

Private Robert Trusty, 'D' Bn., Layforce

Polish Commander Cried

THE GRAPHIC STORY OF HOW HE WAS LIBERATED BY A POLISH ARMoured DIVISION WAS TOLD TO THE "CHRONICLE" BY CPL. GEORGE ROBERT TRUSTY, A COMMANDO, AGED 25, AT HIS HOME AT 9, BURNFOOT AVENUE, AFTER NEARLY FOUR YEARS OF CAPTIVITY."

"A few hours before the Russians moved in," he said, "we were marched from our camp in Berlin. The Germans kept pushing us through. Eventually we got split up into small parties and we got into a cellar of a baroness's home, under the protection of the International Red Cross flag.

Eight Germans in a Ditch

"It was then that eight Germans came and lay themselves down in a ditch in front of us, taking advantage of the flag. Elements of a Polish tank force spotted them and opened fire. The first shell landed in the entrance of the cellar and killed a sergeant-major, who had been in charge of Stalag 3D, and a lance-corporal.

"We sent some Polish women out to tell the Poles we were English and 20 minutes later the Poles arrived. Their commander cried when he saw that Englishmen had been killed, but his face was convulsed with rage as he ordered his tank to drive over the Germans lying in the ditch. That was a pretty grim sight."

Reunited After Eight Years

The Trusty family have just been reunited for the first time in eight years. Without any prearrangement Cpl. Trusty's arrival from Germany coincided with the normal leave of his two soldier brothers, Pte. Thomas Trusty, aged 20, of the R.A.S.C., and 18-year-old Guardsman Philip Trusty.

Another brother, Patrick, aged 12, came home from Brighton, where he had been evacuated. A 16-year-old brother and a sister, aged 10, complete this happy family of Mr. G. P. Trusty, who served in the Artillery throughout the last war from the age of 16. All the boys attended Lillie-road and Sherbrooke-road Schools.

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Crete Incident

Cpl. George Trusty, who weighs 15st. 7lbs. and neither smokes nor drinks, is a regular soldier and was in Palestine with the Leicestershires just before war broke out. He was in Wavell's first push and transferred to the first unit of Middle East Commandos for the Crete operations.

"We were 170 yards off the boat that would have taken us off Crete," he said, "when the captain shouted, 'Well, chaps, you can sit down now. You have had it.' He was forced to sail with his heavily-laden craft. Our officer told us we had no other course than to capitulate, and he got three bullet wounds in going out to contact the Germans."

Berlin Bombing

Cpl. Trusty had personal experience of the bombing of Berlin. "It was terrible," he said. "I went up to St. Paul's the other day to see some of the damage in the City, but I could not see anything to compare with Berlin. Stuff fell all round us, but, luckily, nothing in our camp."

Of Germans, Cpl. Trusty said there were some good ones and "some deadly ones." "One day some Sudeten Germans came to the camp and started pushing us around," he said. "I found it necessary to hit one of them, but the feldwebel (German sergeant) told them to scram, and no complaint was put in against me."

Cow Came in Useful

Cpl. Trusty was with the Russians for a time after his liberation by the Poles. "The Russians seemed to be living off the country," he said. "When we asked them for meat they shot a cow and said, 'There's your meat.' Fortunately we had a butcher out of the Argylls with us and he cut it up. After that we were more or less left to ourselves to get to the Americans."

"We went to Neustadt and asked the German station-master for a ticket to Wittenberg. He gave us tickets and said the train would be in any time during the week! We waited three days and it arrived. After going about five miles the Russians borrowed the engine for shunting purposes! This happened four times, so that we took two days and two nights to do 25 miles. Then it was Luneberg, Brussels and home."

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