

Corporal Ronald P. Wright #420583

Diary of a forced march from Lamsdorf...to Gorlitz Stalag 8.a.

Compounds 2.3.4 & 5. 3,000 men.

22/1/1945.

Ordered to march at 2pm. Probable destination Gorlitz Stalag 8.a.
Arrives Gorlitz (295 kilos).

2/2/45. Terrible times experienced. Frostbite, blizzard. 1000 sick.

*Joes push coming so quickly forced the Hun to evacuate (Gorlitz 10/2/45)
3,000 men of the various forces on the road destination

* Joseph Starlin

11/2/45. 2nd day. Reichenbach-Weissendorf 11am-2pm.
Easy going, good hay barn. Hot water tea brewed slept well. 13 kls.

* WEISSENDORF

12/2/45. 3rd day. Weissendorf – Boutzen 7am-2pm.
Snow & cold going, good at times, billets riding school
Jerry barracks very cold. Harry loses his pack but finds it again. 17 kls.

13/2/45. 4th day. Boutzen-Pulsnitz 11am-10pm.
Terrible day worst ever. Spent night in church no comfort. Coffee soup
issued from Hospital.
Air Raid alarms (Dresden) 60,000 great glares in sky huge fires etc. 40 kls.
Major doesn't help in our troubles.
I leave (dixie (?)) with meat behind excellent sup & plenty for us.

14/2/45. 5th day. Pulsnitz-Kongbrücke 11am-5pm.
Soup & rations for 2 days. Tents. 16 kls. Harry goes sick.

15/2/45. 6th day. Kongbrücke-Kathranth 11am-6pm.
State farm (Dominion) spuds & soup, did (.....)? till morning. 22 Kls.
Harry comes back.

16/2/45. 7th day. Kathranth-Messen 10am-3pm.
Good billett. Jerry barracks. Good soup rations for 3 days. 20 kls.
I carry Stan 100 yards.

17/2/45. 8th day. Messen-Lomassch. 9am-4.30pm.
Crossed the Elbe at 11am. Good billett had soup onion ...(meal?)?

18/2/45. 9th day. Days Rest. Nothing of interest day wasted.

19/2/45. 10th day. Lomassch-Doblen. 9am-4pm. 60000
Coffee in morning -
Soup at night. 2nd air raid & plenty dropped. 18 kls.

23/2/45. 14th day. Borna-Werchwitz. 8:30am-4pm.

Passed through Menselwitz bombed 22/2/45.

Air alarms hourly. Unfriendly reception. Rain & snow.

Soup bad bread 1/8 loaf, B'shee (buckshee) was it hell. 28 Kls.

24/2/45. 15th day. Werchwitz-Zeitz 8am-1pm.

(.....)? barracks riding school. Jerrys very officious. No rations. 10 Kls.

25/2/45. 16th day. Zeitz-Serba.

"Passed" through Eisenberg our rumoured destination, no stalag in vicinity for us. 7 Kls farther to go today. 35Kls 2nd worst day so far.

26/2/45. 17th day. Days Rest. Thin soup bad day. Rumoured that Turkey in war who b.....(?) again!!!

1/3/45. 20th day. Hohlsteat-Mellingen.

Columns split up into groups to go to various Stalags. We go to Bad ---? (200 Kls). Air alarms delayed us two rooms – and was it cold. 12 Kls.

2/3/45. 21st day. Mellingen-Lindenbuch. 1.30 pm-8pm. By-passed Weimar air raids close. 1.4 loaf no soup. 2 men died during night – pneumonia. 26 Kls.

3/3/45. 22nd day. Lindenbuch-Zeilbatten. 1-8pm. Air Alarms very frequent.

Passed through Erfurt(?) splintered badly. ¼ loaf & sausage with soup or coffee. 25 Kls.

ERFURT

4/3/45. 23rd day. Day of rest . One man shot dead & another wounded stealing spuds we get (----)? on a soup. War rumours Cologne Dusseldorf etc gone.

5/3/45. 24th day. Zeibatten-Kalherfeldt. 7am-2pm. Passed through Gotha splintered. Soup also 1 pkt biscuits & 2 cheeses as days issue. 18 Kls.

