

FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR

FORMERLY PARTICIPATING IN THE MERCER MEMORIAL DAY 500
2004 ~ 2010



ABIE ABRAHAM, U.S. Army enlisted at age 19 and served during WWII with the 18th, 14th, 15th and 30th Infantries., He was a light-weight boxing champ with the 31st Infantry in Manila, Philippines, where he served for 9 years. He fought, was captured, and was forced to participate in the 60 mile long Bataan Death March. Imprisoned for 3 ½ years he was bravely rescued by the 6th Rangers. Promoted to Master Sergeant he stayed behind at the request of General MacArthur for two and a half more years identifying and helping disinter the bodies of his brave fallen comrades along the death march trail and in the prison camps, and seeing that they were properly laid to rest. He has written two books, "Oh God, Where Are You?" and "Ghost of Bataan Speaks" which can be purchased from Amazon.com



DAILEY HALSEY U.S. Army, a 20 year old U.S. Army squad leader in the 2nd Infantry "Indian Head" Division, hit all the hot spots of the Korean War, fighting from Pusan to the Yalu River until he was captured during one of the biggest battles at Kum-Ri. After 5 months of combat his squad and others were ordered to set up a defensive boundary on the mountain Junu-Ri. They ran out of ammunition days earlier but marched on, hoping to reload once they reached the other side of the mountain. Dailey was 3rd in line as the group approached the mountaintop. Ahead of him was a Lt. Colonel and best friend Carl Hunt. In an instant both men were shot dead and lay crumpled at his feet. Five rifles were pointed at his head as thousands of Chinese Army troops closed in. 33 months in captivity he faced an everyday struggle for sanity and survival. Still suffering from the effects of frostbite he is proud of being considered by the enemy a "Reactionary", one who would not betray his country. His hearing loss came from being buried in a foxhole when a mortar struck nearby. 7,140 Americans became prisoners of war in Korea with the highest death rate for American prisoners of war since the Revolutionary War.



DAN KING, Army Air Corps, was given only one meal during the 10 days that passed from bail-out of his P51 Fighter (384th Squadron, 364th Fighter Group) and reaching Stalag Luft 1 where he became a prisoner of war March 15, 1945 in Germany. He was assigned a room with 19 other prisoners who would not talk to him for 2 weeks because they he was a German plant. As the Russians approached they knew Hitler had given the order to shoot all prisoners so they began digging foxholes to protect themselves but all Danny had to dig with was a spoon. When the Russians took over they held them hostage instead of releasing them. Dan and his friend had some freedom to wander and, led by a bad smell, discovered an unlocked gate to a compound. As they opened the door to the first they could see at least 2 rows of double-decked cots with people. Some seemingly could not move their emaciated bodies and others looked at us with pleading eyes, expressing extreme horror. This memory has haunted him to this day.

THESE HEROES, deceased or ailing, have been a part of our POW Salute at the Mercer Memorial Day 500 and will remain **A REMINDER OF WHAT FREEDOM HAS COST SOME**. Their biographies may be printed off our website www.mercermemorialday500.org. For more information – parade500@me.com or 724 662 2786.

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WAYNE MCCLELLAND joined the Army Air Corp in the early stages of WWII. As a young bomber pilot he was shot down and held at Stalag 3 as a POW near the Polish border for a year before being released by General Patton's troops. He remembers always being hungry and credits the Red Cross for keeping him alive. When he was moved to a second camp near the Neuremberg Rail Station there was a very real fear of thousand pound bombs from aircraft killing him. "It was a war of nerves. The strain not knowing your fate was terrible," says McClelland. "We were often threatened by the Germans and once came close to being shot to death when accused of stealing food."



BOB RAYBOULD, U.S. Army was serving with Hq. Co. 3rd Battalion, 112th Infantry, 28th Division, U. S., as a communications sergeant when captured at age 24 by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge. Bob had 2 rings, his wife's and mother's, and a small Bible. He traded the rings for two packs of cigarettes and traded each cigarette (worth \$20 each in the camp) for 1 ration of bread and 1 liter of soup a day. Thirty two young men died of starvation during Bob's 4 month stay at Stalag 9-B. His weight dropped from 180 to 90 pounds in that brief time. Only one Red Cross package made it to the camp for twenty men. The Germans called them the Bloody Bucket Brigade for the red keystone they wore on their sleeves. Among his many medals (Good Conduct, Euro African Middle Eastern Service Medal with 3 Bronze Stars) is the Medaille du Jubile' awarded by the French government. He was liberated on Easter by the 3rd Army, 2nd Calvary.



JIM ZIMMER, U.S. Army was detained in Stalag 9-B after having been taken prisoner by the Germans. The wind blew through broken windows in the barracks. They were forced to stand out in the snow for hours and given only enough wood to heat their stove for one hour a day. 140 men were jammed into barracks 100' by 20' and a third had to sleep on the floor. Only one Red Cross shipment reached them. Jim ate out of a tin can or helmet and had to use his fingers. The meals consisted of putrid watery soup with German food cast-offs thrown in. Bread was made of flour and sawdust. At the beginning, one loaf for 6 men; later, one for 12. Malnutrition was a general condition and POWs slowly starved to death. "When American rescue came many were too weak from hunger to leave their bunks."

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