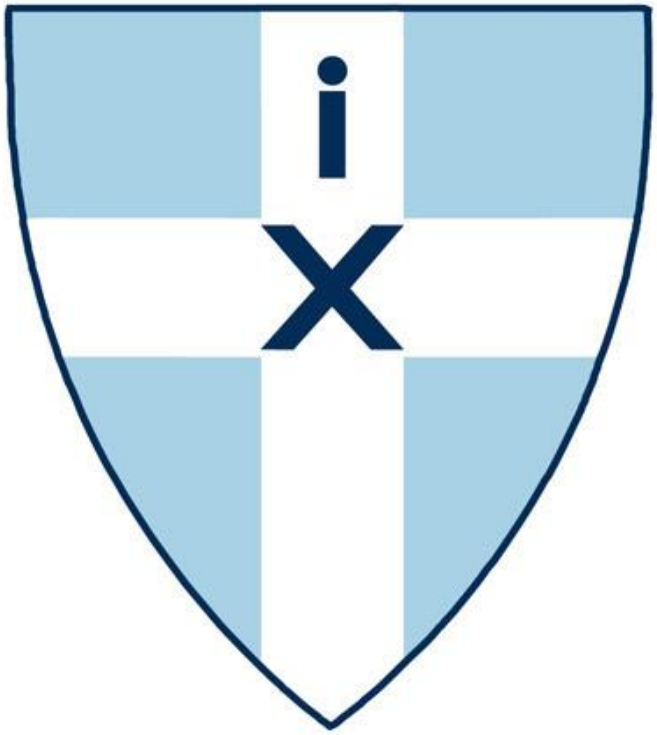
TKS ATHLETICS



'Tough times don't last…tough people do'

Remembering CM Hall and JS White and where we came from.

Mr. BL Gavan - MIC Athletics / Cross Country with Mrs. Jenny Pearce – School Archivist

The Mighty Sky Blue and White

Two of our 'Greats'

Following the GPS Athletics Season of 2009, both myself and our Captain of Athletics, Brent Taylor had the great pleasure and privilege of meeting Mr Clive Hall, our Captain of Athletics from 1931. Our 2009 'Junior and Senior Victory' had taken us 78 years to achieve again (there was no Intermediate trophy until 2012). During our brief but inspiring visit, he spoke of what a great day the 1931 AAGPS Championships had been and explained with pride the joy and excitement of coming back to Parramatta with both trophies. He said that one of the greatest memories in his life was being carried off the grand old Sydney Cricket Ground by his TKS 'mates' to the change rooms. So, there I was with Mr. Hall, as a man of his stature should be called, with the exact same trophies he had won as Captain almost eight decades earlier. He held both trophies as best he could and recounted with pride how his team had won the 'converted' Double at the SCG that year. He became emotional talking about his mates, the war cries, the singing and getting carried off one of the greatest cricket grounds in the world. When I was leaving, he grabbed my hand, looked me in the eye thanked me for remembering him…I told him that we will never forget him, so I have kept my promise…

With the help of Mrs. Pearce, our School Archivist, we have put together some historical information about two of our great 'Kingsmen'. Young men who wore the same uniform as you are, who proudly wore the same beautiful colours on our sporting fields…The Mighty Sky Blue and White.

In the pages ahead, you will find brief biographies about Mr. CM Hall and Mr JS. White (you may recognise this name), to help give us a 'snapshot' of their lives, some photos, a very brief overview of the 1931 AAGPS Athletics Championships. Most importantly, it contains a remarkable account of Mr. Hall's experiences at World War II. I urge you to read and perhaps, afterwards, contemplate how that makes you feel as a young man at The King's School…remember, 'tough times don't last, tough people do'.

Mr. Hall with 2009 Captain of Athletics, Brent Taylor.

CLIVE MAYOR HALL
TKS 1924-1932
Company Director and Wool Buyer

A boarder at The King's School in the Prep, Thomas House and then Broughton, Clive was School Vice-Captain, Drum Major of the Cadet Corps, Captain of Broughton House and Captain of Athletics. Clive was a gifted athlete, winning Full Colours in his three sports, Athletics, Rowing and Rugby. Among his many accolades Clive won the Mile Championship Cup from 1929-1931, the Five Mile Championship 1930-1931 and the St John Gray Cup in 1930.

He was a member of the Senior GPS Athletics team 1930-1931 and was successful in 1932 when representing NSW in the 880 yards Championship. In 1997 in recognition of his contribution to Athletics, Clive was appointed as a Vice President of The King's School Athletics Club. A member of the 1st VII for three years, 1930-32 and the 1st XV 1930-1931, Clive represented the GPS in the 2nd XV in 1931.

In 1940 Clive was accepted into the Empire Air Training Scheme and after initial training in Tiger Moths he was amongst the first group of Australians to train in Ottowa Canada. On Christmas Day 1941 Clive was posted to Gourock Scotland, where he received further training in Stirling bombers. On his third mission, September 6th, 1941, his plane was shot down during a night flight to Berlin. Clive survived the drop and after initially evading capture was sent to Oberursel.

There he and a fellow schoolmate escaped into the woods, but it wasn't long before they were again captured, Clive eventually arriving in Stalag Luft 3. This camp, which by the end of the war held about 10,000 Air Force officers was the camp made famous by "The Great Escape". Clive and a fellow British Officer were able to help forge the necessary papers for the escapees as they worked in the Red Cross store and had access to a typewriter. Clive carried the forged documents to and from the store in a briefcase and was amazed that he was never stopped and searched.

