

## Additional Remembrances

My father sailed to Europe on the Queen Mary. He described the events leading up to his capture on many occasions. He was positioned in Saint Vith at the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge in a forward position. He reported hearing trucks and tanks on several occasions, but was told they were probably American. On the morning of December 16, 1944, the Germans made contact with his position. He held the position with his 30-caliber machine gun until his ammunition ran out, then retreated with his squad to a nearby farmhouse. They took position on the second floor of the farmhouse, and he relates that they were amazed that the German "88's" on the tiger tanks were able to walk rounds up the farmhouse wall toward the window opening. He remembers that the cannon fire stopped for a short time after which they realized they were surrounded by German infantry. He was terrified upon hearing the boots of the German soldiers on the stairs. A grenade was tossed into the room, and sometime later he awoke to a German Soldier pointing his rifle at his face. Over the next several days, the remaining men in the squad, a gentleman named Cohen, a native American and my father were marched into Germany and eventually arrived at Stalag 17 via train. In a mess line, Cohen hid his dog tags and my father gave him his First Communion Rosary, which Cohen placed, around his neck in hopes that it would help him with the German interrogators. When my father was being interrogated by a German officer, he mistakenly divulged that he was from Baltimore. When asked what his occupation was, he didn't want to say that he was in the hardware business because he feared being assigned to work in a factory. So he said he was a farmer. The German officer laughed and said, "I spent several years in Baltimore and I don't recall any farms there. You are a woodchopper." He then sent him on his way.

As a prisoner, he existed on rye (saw dust bread) and turnips. He spent his free time carving likenesses of his childhood pets and other animals out of stolen pieces of firewood. These carvings are in the possession of his family.

He was liberated by the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukrainian Army and was assigned, with other American prisoners, the task of scavenging for food.

He was handed over to the American authorities after considerable negotiation at the infamous Elbe River crossing. He spent the duration of his military service in rehabilitation in Europe and the United States. He was sent to Miami, Florida for R and R upon arriving back in the states. He remembers being served more food than he had seen in a year, day after day until he recovered his strength.

He received the Bronze Star for valor for his actions on December 16<sup>th</sup> as well as a second Purple Heart.