

# Former POW tells how his life compared with movies

Continued from Page 1A

"Everyone had a role to play. I was in the intelligence section of the X Committee. It was my job to keep track of the guards' comings and goings. Ferris was what we called them (the guards). They would carry long metal probes to look for tunnels."

According to Erickson, individual escapes occurred every two to three months. The group efforts, planned by the X Committee, occurred every six to 12 months. It was forbidden, he said, to plan an escape without the committee's approval.

ONE OF the most successful, if not diligent, escape artists was Shorty Spies. It was Spies' character who was later portrayed by McQueen in the movie "The Great Escape." Erickson said in reality Spies was not a part of that effort. Spies, according to Erick-

son, planned and executed some eight unsuccessful escapes.

"He was short in stature and very nervous. He was an individual who couldn't stand being cooped up. All of Shorty's (escapes) were one-man efforts." According to Erickson, Shorty was often recruited "almost immediately." However, on one occasion, he traveled some 100 miles on foot and arrived within two miles of the Swiss border before he was found.

"He was so furious," recalled Erickson. "After 30 days in solitary confinement, which was the maximum penalty, he was still furious. The Germans had set up a false border (two miles short of the actual Swiss border)."

A 50-man factory department was established to begin creating false identification papers. Like the tunnel workers, the prisoners scrounged for useable materials. Red Cross tin cans were used to create air pipes for the

tunnels. But disposing of tons of sand lifted from inside the tunnels was a problem. So, prisoners, called "pen-guins," were soon found waddling around the camps. Each carried bags of tunnel sand under their trouser legs, which slowly sifted out. They'd trample the sand into their jogging path to avoid detection of the light colored earth.

ERICKSON SAID he was a "low member" on the committee set up for what later would be known as the "Great Escape." It was so-called because it was the first massive escape plan from a German Luft camp. Plans for three-escape tunnels began in early May 1943, and eventually all but one of the tunnels was found out.

"Everything was surreptitious. Nothing was talked about due to the plants in the camp," said Erickson. He added that whenever the prisoners found a

German plant in their midst, they'd escort him up to the guards at the gate and turn him over.

Bed bunk boards were used to support the underground tunnels. And during the height of the construction, much of the underground dirt was disposed of under the prisoners' heater, which had been specially designed to accommodate it.

A article in "Clipped Wings," a collection of POW-written accounts, describes the escape.

"By half past eight, it was announced that all was ready. Ten minutes later, the first escapee went down the ladder, well turned out in a civilian suit and carrying a homemade brief case. The second, dressed as a workman, followed on his heels."

WITHIN A few hours, however, plans went awry. Some parts of the tunnel began falling in. But most of all,

confusion set in when RAF bombs began dropping around midnight on Berlin, some 100 miles away.

When the would-be escapees were returned to camp several days later, Erickson described the atmosphere as "very sad. We already knew of it through our BBC crystal sets." Unlike the movie's characterization, Erickson said the escapees were British with the exception of one or two Americans, who were RAF flyers who had joined England before America's involvement in the war.

If the massacre was intended to discourage other escape attempts, it didn't. Erickson said more tunnels cropped up following these tragic days, but these were never used because the camp was evacuated in January 1945 when the Russian Army began approaching.

DURING THE evacuation, some 10,000 POWs were forced to march through the countryside for 10 days in

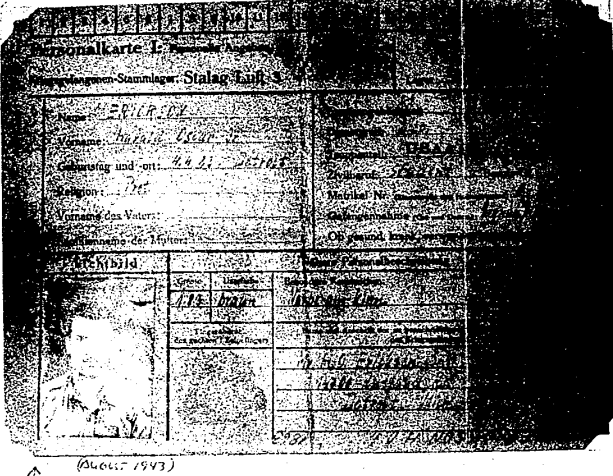
temperatures of 10 degrees below zero. After that they boarded trains for a three-day trip to another camp in Moosberg, Bavaria.

"Then, we started to starve to death, slowly," he said.

Erickson said he dropped from 200 to 155 pounds in the following three months, before being liberated by a division of Gen. George Patton's Army on April 29, 1945. Conditions in that camp went from bad to worse, paralleling the fall of Germany, he said.

Erickson returned home in June 1945. But that wasn't his last experience with war. He was called up for active duty during the Korean War in which he flew a B-36.

Erickson never went to law school. Instead, he went to Wayne State University for 2½ years where he was speech major. He left college and went to work for Ford Motor Co. "to support my family" and became a personnel representative. He retired in September 1980.



Allied forces confiscated numerous camp documents after the German POW camp was liberated. Included was Hal Erickson's identification card. Erickson later wrote a small caption of his own under his mug shot. The words "tired, dirty and unhappy" are faintly visible.

## Romance ends in fatal crash

Continued from Page 1A

a service at Orchard United Methodist Church in Farmington.

The two were buried together in Glen Eden Cemetery in Livonia.

In preparation for their formal engagement this summer, the couple had picked out an engagement ring and placed it in layaway. The ring was purchased by the family and placed on Lynne's finger before her burial.

Dinser was described by his brother Norman as a "happy-go-lucky guy who always had a smile on his face."

