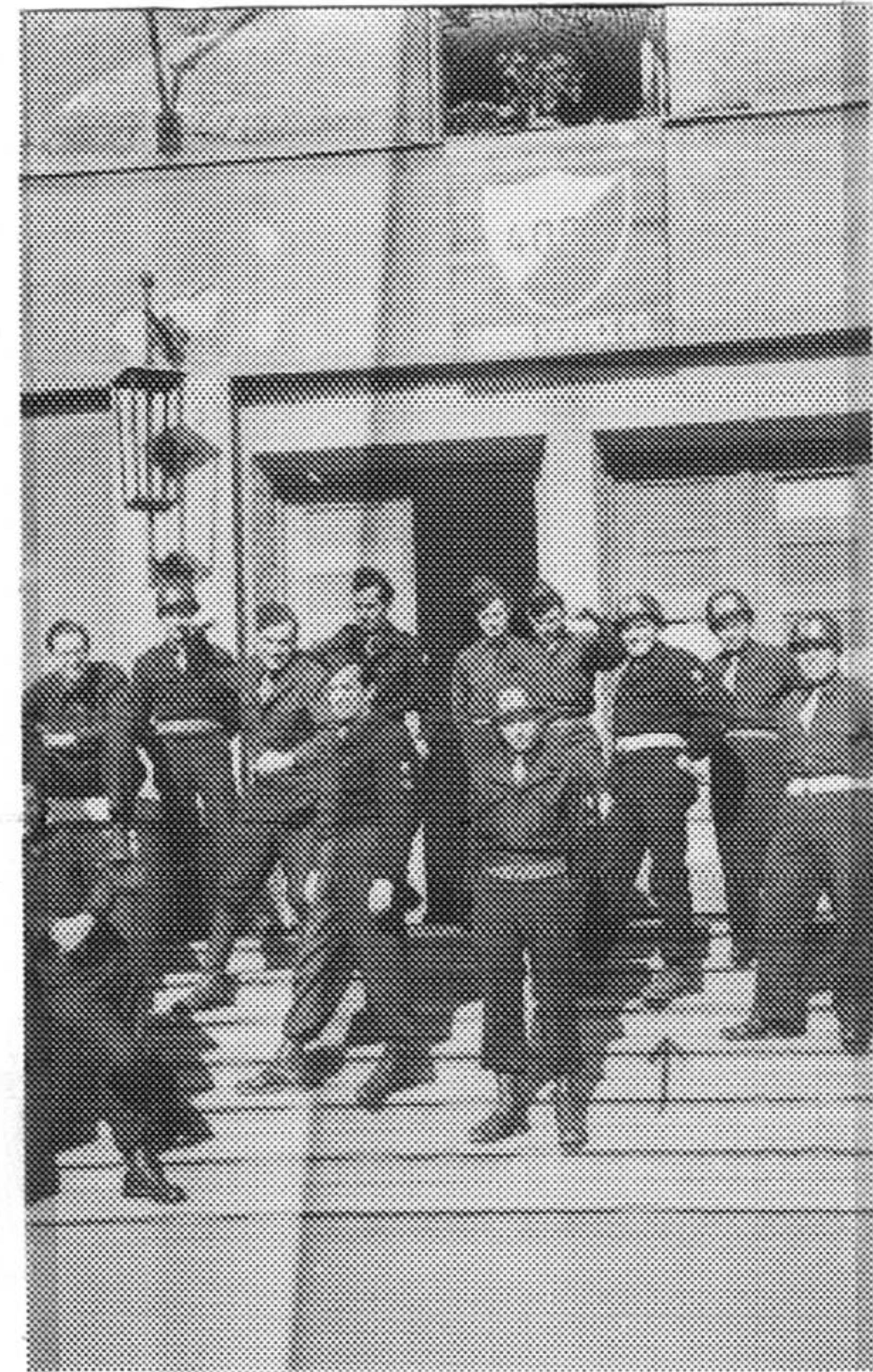




John: Dachau



December 1945: First guard duty assignment in Dachau (John third from right)



John (Guard Duty)



John on motorcycle: Dachau

We were assigned various duties such as guarding the water supply of the city of Dachau, the pumping station and our camp; taking the prisoners outside and inside the camp for different work assignments; there was also a prisoner of war exchange program so some prisoners had to be transported to the Russian zone.

