

VMI Prisoners of War: World War II

Issues of the Alumni Review published during World War II noted that the 38 alumni listed below were prisoners of war at some point during the war. In some instances alumni who were reported initially as being prisoners of war were found later to have been either killed in action or missing in action, but were never prisoners of war; those names are not included on this list. A copy of this list will be placed in the VMI Archives; please send additions or corrections to the Alumni Review as soon as possible.

An asterisk follows the names of those alumni who died while prisoners of war.

Maj. Gen. Samuel L. Howard '12, USMC

The commander of the Fourth Marine Regiment in China and on Bataan, he was commander of all beach defenses on Corregidor when it was surrendered on May 6, 1942. He was a POW in Japan from 1942-45.

Col. Irvine C. Scudder '18, USA

The commander of American and Philippine forces on Cebu Island, he was a prisoner of the Japanese for over three years at camps on Cebu, Luzon and Formosa, as well as on the Manchurian mainland.

Sgt. Maj. Charles D. R. Jackson '19, USMC

Attached to the 4th U.S. Marine Regiment, Corregidor, 1942.

Maj. Stuart W. King '19, USMC*

King was killed in action on Dec. 31, 1944, as a result of the bombing of a Japanese prison ship which was en route from The Philippines to Japan.

Fred M. Satterfield '20, civilian

At the outbreak of the war, Satterfield was a submanager of the National City Bank of New York at its Manila branch. He was a civilian internee of the Japanese for three years, first at Santo Tomas and later at Los Banos in The Philippines, and was released in 1945.

1Lt. William R. Williams '25, USA*

Williams, who was with the 31st Infantry Division, was taken prisoner when Bataan forces were surrendered in April 1942. He was held at Camp O'Donnell, Cabanatuan and Bilibil until he was shipped out on Jan. 14, 1945. En route to Japan with some 1,600 other prisoners, his ship was bombed by U.S. forces in Subic Bay, The Philippines, on Jan. 15. He survived that bombing but was lost when the ship was bombed again by U.S. forces off the coast of Formosa. He made it to shore but died shortly thereafter of exhaustion.

Lt. Col. Cornelius Z. Byrd '26, USA*

Captured on Bataan in March 1942, he died at Camp Fukuoka, Japan, on Feb. 7, 1945.

Chow Ngan Ben '27

Chow Ngan Ben (formerly Jue Ngan Ben), who served in the Chinese Army under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, was seriously wounded and imprisoned by the Japanese, from whom he escaped.

Cmdr. J. Smith Ferebee '27, USN

Ferebee volunteered for duty in the Navy on the day after Pearl Harbor was bombed. When he was awarded Naval Aviator status at the age of 37 in 1943 he became the oldest naval officer with no flight experience prior to military service to receive it. He was stationed on board the carrier *Belleau Wood* in the South Pacific, and while on a mercy mission at the close of the war his plane crashed in Toyawa, north of Tokyo. After floating in the ocean for six hours he was captured by the Japanese. Ferebee was the last naval officer to be taken prisoner in Japan.

Maj. Charles F. Harrison, Jr. '31, USA*

Harrison, a chemical warfare officer, was captured in April 1942 in The Philippines and survived the Bataan Death March. He was killed by the Japanese on May 22, 1944, while attempting to escape from Davao, a prison camp on Mindanao.

Lt. Joseph W. Stirni '31, U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey*

Captured by Japanese forces in 1941 when they sank the American ship to which he was assigned, Stirni was held prisoner at Santo Tomas in Manila. He was later taken to Cabanatuan and remained there until he was transferred to a prison ship on Dec. 13, 1944, for shipment to Japan. He was killed by an American bomb when the prison ship taking him from The Philippines was sunk by American bomber planes at Formosa on Jan. 9, 1945. His wife, Dorothy, was also a prisoner of war at Santo Tomas and reported later that, following Stirni's death, Lt. Cmdr. George Morris sent her Stirni's VMI class ring, which he wore around his neck on a string.

Lt. Col. C. Pickett Lathrop III '34, USA

Lathrop, who was stationed in the South Pacific area as part of the Sixth Field Artillery, 37th Infantry Division, was a prisoner at Santo Tomas Internment Camp, Manila, The Philippines. He met his future wife, Marie, there; she was a volunteer nurse at Bataan and Corregidor, and they were married in California after her liberation in 1945.

1Lt. Philip D. Beall, Jr. '36, USAAC

A bombardier with the 710th Squadron, 447th Bomb Group, he was a POW in Germany at Stalag Luft 1.

