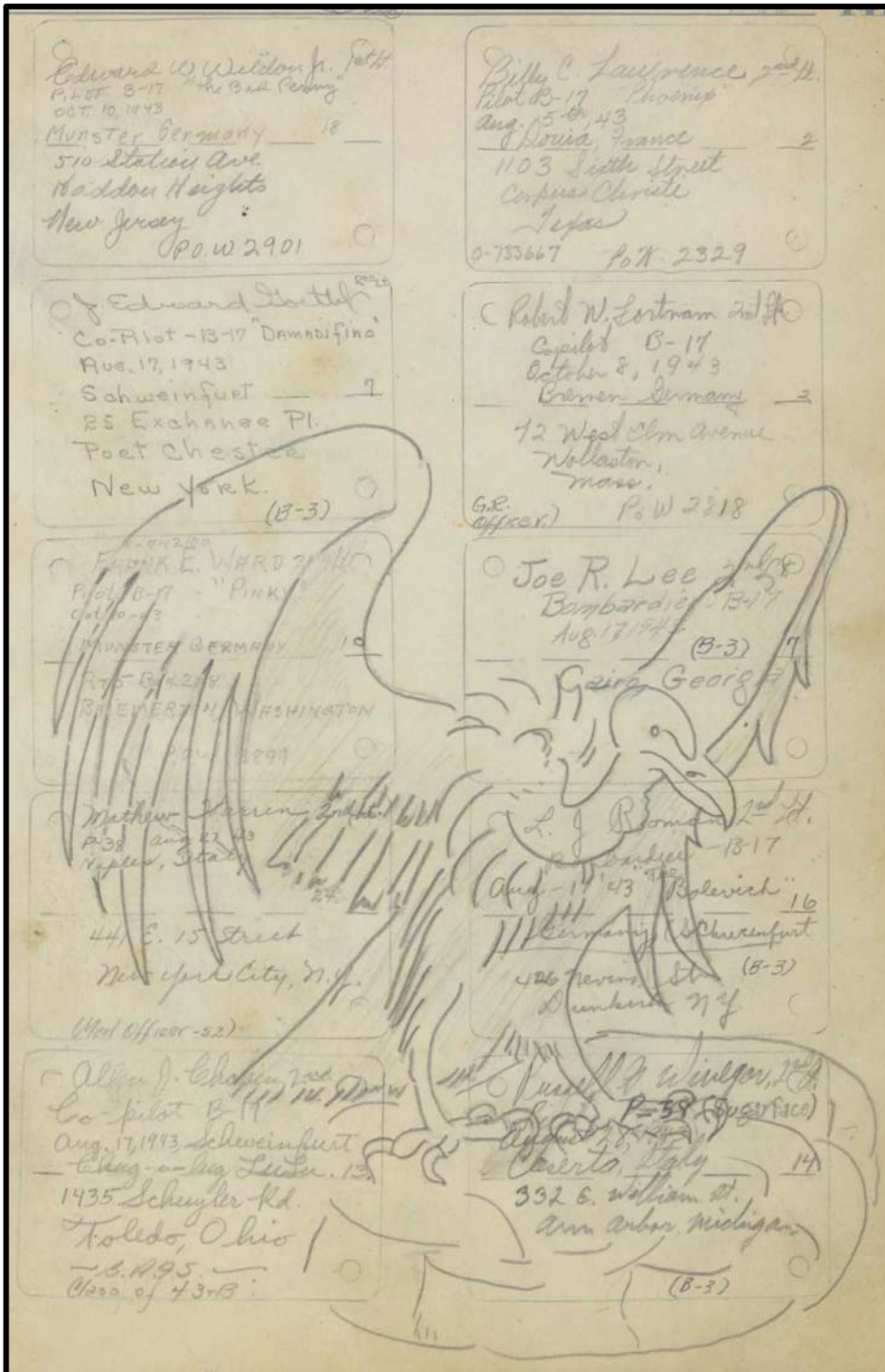
men further back in the picture, so clearly multiple combines, apparently together in one of the two large rooms, are represented. The painting is dated November 1944.