In 1960 Clive was successful in founding the Sydney Greasy Wool Futures Exchange to protect the Australian farmers from the rapidly fluctuating wool prices previously set by the London Markets. The Futures Exchange guaranteed the farmer a definite wage and for his work in establishing what was to become the Sydney Futures Exchange, Clive was awarded an OAM in 1999.

Clive was a generous philanthropist, both for those in need at The King's School and in the wider community. He was Chairman of the Jenny Leukaemia Trust and a Trustee of The King's School Foundation. In 2009 Clive was awarded an Honorary Life Membership of the Old Boy's Union in recognition of a lifetime of service to his alma mater. We also have the CM Hall Cup, an Athletics award granted to the Athlete who puts his team before personal achievement.

CM HALL – 1931 AAGPS CHAMPIONSHIPS

JAMES SUTTOR WHITE
TKS 1924-31
GRAZIER

Jim spent his early years in Goondiwindi before coming to the Prep School in 1924. A member of Thomas and later School House, Jim was a gifted athlete, excelling in Athletics, Cricket and Tennis receiving Colours for each.

A member of the Athletics Team for four years, in 1930, Jim broke the Australian Open and GPS records for the 120 yards hurdles in a time of 15.2 seconds, missing the world record by less than a second. In 1931 he received the St John Gray Cup, Headmaster's Cup and the Feez Shield for Tennis. That same year Jim was Captain of Cricket and Tennis and a member of the GPS 1st team for both sports.

Despite offers to play Cricket, Jim retuned to "Edenglassie" in Muswellbrook before moving to "Brunette Downs "in the Northern Territory in 1933. At the time of his father's death in 1945, Jim became managing director of several family companies involved in the freehold and lease of land totalling six million acres and carrying 120,000 head of cattle stretching over three states. At "Brunette Downs" Jim did much to develop the shorthorn herds and infrastructure in the twenty-five years before the property was sold in 1958, building over 30,000 kilometres of fencing and digging 30 bores.

In 1953 with the support of the Shorthorn Association, Jim organised the first Northern Territory Stud Bull sale at "Brunette Downs". This involved an airlift of Stud Bulls from around the country to the property, the sales contributing significantly to the recovery of the post war cattle industry. In partnership with Professor Lamond from Queensland University, Jim led the way in carrying out successful trials in the artificial insemination of Angus cattle in a fully equipped private laboratory at "Gozo", Boggabilla.

Jim always maintained his love of sport and in 1937 he took the first of many Cricket Teams on Tour. He formed the Emu Cricket Club and sponsored talented, young, rurally disadvantaged players taking them to Argentina, Singapore and Europe as well as local carnivals. For this work he was awarded an OBE in 1969 for Service to International Relations through Cricket.
He was further recognised with a Medal of Honour from the American Biographical Institute and a Certificate of Merit from the Cambridge Directory of International Biography for lifelong achievement. Jim was also admitted to the Longreach Stockman's Hall of Fame. Jim's records from "Brunette Downs "were donated to the National Archives of Australia and form a significant collection on the development of the cattle industry and history of the Northern Territory.

Jim never forgot his Alma Mater and over the years was a very generous benefactor to the School. He provided funds, often anonymously, for the development of the Gowan Brae site as well as supporting students in need. He became a Trustee of The King's School Foundation in 1990, a Vice President of Athletics and an Honorary Life Member of the Old Boys' Union, Tennis and Cricket Clubs. In recognition of his contribution to the School the main oval is named in his honour.

JS WHITE – 1931 AAGPS CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Kings School 1931 Athletics
AAGPS Senior Premiers and Junior Winners

Below is a far to brief review of both the Senior and Junior performances at the AAGPS in 1931.

The Senior Team won the Carnival by ten points from Sydney Grammar School. The team was captained CM Hall, who won the Championship 440- and 880-yard events in grand style. JS White was successful in the 220 yards, the 120 Yard Hurdles, second in the Broad Jump and third in the High Jump. RS Turner won the One Mile First Division. And JH Sanger won the Shot Put. RF Seaborn came third in the 100 yards.

For the Junior Team only six points separated TKS from Shore in the Junior Competition. AM Dan won the Under 16 100- and 220-yard Championship. Although no other competitors won their events, a consistent effort by the team led to the success on the day. BC Egan came second in the Under 16 Hurdles and High Jump while DL Lamb took second place in the 880 yards.

1931 AAGPS Senior Athletics Champions

Recollections of World War II
by
C.M. Hall

At the end of April 1940 I was accepted into the Empire Air Training Scheme and sent to Somers in Victoria. There were 40 of us. After two months' ground training half of us linked up with 20 other chaps at Narromine for flying training on Tiger Moths. At the end of another two months 20 of us linked up with 20 other chaps at a central depot in Sydney and were kitted out to go to Canada for further flying training and were the first group to go away and we were the initial No. 1 Course leaving Sydney on 6 September 1940 in the *Awatea* After two months of flying Harvard and Yale aeroplanes in Ottawa we left for England by sea, arriving in Scotland on Christmas Day 1940 at Gourock.

What I didn't mention at Narromine was we had one instructor there who liked to fly upside down which was all very well except for the fact that the Tiger Moth was built for seat-type parachutes and there was a depression in the floor for the seat-type parachute to go. We didn't have any parachutes, so the instruction was "bring your pillow". Great till you turned upside down and you fell into the straps the pillow drifted around somewhere round the aeroplane. When you righted it you could hardly see over the top where the hell you were going. So much for that.