Lt. Col. Selden L. McMillin '36, USAAC

A POW in Germany at Stalag Luft 3 from 1943-45, he was squadron commander and group operations officer, 29th Bomb Group, and deputy group commander, 384th Bomb Group, European Theatre. He went down on June 25, 1943, while leading his group of Flying Fortresses on a bombing mission over Hamburg, Germany. His plane was under attack from intense anti-aircraft fire and was heavily damaged; he ordered his wing planes to abandon him and seek the protection of another group, and his plane went down in flames. His entire crew survived. He was liberated by Patton in Moosburg in April 1945 after 23 months as a prisoner of war.

Capt. Allen T. M. White '36, USA

POW in Germany.

Lt. Col. Charles W. Willoughby '36, USA

The commander of F Company, 328 Infantry Regiment, 26th Infantry Division, 3rd U.S. Army, he was captured in 1944 by the Germans. After spending some time in a German hospital he was sent to a POW camp in Poland which was later taken over by the Russians. He was taken by the Russians to Odessa and turned over to American authorities.

1Lt. James P. Ferrey '37, USAAF

A bomber pilot in the South Pacific, Ferrey was a communications officer with the 19th Bombardment Group (Heavy), Clark Field, The

Philippines. He was struck in the leg by a small caliber machine gun bullet during a raid by Japanese fighters on the American airdrome at Singosari, Java, Dutch East Indies. His leg was broken as he attempted to get to shelter. He was hospitalized in Malang, Java, where he was taken prisoner by the Japanese on Mar. 8, 1942. He was released in Mukden, Manchuria, on Aug. 20, 1945.

Capt. William W. Lewis '37, USMC

Lewis was stationed with the First Defense Battalion on Wake Island when the Japanese attacked on Dec. 7, 1941. He was taken prisoner on Dec. 23 when the island fell. He spent three years in war camps near Shanghai before being transferred in May 1945, first to a camp in northern China and later to the Japanese mainland itself, where he and other American officers were forced to work in coal mines.

Capt. James H. Baldwin '38, USA

Baldwin served in the Army Transport Service (QMC) in Manila and on Corregidor and Bataan until Corregidor's fall on May 6, 1942. He was a prisoner of war in Japan from 1942 until September 1945.

Pvt. Richard H. Harwood '38, Canadian Army

Harwood joined the Canadian forces in 1941 as a member of the 1st Battalion of the Black Watch, Canadian Army infantry, and was selected for membership in the Black Watch's Commandos. He was sent to England in 1942 and was declared missing in action during an Allied raid on Dieppe in July 1942. It was later discovered that Harwood had been captured by the Germans. He was released on May 1, 1945.

Maj. Alfred G. Lambert, Jr. '38, USAF

The commander of a squadron of Flying Fortresses, he went down in combat near Leipzig, Germany, on Oct. 7, 1944, on his 35th mission. His brother, 1Lt. H. Read Lambert, a Liberator pilot, was shot down near Munich in June 1944, and they were imprisoned by the Germans in the same camp, Stalag Luft 3.

Capt. Arnold W. Ellis '39, AUS

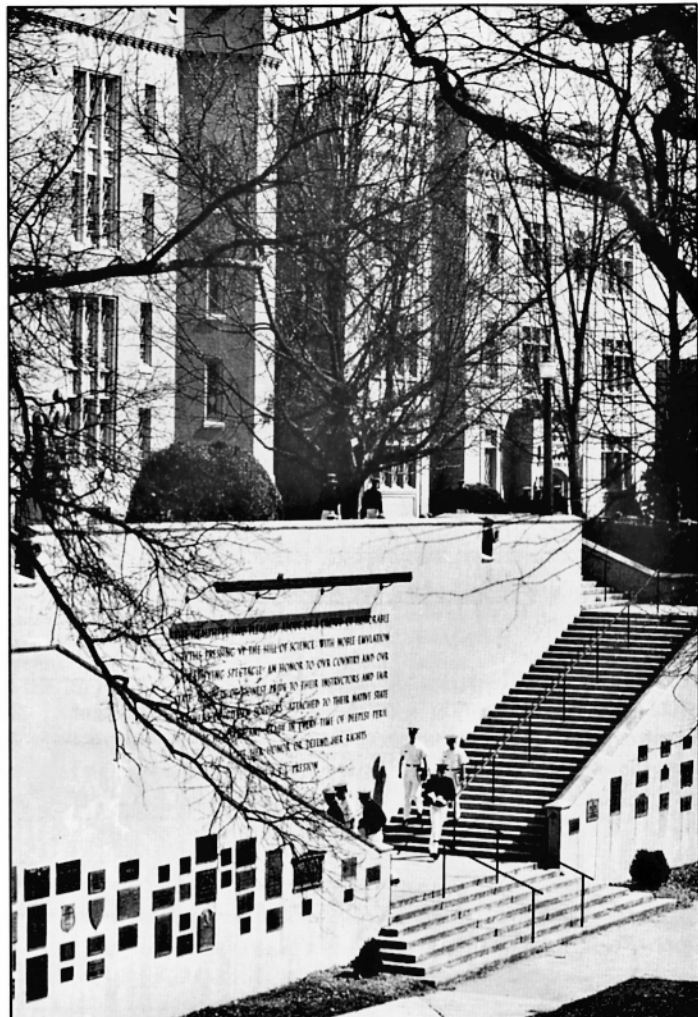
Ellis took part in the Normandy invasion with the 121st Combat Engineers, 29th Division. He was captured by the Germans on April 1, 1945, while leading a jeep reconnaissance mission with the 1149th Engineer Combat Group of the Ninth Army. He was taken to Neinburg prison camp where he took a French major's uniform, slipped into the barracks where the French prisoners were kept, and "lost" himself. The following day, according to news reports at the time, "...when the Germans forced the French prisoners to look for the escaped prisoner of war, Ellis joined the search." That night he slipped through a wire fence and headed toward the sound of allied artillery fire. He was picked up by a British patrol, which returned him to his unit. He had been a prisoner of war for one week.

