

DEAR SIRS,

THIS IS TO THANK YOU FOR A SURPRISE OF A LIFETIME.  
IT WAS MY FIRST VISIT TO WASHINGTON, D.C.,  
AFTER SEEING NEW YORK, PARIS, AND BERLIN, I SAW  
BERLIN FROM INSIDE A BOX CAR WITH 119 OTHER "KRIEGIE"  
W/ <sup>HAD</sup> THREE BOX CARS,

WE WERE SHIPPED TO BARTH ON THE BALTIC FOR  
ENTRY INTO STALAG LUFT I. SEVENTEEN MONTHS  
LATER THE RUSSIANS LIBERATED US, OUR AIR COMP  
FLEW IN B-17 AND LIFTED US OUT.

I WEIGHED 98 LBS AND COULD TOUCH MY THUMB WITH THE  
LONG FINGER AROUND MY SHIN JUST ABOVE THE ANKLE.

IT GOT SO COLD THE SECOND WINTER THERE THAT  
AT BEDTIME I LEFT MY CLOTHES ON AND PUT ON ALL  
OUTSIDE CLOTHING, INCLUDING KNIT CAP, OVER COAT, SHOES,  
GLOVES, AND SCARF. TO SLEEP IN, THIS WENT ON FOR ABOUT  
THREE WEEKS. WE NEVER HAD ENOUGH FUEL (BRICKS) TO  
KEEP A FIRE GOING AT NIGHT, THE WATER BUCKETS WOULD  
FREEZE OVER EVERY NIGHT A  $\frac{1}{2}$  INCH OR MORE OF ICE.

IN OUR COMPOUND WE TOOK DELIVERY OF OUR RED  
CROSS FOOD PACKAGES AND DID OUR OWN COOKING, TWO  
KRIEGIES EACH DAY DID KP & THE DISHES, THE COOK IT WAS  
DELIVERED BARLEY SOUP ABOUT 3 TIMES PER WEEK, PLUS  
CABBAGES, POTATOES AND BLACK BROT (BREAD) WHICH WAS VERY  
SOGGY AND WEIGHED 4# / LOAF

THE FIRST DAYS OF MAY '45, RUSSIANS STARTED SHOWING UP.  
ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup>, THE WAR WAS DECLARED V. E. DAY  
THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL TRIP.

HAPPY HANDINGS Roy H. Helms SR. VICTORY GROPE