

HISTORY OF GERMAN SAW-DUST BREAD

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About April 5th 1945 it was evident that Prisoner of War Camp 13C at Hammelburg, Germany was about to be liberated by the advancing American army. It was rumored that we were going to be marched out and I decided I wasn't going, if at all possible. Next morning we were told to get ready to go and I took off to the third floor loft of the old calvary barns we were housed in and hid under the old hay there. An hour or so later everyone had been moved out and the German guards checked the barns including the loft by poking around with their bayoneted rifles. Fortunately, they missed me, and soon I was alone. The guards had left along with all the prisoners. However, looking out the window I could see the Russian prisoners were still in their own compound about 300 yards from us. I decided it was safer to stay in my compound and ate one of the two black bread rations I had saved. That night I had a visit from the Russian prisoners who brought me a large bowl of very good soup – they had seen me in the window.

Next day about noon tanks of the 11th Armored Division knocked down the camp gate and food became plentiful. I explored a few deserted German houses and among other items I collected some silk handkerchiefs. I wrapped the ration of German bread I had left in one of the handkerchiefs and took it with me to Camp Lucky Strike at LeHarve, France and from there, home. The ration of bread resided in a drawer in my mother's house for the next two years until she told me one day that bugs were flying out of the drawer. Investigation showed that the bread had a bug infestation so I took it and sprayed it with fly spray and then put it in a jar and sealed it up where it has been to this date.

(written 8/28/1987)