Finally, at the bottom of this page, there are two representations of barracks bunks, as given in Lt. Welles' woodcut (left) and in a photo from Arthur Durand's *Stalag Luft III*. Durand added:

The prisoners managed as best they could and grouped four to six beds around some room furniture. These arrangements became known as "combines."



During his time at Stalag Luft III, Lt. Carter collected nine pages of neatly arranged signatures of fellow POWs for his journal. Almost all added information on when and where they had been shot down or captured, their aircraft, and their homes of record back in the US. The range of dates captured, for these 89 American servicemen, began with August 1943 and extended to September 1944. While all were American military personnel, at least two flew with RAF units. While the clear majority were AAF officers, there were exceptions. At least half a dozen, including the two sergeants from Lt. Carter's crew, Sgt. Daniel Bergin and Tech. Sgt. Michael Urban, were enlisted men. And there were a few soldiers from infantry or artillery units, at least two of whom were captured during action in Italy. The list also confirms that the other three officers from Lt. Carter's crew, Capt. Pedersen and 1st Lts. Burgess and Gorden, were with him at Stalag Luft III. One page of these signatures is shown below:



Lt. Carter added the illustration of the vulture to this page; many pages of his POW journal have similar stylized drawings and sketches. At the bottom of the right-hand column is the name of 2nd Lt. Russell Winegar of Ann Arbor, Michigan, pilot of the P-38 fighter aircraft *Sugarface*, who was shot down near Caserta, Italy on August 28, 1943. Lt. Winegar was a member of Combine B-3, Block 52, Center Compound, as described below.

The first hint of identity for Lt. Carter's combine comes from this entry in his journal:

Member of our combine has diphtheria. B-3 was quarantined for 1 week. Oct — Quarantine lifted 9th of Oct. Complete Bloc 52

On three different pages of the journal, Lt. Carter carefully listed 12 names that belong to the same unnamed organizational unit. One such table is given at the top of page 6. Each name is followed by AAF rank (1st or 2nd Lt.), POW number, issued by the

Name	Rank	POW No.	Blanket Cap	Knife	Fork	Spoon	Bowl	Shovel	Hatchet	Socket	ASN
Carter, J.E.	2nd	2945	10K	1	1	1		1			0-204477
Dugandzic, P.F.	"	7387	15			1		1	1		0-822-655
O'Brien, J.L.	"	1877	10K	1		1	1	1	1	2	0-679118
Winegar, R.G.	"	2466	15		1	1	B	1			0-740620
Waters, E. (NM)	1st	6873	10K	1	1	1		1	3		0-687355
Dependahl, R.H.	2nd	1458	20K	1		1	1	1		2	0-734539
Shepler, W. (NM)	"	52639	10K				10	1	1	2	0-708622
Abbott, G.A.	1st	6194	1K			1	1	1	1		0-728809
Kiecker, P.F.	1st	8009	10K	1		1	1	1		1	0-699074
Warr, N. (NM)	2nd	3835	10K	1		1	1	1	1		0-676989
Boyce, W.C.	"	3023	10K	1		1				1	0-820746
Peters, G.A.	"	2728	2	1	1	1		1	3	2	0-740544
Total			13	9	5	10	6	112			18

Germans, the number of listed essentials (blanket, knife, fork, spoon, bowl, etc.) issued to him, and his Army serial number. The names are summarized below, arranged according to the corresponding dates of capture:

2nd Lt. Robert H. Dependahl	08/12/43
2nd Lt. Garvin A. Peters	08/12/43
2nd Lt. Russell G. Winegar	08/28/43
2nd Lt. Joseph E. Carter	10/08/43
2nd Lt. John L. O'Brien	03/18/44
2nd Lt. Nemor Warr	03/19/44
1st Lt. George A. Abbott	06/21/44
1st Lt. Edward Waters	06/21/44
2nd Lt. Peter F. Dugandzic	07/25/44
2nd Lt. Warren Shepler	08/24/44
1st Lt. Paul F. Kiecker	09/08/44
2nd Lt. Wallace C. Boyce	09/10/44

Although they were captured the same day as Col. Spivey (see page 1), neither Lt. Dependahl nor Lt. Peters, nor Lt. Welles (see page 3) was flying with him aboard USS *Aliquippa* on that fateful day.