1Lt. Roger N. Peterson '39, USAAF

Peterson, who was shot down in May 1944 on his 30th mission over Germany, was with the 351st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. He was a POW at Stalag Luft 3 for 11 months and was liberated at Moosburg in April 1945.

Capt. John C. Wood, Jr. '39, USA

Wood was executive officer of C Battery, 7th Field Artillery Battalion, during the Oran Landing and the subsequent North Africa campaign from November 1942 to May 1943. He commanded C Battery during the Sicilian campaign, July-August 1943, during the D-Day landing on Normandy and during subsequent operations to secure the beachhead. He



was captured at St. Lo on June 18, 1944, while on reconnaissance, and was in prison camps in France, Germany and Poland. He was liberated at Moosburg on April 29, 1945.

2Lt. Reid S. Aaron '40, USAAC*

Aaron, who was captured at the fall of Bataan in the spring of 1942, was killed in action in the Pacific Theatre while being transported with other prisoners of war aboard a Japanese vessel which went down in Subic Bay on Dec. 15, 1944.

2Lt. William J. Lang, Jr. '40, USAAF*

Captured by the Japanese in the Bataan Campaign in May 1942, Lang survived the Bataan Death March and was a prisoner at Camp #2 in The Philippines. He was killed en route from Luzon to Japan on a prison ship which was torpedoed in the South China Sea by American forces on Oct. 24, 1944.

Capt. Donald L. May '40, USA

May, a company commander in his tank battalion, was reported missing in action at Salerno on Sept. 11, 1943. He was captured by the Germans and was a prisoner of war in Italy, Germany and Poland, where he was liberated by the Allies in the spring of 1945.

1Lt. D. Herbert Wills '40, USA

Captured when Bataan fell in April 1942, Wills was sent to Cabanatuan prison camp. He later was sent to Mindanao's Davao prison to do farm work and remained there until June 1944 when he was put on board a prison ship headed for Japan. He escaped from this ship as it steamed

by Zamboanga in June 1944 on a rainy evening when, saying he needed to use the latrine located along the ship's railing, he jumped over the railing and into the sea. He swam to shore four miles away. He joined some guerillas and aided them in the destruction of enemy garrisons on Mindanao. He returned to the United States in 1945.

Capt. Robert A. Foster '41, USAAC

Foster, an assistant group operations officer and squadron operations officer, was assigned to the 92nd Group, B-17, 8th Air Force. He was shot down over Germany while visiting the 91st Bomb Group and was a POW for over two years at Stalag Luft 3, where he roomed with Selden McMillin '36, and at Stalag Luft 7A.

2Lt. Robert E. L. Michie '41, USAAC

Michie, a pilot with the 19th Bomber Group who was stationed at Clark Field in The Philippines, ferried planes from Darwin to Malang, Java. He was taken prisoner following an air crash some time between Mar. 1 and 7, 1942, and was a prisoner of war in Java before being moved to Camp Fukuoka in Japan.

2Lt. Minton A. Prideaux '41, AUS

POW in Germany.

1Lt. Warren T. White, Jr. '41, USAAC

White, an operations officer with the 722 Heavy Bombardment Squadron, 453 Heavy Bombardment Group, was a Flying Fortress pilot who was declared missing in action over Germany in late April 1944. He was a prisoner at Stalag Luft #1, Barth, Germany, from April 1944 to June 1945.

