

DACHAU

by

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All the Horrors of Nazi Oppression

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AUTHOR'S NOTE:

I wish to convey my thanks and gratitude to all who have assisted me in obtaining facts and figures which are correct in every detail.

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This story has been written as a tribute to all the men, women and children of every nation, including Germany itself, who suffered in Nazi prisons and concentration camps. Most of all, to those who, with the author, were amongst the unfortunates in what was most likely the worst concentration camp in Germany—the dreaded DACHAU

Foreword

THIS is a true account of what did really happen in the German prison and concentration camp of Dachau.

The names of many of the persons concerned have been withheld to avoid embarrassment, but those mentioned are the true names of people whom I met, many of whom died or were murdered in various camps.

This story may bring news of loved ones who could not be traced; if so, may I tender my deepest sympathy to those concerned.

To those whom I mention who are still living, may I wish them every happiness in the future, a happiness which they justly deserve, and freedom for all time.

To Madame Hubert and her daughter Suzanne, but for whose help and succour this book may never have been written, my most sincere thanks and gratitude for their most loyal self-sacrifice for the Allied cause.

K. G. BAILEY

Exerpt: Testimonial of Frank Hubert Tuck

Frank was on the list for this convoy and we spent most of the night before talking of old times. We went over our activities against the Germans, and did not regret one moment. We did not know what lay ahead, but promised each other to meet every year after the war, if we should both survive.

The following morning, I watched Frank's convoy leave. It consisted of many lorries, loaded with the prisoners who were all standing. Behind were further lorries loaded with German guards and police dogs. There must have been one guard to every two men. The Germans were not taking any chances. As the lorries drew out of the courtyard I pressed my face to the bars of the window hoping to see Frank once more. I did not see him again. As I turned away, my eyes were dimmed with tears. Gone was my best friend, with whom I had shared so much; exciting sabotage, capture, privations, humiliation, and hunger; but, above all, we had shared a trust in each other that even the Gestapo had not broken. I felt a deep sense of personal loss, which it was to take months to overcome. It was in later years that Frank told me his story as follows:

"Out through the huge gates of Villeneuve Prison and across the moat we marched on the first lap of our journey into Germany. When we arrived at what, I believe, was the Gare du Nord Station, we were bumped into a train—into compartments filled to overflowing. It was a hot day, an extremely hot day, so that we were stifled with the heat and lack of air. The guards refused to take the manacles off our wrists until the train was on its way.

The delay seemed endless; but, eventually, we were on the move. All through the night, we rumbled on through the vast expanses of French country, with several stops and hold-ups, till, early the following evening, we eventually arrived at the German city of Karlsruhe and were marched, manacled in pairs, tired, dishevelled and starving, to the prison, which was apparently one stage of our journey.

"The prison appeared to be clean and efficiently run, but had a distinctly depressing and evil atmosphere. Here, we were housed for the next few days, but were curiously glad to leave there despite the possibility of something worse. It was here at Karlsruhe prison that, it was discovered, after the war, that the loyal Anglo-Indian girl agent was tortured and shot.

"We were eventually put on a train again and, two days later found ourselves at the old fortress town of Landsberg in South Bavaria. We marched for what seemed to be endless miles to the huge Landsberg prison, which was considered to be a model of German prisons—where Hitler had been imprisoned and where he is reputed to have written *Mein Kampf*. The inside of Landsberg Prison is enough to give anyone the creeps. Huge and spacious, cold and bleak, I can well imagine it striking fear and despondency into the heart of the most hardened criminal. Strangely quiet, and echoing every footstep and clink of keys in the great dome-like hall, this place did not, at this stage, have the appearance of being overcrowded and quite different to what I found it on the return journey three years later. We went through the usual admission procedure and, after having baths, were each placed in a separate cell. Next day, we were all attached to working-parties and sent to work on repairing railways. The work was heavy and our bodies weak through semi-starvation, even at that early stage, and we arrived back in the evening, completely exhausted, to a bowl of soup and slice of black bread. Two days later, the plans seemed to have changed and we were sent to collect all our belongings again. We were soon *en route* for some other destination. We eventually arrived at Augsburg, much farther north, and had to go through the same procedure on admission to Augsburg Main Prison; but this place was much older and not quite so terrifyingly impressive as Landsberg. Next day we were sent to a labour camp two or three miles outside Gundelfingen, a small town in Central Bavaria, and here we were to stay for the remainder of the time we worked in Germany. This

was a labour camp of between eighty and one hundred strong, made up of defaulters of various nationalities, but the majority were French. Even the odd Germans came here to work eventually. When I arrived I found that three of my colleagues from Guernsey had preceded me; and there were also two men from Jersey. Needless to say I was delighted about this; to be unable to converse freely with your fellowmen because of language barrier is to be alone amongst a crowd, especially under these conditions.

