

CHAPTER 2 – THE BREWING STORM

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The great depression had ended, people were employed and dreaming again but although the US was once again on its feet, the 'War to End All Wars' was quickly becoming a distant memory as Germany once again began to assert its power in Europe. By the spring of 1939, President Franklin D. Roosevelt began rapid expansion of military forces for the defense of the Western Hemisphere.

Roosevelt signed the Selective Training and Service Act (STSA) of 1940 on 16 September, creating the country's first peacetime draft and formally established the Selective Service System as an independent Federal agency. The World War I system served as a model for that of World War II. The 1940 STSA instituted national conscription in peacetime, requiring registration of all men between twenty-one and forty-five, with selection for one year's service by a national lottery. In the massive draft of World War II, 50 million men from eighteen to forty-five were registered, 36 million classified, and 10 million inducted.

Motivated in part by their patriotic spirit and youthful invincibility, but also to have some say over where they ended up, on January 14, 1941, cousin Gilbert Rauh, first as always, enlisted. Best friend Mike Iriarte followed him. George, who had registered with the draft on August 16, 1940, as required by law, was rated 1-A by April of 1941. He followed in their footsteps, enlisting on May 15, 1941.

SERIAL NUMBER 1927	1. NAME (Print) Gilbert Andrew Robert Rauh (First) (Middle) (Last)	ORDER NUMBER 1599
2. ADDRESS (Print) Lincoln Place Thornwood Westchester N.Y. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
3. TELEPHONE Pleasantville 183 W (Exchange) (Number)	4. AGE IN YEARS 25 DATE OF BIRTH May 25 1915 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)	5. PLACE OF BIRTH Thornwood New York (Town or county) (State or country)
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Gertrude Rauh (Mr., Mrs., Miss) (First) (Middle) (Last)		6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U. S. A. (Country) (State)
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON Lincoln Place Thornwood Westchester N.Y. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME Eighth Ave. Coach Corporation		
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS 132nd St. Broadway Manhattan New York N.Y. (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. S. Form 1 (over)		10-17105 Gilbert Rauh (Registrant's signature)

REGISTRAR'S REPORT			
DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT			
RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION
White	5' 9"	150	Light
Negro	Blue	Blonde	Ruddy
Other	Gray	Red	Dark
Indian	Brown	Black	Light brown
Other	Black	Gray	Dark brown
Other	Other	Other	Other
Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification None			
I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read or has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark and that all of the answers of which I have knowledge are true, correct or follow.			
Registrar for 24 9 NY 24 (Date) (City or county) (State)			
Date of registration October 16 1940			
LOCAL BOARD NO. 34 Hotel Broadway 235 W. 102nd St. New York, N. Y. STAMP OF LOCAL BOARD			

SERIAL NUMBER 2510	1. NAME (Print) FRANCIS MICHAEL IRIARTE (First) (Middle) (Last)	ORDER NUMBER 50
2. ADDRESS (Print) 150 West 104 St. NY NY (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
3. TELEPHONE RI 9-0845 (Exchange) (Number)	4. AGE IN YEARS 21 DATE OF BIRTH Mar 16 1919 (Mo.) (Day) (Yr.)	5. PLACE OF BIRTH New York New York (Town or county) (State or country)
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS Mrs. Leonore Capote (Mr., Mrs., Miss) (First) (Middle) (Last)		6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP U. S. A. (Country) (State)
9. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON 522 West 146 St. NY NY (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
10. EMPLOYER'S NAME United Fruit Co.		
11. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS P.O. Box 2 North River NY NY (Number and street or R. F. D. number) (Town) (County) (State)		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. S. Form 1 (over)		10-17105 Francis Michael Iriarte (Registrant's signature)

REGISTRAR'S REPORT			
DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT			
RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION
White	5' 9"	185	Light
Negro	Blue	Blonde	Ruddy
Other	Gray	Red	Dark
Indian	Brown	Black	Light brown
Other	Black	Gray	Dark brown
Other	Other	Other	Other
Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification Partly bald - Left hand band			
I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read or has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark and that all of the answers of which I have knowledge are true, correct or follow.			
Registrar for 12th Dist. N.Y.C. Board of Selective Service (Date) (City or county) (State)			
Date of registration Oct 16 1940			
SELECTIVE SERVICE LOCAL BOARD #746 BANK BUILDING NO. TARRYTOWN, N. Y. TEL. TARRYTOWN 1-2000			

