

PFC Don H Dyke

U S prisoner of war
86994

Stalag 7-A Germany
Via BX BX USA

News account of Don H. Dyke's capture, escape, and rescue by units of the 45th.

DP's Are GI's Released from Kraut Cages

„DP“, the letters you've been seeing on reports and on signs all over town, stands for „Displaced Person“, liberated Allied prisoners of war. Within their ranks are many Thunderbird fighters who experienced the thrill of being rescued by their own division, some of them by their own regiments.

All of them are bound for the States for a 21-day furlough before being re-assigned. Right now they're whiling away the time in the sheer luxury of just doing nothing after months of inhuman treatment.

They're smoking American cigarettes again, sipping good American coffee, eating American chocolate, visiting and telling their stories to anyone who'll listen.

→ „Don't talk to me about the Geneva Convention“, said Pfc. Don. F. Dyke, DP from Woodward, Okla. „The Germans may have heard of it, but they didn't observe it in caring for PW's.“

Dyke, formerly with Co. F, 179th Inf., should know. He was a prisoner since last September when his rifle company came out second best in a fight with Kraut ambushers. Although he spent his last months in the dreaded confines of the Munich prisons, among the worst in Germany, he doesn't look too bad.

That's because I took off finally“ he

He worked hard, but more important, he ate five times a day in the best farmer tradition.

Then one day he heard artillery and he made his way to the top of the hill to watch the fun. The night before he'd heard that the Americans might arrive the next day. He drank the farmer's last bottle of schnapps and generally had himself a time.

„From the hill I could see the SS troops scattering“, he smiled as he recalled the scene. „There were shells dopping in all over the place and they were taking off. Then came the tanks and I waited to see which division was coming up. When I saw those Thunderbirds coming down the road - - brother I almost fell off that hill!“

Two former Co. I, 179th men, Pfc. Calvin C. Whitney and Pfc. Shaelfner, were rescued by their regiments the other day.

They were captured last October in the tough fight for Grandvillers. After four months of hell in the concentration camps, they were given the assignment every PW hopes - - for farm work.

The two were sent to a farm about a dozen miles outside Munich where they worked hard, but treated well. One morning they awoke to find the house surrounded by tanks - - American tanks. Later that day they turned in to a patrol

ambushers. Although he spent his last months in the dreaded confines of the Munich prisons, among the worst in Germany, he doesn't look too bad.

„That's because I took off finally“, he grinned at his buddy, Pfc. Philip Kramer, division headquarters, formerly with Co. F. „I was lucky. I made for a German farm outside the city, and the family there took me in. I worked for them, and they fed me. And, brother, did I eat! In a few weeks I gained 35 pounds!“

Life in the Munich camps was hell. The men worked long hours through the cold Bavarian winter without overcoats, without enough to eat. A little ersatz coffee, a thin cabbage soup, a slice of bread - - that might be the amount of food given the man for a day's work.

„We sewed special pockets into our clothes“, Dyke said, „and we'd stuff our pockets with spuds. Sometimes we got by the guards who searched us every night, and sometimes we didn't. If we were caught it often meant a beating. Once the Red Cross parcels that reached us occasionally contained C-rations. You can't imagine how good a C-ration can taste until you have been a PW.“

He told of one American prisoner, a teetotler, who found a bottle of wine and raffled it off for smokes. Dyke won the bottle and the teetotler collected about 100 smokes.

„They had us working on the railroads in Munich“, Dyke recalled. „That was a thankless job. The Yank bombers would blast hell out of the tracks one week-end and we'd work all the following week straightening out the tracks. Friday they'd be good as new again. Saturday there'd be another raid and we'd start all over again on the same road!“

Finally Dyke escaped. The Bavarian farmer was glad to take him in - - the Americans were coming, he'd heard and a Yank in the house would make things look better. Dyke got the job.

dozen miles outside Munich where they worked hard, but treated well. One morning they awoke to find the house surrounded by tanks - - American tanks. Later that day they turned in to a patrol from the 179th Inf.

Within three hours they were back visiting with their old buddies in Co. I. Just like that.

Whitney told the boys how he was captured.

„It happened while we were fighting for Grandvillers. I happened to glance up and notice a GI and a Kraut standing together. Like a sucker, I thought the German was the PW, so I walked over.“

„Another German, hidden behind a tree, popped out with a rifle and I thought, This guy has a nerve, and I slammed his weapon down with my M-1. But the first Kraut, who wasn't a PW after all, stuck a Luger in my ribs and off we went for Munich!“

A GI chocolate bar was the first food request Whitney and Shaeffer made when they were free. Hq. Btry, 160th FA, prepared a special meal for them and 24 other DP's, not from the division.

Pvt Robert Schlegel, Banks, Ore., Hq. Co., 1st Bn., 180th Inf., became a PW because his buddy, Pfc. Walter Larsen, New York City, hadn't finished breakfast.

Last September 2, Schlegel was a mechanic in the motor pool when a loogie called for Larsen, his driver. Larsen was eating breakfast, so Schlegel offered to drive.

An hour later he was a PW - - he drove up next to a Tiger tank which was very neatly camouflaged.

He almost escaped shortly after. On the trip back to Germany, Schlegel and his captors stopped in a French cafe for something to eat. One FFI man there slipped the Thunderbird a note saying that if he could get out the back door the people of the town would hide him. But the place was too well guarded for that.