1Lt. Keith Willis '41, AUS

Willis, who was with the First Field Artillery Battalion, was captured three miles from the German lines at Faid Pass on Feb. 14, 1943. He was directing fire of his battery of 155-mm Howitzers when the

Germans broke through the pass and cut off 92 enlisted men and five officers. He was imprisoned by the Germans at Oflag 64, Szubin, Poland, for 28 months and was liberated at Moosburg on April 29, 1945.

2Lt. John W. Carmine '42, USAAF

Carmine, a pilot who had previously been missing in action over Greece, was a prisoner of the Germans.

1Lt. Robert P. Jones, Jr. '44, USAAF

Jones, who had flight training as a gunner, navigator and radar bombardier, was assigned to the 52nd Squadron, 29th Bomb Group, 20th Air Force, which was based on Guam. On May 26, 1945, while serving as a navigator on a B-29, he was shot down over Tokyo on his tenth mission over Japan. Although wounded in the leg by a fragment of flak, he parachuted safely from the B-29, the wings and engine of which were on fire. He landed in a rice paddy near Tokyo, and was held as a prisoner in Japan until after the termination of the war. He was liberated on Aug. 29, 1945.

2Lt. Robert E. Nay '44, USA

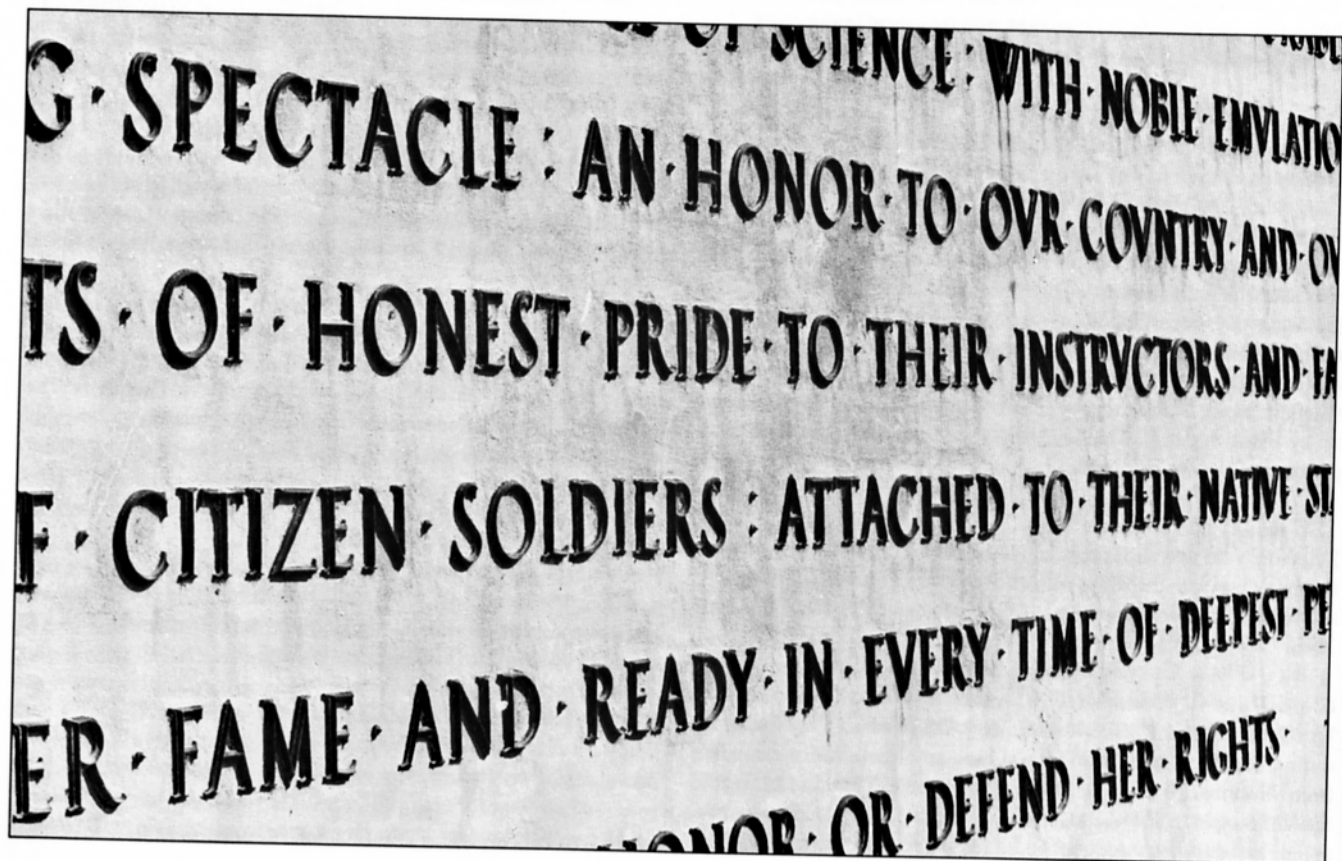
Nay, who was serving with an infantry outfit which saw action in France, was a prisoner of the Germans.