“Our job thenceforward was to repair and build German railroads; and our experiences were such that I wonder that I, or any of those who underwent this experience, can ever bear to see a train or railway again. The commandant of the camp was a detestable, weed-like, whippet-like character with a sneering, snarling face and a horrible disposition who seemed to delight in petty and grosser acts of savagery and sadistic cruelty, possibly, as a compensation for his own physical and mental limitations. The workmaster—the man who was in charge of and accompanied the working-party each and every day—was a gorilla-type monster, just about one of the ugliest men you could ever meet, with a big nose, and cropped head; the French boys were quick to nick-name him *Gros-nez*, meaning ‘big nose’. He even walked like a gorilla and his misshapen, though muscularly-developed, body and bald head sent a cold chill down your spine. He was a powerful beast, and packed such a punch behind his powerful shoulders that even a slap with open hand across a prisoner’s face would send him reeling to the ground like a log, stunned and unable to rise for several minutes. He was reputed to be, or to have been, a pugilist, wrestler and weight-lifter. He was not very tall; but this brute was as strong as a lion and obviously selected for the job. It was this beast, this embodiment of everything that is evil, who, aided by the guards, saw that the work was carried out. It was because of the terrific fear he wrought amongst the prisoners that seemingly impossible tasks were carried out by men with weakened bodies, so devoid of strength and robbed of vitality, that even the act of walking was often a struggle. With these human shells, in which even the fire of faith and hope was dwindling, he kept the railroads in that part of the country open until early 1945—when American Fortresses based in Italy wreaked such havoc that this was no longer feasible.

“The day started at 5.30 a.m., when the whistle blew and

you dressed and made your beds. ‘Beds’, did I say? Well, your bed consisted of a straw-filled ‘palliasse’, which you had to constantly turn over even to obtain any degree of softness; but it was better than lying on the bare boards and, at least, here, we were free from vermin. One light blanket and a light cover formed the top and, even in the height of summer—as the nights and mornings are extremely cold in Bavaria—we often had to use our working clothes as extra wrapping in an attempt to keep warm. There were never any fires in the dormitory—although grates were installed—even in the depth of a Bavarian winter; when, soaking wet and freezing cold, we were locked in the dormitory from about 5.30 or 6 p.m. until the following morning; and had to place our sodden clothes on our beds where the heat of our bodies—we hoped—would help to dry them for the morning. Only twice during the worst European winter recorded in 1943 did he give orders for fires to be lighted; and strangely enough, most of us were sneezing and coughing the following morning with colds and sore throats!

“The conditions were hard and the tasks were hard; I often wonder how the human body could stand up to such treatment at all, and that there were any survivors. The cold was so intense in winter that your clothes touching your skin—no such things as underwear there—were almost unbearable. The term ‘frozen stiff’ had a literal meaning here. I have been, and often seen many others, so perished and blue with cold I could not move, and with icicles formed at the end of the nose which I could not raise my numbed arms and hands to knock off. In the summer the heat is tropical after about 10 o’clock in the morning, with a terrific heat haze hanging in the sky. Our tongues at times were stuck to the roofs of our mouths, completely parched by the intense heat; and the guards at these times would delight in handing round a bottle of beer to each other. We were allowed to shave only once a week with a razor passed round and sharpened—or blunted—on a type of whetstone. It became more practicable, however, to assign this task to one or two Frenchmen of the type who always turn up in these circumstances with their handy notions—and who were usually rewarded with an extra bowl of watery soup for their services. The ordeal of being shaved, however, is one I don’t care to remember. The soap that was issued would have been better described as pumice stone—just about as gritty and unpleasant to use. This had to be used for the