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HONORABLE DISCHARGE

1. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) Dyke Don H		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. 36 010 436	3. GRADE Pfc	4. CODE OR SERVICE Inf	5. NUMBER A11
6. ORGANIZATION Co "F" 179th Inf		7. DATE OF SEPARATION 31 Aug 45		8. PLACE OF SEPARATION Separation Center Co Chaffee Ar	
9. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE MAILED Gen Del Arnett Mills Co Ohio		10. DATE OF BIRTH 20 Sep 19	11. PLACE OF BIRTH Harmon Ohio		
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE MAILED See 9		13. COLOR (Specify, Blue, Black)	14. HEIGHT 5-10	15. WEIGHT 180 lb	16. HAIR None
17. RACE W	18. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. I	19. U.S. CITIZEN A	20. OTHER EMPLOYER OR NO. Truck Driver Light 345		

MILITARY HISTORY

21. DATE OF SEPARATION 12 Feb 41	22. DATE OF SEPARATION 12 Feb 41	23. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 71 5111	24. PLACE OF BIRTH (Last 4 Digits) Ohio
25. ORGANIZATION (Last 4 Digits) 1	26. GRADE AND TITLE Dewey Coda	27. NAME ADDRESS OF UNIT OF BIRTH (Last 4 Digits) Box 100 Arnett Mills Co Ohio	
28. MILITARY EMPLOYMENT (Specify and No.) Truck Driver Light 345		29. MILITARY EMPLOYMENT (Specify and No.) None	
30. EMPLOYMENT (Specify and No.) Not Available			
31. EMPLOYMENT (Specify and No.) Not Available			
32. EMPLOYMENT (Specify and No.) Not Available			

2-11-46

33. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 18 Mar 45		34. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 18 Mar 45		35. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 18 Mar 45	
36. GRADE AND TITLE Pfc		37. NAME ADDRESS OF UNIT OF BIRTH (Last 4 Digits) Not Available			
38. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 1	39. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 11	40. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 25	41. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) None		
42. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) None					
43. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) None of Dept 831-1 (Demobilization) 18 015-355 18 Dec 44					
44. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) None					

PAI DATA

45. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	46. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	47. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	48. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	49. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	50. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300
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INSURANCE NOTICE

51. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	52. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	53. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	54. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	55. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300	56. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 300
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57. SIGNATURE (Last 4 Digits) <i>Don H Dyke</i>	58. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 18 Mar 45	59. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 18 Mar 45	60. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) 18 Mar 45
	61. SERVICE NUMBER (Last 4 Digits) None of Dept 831-1 (Demobilization) 18 015-355 18 Dec 44		

**ARMY
SEPARATION QUALIFICATION RECORD**

NAME FIRST NAME KE, DON H.	MIDDLE INITIAL	ARMY SERIAL NO. 38 018 438	GRADE Pfc	DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE 12 Feb 1941	SEX M	DATE OF BIRTH 21 Sep 1919
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PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES (STREET AND NUMBER, CITY, COUNTY, STATE)
 Nett, Oklahoma

CIVILIAN EDUCATION					
GRADE COMPLETED	LAST YEAR OF ATTENDANCE	HIGHEST DEGREE RECEIVED	MAJOR COURSE OF STUDY	NAME AND ADDRESS OF LAST SCHOOL ATTENDED	
High School	1938	--	Academic	Camargo High School Camargo, Oklahoma	
COURSE		NO. HRS.	COURSE	NO. HRS.	COURSE

SERVICE EDUCATION					
SERVICE SCHOOL	COURSE	WKS. OR HRS.	RATING	INSTITUTION WHERE ENROLLED	CURRICULUM AND TERM (COURSE OF TRAINING PURSUED)
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CIVILIAN OCCUPATIONS	
OCCUPATION FARM HAND, GENERAL SUMMARY Helped father operate 160 acre farm. Used tractors and tractors to plow, cultivate, and harvest crops. Drove 1 1/2-ton truck to haul produce to market. Assisted with all farm chores on the place.	SECONDARY OCCUPATION (TITLE) -- JOB SUMMARY

LAST DATE OF EMPLOYMENT	NAME AND ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER	NO. OF YEARS	LAST DATE OF EMPLOYMENT	NAME AND ADDRESS OF EMPLOYER
Feb 1941	Jessie Dyke Camargo, Oklahoma			

MILITARY SPECIALTIES						
MONTHS	GRADE	PRINCIPAL DUTY	ASSIGNMENTS		PRINCIPAL DUTY	ARMY CODE NO.
			YEARS	MONTHS		
3	Pvt	Basic-Infantry	2			521
3	Pfc	Truck Driver, Light	3			345
9	Pfc	German Prisoner of War				

SUMMARY OF MILITARY OCCUPATION AND CIVILIAN CONVERSIONS (SHOW BY TITLE)
 TRUCK DRIVER, LIGHT: Drove 2 1/2-ton trucks to haul military personnel, supplies, and equipment. Made minor repairs and adjustments to the vehicles. Serviced, cleaned, and lubricated truck. Served with the 179th Infantry in Africa, Sicily, Italy and was captured in Southern France. Was a prisoner of war for 9 months.

THIS INFORMATION BASED ON SOLDIER'S STATEMENT. (INDICATE BY * ANY ITEMS NOT SUPPORTED BY MILITARY RECORDS)

DATE OF SEPARATION 1 Aug 1945	SIGNATURE OF SOLDIER <i>Don H. Dyke</i>	SIGNATURE OF SEPARATION CLASSIFICATION OFFICER <i>O.D. Hurnicutt</i>
DA FORM 100-1 (15 July 1944)		O.D. HURNICUTT, WOJG, USA Separation Center, Camp...

Honorable Discharge



from the Armed Forces of the United States of America

This is to certify that

Pvt. DON H. EYKE 38 018 438 Inf-Reserve who enlisted 31 August 1945

was Honorably Discharged from the

Army of the United States

on the 30th *day of* August 1948 *This certificate is awarded*
as a testimonial of Honest and Faithful Service

William H. Craig

WILLIAM H. CRAIG
Colonel, Infantry
Senior Army Instructor