2Lt. Irl C. Riggan, Jr. '44, USA

Riggan, who was with the 7th Army (Rainbow Division), was imprisoned in Germany.

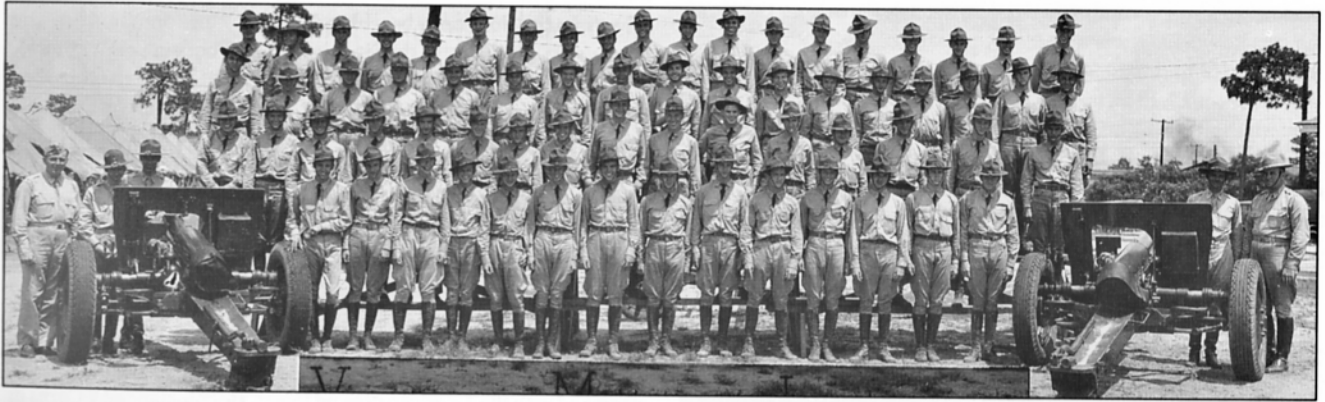
Paul A. Louis '45, USAAF

Louis was a B-26 Marauder pilot assigned to the 44 1st Squadron (Med. Bomb.), 320th Group, 12th Air Force, operating from Sardinia and, later, Corsica. He was shot down over northern Italy on his 29th mission, captured and imprisoned in Germany until he was liberated by Gen. Patton's Third Army at the end of the war.





Some members of the class of 1944 are shown here in the summer of 1943 when they were with Troop L, 3rd Training Regiment, at Fort Riley, Kansas. Front row, left to right: C.T. Moses, Jr., G.I. Poos, H.B. Weatherford, Jr., L.M. Ludlow, Jr., L.L. Nichols, Jr., R.Y. Moon. Row 2: H. Hill '45, R.F. Walker, R.W. Smothers, A.W. Martenstein III, T.C. Wilson, Jr., H. Ratrie, Jr., A.C. Taylor, Jr. Row 3: J.M. Hull, Jr., W.V. Sanford, H.V. Bray III '45, L.DeW. Freeman, Jr., J. Inglis, J.P. Irby III, E.L. Baker, Jr. '43, C.W. Parker, Jr., C.H. Marks, Jr., D.C. Burdon, T.S. Cooke, Jr. (Photo from the Richard C. Niess '44 collection in the VMI Archives.)



VMI ROTC at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, June 13-July 24, 1941. (Photo from the L. VanLoan Naisawald '42 collection in the VMI Archives.)



Alumni stationed overseas celebrated New Market Day in 1947 at the Tokyo quarters of Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond '15. From left to right, they were C.P. Brownley III '39, J.D.R. Mead '23, C.H. Phipps '37, unknown, R.G. Duff '21, unknown, unknown, W.A. Hallett, Jr. '47, unknown, Maj. Gen. Almond, unknown, D.P. Smith '40, W.B. Bradford '16, C.W. Willoughby '36, unknown, W.S. Morris '16, unknown, H.P. Costolo '23, unknown, unknown. The names of the unknown alumni would be appreciated.