There was one instance when we took a convoy of trucks filled with prisoners to the Russian zone. There were fifteen Polish guards and two American officers in charge. We arrived in the Russian zone and handed the prisoners over to the Russian guards. The Russians discovered that we were not Americans and told us that we couldn't go back to the American zone either and that we had to go back to Poland. We most likely would have ended up in Siberia.

Fear swept over us. We were surrounded by Russian soldiers who ordered us to lay down our weapons. The American lieutenant who was in charge immediately stood up to the Russians and told us to cock our guns. We carried automatic 45 caliber Tommy guns which held a magazine of 32 rounds of ammunition each. We were outnumbered by them, but we stood there for about twenty minutes facing the Russians, standing about a distance of three meters from them, pointing our guns ready to fire. It would have been suicidal to fire, and they finally gave in and let us go. We were on "alert" all the way back to the U.S. zone.

This added to the aggravation of the cold war. After this incident the prisoners were exchanged at the border of the U.S. and Russian zones. There was a lot of unrest and there were rumours that there might be a war between Russia and the allied forces. Prime Minister Winston Churchill was all for marching into Russia and taking them over but U.S. President Harry Truman was against the idea. We were all hoping for a war for a chance to liberate Poland from Russia.

Many of our men were veterans, concentration camp survivors, forced labour workers like myself and underground army men from Poland (freedom fighters) and we were ready to fight for the freedom of Poland. We would reminisce over our war time experiences, relating stories that were very interesting and

often hair raising!

It was spring of 1946. There were three American companies in the Dachau camp made up mostly of administration personnel and guards. The Commanding Officer's name was Colonel Cole.

In early April the Americans decided to build a football field inside the camp. The most suitable area was obstructed by fallen trees and tree stumps which had to be cleared and the ground levelled. It also needed lots of top soil before it could be seeded with grass. There was also a time limit of when it had to be completed.

An American sergeant, three Polish guards and thirty prisoners were assigned to work on the football field. I was in charge of the thirty prisoners. My first job was to pick out suitable prisoners who I thought would be capable of doing this job. I got all the necessary tools that I needed for the job which were cross cut saws, axes, shovels and three - three ton trucks.

At first the prisoners I had picked were lazy and dragged their feet. I tried to encourage them by telling them that if they did good work they would be released sooner. But that didn't work too well. So I started to replace some of them with a new bunch of prisoners. The work improved and they liked their job, especially when we travelled all over the country side looking for suitable top soil. I found a great big pile of top soil outside of Dachau.

This one time we were heading out for some more top soil with a truck and ten prisoners and I was the guard. There was a woman standing on the side of the road, waving as we passed by. One of the prisoners who was about a year or two older than I was (I was 19) said, "That was my mother!" He asked me whether on our next trip we could stop so that he could talk to her. Of course that was against the rules. The other prisoners begged me, asking me, "Why not?" They were good workers and said that they would work even harder if I would drop him off on the next trip so that he could visit with his mother while we went to load the truck, and would pick him up on the way back about an hour later. The prisoner said, "You can trust me." The other prisoners vouched for him. I thought about my own mother and I got soft hearted and said, "O.K.

you get off and visit with your mother, but if you are not here when we come back you will be responsible for the lives of your fellow prisoners, all nine of them. Because if you are not here, I will shoot them all." I don't know to this day what I would have done if he had not been there. But he was there and he and his mother were very grateful for what I had done.

From that day on I was their hero. They worked like dogs. I assured them that they would be on my crew until the work was completed.

The football field was completed well ahead of schedule. The Commanding Officer Colonel Cole came and shook my hand and said that he was very impressed with my performance and that the job was very well done and in record time.

A few months later our company received a letter of commendation for excellent performance and a personal letter to me, which I still have.

I was called in front of our company and thanked by our captain for a job well done and he told all of the men to take an example from me as to what a model soldier should be. He read the letter from the commanding officer and handed it to me, saluting me.

