

lowed facilities to heat water and clean our eating utensils. Water was limited as it was hauled up the mountain by donkey cart, so we would stand outside when it rained to bathe ourselves.

Later on in our stay, we had goat milk to drink and limited amounts of fruit and eggs. The building and the area around it was enclosed with barbed wire fences. Three goats seemed to have the run of the area.

There were some Britishers in the camp who enjoyed debating which proved to be good entertainment. Once while we were there we were herded down the mountain to a Turkish bath where we got cleaned up.

After three months in captivity, the Russians were advancing from the north so Bulgaria said she was neutral. Seven days later, she declared war on Germany. Three days later Moscow announced an armistice between Bulgaria and the Allies.

On September 7th, 1944 we were loaded on trucks and taken down the mountain to a waiting train. The train sat there all night while we wondered what was happening, then we headed for Turkey

and freedom. When we passed through towns, the guards would shoot into the air, and I'll always remember the people in rags who turned out to see us when we stopped in Greece. They would fight each other to get cigarettes the guards threw at them. We spent one night on a Dutch boat at Istanbul, Turkey, before going to a British base in Iran, where we were deloused, had warm showers and given clean clothing.

The next day we were flown to Cairo, Egypt, by the British. The American Red Cross took us by bus out to see the pyramids while we were there. Planes from the 484th Bomb Group picked us up the following day and flew us back to Cerignola. Here we learned that three planes were lost from our formation the day our plane was shot down and only two crews survived.

Recently after 44 years I have been in contact with four of our B-24 crew members and talked to them by phone. I am looking forward to meeting them at the next reunion.

The End



Picture of my bed at the Shumen POW Camp #1