

# Tyler Morning Telegraph - Dad's POW journal

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(Editor's Note: Carlton Josephson was a waist gunner on the Mission Belle, a B-17 Flying Fortress. The plane was shot down Dec. 1, 1943, during a raid over Leverkusen, in Germany's Ruhr Valley. Three of the 10 men aboard were killed; the other seven spent the rest of the war in Stalag 17B, a German prisoner of war camp. This is his journal.)

What a life!

Our winter here was very cold and miserable as we had inadequate blankets and no heat. Our meals consisted of coffee from our Red Cross parcels while the other two meals were soup. What a concoction! Everything from fleas to horses was used in this soup. The bread was like armor plate and often had wood chips in it.

We had nothing but cold water to wash ourselves and our clothes. The Germans would even turn the water off so we could only wash at certain times.

Many men blew their tops while we were here. They cannot be blamed for this as we were living like caged animals praying for the war to end.

The only beautiful scenes we had to look at were sunsets, the moon and the mountains in the background with little towns among the hills.

Without the Red Cross food, equipment and clothing, all would have starved or gone mad.

Aug. 26, 1944 (almost nine months after being shot down), I got my first letter from home. I don't think anything could have boosted my morale as much as this did. I'm just hoping Steve (Carano) gets a letter now and that I get a picture of my wife in my next letter.

Many other incidents occurred while we were here. It would fill a book to write them all down. Besides that, this logbook might be read by German censors so many things will have to be omitted.

I met many fellows here that I knew in the States, so we had many bull sessions telling each other what had happened since we parted.

I'd like to mention here that Steve (Carano) and (Charles J.) Culver the only other members of my crew



here, are about the two nicest fellows I have ever known. They would do anything for me as they both displayed the day we crashed in the Rhine. We have been very close buddies here, and I certainly hope I will be able to keep in contact with them when the war is over as they now seem more like brothers than anything else. Whenever we had the blues, which was often, we would spill our hearts out to each other and relieve our minds. This I think helped us a great deal from getting homesick and barbed wire nervous.

This just about completes my little story. I'd like to say in closing it was rough. So give me the good old USA!

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Some memorable dates overseas from Josephson's War Journal:

Nov. 24, 1943: Went over the channel, mission scrubbed.

Nov. 26, 1943: Went to Bremen – 24 to go!

Nov. 29, 1943: Mission scrubbed on the ground.

Nov. 30, 1943: Got to the enemy coast – mission called off.

Dec. 1, 1943: Shot down, crashed in the Rhine River.

Jan. 5-8, 1944: Miserable train ride to Krems, Austria, 35 miles west of Vienna.

Aug. 26, 1944: Received my first letter.

Sept. 9, 12 and 13, 1944: A memorable picnic inside the camp. Misery Galore!

Oct. 6, 1944: Received my first cigarette parcel from home.

April 8, 1945: Left on our 225-mile march. The Russian Army was 35 miles away in Vienna.

April 15, 1945: My 27th birthday. Some birthday! Anyway, I had a lot of hay to sleep on.

April 25, 1945: Arrived at Weilhartfurt on the Austria-German border and the Salz-Inns River. It ended our march. We stayed in a pine forest until we were liberated. It rained every day there.

May 3, 1945: Liberated by the 13th Armored Division. I was too sick to be very enthused.

June 3, 1945: Arrived at Boston, Mass. It was all over now.

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Carlton Josephson returned home after the war to Connecticut, where he raised a family and worked for 43 years for Stanley Tools. He died in 2001. His son, Paul Josephson, lives in Tyler and shared his father's POW journal.