Although I bent the rules (regarding the prisoner and his mother) it worked out just great for everybody concerned. The Americans got their football field, the prisoner visited his mother and I received a commendation. The Americans got to play football one week sooner than anticipated. I received two weeks leave and a pass to travel all over the U.S. zone in Germany. I had free transportation, food and sleeping accommodations at different U.S. camps. When I got back I was promoted to an administration company No. 4049. My job was to be in security in a hospital for prisoners. There was no more guard duty for me!

We had an office inside the hospital. There were always three soldiers on twenty-four hour duty with two days off. Our duty was to check the prisoners when they came in to see the doctors. We searched them and kept track of the time as to when they were admitted and released. We also made sure that they were all accounted for. We checked their mail and censored anything that looked suspicious or



Guard duty

wasn't allowed.

Our superiors were Americans; Captain Dr. Khuri (Dr. Khuri spoke to us through an interpreter), was of Arabian descent, and Sergeant Gibilisco who spoke German. We got along very well.

We had thirty SS generals as prisoners in our barracks. They were not sick but were there for extra security precautions. They were often visited by different American officers. We also had one barrack of psychiatric patients.

We had three ambulances at our disposal. One ambulance had a seating capacity of twenty people. We took patients that needed to get fitted with artificial limbs to different locations in the U.S. zone. Some of the patients who had tuberculosis were taken to Garmisch, a city located in the mountains in Southern Bavaria, for treatment.

I just loved my job.

One time we were coming back from one of those trips travelling through the Black Forest. We spotted a group of deer grazing in a clearing about one hundred and fifty meters from the road. I told the ambulance driver to stop and I said, "Maybe we should get some fresh meat!" The prisoners laughed saying no way could I hit a deer from that distance. There were two of us guards. Of course I just had to try. I aimed and

fired and hit one of the deer right in the jaw. The deer fell. I ran and picked it up. It was a little buck. It wasn't moving much, so I thought it was dead. I wrapped it up in a blanket and put it in the ambulance and we headed back to the barracks. It was winter time. Around 6 p.m. we unloaded the prisoners and headed back to our quarters. I put the deer on my back and carried it to my room and put it between two beds, thinking that after supper I would take it to the kitchen to get the meat processed. No one was in our quarters as everyone had already gone for supper. I went for supper leaving the deer lying there. In the meantime, the power went off leaving the place in total darkness. After supper my roommates returned to our quarters. (There were four men to a room). The guy who had the bed next to me felt his way between the two beds in the dark. In the meantime the deer stood up. It had just been wounded. The guy groping around in the dark upon feeling the deer, ran from the room screaming, saying that there was a devil in his room. He had felt the horns of the deer which were about ten centimeters long covered in velvet fur. When I got back from supper there was a big commotion. The guy was shaking. I arrived at my room and sure enough the deer was standing between the beds. After he composed himself my roommate said that this was the most frightening experience that he had ever had in his life. The power came on and I took the deer to the kitchen. The cooks butchered it and cut it up into roasts and cooked it up. Some of the guys brought some home-brew and we had a party. Everyone had some of the roast deer. It was delicious. I took some of it to the ambulance driver who was one of the prisoners. He enjoyed it too and shared it with the other men. We all got along very well.

I had informers in this hospital and I knew what was going on. I was on duty this one night when one of the prisoners broke into the medical supplies and took thousands of dollars worth of penicillin. We found this out in the morning and immediately closed the hospital. No one could come in or go out. Dr. Khuri was informed of the

break-in and he came immediately to the hospital. He was very concerned. He came to me and said that the hospital would be closed until such a time that we recover the penicillin. We were all assigned to search for it. I approached some of my informers and through them I got hold of a likely suspect. I went to his room to see him and started talking about different subjects entirely unrelated to the incident. I spoke the German language very well. When the suspect was relaxed, I then told him that I knew for a fact that he stole the penicillin. His expression changed completely and his face turned different colours. I couldn't believe that his face could change so quickly and I knew instantly that he was guilty. He denied it while I searched him. He was shaking and kept denying it. I spent about two hours searching his room and still he kept on denying it. Then I quit. I sat down and started to talk to him telling him that the Americans would be a lot easier on him if he admitted it, and I would find it eventually anyway. He wouldn't budge. He thought I was finished with him, when I suddenly started to rip up the floor. Before I had lifted up the first board he admitted that he had hidden the penicillin under the floor. He retrieved the penicillin and I took it to Dr. Khuri. He was overwhelmed and relieved. This whole episode lasted about four hours. The hospital was re-opened. Two American officers arrived in a jeep and picked up the thief.