The POW population of a given block was not static and could change whenever a new shipment of prisoners, or "purge," arrived. The list given above was clearly organized in the fall of 1944, as two of the POWs were captured that September. In that time frame, however, I would conclude that these 12 men belonged to combine B-3 in Block 52 of Center Compound.

* * *

In his book, *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story*, Arthur Durand gives POW accounts of Christmas observances at two different compounds within the camp in 1944. First, from a POW in West Compound:

Christmas day, 1944, proved to be much happier than any homesick Kriege [short for *Kriegsgefangenen*, or POW] had reason to hope for because of a beautiful gesture by the Mail Officer and a few others in his confidence. At evening roll call on December 24, the men were waiting in orderly fashion for dismissal after the count had been taken when sleigh bells and general clatter announced the arrival of a small wagon carrying Santa Claus, resplendent in a red and white suit, and an assistant. The wagon was pulled by two men dressed as reindeer. As the

assembled men watched hopefully, Santa made the rounds tossing out bundles of mail to each group as he passed. Faces were a little brighter as the men returned to the barracks. Santa had brought the Spirit of Christmas to this lonely camp in the wilderness where the ever-burning light of hope at times grew dim. Mail had been allowed to accumulate over a period to permit Santa's visit.

Then, from a POW in Center Compound:

Normally, the Germans locked us up as soon as it became dark. On Christmas Eve 1944, they made a special concession and let us visit in the various blocks until well after dark. Then, after we had all been confined, I remember a brass ensemble—a couple of trumpets, an alto horn, a trombone or two, and a baritone—played “Silent Night.” In the still bitter cold of that lonely, dark night, the music, played by American prisoners in the middle of the compound, had a great impact on all of us. It became deathly quiet in the cell blocks as everyone paused to hear the clear, mellow strains of this beautiful, traditional Christmas carol. And there were some misty eyes here and there. I can remember that some of our German guards were as touched as we were. I suspect that this auditory impression will remain with me always; in fact, I never hear “Silent Night” without recalling that night in Sagan.

* * *

From the article, “Kriegie Christmas, 1944,” posted on the website for the National WWII Museum (<https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/kriegie-christmas-1944>, accessed December 21, 2023):

At the well-established camps, some Kriegies . . . were fortunate to receive Christmas parcels. The American Red Cross packed and shipped 75,000 Christmas parcels in the summer of 1944 leaving time for a Christmas arrival. The packages contained mixtures of food (including canned turkey and fruit cake), tobacco, games, and Christmas decorations.

No. 1 in → 1943
Christmas package No. 2

P Form 1629
Rev. Feb. 1943

AMERICAN RED CROSS
RECEIPT FOR PRISONER OF WAR PACKAGE

(Last Name) (First and Middle Names) (Rank)

(Number) (Prison Camp) (Country)

I have received today one food package from THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS through the International Red Cross Committee.

(Signed) _____

Nationality _____ Date _____

This receipt for “Christmas package No. 2” from the American Red Cross was saved in Lt. Carter’s POW journal. He indicated in pencil that he received this for Christmas 1944.

(continued on page 8)

Continuing with the article, “Kriegie Christmas, 1944”:

In Stalag Luft III, they had a gigantic “bash” [see below]. POWs were given freedom to roam the grounds on Christmas Eve and Christmas night. Alcohol was made in several camps by fermenting raisins from aid packages. Most of the camps had Christmas concerts and services. At Stalag Luft III the auditorium held 700 men, but even with several performances, not all of the 11,000 POWs could see the Christmas pageant. In some of the camps, . . . some barracks received small Christmas trees from guards, which they decorated with snowflakes cut from tin cans, lint, food labels, and nails. Formal dinners were served in many barracks, every mouthful savored. Some of these details as well as menus, cards and programs, were recorded in Wartime Logs, journals printed by the YMCA and distributed by the Red Cross to POWs in Europe.

