



Dear Executive Committee of the Friends of the Air Force Academy Library,

I am delighted to report that my archival trip to the Clark Special Collections in the McDermott Library at the United States Air Force Academy was extremely successful. I cannot express how grateful I am to the Friends for this opportunity.

I originally applied for the Clark-Yudkin Research Fellowship to further my research that I had begun for my Honors Thesis at Texas Christian University. My project, "Marching through Snow, Blood, and Bombs: The Stalag Luft IV Evacuations of 1945 in Eastern Europe," covers the "Death March" of Allied airmen prisoners of war on the eastern front in World War II. The evacuation from Stalag Luft IV camp would be called in Miller's Master of the Air "for American airmen the European equivalent of the Bataan Death March of April 1942." The brutal three-month march had limited food and water during one of the coldest winters in Europe. However, there lacks a definitive synthesis of this event--and I sought to address this. The Clark-Yudkin Special Collections has many materials that helped fill this gap regarding the evacuations from Stalag Luft IV in 1945. While I plan on continuing this topic for my eventual dissertation, my more immediate aim and use of the collections was to write a historical memory article. The extensive collection of prisoners of war diaries, rare prisoner of war books, information on Stalag camps, intelligence reports, welfare accounts, policy briefings, and legal documents led me to visit the Clark Special Collections at the Academy.

I spent ten days (from July 17th-July 28th) in the Clark Special Collections. I reviewed sixteen archival collections and six books. Some findings were expected like the information regarding perspectives of airmen's time at Stalag Luft IV. The Clark Collections books *The Shoe Leather Express: Volume 1-3*, *Barbed Boredom*, and *Stalag Luft IV: 50th Anniversary Edition*, *Wartime Log*, *C-Lager and the 86-Day Hunger March*, *My Last Combat: No Ordinary Day*, and *Unforgettable: The Biography of Capt. Thomas J. Flynn, World War II Veteran, 28th Infantry Division, 110th Infantry Regiment, K Company*, and the Edward V. Wilson collection manuscript "The Long March" all provided valuable insight into the Stalag Luft IV marches. These accounts are helping me write my historical memory article and further strengthening my argument about the reliability and validity of this event despite it not being well known. The airmen consistently use the same terminology, chronology, and details regardless of the time that their account of the march was written, which is quite remarkable. Additionally, the personnel roster in *Barbed Boredom* is the only complete roster of Stalag Luft IV that I have come across. I had only encountered a partial roster at the National WWII Museum. This helps not only the statistics on who survived the marches but also provides an insight into the diversity of the camps. Cross-referencing the names with Census Bureau data reveals many Chinese, Japanese,

Native American, and African American Allied airmen prisoners of war at Stalag Luft IV. This is a remarkable finding since in theory bomber crews were supposed to be segregated.

In addition to Stalag Luft IV, many other collections gave insight into the camps the men traveled to from Stalag Luft IV. The Albert P. Clark, George B. Sperry, Birch G. McVay, Henry M. Maggenti, Maurice S. Dillingham, and Walter Steck collections all provided in-depth perspectives into Stalag VII-A, Stalag XIII-D, and Stalag I-A. These all were camps that some airmen ended up at from the Stalag Luft IV marches. "March to Moosburg" by Sperry and "Thirteen Months as a P.O.W." by Dillingham are particularly unique manuscripts. The Stalag Luft IV experience is also augmented by a neighboring camp Illag 1A. Their camp Illag 1A was in Poland, near Stalag Luft IV; however, they were liberated by the Russians just before the Germans could enact a march. The Soderberg Collection has hundreds of newspapers written by the POWs documenting their accounts of Illag 1A. An unexpected find was sheet music written by Belgium POWs. I had not encountered POWs encapsulating their experience in song. Fortunately, Eva Gribbons, a talented musician and cousin of mine, was able to sing and record the music; the music encapsulates the eastern front POW experience in such a hauntingly beautiful way that brings the past to the present. I have attached the audio files. While music is traditionally used in Holocaust Studies, I think this is relevant to POW studies as well. I plan to present on this topic at the 2024 Society for Military History Conference. Overall, the Stalag Luft IV and related Stalag camps help further the understanding of the airmen POW experience on the eastern front.

The Clark Special Collections further granted insight into how the intelligence networks and POWs impacted each other. The Steven D. Nylen collection provided a special viewpoint otherwise not possible. The Escape and Evasion Reports, MIS-X Reports, and Repatriation Reports from Poland and Germany in 1945 granted information on POW living conditions and the marches. Unfortunately, some of the key information I needed from the Lloyd R. Shoemaker collection was on indefinite loan to the Department of Defense. This information would have included information and statistics on prisoners of war from 1944-45. The Steven D. Nylen did fortunately have many intelligence reports on POW collection from 1944 and partly from 1945. The Office of the Secretary of Defense: Southeast Asia Prisoner of War Experience also had a lot of context on the Survival, Evasion, Resistance, and Escape training before 1973. The 492nd Bombardment Group Collection further granted perspective into the role of intelligence and the OSS with air operations in 1945. These three collections gave me insight into how intelligence impacts military welfare in a way I previously did not have access to. It provides additional insight into the POW experience in 1945 as well.

I was able to find out about additional welfare, diplomatic, and legal perspectives regarding POWs in 1945. The Henry Soderberg collection answered key questions relating to the POW military welfare system. The YMCA representative Soderberg documents and reports the conditions of the POW camps on the eastern front throughout the war. It gives insight into how the NGO system worked within the war to provide aid and their challenges. Soderberg provides a strong contrast and compliment to the YMCA Paul B. Anderson

collection from the University of Illinois collection and his care of the western front camps. The Edward V. Wilson provided understanding on the diplomatic aspect through information regarding the US military mission to Moscow. I anticipate digging more into this aspect in the future. The Morton L. Schmucker collection and document "For the Commandment of an Enlisted Men's Prisoner of War Base Camp" gave insight into the German procedures of the prisoner of war camps. Regarding the legal outcomes, the Delmar Spivey collection helped explain why the marches and the horrid conditions were not prosecuted as strongly. Delmar Spivey and Gottlob Berger, the Schutzstaffel head of Nazi Prisoner of War Affairs, had a very intimate relationship; Spivey wrote many affidavits in favor of Berger. The Soderberg, Wilson, and Schmucker collections all helped me understand these complex systems.

Overall, the trip was exceedingly beneficial. I examined thousands of pages from diaries, reports, maps, legal procedures, books, and letters. I was able to get information regarding outcomes from Stalag Luft IV, related Stalag camps, the welfare system, intelligence roles, legal factors, and diplomatic attempts. All these aspects aid in addressing the gaps in the airmen's POW experience on the eastern front in 1945 and progress on my historical memory article. I am presenting at the Center for Contemporary History Conference at Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia this Sunday, October 5th; this presentation allowed me to develop my article further and receive feedback on history and memory. I am also working with the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) cluster at Southern Methodist University to accurately map all the locations mentioned in the accounts. The maps and aerial photographs in the Albert P. Clark collection additionally provide data. I plan to acknowledge the Friends support in all related scholarship publications, and I will forward a copy to the Friends. I will forward the Friends any and all maps generated through GIS as well. At SMU, I plan to continue developing my POW dissertation topic. I am so grateful for Chris and Ruth's archival help, and for meeting Kathy. If I can ever be of help, please do not hesitate to contact me. This was an incredibly enriching opportunity that I will always cherish. I will continue spreading the news about the Clark-Yudkin Research Fellowship. I look forward to continuing the relationship we have crafted.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly Harris". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Holly Harris

PhD Student

Southern Methodist University