Back to getting to Scotland - half a dozen of us were sent up to Lossiemouth - way up on the north-east side of the Moray Firth. Jolly cold and dark there and we didn't get to fly an aeroplane for some weeks. Eventually we did and there were about 20 in the class. We got through learning to fly Wellingtons. When we completed that exercise two of us were kept back to instruct other pupils coming on. Eric McLeod from Queensland was one and I was the other. He didn't agree with this decision at all and wanted to get away on ops and persuaded me to come with him to interview the Wing Commander and see if we could get down onto ops. The Wing Commander didn't waste much time. We stayed there. After a week one evening Eric and I went out to choose an aeroplane. We tossed a coin. He took one and I took the other and he wasn't seen again. We assumed he went into the sea somewhere in the north.

After some weeks up at Lossie instructing on Wellingtons I finally got away to operations down on 7 Squadron at Oakington which was the first of the four engines installed on aircraft - the Lancasters came much later in quantity but the Stirling was a massive creature: some 27 feet or more from the cockpit to the ground. Here it will interest some people to know that I was given one-and-a-half hour's dual instruction on this machine and had to bring it in to land with one engine cut out, with two engines cut out on one side and so on and then told to take it off and fly it on my own, which I did. That evening the Wing Commander called me over and said, " Hall, you've got off today. You pick a crew and we'll get you straight away on ops." I protested and asked for permission to have at least three trips with other pilots to know what was happening over there and how to deal with it. This was granted and my first trip was with a man called Dennis Witt who had flown 62 operations, a quiet, kindly-spoken, smallish man who advised me that over the target you never, never fly straight and level for more than 10 seconds. It's a very inviting target.

In those days the night we were shot down, a Sunday night 6 September 1941 there were I think eight four-engined aircraft were on Berlin that night. I was travelling with a Sergeant Pilot - he was in charge when we approached from the east of Berlin and went over Berlin. He wasn't happy with the progress and said, "We'll go round again." Perhaps I could comment it's an unusual decision to make. It's a big city. However, back we went and round again. We were flying happily, steady, straight and level for what seemed to me to be an awfully long time when out of the dark came a pale blue searchlight and we were pinned. All the other searchlights came on to us and we were then what is called 'coned' in a volume of light. The Flight Sergeant did a terrific job. We went down, hard down, low over Berlin, I would suggest to a thousand feet or thereabouts. The local natives were very cross and threw things at us

from the ground which you could hear hitting into the fuselage. The only casualty was the Engineer who got a bullet in his shoulder. We managed to get away but no instruments were working and it took two of us to handle the plane very well.

We got the plane back up to seven thousand feet and then asked the front gunner to please keep his eye on the ground and tell us if he saw any flashes down there which would signify anti-aircraft fire. He didn't seem to notice but we became wide awake when there were big black puffs in the air in front of the aircraft and you could smell the cordite. The Flight Sergeant asked what I thought and I said, "I think it's time we left", so the order was given by him to the rest of the crew to "Jump, Jump!" I was still wearing my seat-type parachute. The others all had ones that were on the side of the aircraft and had to pick them up and hook them onto hooks on the front of their chests. I put the parachute on the pilot's chest. All the others had gone and stepped through the escape hatch in the floor. I looked down and thought, "Very unattractive." I know I didn't jump. The wind caught me and out I went. I think an automatic reflex pulled my arm and the parachute opened and I found myself drifting down with two black puffs nearby so I tried to sideslip and get lower down.

The journey down after that was quite interesting and smooth. The ground of course came up quickly and after landing we didn't know where we were for remember the instruments had been wrecked. We thought we might have been over North-West Germany or Holland - we just didn't know. However I landed with a bump in a field and overlooked the instruction which said the first thing to do is to hide your parachute. The first thing I did was to unhook it and listen to the thunder of what I interpreted as a crowd of people coming after me. I thought, "By God, they're going to lynch me!" So I hared off across the paddock and hid in a ditch. I then plucked up courage and looked up over the top as the crowd got nearer. There were two draught horses that had come over to see what was going on! So much for that!

I then had a walk for about two or three days, walking at night, hiding in the daytime and eventually at dawn one morning neared a farmhouse and asked the farmer when he opened the door, "Are you Dutch?" He said, "Ja, Deutsch. Kommen Sie 'rein!" They were quite agreeable to me, took me round the house and showed me where the bits of bomb craters were close, near-misses for them. I had a bit of chocolate in my pocket which I gave to one of the children. In due course, the local policeman arrived, found he couldn't manage his bicycle and me so a truck was sent for and off I went, put into gaol and later collected and interviewed by a Luftwaffe officer. I gave him the usual answers of name, rank, number and finishing up at Oberursel which was where the collection point for shot-down airmen was located. It's a village or small town near Frankfurt.

There, a great surprise. Walking around, the perimeter might have been a few hundred yards and naturally enough you'd walk around to get the exercise, and I'm walking around that first evening when I meet a fellow from The King's School Parramatta called Tom. The joy was too great! Absolutely. To find a bloke from school there and the first thing you say is, "Well, Tom, how many trips have you done?" and poor old Tom looked very embarrassed. "Er, as a matter of fact, Clive, I haven't done any." I said, "Well, Tom, you're here, so something must have happened. What was it?" "Well," he said, "I was the navigator on a Wellington from the south of England on a cross-country flight and unfortunately made a major mistake in my navigation, I think they call it putting black on red and we finished up landing in France, occupied France!" I could just see the dismay of his crew who'd been thinking of bacon and eggs and the popsies in the local village when they came to get out and were confronted by a man in a grey uniform with a rifle who said, "Kommen Sie mit!" So Tom was in the bag. His crew I imagine were quite displeased but I think they might have been grateful for him at the end of the war.