The deer I shot was brought to camp in this ambulance

A few days later I received a letter from Dr. Khuri thanking me and commending me for the excellent performance in the way I handled this case.

There was a lot of black marketeering going on between the prisoners, and sometimes they bribed the guards. As a result the regulations were tightened and we became more strict. Our job was to search the prisoners more thoroughly when they came in and out of the hospital. They would bring all of their possessions with them. There were rules as to what they were allowed to have in their possession when they were admitted to the hospital. Some of the prisoners would have a suitcase full of tobacco. Some had gold and some had diamonds. These things were confiscated and reported to Dr. Khuri. They were labelled and stored.

This one time there were a few prisoners who were waiting in line to be searched. As I was confiscating some excess tobacco from one of the prisoners he pleaded with me to let it go. There was another prisoner in the line who was a major in rank, who didn't like what I was doing so he began to mouth off saying that the world was revolving and that their time would come to have their revenge over us. He didn't know that I had heard him. I went up to him and very politely told him, "It took you a long time to find out that the world is revolving. You should have thought about it in 1939 when you invaded Poland." Using my discretion I took him out of the line and searched him extra long and confiscated more than I normally would have, then I took him to Dr. Khuri to be dealt with. I felt good. I thought how right he was, the world certainly was revolving, but in my favour now; he couldn't see that he had just had all the authority he could muster only a few short months ago. Now justice had been done, he was the prisoner now. The authority was now mine and I felt good about it, not that I would abuse my authority because I knew what it was like to be on the other side - boy did the world ever revolve!

Some of the prisoners got shot trying to escape and it was our job to bring them in to the hospital, dead or alive. We never lost any prisoners!

HEADQUARTERS POST HOSPITAL
WAR CRIMES CENTRAL SUSPECT
AND WITNESS ENCLOSURE DACHAU
APO 407, US ARMY

8 February 1947

SUBJECT : Commendation of Polish Guard Cpl MIKULA, JAN,
Co 4094

TO : Commanding Officer, Post of Dachau

Request a letter of commendation by the Post Commander
to :

Cpl MIKULA, JAN, Serial No 31471,
Co 4094

for his efficiency, thoroughness, excellent behavior and
intelligent execution of his duties performed in WCE-Hospital
as a guard.

D. Naim N. Khuri
DENAIM N. KHURI
POST SURGEON

The following are the letters of commendation through the chain of command relating to the stolen penicillin; including the versions translated into Polish.

HEADQUARTERS
WAR CRIMES CENTRAL SUSPECT & WITNESS ENCLOSURE
APO 407 US ARMY

15 th February 1947

SUBJECT: Recognition of Excelent Service.
TO : Commanding Officer, Co.4094.

1. Attention is invited to attached letter, subject:
Commendation of Polish Guard Cpl. MIKULA Jan, Co.4094, dated
8 Feb 1947 and 1st Ind. this Headquarters, dated 15 Feb 1947.

2. Recommend that some recognition be given Cpl. MIKULA
for the excellent service he has performed in the form of a pass
or some other similar recognition.

C. B. COLE
Col. FA
Commanding

Tele: MM 2741-5
Ext: 132

This letter is the follow up to Dr. Khuri's letter. Dr. Khuri's letter is the attached letter referred to here.

