

For The WAR CRIMES OFFICE

Judge Advocate General's Department -- War Department

United States of America

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Authority NND 735027

In the matter of Exposure of Prisoners * Perpetuation of Testimony of Ira E. Vance,
of War to the danger of gunfire and * Jr., 1st Lt., ASN 0-812332, St. Louis,
bombing at Camp Buchenwald, Germany. * Missouri.
from August 20, 1944 to October 19, *
1944. *

Taken at: St. Louis, Missouri

Date: 18 July 1945.

In the Presence of: Kenneth Barrows, Special Agent, SIC, 7th SvC, St. Louis, Mo.

Reporter: Lorine Teckemeier, Stenographer, District Intelligence Office, St. Louis, Mo.

Questions by: Kenneth Barrows, Special Agent, SIC, 7th SvC, St. Louis, Mo.

Q: State your name, rank, serial number and permanent home address.

~~A: Ira E. Vance, Jr., 1st Lieutenant, O-812332, 4119 Blaine Avenue, St. Louis, Mo.~~

Q: State your date of birth, place of birth, and marital status.

A: September 13, 1919, St. Louis, Missouri; married.

Q: Have you recently returned from overseas?

A: Yes.

Q: While overseas, were you a Prisoner of War?

A: Yes.

Q: Of whom were you a Prisoner of War?

A: The German Army.

Q: State the date, place and circumstances of your capture.

A: On August 4, 1944, I was pilot on a B-26 and was shot down over Chartres, France by flak. My organization was the 397th Bomb Group, 598th Bomb Squadron. I was given food and shelter by the French patriots for six days, during which time they moved me back to Paris, France, where I was arrested by the Gestapo on August 10, 1944.

Q: At what places were you held? Give the approximate dates.

As I was held as a prisoner at the Gestapo Headquarters at Paris for one day. Then we were moved to Frennes Prison, just south of Paris, where we were imprisoned for five days from August 10, 1944 to August 15, 1944, and we were under SS Guards. We were moved by train from Frennes to Buchenwald, near Weimar, Germany.

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A: (continued)

The trip took a period of five days and we travelled in box cars along with civilian prisoners--French, Polish and all nationalities. We were held at Buchenwald, still under the SS, from August 20, 1944 until October 19, 1944. We were then turned over to the Luftwaffe and transported to Sagan, Germany, Stalag Luft III, via box car where we were imprisoned until the latter part of January, 1945. We left Stalag Luft III on a march at the end of January, 1945 and marched approximately 80 kilometers where we were loaded on box cars and then transported to Stalag XIII-D, Nurnberg-Langwasser, Germany, where we were still under Luftwaffe Guards. In approximately the middle of March, 1945, we left Nurnberg enroute to Moosburg, Bavaria, marching all the way. The trip took sixteen days, arriving at Moosburg approximately April 1, 1945. We remained at this camp until we were liberated by the American Third Army.

Q: When you were captured in Paris, did the Gestapo accord you the treatment of a Prisoner of War?

A: No.

Q: When did you first acquire the status of Prisoner of War?

A: When captured, I was wearing civilian clothes furnished me by French patriots and treated by the Gestapo as a civilian prisoner. Upon arriving at Frennes Prison, I was interrogated by a Luftwaffe Oberleutnant Military Intelligence Officer. He informed me that I was being held as a civilian prisoner, but that my status would be immediately changed to Prisoner of War. At Buchenwald I was treated in the same manner as a civilian prisoner, except that I was not compelled to work. When I reached Sagan I was first recognized as a Prisoner of War.

Q: While you were at Camp Buchenwald did you observe any exposure of American Prisoners of War to the danger of gunfire or bombing?

A: Yes. For the first six weeks of my stay at Camp Buchenwald we were quartered in an open compound, approximately 300 yards from a military installation, this being a factory manufacturing gyroscopes for V-1 bombs. The factory was located within the camp proper, and the buildings which made up the factory were identical to the barracks proper. While we were there this factory was raided by the American Air Force. About seven groups of B-17's went over the target. We had no air raid shelters provided whatsoever, and were forced to just lie on the ground while the raid was in progress. We were forced to extinguish the fires created by this raid by the guards and were forced to walk in the burning buildings barefooted to carry out supplies and records.

Q: Were any American Prisoners of War injured in this raid?

A: One was slightly injured. This man was wounded by a brace from incendiary bomb cluster and was struck across the back. I do not know his name, nor can I describe him by rank or organization. I remember, however, that he had red hair.

Q: What was the approximate date of this air raid?

A: I believe it was sometime between September 1, 1944 and September 15, 1944. It was the only air raid carried out on Camp Buchenwald.

Q: Do you know who was responsible for placing the American Prisoners of War near a military target at Camp Buchenwald?

A: The camp was under the administration of the SS and I do not know the Camp Commandant's name.

Ira E. Vance, Jr., 1st Lt., O-312332

I, Ira E. Vance, Jr., of lawful age, being duly sworn on oath, state that I have read the foregoing transcription of my interrogation and all answers contained therein are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Ira E. Vance, Jr., 1st Lt., O-312332

Subscribed and sworn to before me this day of July, 1945.

A.P. Collar, Major, CWS,
Summary Court Officer.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kenneth Barrows, Special Agent, SIC, 7th Service Command, St. Louis, Missouri, certify that on 18 July 1945, personally appeared before me Ira E. Vance, Jr., 1st Lt., AC, and gave the foregoing answers to the several questions set forth; that after his testimony had been transcribed, the said Ira E. Vance, Jr., read the same and affixed his signature thereto.

Place: St. Louis, Missouri

(signature)

Date: 19 July 1945

Special Agent, SIC

7th Service Command, St. Louis, Mo.

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