Whilst at this camp at Oberursel for a few days Wing Commander Bader was there, the man with no legs, who was a great man and flyer, I met a fellow called Wallace Tarry whose name we knew him as Popham, and he said, "We'll be going off in a few days on a train, and I think it might be worth having a go at jumping out the window." I

said, "All right." We learnt that the Germans were a wake-up to this and they took your boots in the evening so we had to have a spare pair of boots which we obtained by raiding the German store in the compound one night and fitting ourselves to a pair of boots each and then when we came to leave the camp we had these in a Red Cross box which they didn't open. We carried them with us in the train, a corridor compartment train it was we were put into with six P.O.W.'s in each compartment with a German guard at the door. I think there must have been one at the loo, too, because he wouldn't leave the door otherwise. We travelled all day and at times the train slowed down in daylight and hardly moved very very slowly up the hill and the other chaps would say, "Come on, Hall, what about it? We'll have a run for it here." But I declined as there was an open carriage further down the train filled with German soldiers with rifles, machine guns and stuff and it seemed to me plain stupid.

At the doorway of our compartment there were three different guards on for two hours and off. One we christened 'Dopey' who was not at all bright. Well, came dark. The time passed and the pressure was mounting, but so was the speed of the train and the window we had to go out you would jump onto the other train line where trains were passing about every twenty minutes. There were some very interesting tales recounted then of how Russians had tried to jump and lost both legs and so on. However, 'Dopey' came on duty at ten and at five to twelve I could bear it no longer. We had to go and unfortunately the train was going quite fast. However, I gave the signal and Tony Ruffel, a South African, big chap, stood up in front of the doorway with his blanket and spread his arms wide so that the guard there, 'Dopey', couldn't see what was happening. As he did that we up with the blackout, down with the window and out and the other chaps closed everything and the train kept going. I heard later that it took a few minutes before 'Dopey' found that there was somebody missing. He was counting eins, zwei, drei, vier, eins, zwei, drei, vier and then pulled the communication cord for the train to stop which was miles away from where we jumped.

After the jump I woke up to see I think the tail light of the train disappearing, thank God, but I had hurt my leg, ankle and my head. However, I staggered off from the side of the railway line, down the embankment, walked a little way, into some woods, more or less, when I suddenly found myself confronted with a heavy duty wire fence. It looked most unpleasant, so I headed back to the railway line. By the grace of God a goods train came along and stopped, full of empty goods trucks. This gave me a chance to come up the bank and climb into one of the empty trucks and lie there where I spent the next three days. During the next few days, three days to be exact, I think, I had half a dozen lumps of sugar and four bits of Wrigleys chewing gum, which kept my thirst down, as there was no water in the empty train. Finally I'd had enough of this and one morning the train was stationary, I was lying there when the usual guard or somebody walked by the door and put his head right in and looked in the nearby corner and saw me, so I got up and spoke with him and he was French, we were in Alsace-Lorraine and he seemed a reasonable sort of a bloke, so I gave him the Australian flash off the side of my jacket. There was a big fog and he said, "Look, this train doesn't go any further. Come with me and I'll put you in one that'll leave tonight to go into France." So, off I went and spent the rest of the day lying in another train, waiting for it to go into France at night, but it didn't move, so I set off on foot.

After walking for a while I found a road and went down that and was sheltering that night until dawn with the rain gently falling near a small village but I saw men come out and go to work. Then I took a risk for a chance - cold, damn miserable - so I went down and knocked on a door after the man had gone and an agreeable woman opened the door, understood some of my Fourth Form French which originated at The King's School. She let me in and gave me a bandage for my head and gave me some bread and jam, which was jolly nice and then she wanted to call the police, so I said, "No, I didn't come here to deal with the police." So we sorted it out and I persuaded her to show me the way on into France, which she did and directed me to follow at least a hundred yards behind her along the road and where the road forked, she would go to the right and I was to go to the left. We did this. I enjoyed walking past the local police station, trying as much as I could to look like a French unemployed farmer and went out along the road in daylight till I got to some hedge where I crawled into and lay

down for the day. During that day the farmer and his child came quite close within a few yards of where I was lying and I was glad when they went away, so I set out again at night, but it was no use.

So, in desperation I turned back and went to the railway line again. It must have been about dawn. I was very cold and miserable, so I went up to the signal box and spoke with a man there. He had a lovely warm room which was beautiful and I just sat and waited for events to take their course, which was the inevitable policeman, followed by a truck, onto which I was put and taken off to be interviewed by somebody and eventually back to Oberursel where I was well received and given a week's solitary in the nearby prison camp. Very miserable, solitary, as I found. I got quite cross with the guard one morning when he brought me a tiny piece of bread and jam and shouted at him, demanding more, which to my astonishment I got. It only happened once.

However, eventually back to join the chaps at camp and was put on another train and off we went to Lübeck, where the Greece and Crete boys were kept. I was only there a few days till we were all bundled up and sent down to Warburg where we had Offlag 6B it was called, where the chaps from Dunkirk and Greece and Crete and in that camp there were 3,000 officers, 2,000 were army types, 800 airforce and 200 naval officers. I think there were 26 languages taught in that camp and just a side comment here in view of it being 1995 and homosexuality seems to be increasing wildly, never in the whole of my prison time did I ever see any signs of homosexuality. I'd just like that to be noted. In the camp we were in huts, about 110 to each hut, and there were two small single rooms at the end of each hut, either for a senior officer, or one case in our hut some poor bloke who snored in the most frightful way and we had to put him out in this end room with a friend to keep him company.

