

Charlie Upham, the New Zealand double V.C. went up to the German Officer and said "You remember Goering said that no enemy plane would ever darken the sky of Germany," the officer said "Ja". Upham "What do you think those are up there bloody ducks". The disgusted officer walked away. They were scared of Upham, the man who used to carry a sandbag full of hand grenades with which he fought. On one occasion three of our fighters flew past our schloss and then, spotting a train which had just arrived, dived on it and the engine looked like a watering can.

On another occasion they again fired on a train and gee we had to dive and keep low as they also shot up the schloss. Then they dropped a couple of bombs near us and the blast was so severe that our room door was blown in. But boy we were thrilled to see and hear all this - it meant we were getting nearer home.

One thing I always looked forward to was a walk out in the country - a treat to feel free. We each had a parole card which we handed to the interpreter who accompanied us and which was handed back to us on our return. We were not compelled to walk in any formation but just dawdled about, stopping many times to enjoy the scenery. Along the roads as I have mentioned were any number of apple trees - some very big and old. The local Germans gathered most of the apples but there were still quite a number left and these we amused ourselves bringing down - as the trees were tall - with sticks. Great joy! Sometimes we studied the various flowers, the names of which we were told by our Horticultural lecturer, on other occasions we wandered through the woods watching the birds etc. On one occasion we were crossing a bridge and below us a Frenchman was clearing the irrigation furrow - there were many Frenchmen-labourers. I could not believe my eyes when I saw him pull two trout out of the stream and throw them up and I was lucky in catching one. I was very a very popular member of our room that night. I had last had trout I caught in the Pirie Dam at King Williams Town. What a treat!

The German Commandant was a keen artist and he allowed us once a week to go on sketching walks. When we arrived at some suitable spot the interpreter would tell us to pick our spot and he would blow his whistle in two hours time when we assembled for the return to camp. Sometimes the chaps were spread over a large area some half a mile away.

On some walks we passed through a small village and the children would run after us shouting "Chocolate" and we were able now and again to spare a square or two for these poor mites who were not responsible for the war and had never seen chocolates before.

On another occasion we stopped near a Kindergarten school where the kids were having a break. Here we sat painting and a little child of no more than three came up to me and putting out her hand to be shaken said "Heil Hitler" what did they know about Hitler? Then she started mucking around with my paints, thoroughly enjoying herself and as we left one teacher came up to me and said "Dankie Shein" or words to that effect.

We were on a walk and the snow had fallen and some kids came past on their sleighs and offered me a slide which I enjoyed though I came a cropper.

One day sitting in our room and looking out onto the field below during a heavy snowstorm I remarked that the flaked reminded me very much of the locust swarms we used to have up country. Yes I remember the old locust swarms in the Bechuanaland Protectorats and how we as youngsters use to run out with old tennis rackets and beat them down. In the distance one saw what looked like a dust storm and presently the locusts arrived, great clouds of them. They do incalculable damage cleaning up acres of grass, plants, mealies etc leaving behind just the bare earth. At night they settled in trees etc. and the natives went out with baskets and gathered tons of them or rather as many as they required.