PMM/lh

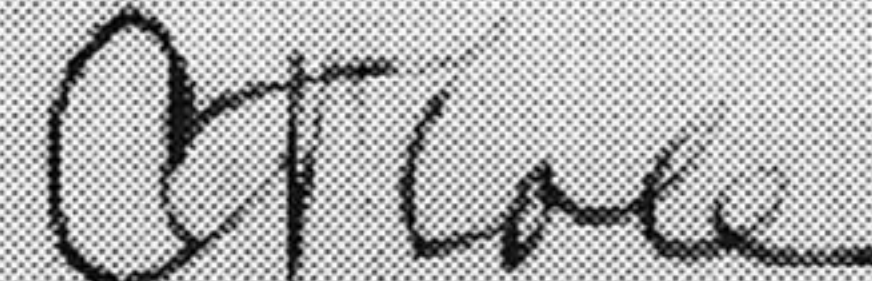
1st Ind.

HEADQUARTERS, WAR CRIMES CENTRAL SUSPECT AND WITNESS ENCLOSURE, APO 407, US Army,
15 February 1947.

TO : Cpl. Jan Mikula, Serial No. 31471, Co 4094

THRU: Commanding Officer, U.S. Polish Headquarters.

1. It is with great pleasure and pride that I have noted the improvement in the work of the Polish Guard Units. The fine work that these units are doing are due to the outstanding service rendered by individuals such as yourself.


C. B. COLE
Col. FA -
Commanding

Tele: MM 2741-5
Ext: 132

2nd Ind.

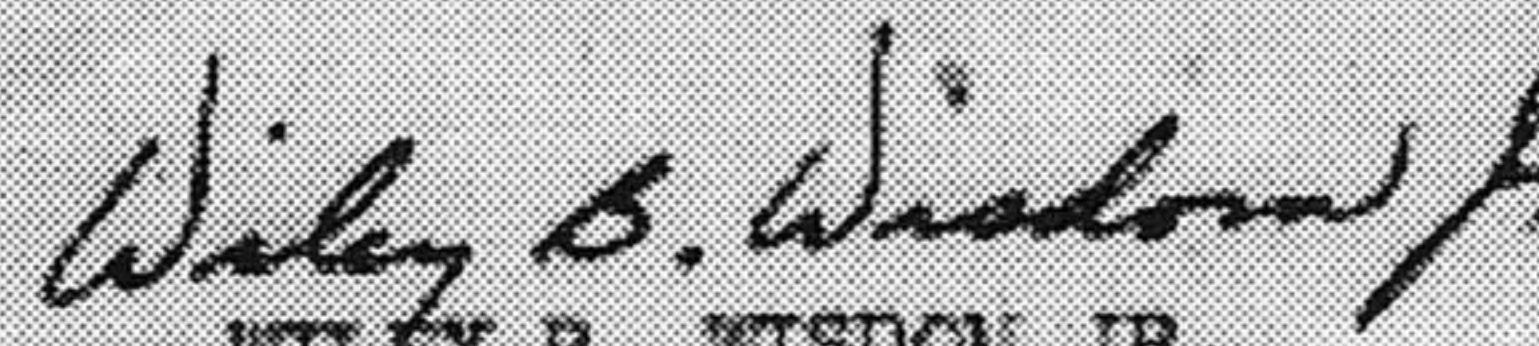
HEADQUARTERS, 130th Labor Supervision Center, APO 407-A, US Army, 21 February 1947

TO: Cpl. Jan Mikula, No. 31471, 4094 Labor Service Company

THRU: Commanding Officer, 1892 Labor Supervision Company, APO 407-A, US Army

It is indeed a pleasure to forward such reports as basic communication and first indorsement thereto.

Telephone: MM 2626


WILEY B. WISDOM JR.
Lt. Col. Infantry
Commanding

This is the personal letter of commendation from Colonel Cole for the construction of the football field and for the hospital incident

PRZEDMIOT: Uznanie za dobra sluzbe.

DO : D-ca kompanii 4094.

1. Zwraca sie uwage na zalaczony list, przedmiot "Pochwala
Polskiego Wartownika cpl. Mikule Jana z dnia 8 lutego 1947."

2. Zaleca sie aby jakies wyroznienie dane kpr. Mikule za
dzielna sluzbe, w formie przepustki lub t.p.

C. B. COLE
Col. FA
Commanding

Polish translation

HEADQUARTERS POST HOSPITAL
WAR CRIMES CENTRAL SUSPECT & WITNESS ENCLOSURE
APO 407 US ARMY

8 February 1947

PRZEDMIOT: Pochwala Polskiego Wartownika kpr. Mikula Jana, komp. 4094
Do : D-ca Obozu Dachau.