However it was interesting being there and there was a big escape planned for one evening over the top of the wire. This was done and organised by ladders which were in each room which were really bookcases but you took the books out when you wanted to use it as a ladder, propped it up against the wire and a plank to go over the top of the wire and then dropped down on the other side. There were three teams as I remember, an army, a navy and an airforce team. The airforce were selected to fuse all the lights in the camp, the fluent German speakers a couple of them were dressed in imitation German uniforms, with imitation wooden rifles and they walked along the inside of the wire, shouting the wrong instructions to the Germans outside. In due course that is when the lights were fused. You must remember that the guards were not front line troops they were down the line a long way, C Grade, even D Grade, someone who'd never fired a rifle in their lives. This was too good an opportunity to miss. They were recorded as holding the rifle, just firing the bullets, bang!, bang! up the spout and thoroughly enjoying it. In the midst of all this, all hell breaking loose outside like a battle field, a German guard with his canister, gas-masked canister at his side walked into an Australian army room at the other end of the camp and said, "Anybody want to buy any eggs?" It just shows that human nature is something to be marvelled at. I think it was the airforce ladder that broke and we were not very successful. I do not have any news of any of those chaps who did go over the top ever getting back to England again.

What I forgot to mention in that camp in Warburg was the army were in separate huts, the airforce had separate huts and the navy had separate huts, spread over the camp and covered a pretty wide area - I think it was well over a 1,000 yards to walk round the inside of the wire.

Also at Warburg I met Aubrey Mace who I think was at Macarthur House during my time and he came from a property at St George in Queensland. He was a countryman and very useful with his hands in making utensils such as a coffee percolator out of two empty Klim tins. Pictures from home at this time were much admired and Aubrey was delighted to show some of the Brits in our room the pictures of his wife and child. He forgot to mention that the lady holding the child was a lubra, to the Brits' astonishment!

Another matter I forgot was when being shot down over Berlin, I was sitting there beside the Flight Sergeant who was driving it and looking beside me I could see these little pink things going into the wing and then bigger ones going "whoo whoo whoo" into the wing which of course was tracer and cannon fire. We then thought that there was a shout through the intercom, rear gunner saying "I've got a 110, I've got a 110". A jolly good show we said and then we proceeded to dive down and try and get out of it all.

Another bit left out in the jumping out of the train window. I didn't mention poor old Popham who landed a bit heavily on his head apparently and they took him to Hannover Hospital and had to take a bit of a slice of the side of the bone of his head as far as I understand, but he got out, came back and joined us all later on at Sagan. He then proceeded to be a nuisance to the Germans of course. It was our job to be as awkward as we could with the Germans and keep as many of them occupied as possible and for this reason escapes and attempted escapes would normally take place on a Friday night. This buggered up their weekend leave.

Back again to Warburg, that big camp where we spent Christmas in '41 and it was very, very cold. At least minus 20, if not more and that was what upset the German army and prevented them from getting into Moscow, or tried to and the stories were of how some of the German soldiers would take their boots off at night and their feet were still in them. There was a big appeal for any warm clothing, furs and stuff, in the German press at the time. After this very cold winter there was the thaw and a lot of mud and running water through the camp which we channelled into little rivulets. The fellows made boats and had a great racing day with boats down the floodwaters of the thaw.

It was then later, some time later, that we in the airforce were moved and taken to Poland to a village called Schubin and there were then the 800 of us and the camp was a terraced camp, brick huts which held, I think, a couple of hundred in each one, with a washroom in the middle and a three-storey building which was used as the hospital in which lived the three doctors from Dunkirk, army types, and a padre, I think he was an Australian, the dentist who was a British army man, and Dan Hallifax, who'd been badly burnt when he crash landed, acting as interpreter and I got elected as the Hospital Quartermaster, which was always very much appreciated by me. There was feeling in here between the camp and the medical profession about how to treat a patient. If somebody was sick in their hut and the man wanted the doctor to come up but the doctor said,"No, you bring the patient to us. We've got very little and we've certainly got nothing when we get out there. Bring them down here and we'll see what we can do to them." In the dental world, I was passing the dentist's room one day where he was working where he had a foot pedal drill and on this occasion he called to me and said, "Will you come in and lend a hand?" So I went in and he said, "Would you mind holding this man's head for me?" He had a hammer and a chisel, trying to get the last of a tooth out of the poor bloke's gum. Such was life in those days.

One exciting moment was when the espionage types in the camp came to me with the radio and said, "Things are getting a bit hot up in the camp, would you look after it here?", so I was lumbered with the one contact with the outside world and I had to hide it for three days I think it was, which I managed to do by going to the top floor where there were three lavatories and declaring one U.S., emptying the water out of the sistern upstairs and putting the radio in. Big notice on the door: 'Out of Order'. That worked and the fellows from the camp came and got it back again.