entire body as well; and you were forced under a cold shower-bath no matter how many degrees it was below zero. The stresses and strains of living under these conditions soon made themselves felt and many lost all their self-respect and were reduced to the level of animals. All men, however self-possessed or strong-willed, soon underwent some degree of mental and physical deterioration. Tempers were easily frayed, emotions easily aroused; petty jealousies guided men's actions; and often bitterness to the extent of treachery took place. It was impossible to keep yourself to yourself under these conditions and one could easily become involved in some fracas quite involuntarily. Starving men found themselves ready to do almost anything for an extra bowl of watery soup, a slice of black bread, or the whiff of a cigarette for the shattered nerves. Day in and day out, the same routine went on; up in the morning and out on to the railway track ripping up and laying railway lines, carrying and placing sleepers, and carrying lengths of line as well. Men dropped with heat and weakness in the near-tropical summers, and passed out with the cold in winter. There were constant beatings and punitive measures. Anyone who knows the chill of a Bavarian morning at 7 o'clock will be able to imagine the cruelty of having to discard one's clothes at that hour and work stripped to the waist. The excuse given for this treatment was to discourage escapes.

"The outlook of running away without clothes was indeed a grim one; and the Germans of course realized this. There were, however, a series of escapes and, eventually, dogs were brought to the assistance of the armed guards. As difficult as it was before, it was even more difficult then; and the attempts became fewer. The eventual return of all escapees confirmed my view that, in the circumstances, the attempt to escape was futile and well-nigh impossible. Three who made the bid were in a shocking condition when they were returned to the camp after a month of solitary confinement on bread and water, and further unmerciful beatings by *Gros-nez*, the Workmaster, on top of the flogging meted out to them on recapture. The white-skinned, Belsen-type skeletons which came back to more floggings and victimization by the guards were a grim verdict on the unplanned and ill-timed escapes.

"It can be argued, of course, that many escapes by captured Service personnel, and indeed captives of all types, were at-

tempted and made; but what is not generally appreciated is the low ratio of successes; and many were shot in the process of trying to escape and on recapture. It must also be remembered that every labour camp, or group of forced labourers, each had its own peculiarities and set of circumstances which made the possibility of escape either feasible or impracticable—and, sometimes, even absolutely unthinkable. The factors against successful escape from this camp, and indeed all others like it, were, firstly the weak condition of the prisoners, together with the vast expanses of enemy country which had to be traversed before a get-away could be effected. Long distances cannot be walked without some little reserve of energy. There was also the question of sustenance on the journey, and clothes to change into—as the garb we were made to wear certainly carried the mark of the prisoner, and could not be expected to take you far at any time, let alone in enemy country. Then there was the closely guarded situation with armed guards and alsatian dogs; but, despite the precautions and unfavourable conditions, the least opportunity which presented itself was usually taken with, as I have said before, disastrous consequences. I saw a French youth of 19 years of age brought back half an hour after he had got away and been tracked down by the dogs, beaten with the handle of a pick-axe until his shrieks were subdued by unconsciousness and his battered body was black and blue and bleeding, with several bones broken. The hysterically-frantic flogging stopped only when the pick-axe handle snapped in two. The boy was taken away to Augsburg Prison, from where he returned several weeks later completely broken, even the fiery twinkle in his normally bright eyes having gone out. This boy was later burned severely about the head and face by an incendiary bomb when the U.S. Air Force, operating from bases in Northern Italy, bombed a huge German supply stores opposite the railway line on which we were working. Months later, I met him when we were marched from place to place in face of the Allied advance into Germany; and, though miraculously recovered, he was scarred and disfigured for life.

"The mood of our captors changed from time to time according, it seemed, to the progress of the war and the tone of the German propaganda. It is difficult to understand the German mentality and, even at the time, when it must have been evident to the dullest German that ultimate victory would not belong to them, they made no attempt to let up on their acts of violence, or

to attempt to reconcile themselves with the prisoners. Indeed, rather than consider the possibility of retribution from their victims and try to make amends, they constantly and right up to the end, when the outcome of the war was evident and inevitable, sought to leave the prisoners in no doubt as to who were the masters; one of their common sayings, increasingly repeated as the end of the war got nearer, was 'we are the masters yet'—shouted at their victims with greater belligerency than ever.

"It transpired, however, that, when they were forced to accept the 'writing on the wall', the remedy they devised to try and escape retribution for their evil deeds was to move the prisoners hundreds of miles from the scenes of their crimes and to change the guards. Actually, during the last few days before Germany's capitulation, the guards were all strangers and dressed in civilian clothes.

