

Comments regarding Joe B. Maloy Jr. for 392<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group Reunion 2019.

My father, Joe Bruce Maloy Jr. was from Montgomery, Alabama. He was born in November 1924. He entered the Eighth Air Force in 1943. He was a ball turret gunner on a B-24 flying out of Wendling with the 392<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group. I have provided two handwritten excerpts from a larger account of his life and war experiences.

The first excerpt is the actual account of being shot down and bailing out after a raid on Berlin in April 1944.

The second is from April 1945 when the P.O.W.'s from Luftstalag XVII B in Krems, Austria were marched back and forth for hundreds of miles as the guards sought to avoid capture by the Soviets. During that march they witnessed the slaughter of Jews who were being marched out of Mauthausen Concentration Camp.

Like many others my father was quiet about his war service. You didn't see it reflected in his day to day life. When he came back, he went to the University of Alabama on the GI bill. He married my mom and he worked for Kimberly Clark Corporation until he retired.

One thing I didn't fully appreciate until I was older was why it was that as a child I could never get my Dad to go on a camping trip. He must have sworn an oath to never again be without indoor plumbing and central heat.

However, around the time of his retirement he began to hear stories of people who denied that the Holocaust had ever occurred. That ate at him. He could not abide that there were people who claimed loudly that something he had seen with his own eyes never happened.

He wrote almost one thousand pages in wire bound notebooks of his experiences in the war. He began to tell his story publicly. His logic was simple. "I am the unimpeachable witness. I was just a kid from Alabama who was thrust into something he never wanted to see or experience." He had no political agenda; he simply told what he saw.

He spoke to high school civic classes, Rotary clubs, Kiwanis, you name it.

Telling the truth gave my father purpose in his later life, but his Eighth Air Force experience didn't prevent him from enjoying life. In the mid 1990's I bought a new car. It was a large Mercedes convertible sedan. I went to pick him up to take him to lunch. I hadn't told him I had bought a new car. He came out of the house and saw it in the driveway. He walked all the way around it and said, "Wow. The last time I got a ride in a big Mercedes convertible it was from Gestapo Headquarters to the P.O.W. camp...but we're just going to Chick-fil-A, right?"

My father passed away in 2006. He and my Mother rest at Arlington. I know he would wish you a happy and successful reunion.

ON APRIL 16TH WE WERE UP EARLY AND ON OUR WAY. WE WERE HUNGRY AND WEARY BUT OUR SPIRITS WERE HIGH. WE KNEW THAT THE END WAS IN SIGHT, BUT WE SOON BEGAN TO HEAR DISTANT SOUNDS OF SMALL ARMS FIRE. THIS COULDN'T BE THE RUSSIANS, THEY WOULD BE COMING BEHIND MASSIVE ARTILLERY BARRAGES. IT GREW CLOSER. WE STOPPED IN A QUAINT AUSTRIAN VILLAGE TO FILL OUR WATER CONTAINERS FROM A FOUNTAIN IN THE CENTER OF TOWN AND MOVED ON. AS WE ROUNDED A SHARP CURVE IN THE ROAD WHICH WAS CUT INTO A HILLSIDE, I GASPED AT THE SIGHT THAT GREETED ME. COMING FROM THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, FOUR ABREAST, WAS AN ENDLESS COLUMN OF WALKING SKELETONS! EACH PITIFUL THING HAD ON A STRIPED PRISON GARB, A THIN, BATTERED, ~~BLACK~~ LONG BLACK COAT AND A BILL-LESS CAP. EACH COAT HAD A YELLOW STAR-OF-DAVID ON THE LEFT BREAST, WITH THE GERMAN WORD FOIR JEW (JUDE) IMPRINTED IN THE CENTER. IF YOU CAN IMAGINE, THEY LOOKED AS IF SOMEONE HAD COLLECTED A BUNCH OF LABORATORY SKELETONS AND COVERED THEM WITH DIRTY, ALMOST TRANSLUCENT SKIN. THEIR EYES WERE SUNK DEEP INTO BLACK ~~HOLES~~<sup>SOCKETS</sup> AND THE