It was Christmas '42, I think, that we spent up in Poland - jolly cold, there was what we recognised as horizontal snow going past the windows and anything we even bought those wooden clogs to use as fuel to put in the fire to get some warmth going. It was later that the Luftwaffe decided they'd take over the keeping of the air force prisoners and they started to move us out. The first two hundred were taken down to the station where they have the inevitable cattle trucks waiting for us and the men piled in and had a terrific sing-song all day, but the train didn't move. The reason was that the German officer, Luftwaffe man, was protesting about carrying air force men in

cattle trucks. He wanted carriages, so he returned everybody back to camp that night, which was very annoying for the men down there because they'd been having a great sing-song, during which time they were sawing through the floor of the cattle truck to make a run for it that night. Not only that, when they got back to camp, we'd never expected them back, of course, so we'd raided their building and got as many bed boards as we could and anything that would burn to have a really good warm evening. So they were displeased. However the air force came again for them the next day and we went off in groups of 200 or thereabouts to Stalag Luft 3 which was a very big camp and at the end of the war there were a total of 10,000 flying officers.

There were 7,000 Americans, 3,000 British concentrated in six different compounds. There was a North Compound, a South, an East and a West, a Centre Compound and one a few miles away called Bellaria. The Americans were in separate camps to the British. The North Compound was British and East Compound - where there were only 1,000 of us - was also British. People from all over the Empire were in that camp. It was there that the Wooden Horse Escape was made, which was quite a brilliant effort. The thing that ought to be noted here is that if you didn't want to escape, that was all right, but escaping had the number one priority and if you didn't want to you at least had to help somebody else do it, join in the effort, so that's why they had men leaping over the wooden horse day after day after day while the other blokes were down below digging. There was also the man called Squadron Leader X. He was a Squadron Leader, R.A.F., in charge of all escapes. Any bright ideas you had you had to submit them to Squadron Leader X and he would say, "Yes, that's a great idea, you want to pole vault over the wire at 9 o'clock on a Wednesday morning. There are seven others in front of you. You put your name down." But he kept some sense into the escape procedures and that was evident in the wooden horse. What is not generally known is that our hut when we lined up on parade, we were near the trip wire, which is a wire extending either five or ten yards inside the main wire, just a single barbed wire and if you went over that it was open season for the guards up in their towers. There were machine guns and stuff further on. We were close to this and several of the fellows made a trapdoor, did a bit of digging while we were on parade. The Germans could never count very well and you could always muck up the counting and keep us out there a bit longer and in the winter they dug through and established the beginning of a tunnel from the parade ground, under the trip wire, outside the main wire. This tunnel was completed but not allowed to be used after the Great Escape in the North Compound when they shot those 52 blokes.

However, it had its exciting moments because it was sand that was coming up. We'd all wear greatcoats on parade even into the summer. The Germans found it very difficult to understand the British, so did I. The sand was brought up in socks or containers of some sort and you'd put them inside your greatcoat and shuffle down the camp, dribbling it into the grey sand on the surface there and getting rid of it. On one occasion we got a word from a friendly guard there was going to be an immediate Appell (roll call) and so there were a couple of blokes down in our tunnel digging and within a very short time there was a football game on and a scrum over the entrance to the tunnel. The blokes came up and handed their balaclavas and greatcoats over and stood and were counted and all was well. But it was a tense moment.

At this camp there was the normal large enclosure with the wooden huts in which we lived and a playing field or field of some sort in the middle and then there was the Vorlager which is an enclosure in front of the main gates of our camp again surrounded by barbed wire in which the storehouses were kept and the censors worked for censoring mail etc and our Red Cross parcels were kept with possibly fifty or sixty thousand parcels there. The distribution of the Red Cross parcels was handled by an R.A.F. Flight Lieutenant, Marcus Marsh, who I think was a horse training man from England with a team of about sixteen N.C.O.s and the Americans were handled by a fellow called Captain Fuljames who had fourteen sergeants to help him. Towards the end of 1944 Marsh was fired for some reason or other and I was summoned by the S.B.O.(Senior British Officer) to take over which I did and handled it until we left at the end of January, 1945.

It meant going down, carrying a briefcase, down to the store daily, or on alternate days, depending on the transport provided by the Germans, and either receiving or distributing the parcels by lorry or by horse and cart and handling the private parcels as well. We had an office there and in the office was a typewriter and one of the sergeants, a British sergeant, used to operate the typewriter It was at this stage that I was summoned by Squadron Leader X to say, "You've got a typewriter down there. As we understand it, it's the only typewriter that's not on parole," (because we needed them for plays and all that sort of stuff in the camp, so they had to be used on parole), so he said, "We need some documents typed. Would you see what you can do?" Well, I did, I spoke with a fellow called Sergeant Dosseter who was a British N.C.O., a nice, agreeable chap, and I explained to him what was required, and what the risks were, if you were caught. I said, "There's nothing compulsory about this, if you'd like to have a go, we'll look after you from a watching point of view." He agreed and so we started. I used to carry the documents down in my briefcase and give them to him. He would copy them and I'd carry them back to camp later in the day. There was a certain amount of excitement inwardly to me to meet the Oberleutnant in charge of security on the road there on more than one occasion with a briefcase full of hot documents which he fortunately never thought to ask what's in it. So that was the way it happened. This appointment, Rotekreuzpaketenüberwachungoffizier or another simpler word was Vertrauensmann, a man of confidence, for when we received a truckload of Red Cross parcels and I'd have to sign for them, there were cards that accompanied them and I had to sign these and they went back to Switzerland. We didn't always have parcels. There were times when we had none and then things got a bit hungry and that was when I found that the morale and the spirit in the camp was at its best. When we had no Red Cross parcels we lived on very meagre German rations and there was no petty squabbling - we had one common hate and that was the German and it was really a very interesting performance to watch it happening.