"If you were too weak to do at least what the Germans considered to be the minimum amount of work, you were battered and tortured in many ways to the point when you could no longer stand up; and, at that time, you were moved to the cells in Augsburg prison to die alone and without medical attention. This happened to one of my English colleagues, whose death in this case was witnessed by a Frenchman—a French airport controller—who later arrived at our camp and told us the dreadful story of this man's last hours, when all attention was denied him, including refusal to call a doctor.

"I have seen men tied to trees in the bitterest cold, with a howling wind blowing around them and snow a foot thick on the ground, from 9 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon, when, blue with the cold, they could not stand up and had to be carried or wheeled in a truck back to the camp. I have seen men made to sit down in pools of water in the depths of winter for hours on end. I have seen men knocked down with the butts of rifles just because they were too weak to do the particular task assigned to them or because, for the same reason, their movements were not fast enough to suit that monster of a workmaster, *Gros-nez*. And I have had that treatment meted out to me. The weaker you were, the worse you were treated and the more despised. The degree of severity or leniency of treatment was determined by your measure of usefulness and ability to work according to your age and condition. When dysentery spread

throughout the camp, we were compelled to carry on working until we could do so no longer; and then walked about two miles to see a doctor, the stronger ones helping the weaker ones along. Next day, you were back at work and hopefully expecting the medicine to do its job.

"In July, 1943, something happened which was to give us new hope, and courage, in these dreadful and dismal surroundings. It was a hot day and the gang was working on repairing the railway line at Gundelfingen station—which was a comparatively short distance from our camp, outside the entrance to a timber yard and works, into which ran a private railway line serving the works from the main station. The buzz of whispered rumour went around like wildfire that someone had found food placed in the hedge on the side of the station, right in front of a big house to which apparently the timber works belonged.

"Some of the boys had been working—very luckily—near to this hedge; and, in the evening back at camp, the rumour was confirmed concerning the food. It was true that quite a number of huge slices—hunks—of deliciously white bread (white bread was practically unheard of in war-time Germany; the normal ration, even to civilians, was what is known as 'black bread' and was not in any way comparable with the bread issued in war-time Britain) and butter or margarine, and spread with jam, had been discreetly placed in the hedge at various accessible points where it could be retrieved by the prisoners who were working close enough to do so without attracting the attention of the guards. Some obvious benefactor had been at work, but the mystery remained and, next day, the process was repeated. There was, naturally, bitterness and jealousy towards the fortunate ones who were working close enough to obtain this 'manna from heaven'; and this was made worse because in this 'each man for himself' system, and the fact that everyone was starving, hardly anyone of the lucky ones thought of sharing a crumb with someone else. This is how men get when the instinct of self-preservation takes absolute and complete control.

"This was repeated two or three times and, as we were dispersed in small working groups in this area, I do not quite know how it came about; but it was revealed that the 'angel'—and I use that word very deliberately and meaningfully—who was endeavouring to minister to our physical needs was the daughter

of the owner of that timber yard and factory, who also had a farm and an interest in milling—or his family had, my memory is not too clear on that point. Her name was Annie Sailer. She and her mother and wonderful aunt (her father kept much in the background but, I later understood from Annie, was pro everything they did) were prepared to risk their lives, it transpired later, in the cause against Hitler. Annie is the foremost figure here as everything, it seems, was inspired by her. She, and her family, were waiting for the defeat of Nazi Germany, and prepared to help it along if possible, and also dedicated to help all those suffering as a result of Germany's iniquities. She had a dear brother on the Russian front, but was delighted at Germany's failure there. Hers is a story, of course, which should be told separately; and this, in any case, is only a brief resume of my own experiences in Nazi hands; but not to mention her, in passing, would to my mind, be to deny a debt of extreme gratitude to a wonderful person. By pretending to befriend *Gros-nez*, whom she actually despised, and the guards, she engineered it, with her father and mother's acquiescence, so that working-parties went inside the timber-yard and on the farm to do jobs, very light jobs, so that she could feed and encourage them while they were there. In order to accomplish this more fully, she even bribed *Gros-nez* and the guards. One memorable time for me was when her mother entertained *Gros-nez*, and even got him 'tiddley', whilst I listened to the B.B.C's report from London on the invasion of Italy in Annie Sailer's bedroom! This certainly was taking risks, but it came off. For some inexplicable reason, as I could not have cut a very good picture in those days, Annie took a liking to me, or so it seemed. She often managed to get me out from the crowd on various pretexts—'a job that only required one man' and so on—and, in this way, I was able to discuss many things with her; the war, its causes and its progress, the news and Nazi propaganda, religion and God, our respective countries, and home life—a very bitter-sweet subject in those circumstances. I forgot to tell you, whilst Annie could speak and understand English fairly well, my own German was lamentable. She did express concern for the British in the camp, as she was quite aware of particular antagonism towards us at work, and at the camp, by the Commandant, and *Gros-nez*; and we did feel that her influence, even in some small degree, at times dissuaded them from their worst practices, to us and our fellows, especially if we were working in or near Gundelfingen. Maybe, on second

