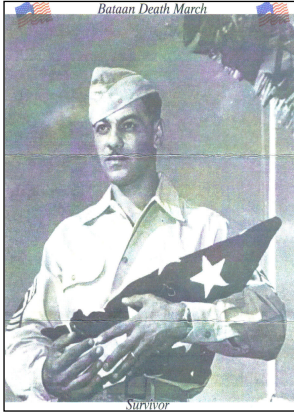


PRISONERS OF WAR



Abie Abraham was born in 1913 in Lyndora, PA. He enlisted in the Army in 1932. Staff Sergeant Abie Abraham was stationed during WWII with the 18th Infantry, New York; 3 years with the 14th Infantry in Panama; was a light-weight boxing champ; 15th Infantry, unassigned in China while the Panay was sunk; 30th Infantry Precido, San Francisco; 31st Infantry in Manila, Philippines, there 9 years. He fought and was forced to participate in the 60 mile long Bataan Death March. He was imprisoned for 3 ½ years as a POW and then was bravely rescued by the 6th Rangers. SSGT Abraham then stayed behind at the request of General Douglas MacArthur for two and a half more years disinterring the bodies of our brave fallen comrades from the death march and the prison camps. He helped identify their bodies and saw that they were properly laid to rest. He was promoted to Master Sergeant in 1945. He became a recruiter; then served in Germany before ending his 30 year military career. He has written two books: "Oh God, Where Are You?" and "Ghost of Bataan Speaks". He volunteers daily helping other veterans at the Veterans Hospital in Butler. For more information he may be contacted at 142 Hoffman Lane, Renfrew, PA 16053.



Wayne McClelland joined the Army Air Corp in the early stages of WWII. He considers graduation from flight school one of his greatest achievements. As a young bomber pilot he was shot down and held as a POW for a year before being released by General Patton's troops. He has vivid memories of Stalag 3 in Germany near the Polish border. He remembers always being hungry and credits the Red Cross for keeping him alive. Since a second camp they were moved to was near the Neuremberg rail station there was a real fear of thousand pound bombs from aircraft killing them. "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, being accused of stealing food." He was recalled to active duty during the Korean War and served in the Air Force Reserves earning the rank of Colonel before retiring in 1980.



Jim Zimmer was detained in 9-B Stalag after being taken prisoner by the Germans near Frankfurt prior to the Battle of the Bulge. They were marched for five days to a rail head where they boarded boxcars that took them to their detainment camp. During their march they were given no food or water. Townspeople, as they passed, kicked them and threw things at them. Stalag 9-B was nicknamed Little Siberia because it was so cold. The wind blew through broken windows in the barracks. At one point he, with the other prisoners were forced to stand out in the snow for hours to force a couple of them to confess to a crime. Living conditions were considered to be among the worst of the camps. Incredible over crowding, deplorable facilities and starvation diets were responsible for this rating. The total American prisoners in 9-A and 9-B at one point reached over 4000. During Jim's confinement, from December 16, 1944 until April 2, 1945 when they were

liberated, his group of 140 men were jammed into barracks 100' long and 20' wide. They were locked in at night. The confinement buildings were not made for winter use and were infested with lice, fecal material and other vermin. There were not enough beds and blankets for them all and nearly a third had to sleep on the floor. They were given only enough wood to heat their stove for one hour a day. There were few eating utensils and a thousand soldiers had to eat out of their helmets. Jim ate out of a tin can. Most used their fingers. Malnutrition was a general condition. Men slowly starved to death. "Only one Red Cross shipment reached us", he said. Daily fare consisted of a putrid watery soup they called "grass soup" because of the putrid greens in it. Sometimes turnips or beets, potato peelings and German food cast-offs were thrown in. Prisoners were given bread made of flour and sawdust. One loaf for 6 men; later, 12 men to a loaf. Once a horse carcass was lowered into the boiling soup. The meat that fell off of it was a treat. Camp work included cleaning out latrines "The sewage would slosh on our feet and we had neither washing facilities nor spare clothes to clean up." No mail was received and little sent to America ever arrived. The camp was provided with some musical instruments and plans were made for a band, but the soldiers' health "went down too fast" to continue with it. When the Americans came to rescue them, many were too weak from hunger to leave their bunks. It is believed the officer in charge of the camp was tried and executed after the war.

**All 3 men will be on Veterans Platform at noon Monday, May 29,
at Citizens Cemetery to answer questions
following the Observance.**