Now, on the matter of food, when we were on German rations, we were allowed one loaf of bread per day to the room, so there were 16 blokes, we got 32 slices and they were all exactly the same size and the crusts we kept and somehow somebody made some sort of a 'pud' out of them at the end of the week. The rest of the German rations for that day was a bowl of soup if I remember correctly and a bit of marg. I just remembered we had also had some vegetable rations at times, potatoes, and sometimes some extraordinary things like Mangelwurzels, they're overgrown turnip things which were not overly popular but could be made into something, help flavour the pud with the ends of the bread loaves. The potatoes were kept in clamps, potato clamps in the ground and covered over with dirt and sometimes there was a place, room below them where we went in to get the potatoes. One of these clamps was outside our room and one day we heard extraordinary noises coming from over there out of the potato clamp and somebody went over to find out. It was some poor chap who was trying to cut his throat, for he felt that he was at fault for getting his crew down into prison with the Germans. Apparently it's very hard to cut your own throat, he didn't succeed.

I'll go back to the camp at Warburg where we always said we'd be home by Christmas. That was the saying in any camp that I was in, you'll always be home by Christmas but at the camp at Warburg there was a sweep conducted, a pound a ticket, pick your date for the end of the war, but I gather that when it did finish there were only two blokes left in it. So much for that.

Back to Stalag Luft 3. It's January 1945. It's Saturday night, about 28 January, I think, and there's a play on down in the theatre and as usual, it's cold and snowing, when the Germans come in and say, "You leave now!" Regardless. The chaps acting in the play still had their gear on and stuff and had to go out and we left in groups of 2,000. I was summoned down to the Red Cross Parcels shed with my sergeants and we handed out parcels to the men as they filed by all night. Some just opened the parcel and took out the cigarettes, soap and coffee and threw the rest away, not wanting to carry a load, so there was a hell of a mess of tins and junk on the ground, come dawn, which was appreciated by the young ladies, German censors, who censored our mail, they were down to pick up what they could out of the wreck. The last that were left, we were the end group, the parcel staff and I trudged along, some chaps had made

some sort of a sledge out of an upturned stool, or something to pull their personal belongings over the snow, but we went as I said I think earlier in groups of 2,000.

We had about three days on that march, forced march, which was basically to get away from the Russians who were getting pretty close - we could hear the gunfire. The first night was damn cold, sleeping in a school, packed like sardines, the second night I think we were put in some sort of glass factory. We got warm in there, with furnaces going. After three days we were finally put on a train and taken up towards the Baltic to a camp called Malag/Milag Nord at Bremen. This we reached in some early part of February. It had been occupied by merchant marine officers and people who had moved out to make way for us. There were about 2,000 of us pushed into this camp. Unfortunately we arrived there at night and we stood all night out in the cold with only iced water to drink. It was pretty tiresome.

When we got in there weren't enough beds for everybody, so some of us slept on the floor for a few days. Then we settled down to the normal camp life. There was a small building there which was the hospital. Beside it was the camp storeroom for the few Red Cross parcels we had with us at that stage and it's coming into March now and the March-April period we could see the air raids on Germany from the camp in daylight and at night you could see some of the anti-aircraft fire and the machine gun fire upstairs. We could even see some of the V2 bombs or bomb machines being fired in the distance, hurtling across the sky. However, in daylight we could see the American bombers, silvery colour, flying more or less in formation, bombing the place. At other times you would see the black machines in the sky, they were the R.A.F. bombers, doing some daylight jobs. We were a camp of 2,000 strong and it made a very good target, so we had to devise some way of getting a message upstairs, bearing in mind that the blokes flying the aircraft that are going to bomb the area spoke a variety of languages and it had to be a simple message. So we did. We found a big store of lime in bags and a huge message was written out on the parade ground in single letters: "R.A.F. F.U.C.K. O.F.F." I am happy to say we were not bombed after that.

Later on in April, we were turfed out of there and put on the road again to head over towards Lübeck. I had with me as an assistant a chap called John Nicholson who was a naval man, a Lieutenant, and we were given a horse and cart and about 320 or 30 Red Cross parcels to follow at the end of the column of the men marching out. Then we headed towards Lübeck, the S.B.O. (Senior British Officer) asked me to go ahead and check the camp that we were aiming to be lodged in. Nicholson and I manned the horse and cart and with our guard trudged into the area around Lübeck, through several roadblocks and came to the camp and went along the side of it, where the fellows inside were shouting, "Don't come in here, we've got typhus!" However, our guard insisted that we go into the main gate and there we stayed between the main gate and the camp proper for about an hour arguing before we were allowed by the Germans to turn around and go back and report to the S.B.O. He then spoke to the German major and said, "We're not going any further, we'll camp here in this village." And that was what happened.

We had about five or six days on the roadside, making the best of things that we could. There was a highway nearby, very close, on which now and again you'd see the German aircraft land and take off again. They were jets, those ones there at that stage. I was told to go into Lübeck, to the Free Port and get whatever gear I could to give to the men back at the roadside, which I did and we managed to get a certain amount of 'loo paper, writing paper, a couple of bicycles and other stuff which I can't possibly remember at the moment. However, I do recall seeing in the store, the German store there at the wharf, the port, bales of what appeared to be paper waistcoats, sort of browny paper waistcoats and I asked the guard what they were for and he said, "They're for the political prisoners in the winter." Poor chaps.

I seem to remember having lunch one day in the Swedish Embassy I think it was, where there was very, very little food, about a postage stamp sized piece of meat on your plate and a half a potato, but whilst waiting outside I distinctly remember a

German soldier coming up and wanting to surrender to me, so I told him I wasn't in the business, he'd have to go and find somebody else.