thoughts, I was privileged to enjoy Annie's special attentions because I liked talking—I always have had quite a lot to say in certain situations and circumstances, or when prodded or aggrieved by some injustice, although not what I believe is generally considered an extremely voluble fellow—and I really think she wished to learn, and to confirm, what she had already learned, of the British way of life. After all, that is what the war was about, or boiled down to fundamentally, just that—a way of life. She was an intelligent girl—and I love an intelligent conversation—with an unquestionable faith in Almighty God to see that this evil regime would be wiped out of Germany.

"She did all within her limited power to try and alleviate our suffering and misery; but for long spells of sometimes months on end our working-parties never went near Gundelfingen Station; there was work to be done in so many and widespread places. The war dragged on and, from the beginning of 1944 onwards, the raids on that part of the country were considerable. We were machine-gunned on the trains going to and from work; we were bombed and machine-gunned at work on the railway lines and in the stations; and we lost many of our numbers. But replacements still came from Augsburg—there were still prisoners being brought in from the occupied countries right up to the bitter end—remember—'we are still the masters' they said, even when Berlin and all the great cities of Germany were crashing and smouldering in ruins, and the German armies on both fronts were falling back in one great *debacle* (which made Dunkirk look like a victory march). There were days when we spent our time sheltering in the woods which flanked the railway lines, against the incessant onslaught of American Flying Fortresses which came over in hordes from Northern Italy and wrought destruction on every railway line and yard, and siding, in sight. Whilst the main station in Neu-Ulm was totally destroyed together with that part of the city, by pattern bombing done by great waves of bombers, we sheltered in foxholes dug in the fields, flanking the station on the outskirts, less than a mile from the main target. We barely had time to run or, more accurately, drag ourselves there, when the sirens went at about 9 o'clock one morning. After the raid a single 'plane overhead scattered thousands of leaflets, which we were forbidden to pick up. One or two, however, *were* picked up and smuggled around; but, being written in German, we had to wait for interpretation of them back at camp in the

evening by a German-speaking Greek. The most amusing part, however, was that, in our ignorance through being cut away from the world for so long, we mistook the head of Eisenhower on the corner of the leaflets to be a younger picture of Churchill! At a cursory glance, which was all we had time for, it was quite feasible and, in any case, we had, at that time, never even heard of Eisenhower. Such is the price of being cut away for years without news and fed only on suitable pieces of Nazi propaganda.

"The position in March, 1945, became so intolerable that it was almost impossible to keep the camp together. Each day we were machine-gunned and bombed and had to crawl into hiding and reassemble after the raids through black smoke and grime and the smell of burning cordite, back to the burning stations, and hopefully, the waiting trains to take us back to camp. Often we had to march back, dirty, hungry and dishevelled, those that were left of us, many miles to the camp. Those who dropped out with exhaustion or through injury we heard of no more. Still replacements came. On some lines which were still working, we saw hundreds of cattle-trucks packed tight containing many thousands of prisoners of all nationalities being transported to some unknown destination. When one of these convoys of railway cattle-trucks halted one day in a siding on which we were working, we were horrified to see men of the Belsen-type peering through the doors whilst attendants removed the dead bodies from the wagons. Apparently, they were dying like flies from hunger and suffocation, and the stench was terrific. It was only by accident we saw this sight as we were being marched through this siding; and even our own guards looked sick and ill at ease. It made us think. We thought our own position was intolerable and our own bodies wasted away to a skeleton; but, at least, we were comparatively clean against these poor souls, their clothes matted with their own human excretions, and the pitiable expressions of the wasted skeletons of men about to die. Despite the other horrors and privations and the terrible conditions of life under which we lived, we had not seen many lice or vermin since we left France. The Commandant of our Camp with all his savagery, which perhaps turned it into a good point in this instance, delighted in enforcing cleanliness. Indeed, in his twisted mind, he seemed to regard his brutal methods of enforcing cleanliness as a great opportunity of inflicting another penal task, with all its rigours and humiliations, upon his unfortunate victims. If vermin

