

## **Personal account by Albert Lang (1995)**

*Ball turret gunner of the Liberator "Ginger" (crashed 26th August 1944)*



We made it as far back as Saarbrücken, bailed out at about 3000 feet. and I saw some of the guys come down down in the chute. As soon as I left the airplane the first thing I heard was a rooster crowing when my chute opened. And then I heard people, and I heard guns cracking. I landed almost immediately in a big tall tree. My chute collapsed and I fell down to the ground. That's when I broke my leg. I was twisted round backwards. The first thing I did - knowing that I couldn't get away from there - so I dug a hole, took my 45 and put it in the hole. Then I got the escape kit out, which I carried in my knee pocket and took a shot of morphine in my right leg, it was really killing me at the time. I buried that because it had a lot of German Marks and it also had maps and so forth, it was an escape kit. From that point on it was just a matter of time. It happened at about high noon on 26th August 1944.

It wasn't long till I heard some dogs and they came and they stood off about 5 feet from me and were barking and pointing with tails to the soldiers that came, who were ack-ack gunners, I discovered later. They came up to me with their guns levelled. I held up my hands, with the white part of my parachute. They said: "Aha!" And I said: "OK, I surrender." They said: "Alright, get up! Raus!" And I said: "Mein Bein ist kaputt." They said: "Aha." And they took some branches out of the tree and took my parachute and made a stretcher. Of course they were searching me initially for my 45 and I told them I didn't have anything. So they found the cigarettes and they said: "Zigaretten?" And I said: "Yeah that's alright." And I gave them cigarettes and they took them. And I had a cigarette with them. They then carried me back to their barracks [at Gersweiler near Saarbrücken]. And I found out that they had Lesko and Phillips at that time in another room. I told them I wanted "Wasser" and they said: "Wasser nix gut." And they brought me a beer. And I thought: "Hey this can't be so bad after all." Then they brought Lesko and Phillips in and we talked about who we saw and who we didn't see. We knew they were dead.

At about 5 o'clock in the afternoon we were picked up by the SS and they put us in the back of a flat back truck and drove us through streets in Saarbrücken. Civilians saw us and they were throwing rocks and bricks and whatever. They stood guard over us. It seemed that they were proud to have prisoners. Then we were taken to this jail.

The jail was full of supposedly French political prisoners and they made them work, clean up after bombing raids, work on the railroads and things like that that we didn't have to do as

Americans. They did a certain amount of interrogation, not much. I was put into a cell between Lesko and Phillips and we spent seven days there to the best of my recollection. I had no medical attention and I was on a regular stretcher. They would come in every day, talk to me, trying to get some information. I said back to them to shoot me because I was in so much pain. I got no medication, no medical attention. I had one meal that I could remember, but I had plenty of water they had set beside my stretcher. Of course I couldn't go to the bathroom, I couldn't get up, I couldn't do anything, everything happened on the stretcher. Once we were relieved to get out of there they put us on a train with guards. Lesko and Phillips carried me on the stretcher and we went back from Saarbrücken to Frankfurt.

*Account recorded April 1995*