After the five or six days, May 2, 1945 at 13.05 hours, a British jeep, manned by a lieutenant and an N.C.O., drove into the camp and we were freed, at 13.05 hours. That morning all our guards had left and now an incident occurred that showed the initiative of some blokes under duress. A couple of fellows, as soon as we were released, went down to the village and souvenired, if that's the right word, the local mayor's Mercedes and managed to drive it through to Belgium and sell it at a handsome price before turning back and doing it again.

However, John Nicholson and I got a transmitting truck, if that's the right word, filled with wireless equipment threw it all out, put a packet of Red Cross parcels inside and set off to drive away. As we got down near Hannover the military police were there directing all such traffic into a huge playing field. There was no case of argument, you just went. There these vehicles were left and we were taken back into barracks. We were then told that the next day we'd be going by road to Belgium, to Brussels and we were loaded into trucks and I remember travelling through Brussels the next night with John Nicholson. I said, "I've been here before, there's a good hotel I remember, called the 'Metropole' and I think we could do better in that than in the barracks or wherever they're taking us now." He agreed so we dropped out of the truck when it came to traffic lights or something and found our way to the 'Metropole'.

It's worth noting here that we'd been on the road living in our clothes, quite grubby and horrible, for over a week or more and so we were not very attractive but we managed to talk ourselves into a room where we had a most glorious bath, put on our grubby clothes again and went down to the dining room and had almost finished our magnificent meal when a fellow went by and said, "The military police are looking for you and they've started at the other end of the dining room," so we found it best to leave and went out into the blackout. There we must have been picked up somewhere or other and put into aeroplanes and flown back to England, which was very good. We were lucky because odd aircraft crashed, carrying former prisoners, also odd chaps, shot up by the Allies at the end of our column. A column of 2,000 men makes a very good target for a young man with a fighter plane. Whenever we saw a plane, we'd just break off into the woods straight away. I think that's about the end of my story.

An item that I thought might be of interest to people today is when we were down in Warburg we had two Appells a day, an Appell was a parade where they counted us - they weren't very good at counting, the Germans. We moved up to Schubin in Poland and we started off immediately with three Appells a day. After three days there the Wing Commander in charge of us, Wing Commander Day - I cannot speak too highly of this man (Wing Commander Day was shot down on the first day of the war as a Wing Commander). We were up in Poland after three days there he called us on parade, what we termed a British parade and of course there were German interpreters standing around listening to whatever we did and he said, "Gentlemen, I have this morning met the Kommandant and he is without doubt the rudest man I have ever met in my life. With your help, I'll break him." He said, "The Kommandant complains that British officers are not saluting German officers." He said, "You will <u>not</u> salute German officers, you will <u>not</u> wear caps, but you'll give them the time of day: 'Good Morning!' at the top of your voice." This proved to be quite effective. In due course a tunnel was dug, actually from one of the Aborts, and Day went out. We said there were 32 went out, actually only 30, but by having two more go out, that left us with two what we call 'ghosts', two men to work all the time on tunnelling in the camp without having to come up for air and Appells. So Day was correct, the Kommandant was fired. They sent the field Gestapo down, I can't remember their proper name now, they came down to search us and so on, they were looking for tunnels these chaps. We of course had two or three fluent German speakers planted in bed, what they call 'Krank im Zimmer', sick in their bed in their room to engage them in gentle conversation, possibly sell them one or two things, said, "Get real German money for people who wanted to escape, when they got outside they'd have real German money."

Down at Warburg, I'd like to make some small mention of being on parade one day next door to a British Warrant Officer who was a senior man with his buttons all polished and everything tickety-boo. Talking with him I found out that he was of course caught at Dunkirk, but in conversation it was disclosed that he was also caught in Germany in 1914. It seemed a bit rough to do two five-year stretches for those people.

Let's go back to Sagan and I think I'd like to mention here what I consider to be a singularly brave act by a couple of blokes. They did an escape in broad daylight, middle of the day, under the wire, and walked away into the woods. How that was done took some planning. They managed to obtain some 'iceskates', (probably were real iceskates; anyway iceskates could make good wire cutters and we needed them). The plan was that on a given signal they'd cross the tripwire and lie flat alongside, parallel to the main wire and then they would cut the wire (they carried small one-foot high or fifteen-inch pieces of wood with them to prop up the coils of barbed wire in the middle of the wire and out the other side. This was done by engaging the attention of the two signal or guard boxes, one at either end of the wire. As you know, if the fellow crossed the wire, there was open season for the guard, he could shoot him. At the one end of the wire there was a boxing match arranged, a decent sort of a stoush with lots of barracking and German chaps, speakers shouting a bit about it and that would gain that guard's attention up in his sentry box. The other end, I'm told, there was Wing Commander Bader - I don't think it was him - but there was a fracas going on up there, which also engaged the attention of the guard more than somewhat, with comments to and fro. Then you have the two participants and their adviser strolling along and the adviser assesses the situation and drops his handkerchief. They're straight across and lie flat beside the wire and then they proceed to work their way through. The fight is going on and the nonsense at the other end is going on and much shouting and bellowing and all sorts of things while these two men get out the other side. They stand up and they walk many yards, I don't know, a hundred yards or so, steadily and slowly into the woods. I could feel their backs twitching, waiting for the bullets to come in but they didn't and it was a marvellous effort. It just shows what you can do when you put your mind to it.