was found on anyone, sometimes on a newcomer, he applied his own special treatment to that poor unfortunate person until the last louse was dead.

"These convoys were the beginning of the great exodus of prisoners from various parts of the occupied countries into Germany, and from certain parts of Germany itself to other parts. The great 'change around' you could call it. An effort, it would seem, to ensure that the prisoners were removed a long way away from the scene of the crimes inflicted upon them, so that those responsible could escape retribution. In the same way as attempts were made, successfully in some cases, to burn down concentration camps and all their contents before the arrival of the Allied armies. Our turn came at the beginning of March, 1945. After spending the day in the camp, because it was impossible to go to work, we were assembled in the evening, given a whole loaf of black bread, a tin of something which resembled meat paste, and we began to march—no one knew where. If the guards knew, they were not telling, and by then, as is reasonable to suppose, they were more friendly in a cold sort of way. The Commandant and *Gros-nez*, who started the journey with us, we never saw again, and I can't remember where they fell out. By the end of the journey, many days later, we had all new guards—in civilian clothes.

"We marched all that night, through quiet villages and over moorland roads and only halted once at 3 o'clock in the morning, when we were allowed to sit awhile by the roadside, in freezing cold, to partake of a few mouthfuls of our precious rations which we did not know how long would have to last. Then on again until 7 o'clock in the morning, when they commandeered a barn on a lonely farm, there to rest our weary bones until midday. By this time, we had marched many kilometres and our feet, badly shod, were already sore and bleeding. We helped each other to tear pieces from our filthy shirts and bandaged our wounded feet. On again, on our weary trudge on what seemed like endless roads in Germany. In the afternoon we started passing wrecked military vehicles of all descriptions lying on the roadside and in the ditches, and farm wagons which had got mixed up in the fray, lying battered and riddled with bullets. Several times along this stretch of road, we had to scramble and lay face downwards in the ditches whilst aircraft zoomed overhead and dived menacingly

towards us. Mistakes had, in fact, been made because, at one stage, we passed bodies of prisoners heaped on the roadside, obviously shot-up by passing planes. Our confidence was shaken then and we realized the frightening possibility of being taken for a column of Wermacht soldiers, especially at dawn or dusk. The guards must have realized this, too, and, being naturally anxious for their own skins, we did all our marching at night after that. Of course we had no idea where we were most of the time and were too tired and miserable to care; but our interest was awakened by the constant sound of small artillery fire at the side of us in the distance. We just could not believe, however, that the battle-front was so near to us until we began encountering retreating units of the German Army—but, in our condition, and it might seem strange now, looking back, or to anyone reading this, we could not properly grasp the fact of what was happening until we landed one night right in the middle of the fireworks, battling 'planes overhead, the roar and thunder of the anti-aircraft guns opening up, spewing streaks of fire into the air, it was suddenly like all hell let loose. Then we had to get off the road whilst German front-line troops hurtled past in full retreat. This was, or had been, it seemed, part of their front-line. But why were we kept marching on? We also expected Allied troops to be pressing hard at the heels of the Germans; but none arrived. Our hearts leaped with joy at the prospect, but on we marched. The only inference, looking back, is that they were avoiding somehow, a pincer movement by the Americans, who were in this sector, and we were caught up between. However, distraught and, by now, distracted with disappointment, we pressed wearily on, propelled along by the sheer momentum of mechanical movement, our heads bowed and the blood oozing out of our canvas-top, wooden-soled boots, which were now bloodstained and caked by the dust and mud which clung in a congealed mess.