Proszę o udzielenie pochwały przez D-ca Obozu kpr. Mikula Jan, GSN 31471, komp. 4094, za jego wydajność, dokładność i nienaganną zachowanie się jak i również pilne wykonywanie swych obowiązków jako wartownik w szpitalu WCE.

Dr. NAIM N KHURI
POST SURGEON

I załącznik.

Do : Kpr. Mikula Jana GSN 31471, komp. 4094.
Przez : D-ca, Kompania Nadzorcza Polskich Kompanii.

1. Ciesze się bardzo i jestem dumny, że stwierdziłem poprawę w pracy Polskich Oddziałów Wartowniczych. Wynik tej pracy osiągnęły te oddziały dzięki wybitnym usługom takich jednostek jak Wy.

C. B. COLE
Col. PA
Commanding

Polish translation of letters of commendation

HEADQUARTERS, WAR CRIMES CENTRAL SUSPECT AND WITNESS ENCLOSURE,
APO 407 US Army

15 February 1947

DO: Kapr. Jana MIKUZY No.ew.31471 Komp.4094

PRZEZ: Dowódce polskich jednostek

1. Jestem dumny i miło mi jest zaznaczyć podniesienie się Polskich Jednostek Wartowniczych w służbie. Piękna praca i jej wspaniałe wyniki jakie te oddziały osiągnęły należy zawdzięczać wybitnym zasługom oddanym przez jednostki-solnierzy takich jak Pan

C. B. COLE
PPK. FA
Dowódca

HEADQUARTERS, 130 Labor Supervision Center, APO 407-A, US Army
21 February 1947

DO: Kapr. Jana MIKUZY No.ew.31471 Komp.4094

PRZEZ: Dowódce 1892 Labor Supervision Company, APO 407-A, US Army

1. Jest naprawdę miło przesyłać tego służbowo dalej takie raporty od przesłanego do pewnego ja proszę o udzielenie pochwały i ta oto pochwała.

WILEY B. WISDOM JR.
PPK. piechoty
Dowódca

HEADQUARTERS POST HOSPITAL WAR CRIMES CENTRAL SUSPECT AND WITNESS
ENCLOSURE DACHAU APO 407, US ARMY

8 February 1947

DOTYCZY: Pochwały Polskiego Wartownika kapr. Jana MIKUZY, komp.4094

DO: Komendanta Garnizonu Dachau

Proszę o napisanie listu pochwalnego przez Komendanta Garnizonu dla kapr. MIKUZY Jana nr.ew.31471 z komp. 4094 za wydatną służbę, dokładność w spełnianiu obowiązków, wspaniałą postawę i inteligentne pełnienie służby jako wartownik na posterunku w Szpitalu dla Przestępców Wojennych

Dr. NAIM N. KHURI
Lekarz Garnizonu

Polish translations of letters of commendation

There were many adventurous happenings during this period in my life, not to mention hilarious ones as well.

I must tell you about an event that happened on my first Christmas in camp (1945).

It was day two since we took over guard duty from the Americans. The day was December 25, 1945 and the time was 12:00 noon. We were eating dinner. All of a sudden we heard machine gun fire at close range. The alarm sounded and we all ran out to get ready for action. We thought that we were under attack. The machine gun was automatic and didn't stop firing until all 250 rounds had been fired in a full circle. The guards had hit the deck on the tower when it started firing. It was lucky that the machine gun was pointing up. The only thing that got hit were the windows of the tower. The machine gun firing stopped and we realized that we weren't under attack.

We were informed later that someone accidentally leaned against the machine gun, the machine gun trigger got caught on the rail and before they realized what had happened 250 rounds of ammunition was fired. The machine gun was mounted on the rail inside the top of the main gate camp tower. When the guard changed, the machine gun had to be cocked once, and if it was cocked twice it was ready to fire. The new guard who took it over cocked the machine gun once not realizing that it was already cocked once before, therefore he didn't know that the machine gun was ready to fire.