6/3/45. 25th day. Kalherfeldt-Stredga 7:30am-1pm.

Passed through Eisenbach heavily splintered. 17 Kls.

7/3/45. 26th day. Stredga-Gestungen. 7:30am-1pm.

1 pkt b'cuits 2 oxo cubes of lard per man for 24 hours.

No bread npw for 3 days. All feeling the effects. 28 Kls.

8/3/45. 27th day Days Rest. Miserable, snowy, no rations only mint tea.

9/3/45. 28th day. Gestungen-Heinboldshousen. 10.30-4.30pm.

Continuous air alarms all day No idea of ultimate destination but plenty rumours billett no good 2 pks B'cts & cheese double ration. Fag trouble.

10/3/45. 29th day. Heinboldshousen-Rasdorf. 9.15-2pm.

Very hilly country (Hessen) tiring but keep going 2 days rations $\frac{3}{4}$ loaf $\frac{2}{5}$ meat people in dorf (?) supplied soup, spuds & mint tea with well treated sous pow (?) in England & America. 20 Kls.

11/3/45. 30th day. Rasdorf-Ruckers. 10-2pm.

Easy march good road billets not bad. No rations. 15 Kls.

12/3/45. 31st day. Days Rest. Bread and T meat for 2 days good trading.

13/3/45. 32nd day. Ruckers-Kersel. 8am-2pm. *OR FLIEDEN*

Passed through Fullds*-? Badle damaged. Easy marching good scenery, but does not fill the stomach. Good barn 2 days rations $\frac{2}{3}$ bread $\frac{1}{3}$ meat coffee. 23Kls. * *FULDA A DISTRICT*

14/3/45. 33rd day. Kersel-Ruckers. 8am-12:30.

Lovely spring day quite warm can hear rumblings in the distance & hope its 75mm in the distance. 2 days should see us in Stalag, coffee. 13 Kls.

15/3/45. 34th day. Ruckers-Steinad. 8.30-2pm. No rations billets not so good too (----)?

meet up with party from Saargen they leave tomorrow for Stalag for delousing. Coffee 15 Kls.

16/3/45. 35th day. Rest Day. Conditions better 100 men moved out to another billet 8.c. Folk are 150 French 150 English. (-----)? 1 fag a man for us 1 days ration (Ma----- R)?

Nice day. Trading bad.

17/3/45. 36th day. 2nd Rest day a miserable day cold raining & sleet. Bought a 4 klo loaf 20 fags and some spuds for soup and so did fairly well for food drew rations for 2 days and were told we were moving off at 8 tomorrow Sunday this has been cancelled till Mondy. Air Raids plentyful many refugees in village no trading very poor todays price 100 sauces(?) = 1 fag. 1 $2\frac{1}{2}$ klo loaf = 10 fags.

18/3/45. 37th day. Are told this is definitely our last rest day, quite good and restful many rumours.

Von Ribbenthrop has sent envoy to Allies re peace Colmar & Coblentz have fallen, the Volksturm have been disbanded we buy bread & spuds fed well but rest is no good for we need the exercise to digest the bad food we are eating.

19/3/45. 38th day. Steinan-Bad Orb. 7.45-2.45pm

Slow day many halts but more Air Raids perpetual alarm all day. We arrive at Bad Orb at last and are not excited we get tea (mint) & bread 1-6 and I meet a Spanish speaking Frenchman no chance to talk to him a lot but promises to be useful and has asked me to see him tomorrow. Could not get deloused so spent night in Bad Orbs equivalent to our old F.1. 15 Kls.

Total Kilos since leaving Lamsdorf 893.

This was an address on the back of a photograph that Mum sent Dad during the war.

*Corp R.P.Wright #420583. British POW
Prigionieri Di Guerre
Campo Concentramento
Compound No. 3. Hut No. 60
Fonte Di Amore., SULMONA
Provincia Di Aquila
Abruzzi
Italy*

As I understand it, Italy had lost the war (capitulated) and moved all their prisoners out of Italy, probably by train, into Germany. The Germany were struggling to find camps for all the prisoners and hence the march of nearly 1,000 Klm back and forth trying to find a place to put them. This became known as the "Death March" of 3,000 men.