“I don't know what happened to those who fell by the wayside. As we eventually marched into a kind of camp at a place called something?—*stadd*, my recollection of my own feelings was one almost of immunity from further pain, just a complete and utter weariness which seemed to transcend all else. In the hours of marching prior to arriving at this place, I recall a sense of feeling that I was marching outside my own body; a most difficult experience to set down in words. It was as if I was being sustained by some spiritual power which was greater than, and ignored, the

flesh. I don't know what others felt, but I'm sure that those who arrived must surely have experienced in some similar way a power within themselves, greater than their own physical resources, weakened as they were, which enabled them to carry on. We had marched hundreds of kilometres by then, but found the place we had arrived at was only a temporary stopping-place. We flung ourselves on the beds allocated to us, which were arranged in bunk-like tiers; but then the pains returned and we could not sleep. With the help of prisoners who were there when we arrived, we found a stinking water closet and bathed our feet and our swollen legs and aching bodies. No antiseptics, of course, were available, but our wounds dried and, though they were tender and inflamed, in the estimation of the guards, we were fit to be on the road again. However, we could not get our boots on due to the swelling and tenderness of the feet. There was little that they could do except walk us in bare feet, so we stayed in here a few more days. I met a German author here whom I first noticed in the top bunk opposite me, writing feverishly. I forgot his full name, but it was Baron von *something*, and he gave me the name of his London publishers, which I have also forgotten. Quite obviously, he was a political detainee of some sort. He spoke English but appeared rather distant and somewhat aloof; or, perhaps, he was just pre-occupied. However, he did not seem to want to talk a great deal, but expressed concern as to where our destination was likely to be and mentioned the atrocities of Dachau, Mauthausen and several other concentration camps of which he knew.

“This information, of course, depressed us more than ever; and we prayed in our hearts that the Allies would overtake and rescue us from this living hell. After two or three days we were on the move again and, once out on the open road, saw all about us the evidence of the havoc which was being caused inside Germany at this time. They were getting back a thousandfold what the Germans had inflicted upon other peoples. The roads were clogged up with dead cattle, horses and wagons. Shattered army vehicles and tanks were strewn about, and there was no doubt that any movement at all was very difficult under the keen eyes of the pilots and crews overhead. There was so much chaos at this time that it is impossible in a brief survey to describe the conditions. There were soldiers, of a type, everywhere it seemed, and unarmed; and, as we came across these pockets of them as we

marched on, we came to the conclusion eventually that they had deserted and were on the run. They were certainly not first-class troops, not the types I had seen at the beginning of the war after they had steam-rolled through France and the low countries and finally 'captured' the Channel Islands. Those swaggering brutes had been tough and first-class soldiers; these were obviously just the remnants of a battered army, older men, careworn and weary.

"Confirmation of the desertions, and the strong measures adopted to try and deal with the situation, came on the morning of the last day of our march. At dawn, as we were marching down a road on entering a village, someone uttered a startled cry and pointed to one of the apple trees which line the roads for miles in Western Germany; and there, hung by the neck, was the body of a German soldier with his cap pulled well down over his eyes and a label tied to his tunic. One could guess what the label said. At this sight, a shudder passed down one's frozen spine. How many more had we passed hung up like this during the darkness of the night? Farther down the road, was another and yet another—poor devils! we thought . . . If they could do this to their own men.

"That day, our march came to an end and we arrived at Landsberg, the monstrous, forbidding Landsberg which we had left three years before. This place later housed so many German war criminals themselves, and some were hanged there and lie buried in its precious precincts. But it was different now, not so forbidding, less efficient, and the warders were in civilian clothes. Once inside, at a glance, you could sense this. It was crowded and the mumble of a thousand voices met your ears; that alone gave it a warmer atmosphere. We were thrown into cells, already occupied, many at a time, and there we huddled together in those unhealthy conditions for several days before the boom of the guns came closer, echoing through the small barred, thick-glassed window high up in the corner of the cell. One night, there was a terrific bombardment outside, which didn't last very long, but the walls of the great prison trembled. Next morning, rumours went around that the Americans had arrived in the old fortress town of Landsberg. There was a terrific commotion inside the prison as the rumour spread and was assumed to be correct. It appeared later that the main cause of the trouble was the Greeks who had revolted and gone completely haywire. A large number were

