

A day as a POW not as usual.

On Christmas Eve in Leesburg, Fla, we were sent to the orange harvest in the morning. We were 8 POW's and got a plantation that had been looked through by the black workers one time before. So we could not get the 20 boxes of oranges we should have in the ~~evening~~ ^{afternoon}. Therefore we still were sitting in the trees in the evening/in the dark. We began to sing Christmas songs. Our leaders name was Mr. Hammersen and he liked to drink Whiskey. The empty bottles were hidden in the sand by him, because alcohol was not allowed.

I had still some Dollars left from my uncle Fred who visited me in Dade City and put 20 Dollars into my shoe. So I asked Mr. Hammersen to get me a bottle of Whiskey for Christmas Eve and he did it and gave it to me that day. We came back to the camp late in the evening and when we drove parallel to the fence I threw the bottle over it because I was afraid it could be found entering the camp. And that was well foreseen: this evening all of us had to go to the office first and were controlled. We had to strip off our clothes. The rest of my money I put into my mouth. After that we took a shower and had supper. Then I strolled around to get my bottle of whiskey. Nobody took

notice of that. We enjoyed that whiskey very much because we did not get anything else from the German Red Cross for Christmas after the war was lost.

At 10 o'clock we had to switch off the lights. Then we sang some Christmas songs and drank some glasses of whiskey and again began to sing our favourite songs of home remembering our homes and our families.

We got very sad that Christmas Eve and hanged on to our sorrows and the whiskey helped a little bit to overcome this emotional evening which was already my third Christmas as a POW and it was not the last one.

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