IMPRINT OF TEETH SHOWED THROUGH PAPER THIN CHEEKS. MANY HAD BLOODY HANDS AND KNEES, THEY HAD BEEN CRAWLING. SOME WERE CRAWLING NOW, BEING KICKED BY THEIR S.S. GUARDS. SOME WERE EATING CLUMPS OF GRASS, ROOTS, DIRT AND ALL. THEIR GUARDS WERE WALKING ~~AND~~ <sup>OR</sup> RIDING IN GERMAN "JEEPS" BESIDE THE COLUMN, SHOVING, BAYONETING, BLUDGEONING AND SHOOTING ANY WHO STUMBLER OUT OF LINE, STOPPED OR FELL BEHIND. THE DITCHES ~~ON~~ ~~BOTH~~ BOTH SIDES OF THE NARROW ROAD WERE LINED WITH THE DEAD, THEIR DEAD, SUNKEN EYES. LOOKING UP AT US, THEIR SHATTERED SKULLS UZING BLOOD AND BRAINS. THE ROAD ITSELF, AS WE MOVED ON, BECAME A MESS OF BLOOD, BRAIN TISSUE, BONE FRAGMENTS AND HUMAN WASTE. THE TRUCKS AND JEEPS OFTEN RAN OVER BODIES BEFORE THEY COULD BE DRAGGED ~~BY~~ <sup>INTO A DITCH BY</sup> SOON TO BE DEAD, ~~COMPANIES~~ COMRADES.

FOR MORE THAN AN HOUR WE PASSED. THEY LOOKED AT US WITH THE PLEADING EYES OF A CHILD BEGGING, ~~WITH WORDS~~ WITHOUT WORDS, TO BE SAVED. IT WAS HOPELESS, EVEN IF WE HAD SOUGHT TO OVERPOWER OUR GUARDS AND THEIRS IT WOULD CERTAINLY BEEN A PYRRHIC VICTORY. WE MOVED ON IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS. A RISING TIDE OF SHOCK, DISBELIEF, FURY AND FRUSTRATION LEFT A SICK, SOUR TASTE IN MY MOUTH AND LEFT A PICTURE IN MY MIND THAT WOULD NEVER LEAVE. I WOULD REMEMBER AND REMEMBER AND REMEMBER.

BY NOON WE HAD PASSED THEM AND GOT OUR FIRST LOOK AT THE "HELL ON EARTH" FROM WHICH THEY HAD COME - MAUTHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP.\* WE HAD PASSED ABOUT TWO-THOUSAND MEN, ALL KILLED WE WOULD LEARN LATER. THE YARDS AROUND THE MEDIEVAL LOOKING STONE ENTRANCE WAS LITTERED WITH "SKELETON" BODIES AND SEVERAL HUNG GROTESQUELY FROM THE ELECTRIFIED FENCE, PREFERING DEATH TO LIFE IN THIS PLACE. "IF THIS ISN'T HELL, YOU CAN SURELY SEE IT FROM HERE," I THOUGHT.



When I entered the Coca-Cola Company's "Whom do you choose" Program, asking for the opportunity to carry the Olympic Torch, I was asked to state my reasons for wanting to be a Torch bearer. My answer was:

As a veteran of WW2, who served in the 8<sup>th</sup> AF and survived a year as a P.O.W. in Stalag XVII B, I would consider it a privilege to carry the torch in remembrance of those who fought with us; both the living and the dead. As I run, I shall think of their hands being on the Torch, with mine. Our last Hurrah.

I was selected in May of 1996. On July 17, after a ceremony at the Peachtree City's Plaza, I carried the Flame one kilometer, past huge crowds of cheering spectators, to the accompaniment of thundering music. An unforgettable experience!



In an effort to keep my word, I listed the names of my old friends, my combat crew members and my close friends from P.O.W. days on a small piece of paper. I folded it and taped it to the palm of my right hand.