housed together in one of the larger rooms; they rushed the door at feed time and stampeded through the prison, looking for the Governor (he had fled by then) smashing everything in sight, releasing other prisoners as they went along. Suddenly, there was panic as the rumour went round that the Storm Troops had arrived. Of course, someone had mistaken the fierce-looking American soldiers, who arrived with fixed bayonets and rifles at the ready, for Germans as they approached. However order was restored, as it had to be, whatever the emotions or causes, but I was allowed to speak to the Captain and some of the American soldiers who gathered round. They were surprised to see one Englishman among this crowd of mixed nationalities; and I quickly informed them that there may be others somewhere in the buildings. Two were later found in the hospital, too weak to walk. The Americans promised to be back in the evening to take us with them; and they were. Meantime, they filled my pockets with cigarettes; and, with these, I was able to while away the waiting hours more contentedly. In the evening, between six and seven o'clock, a young lieutenant arrived with three or four G.I.s, who took us away in a jeep to the American Military Government Headquarters to see the C.O., a Captain Cole. Very briefly, we were taken to a huge house used by the Military Government Staff, which had been commandeered from a German arms magnate, and given a bath and a meal—a very light meal of one egg and two slices of toast. At that time, a number of ex-prisoners had died through having suddenly switched to too rich a diet which they had voraciously devoured, so our meals were carefully regulated for the first couple of days, gradually increasing. It was not easy to deny starved men that little extra when so much was lying around. We were also seen by doctors and given cleansing treatment as our stomachs were full of dirt and filth, and we were being eaten alive with worms. After a few days, however, we began to pick up, and it was wonderful to feel new life beginning to pump through your veins, and to watch the glow of colour come back to your cheeks, faintly at first and increasingly more rapidly, as the days went by. By now we were entirely rigged out in G.I. uniforms and were issued with arms. Eventually we joined in the duties of other G.I.s, one of which was to round up and collect pockets of German prisoners found hiding here, there and everywhere. What a delightful task! I can, however, say that we used compassion in dealing with these men. Our real ambition was to go back and find *Gros-nez*, the Commandant, and others

who were guilty of atrocious cruelty towards us and our fellow-prisoners. The Americans did, in fact, arrange for us to go to Augsburg, Dillengen and Gundelfingen to search for these men and bring them to trial. They were apparently brought to trial, but, unfortunately, not by us. I fell from a truck and broke an arm and arrangements were made to send me home at once by hospital 'plane. When I had left, I was told later, there was a change around at Military Government and, because of the distance, the plan fell through. I was taken to an American Hospital in Rheims and stayed there under treatment for about three weeks. Then I, and several other British prisoners picked up in various parts of Europe, were taken by car to Brussels, to the 101st British Military Hospital there. The glum change from American luxury to comparative British austerity, from the Yankee uninhibited and carefree ways, to the inhibited discipline of the British Military system, was almost depressing if it had not been for the excitement of going home. After two or three days, however, we were put on a 'plane for England and landed at an airfield in Wiltshire.

"This is only a brief summary of things which took place; one quarter of the story has not been told. Nor have I given the names of people and places, times and dates. This is only a recollection quickly and vaguely written, without research or prompting, to fulfil a request from my old colleague, fellow-sufferer, and very good friend, the writer of this book. There are no bonds so strong between friends as those that are forged in adversity.

"I have not been able to tell you of the sufferings of my fellow-men, particularly of my own colleagues who were with me most of the time, and two or three of whom suffered even more than me, and those who died. I have only managed to touch upon the courage and gentleness of Annie Sailer. I have not, generally speaking, been able to go into much detail about anything, but if this disordered chapter will contribute to the greater fullness of the book my friend has written, that will suffice. Some day I may be able to write my own story.

"I have heard many times since the war from Annie Sailer; and I'm glad to say she was recognised and rewarded by the Americans for all the good work she did. I wrote to the American

Military Authorities myself, and I was amazed to learn that in the long list of people she had helped were Jews, although she herself is a very staunch Roman Catholic. I also learned that, under suspicion by the Gestapo, she had been arrested and the house searched and ransacked. That she and her aunt rode many miles on bicycles after we had left the camp to try and find us to warn us that thousands of prisoners were being slaughtered as the Allies advanced, and to urge us to escape if we could.

"Since the war I have seen the scepticism of people concerning the atrocities committed by the Germans—and the Japanese—and I have sensed a general trend of desire to forget in any case. Whilst it might be possible to have compassion on one's enemies, and to forgive, which is one of the greatest of Christian virtues, it would be wrong and unhealthy to forget".