In his journal Lt. Carter refers to one particular incident (April 4, 1945) in which he and fellow POWs “did Bash* after a starvation period of sixty seven days.” He defines a bash as “the promiscuous consumption of food.”

This full-page illustrated menu for Christmas dinner 1944 was also recorded in Lt. Carter’s journal:



* * *

Over several pages of his journal, Lt. Carter included a story titled “The Evacuation of Stalag Luft III.” We are not certain when he composed this handwritten draft. But sometime after the war he transcribed the draft into a well-organized typed document of 17 pages. Five weeks after the Christmas Day bash referred to above, at 4:30 in the morning of Sunday, January 28, 1945, the POWs of Stalag Luft III set out on foot in a forced march under miserable conditions. On the afternoon of the 11th day, they reached their destination, Moosburg, Germany, about 260 miles to the southwest. After temporary confinement in the aptly named “Snake Pit,” the men were moved to their new camp. As Lt. Carter concluded his story of the ordeal, he wrote:

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 readjusting themselves to their new conditions, to await the end of the war and to re-enter into a life of democracy, and freedom.

* * *

In “The Evacuation of Stalag Luft III,” 2nd Lt. Joseph Carter describes his arrival by train at Moosburg on Wednesday afternoon, February 7, 1945:

At three in the afternoon the train reached MOOSBERG [*sic*] the cars were unloaded and by five o’clock the men were once again behind barbed wire.

Six days later the RAF and Eighth Air Force initiated their planned one-two punch, as Donald Miller writes in *Masters of the Air*, against the city of Dresden, Germany, a city whose prewar population had swelled to nearly a million as the result of an influx of refugees from the east. Miller describes the raids as follows:

On the unseasonably pleasant evening of February 13, two waves of Lancasters, over 800 bombers, approached the beautiful river town known for its chinaware, its spacious parks, and its fanciful architecture. Dresdeners called their city Florence on the Elbe. That was before it was turned into a desert of stone and ash.

As at Hamburg in the summer of 1943, a catastrophic combination of explosive and incendiary bombs set off a firestorm, this one incinerating or suffocating at least 35,000 people, about 11,000 fewer than did the Hamburg conflagration. The Eighth Air Force flew in that morning [Ash Wednesday, February 14, 1945] and the next, hitting a centrally located marshaling yard and spilling errant explosives into surrounding residential neighborhoods, where thousands of people had gone to escape the fire.

New research [*Masters of the Air* was published in 2006] by Götz Bergander, who has written a scrupulous account of the bombing, puts the number killed between 35,000 and 40,000. But with the city crammed with several hundred thousand refugees, who can know how many died?

The author Kurt Vonnegut was an American POW who had been moved to Dresden several days before the bombings. Donald Miller continues:

The prisoners [including Vonnegut] were not permitted to come out of the shelter until noon the next day. “Dresden was like the moon now, nothing but minerals. The stones were hot. Everybody in the neighborhood was dead,” Vonnegut later wrote in his novel *Slaughterhouse Five*.



Ruins, Dresden Frauenkirche, July 28-30, 1990. Over July 25-30, 1990, before reunification of East and West Germany, my wife and I visited Berlin and Dresden. The Frauenkirche collapsed on February 15, 1945, two days after being burned out in the February 13 bombing. In 1966 the ruins were declared a “memorial for the victims of the bombing war.” Reconstruction began in 1993, and the reconstructed Frauenkirche was consecrated in 2005.

* * *

There would be two-and-a-half more months of war before 2nd Lt. Joseph “Ed” Carter, of Texarkana, Arkansas, and his fellow POWs at Moosburg would be returned to Allied military control.