"Everyone who knew him liked him. Every time he came home from school, he wanted to go see everyone. He was a good kid," said Dinser.

ENTHUSIASM FOR LIFE and love of her family were the most important things in Hamlett's life, said her mother.

"Lynne was a very responsible and caring type person who always felt like she needed to do the right thing. She was a very loving person, and she needed love."

"She wanted her friends to be as close to her as her family," her mother said.

Kuzma said her sister had taken a leave from Ferris one month ago to take a job as a dental assistant in the Farmington area.

"She was unhappy with all the drinking and goings-on at Ferris," her mother said.

"Lynne was one of just a few like herself and felt very lonely. She felt so secure and happy at home."

Hamlett had planned to get her degree, but possibly not at Ferris.

"We went to visit Lynne's grandparents in Massachusetts shortly before the accident and one of the last things I said to Lynne was, 'You look so happy,' and she said, 'I am, Mom.'"

"I had just come home from school and surprised her with a stereo he bought for her."

"They were two very good, straight young adults. There's not many like them around."

### ROSES

14" - 18" **\$9.99** DOZ

- Tropical Plants
- Hanging Baskets
- Flowering Plants
- Azaleas
- Cyclamen
- Mums & More

Ask about our Plant Leasing Program

**Potted Spring Flowers**

- Tulips • Hyacinths • Daffodils

**Farmer John's Greenhouse**

26950 Haggerty Rd.  
1/2 Mile S. of 12 Mile  
**553-7141**

**ROBERT A. COLEMAN, D.D.S.**

is pleased to announce the opening of his new office

**FARMINGTON DENTAL CENTER**

33409 Grand River Ave.  
Farmington, MI 48024  
(Just West of Farmington Road)

Daily 9-6      Medicaid and  
Evenings & Saturday      all insurance  
By Appointment      plans accepted.

**Call 477-1500 for appointment**

**Do-it-Yourselfers will tell you...**

...they can "hammer-home" all their projects by turning to the classified columns for help in finding the best buys.

**REACH MICHIGAN'S FINEST MARKET ONE CALL DOES IT ALL!**

**478-7154**

**Louis Ornelas enjoys retirement so much, he volunteers 25 hours a week.**

**Would you?**

Louis drives a Red Cross van for a community nutrition program.

Five days a week, Louis shuttles elderly people to a Help Center for a free hot meal. He also delivers hot meals to another 20 shut-ins.

On Thursdays, Louis takes his passengers to the supermarket so they can shop for food.

"The important thing is that you get these people a balanced meal," says Louis. "A lot of elderly people don't cook anymore, and if you don't give them a meal, they probably won't eat."

Have you got time on your hands? We could use a hand helping people in your community.

Join us.

**American Red Cross**

**Together, we can change things.**

**Karastan** is on sale!

America's finest carpet is now on sale at the lowest possible prices.

NEW STORE HOURS FOR YOUR SHOPPING CONVENIENCE

DAILY 9-5      SATURDAY 9-6      SUNDAY 12-5

RITE CARPET 7416 AND 7400 BELLEVILLE      476-8360

**25% SAVINGS ON BEST-SELLING HERITAGE UPHOLSTERY!** Sale ends 4/30.

Michigan's first Drexel Heritage store

**Ray Interiors**

33300 Stoum Dr., Farmington      476-7272

**Williamsburg** HAIR FASHIONS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

EASTER SPECIAL! HAIRCUTS 2 for the price of 1 thru 4-11-82

FOAM PERM \$29.50 Reg. \$45.00

2176 SEVEN MILE • LIVONIA 5 BLOCKS E. OF LIVONIA MALL      538-1044

**Swendolyn's** 10 Mile Now, MI 48015

24135 Haggerty Rd.

**\$5.00 OFF** Narrowing Lapels

Good thru April 17, 1982

Watch for our New Spring Hours

Michigan National Farmington

LIVONIA FOOT SURGEONS, P.C.

Dr. Lawrence S. Singer

Physician and Surgeon of the Foot

HOURS BY APPOINTMENT FOR THE TREATMENT OF ALL FOOT AND ANKLE CONDITIONS

27821 W. Seven Mi. Livonia      538-5506

**Coupon NOW OPEN**

PJ's second location in the Walpole/Wixom area on Frontier Trail, 1/4 mile east of Back Road in the NOW SQUARE, 45033 Pontiac Trail, Open 24 hours, 7 days. Also serving Hot Homemade Beef Pasties and Soup.

**PJ's DONUTS & CONES**

38427 GRAND RIVER AVE. between Haggerty & 10 Mile in the Grand Market square. • 478-4848

We accept coupons from ALL ice cream & donut stores.

• 88 VARIETIES OF DONUTS • 32 FLAVORS OF ICE CREAM

**Coupon 6 FREE DONUTS FREE**

Buy a single dip cone, get the second scoop free. One coupon per visit. Expires April 22, 1982

**FEEL BETTER NOW**

Scientific Procedures Get Results

Introductory Offer

**FREE CONSULTATION ORTHOPEDIC/NEUROLOGICAL EXAM** Reg. \$40.00

(X-RAYS, IF NEEDED, WILL BE BILLED TO YOUR INSURANCE.) Dr. Douglas R. Guyot

FREE SPINAL CARE CLASSES every Wednesday at 7 pm • Call for reservations

**GUYOT CHIROPRACTIC CLINIC**

21823 Farmington Rd. Hours: M-F 10-4, 3-7 Farmington Hills Fues & Thurs. By Appointment 1/4 Mile North of 8 mile Sat 10-1

**477-4010**