This caused us a lot of embarrassment. Now when I look back on it, it was rather funny.

Christmas 1946 was just beautiful. We all went to church for Christmas Mass. We had arranged Christmas Mass with the churches in Dachau. After the parishioners had their mass there was a special service for the service men as the churches could not hold everybody at one time. We also had our own chaplain perform the service.

After church we celebrated Christmas, wishing each other the very best and being thankful for the good year that we had.

The free beer in the pub was discontinued. We now had to pay seven cents for a bottle of beer, which was still very cheap. The beer was

very good 7% alcoholic content! It was brewed in Bavaria for the soldiers.

For entertainment we would go the dance hall in Dachau. I got to know some of the civilian people in that area and we visited them quite often. We also spent a lot of time travelling back and forth to Munich by train, which was only twenty five kilometers from Dachau.

I still didn't know whether my mom, dad and sisters had survived the war. I was now so used to being away from my family that I didn't miss them anymore.

The war crime tribunals were set up in the camp in Dachau. All of the prisoners were going through the war crime hearings. Most of them were released and some were prosecuted and sentenced for the crimes they committed.

I came across Otto Skurzeny, an SS Colonel who was decorated by Hitler himself for highest bravery. He was the one who rescued Mussolini from the top of the mountain in Italy. Mussolini had been taken prisoner by the Italian Bagdolio army who were supported by the Allied forces when they rose up against the dictator Mussolini regime in 1944, and they held him captive on a mountain. Otto Skurzeny was the one who landed a small airplane on the mountain and rescued Mussolini and brought him back to Hitler. There was a movie made about his heroism. He came quite often to the hospital for a check up and had to be guarded one on one. I talked to him many times. He was a tall, good looking man. One time as we were talking, he said to me, "You are a rich man." I said, "No, I am not rich. I haven't got any money." He said, "Yes you are. I don't mean money. You have a good attitude and you are happy. That is being rich!" Now, when I look back, I think about how right he was. I think I am the richest man in the world. He was released a short time later.

It was Spring, 1947 and most of the prisoners were released by now. Some of our companies were transferred to other places. Eventually the only company left in Dachau was ours. My friend Mirek Baranek was transferred to our company. He was assigned to the hospital where I was on duty. Mirek was an excellent violin player, playing in concerts for the

Americans, and he enjoyed it very much.

This one time he and I went to Mitelwald, a town in Germany famous for the Stradivari violins that are made there. Mirek came across a Stradivari violin that was made in the 17th century. He played it and fell in love with it. The cost of the violin was 7000 marks and he was short 1500 marks to buy it. He saw other cheaper models, but he kept on coming back and looking at the first one he loved so much, which he knew he couldn't afford to buy. Without any question, I pulled out 1500 marks and said, "This is my gift to you. This violin may bring joy to many people's hearts." It was my utmost pleasure to do this. He was an extraordinary violin player and well worth it.

One time Mirek said to me, "With this violin, I can make women cry." And he did! He could make the sound of the wind blowing with it, and the sound of fluttering leaves; he could almost make the violin talk. On this one occasion we were at a party when he played a hauntingly beautiful melody and the women there actually did cry when they listened to his beautiful music.

By the end of 1947 there were hardly any prisoners left to guard. Things were changing rapidly.

We were posted to Sandhofen, north of Mannheim, Bavaria. Our quarters were brick buildings three stories high and were very comfortable.

We were assigned to guard a supply depot which held goods for all of Europe. This was called the Marshall Plan. We also guarded an ammunition storage depot close by. I was assigned to be a guard at the gate of the Marshall Plan Supply Depot. There were two American and two Polish guards. We had to check all of the vehicles coming in and going out, and also keep track of them. The workers were also checked by us. There was a lot of stealing going on. Even the American personnel had to be checked. It was a fun job for me!

There was a lot of unrest in Poland, and it was badly influenced by the Russians.

The Americans were accused by the Russians for organizing Polish armies outside of the Polish border. The Russians demanded the Americans to dismantle our companies. Instead the Americans changed our uniforms to navy

blue, and changed our status to labour companies and called us civilian guards. The Russians were still not satisfied. They called us traitors and said that we would be dealt with when the time was right.

The cold war intensified. The Russians blockaded the American entrance to West Berlin. All food supplies and other goods had to be airlifted to West Berlin. Some of our companies were assigned to load and unload the planes. We were on the alert most of the time, and we were also getting more training. But life went on just the same.

We didn't have much guard duty anymore so we had more spare time on our hands now, and entertainment was our priority. We had dances every weekend and more money than we knew what to do with.

One time we were travelling on the train. A German woman accidentally dropped a pfennig (a fifty cent coin). It rolled under the seat and she bent down to look for it. It was dark under the seat, so one of the soldiers for a joke pulled out 50 marks (\$50.00) and lit it with a match and helped her look for her fifty cents. When she saw this she couldn't believe it. "Don't burn that. Give it to me and I will forget about the fifty cents," she said.

Money was the last thing on our minds!

There were many activities going on. We had soccer teams competing with German civilian teams. It was fun. Life in Sandhofen was just great. We had good food, and every week we received P/X - these were personal necessities like razor blades, soap, cigarettes (one carton of ten packs) and chocolate bars. You name it, we had it. It was all free. I didn't smoke so I sold my cigarettes on the black market. I also attended English classes in the camp.

We were preparing to immigrate to the U.S.A. We had some American personnel in our company, there was Captain Robert Baker, a lieutenant, a staff sergeant, a sergeant and a corporal, who helped us with the forms we were filling out to apply for American citizenship. To become an American citizen required five years of service in the army.

All of this time we were free to immigrate to any country we wished such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Venezuela, England,

France as well as the U.S.A. We also had a choice of going back to Poland. We had all of these opportunities, or to stay in the army until we put in our five years of service and become an American citizen and immigrate to America.

We spent Christmas 1947 in Sandhofen. The Christmas service was held in camp. We also had a big celebration of freedom. The winter of 1947 - 1948 went by quickly. We travelled all over the U.S. zone for free. I got to know some German people in the area, and spent some time in the German pubs. We socialized with the German people. They were good to us.

I remember one time we went to the horse races. There was one horse who came in last. Not only was he last but he came in way behind the others. So for fun one of our guys suggested that we collect some money between us and give the last jockey a prize. There were a lot of us guys there and we gathered thousands of marks. We went up to that jockey and presented him with the money. He was flabbergasted. His prize was larger than the first prize. We had great fun. This was one of the ways we spent our money. Most of that money was made on the black market.

The money we earned however was paid in occupation marks. It could be exchanged for American dollars, ten marks for one dollar U.S. We weren't too loose with that money.

One day in the morning, the news came on the radio that all the German marks were to be exchanged for new ones.

Everyone received 40 marks exchange. After that you were only allowed to exchange 1000 marks at five per cent (you ended up with 50 marks).

That was the change of currency (1948) from the old marks to the new ones which are still in use at this time (1993).

Many people lost thousands of marks because they could only exchange 1000 marks for the new ones, no matter how many marks they had. Anyone having more than 1000 marks was just like having blank paper - no value.

The new marks had a high value so with that the black market disintegrated. Stores were full of goods. People who made home-brew



Christmas party: Gura, Tony Maj, John

went out of business because there was all kinds of whiskey that you could now buy at the store.

The life of the German people improved dramatically.

I wrote a letter home to Poland and received a reply. The year was 1948. My mom, dad and sisters were all well. They all had survived the war. They settled down across the new Polish and Russian border which was Poland before the war and was now Russia. My brother stayed in Poland on our old farm.

Our mail went through the U.S.A. before it got to Poland. We had to state our name, company number and the State of New York, U.S.A. on our envelopes. This was done so that the Russians would not know exactly where we were.

I was happy that my family was all well.

The reason I didn't write home sooner than 1948 (including all of the Polish boys) was because there was a threat by Russia to all of the Polish families who had boys who were serving in the American army. Stalin was very much in power then and any families who revealed that they had sons or husbands in the U.S. army were sure to be sent to Siberia. There was much fear in Poland.



Cousin Wladek and brother Aleksander, Poland, 1946