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REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE
This is to certify that in accordance with the Selective Service Proclamation of the President of the United States

George (First name) Hofmann (Last name)
502 West 135th St. N.Y.C. N.Y. (No. and street or R. F. D. No.; city or town, county and State)

has been duly registered this 16 day of Aug, 1940

Registrar for 37 (Precinct) 13 (Ward) NY (City or county) NY (State)

BE ALERT { Keep in touch with your Local Board.
Notify Local Board immediately of change of address.
CARRY THIS CARD WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES

D. S. S. Form 2 16-17105

DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT

RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION	
White	6' 3"	190	Sallow	Light
Negro	Blue	Blonde	Ruddy	Dark
Oriental	Gray	Red	Freckled	Light brown
Indian	Hazel	Brown	Dark brown	Black
Filipino	Brown	Black		
	Black	Gray		
		Bald		

Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification

The person named herein whose Order No. is 909

Has been classified by { Local Board ☒ Board of Appeals ☐

in Class A-1 until further notice

General Military Service (Date)

Notify your employer of this classification April 21, 1941 (Date)

This card may be cut on dotted line for convenience in carrying.

D. S. S. Form 87

SELECTIVE SERVICE

NEW YORK (STAMP OF LOCAL BOARD)

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Mr. George Hofmann

502 West 135th St.

Not wanting to join the infantry, after basic training Gibby chose the more glamorous Army Air Corps and went off to be a Cadet. Influenced by their long friendships, the boys of 1941 followed suit. They would follow his lead through basic and specialty training – from civilian life to Regular Army, Army Air force Cadet training school, Bombardier school and ultimately front-line combat. They remained inseparable. Sadly, combat ended it all.

By December of 1941, the United States was at war.



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At the time of their enlistment Great Britain had been at war for over a year and the news from the front painted the horrors of war but gave the image of far more civility than warranted. The British January 31, 1941, issue of *The War Illustrated* gave hints of what was to come – but it was too early for anyone in the US to take it seriously.

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The War Illustrated

January 31st, 1941

‘They’re Prisoners-of-War in Germany’

In thousands of homes in this country and in the Empire overseas thoughts turn to a husband or father, son, brother or lover who is “kicking his heels” in a German prisoners-of-war camp. Some account of the camps and of the prevailing conditions is given in the article that follows.

IN Germany and German-occupied territory there are at the present time, it has been estimated, some 2,500,000 prisoners-of-war. Nearly two million of these are French, hundreds of thousands are Polish, tens of thousands are Belgian, Dutch, and Norwegian, while the British number about 44,000.

This vast host is quartered (except for those enlisted in labour gangs) in prison camps, of which there are three types, known officially as Oflag, Stalag, and Dulag, contractions for Offizierslager, Stammlager, and Durchgangslager, respectively. Oflag is a camp used for officer prisoners, while Stalag is one for privates and N.C.O.s. Dulag is a transfer camp, i.e. a camp to which officers and men are taken soon after their capture, and where they are graded before being dispatched to either an Oflag or a Stalag.

The camps are periodically visited by delegates of the International Red Cross, and reports on some of them have been published. Thus a few weeks ago two Swiss doctors, Dr. Marti and Dr. Des Coedres, reported on Oflag VII C, where there are

1,245 British officers, including a general and five colonels, 31 chaplains, and 39 doctors. It is contained in an old castle in a Bavarian town, and the quarters comprise three floors, the number of prisoners in each room varying from nine to 120. The food, though rather monotonous, is not too bad, and British cooks are employed. Most of the prisoners,

the visitors found, were at that time in need of warm clothes; shirts and so on could be purchased at the canteen, but they were very dear. Four British doctors are on duty in the hospital, and, generally speaking, the health conditions are satisfactory. Hot baths are available once a week and there are facilities for playing games. On Sundays four religious



WULZBURG CASTLE, near Weissenburg, Bavaria, where these photographs were taken, is a prisoners-of-war camp in which the majority of the prisoners are British and French. In the upper photograph some of them are seen making articles of clothing under the supervision of a Nazi guard. Lower photo, the organ provides solace, during recreation hours, to those who are fond of music.

services are held. Books are scarce, but the supply is being augmented by the Y.M.C.A.

The same two visitors inspected Stalag XIII, where there are 1,036 prisoners – not only British, but French, Poles, Belgians, Dutch, and Norwegians. This prison camp was found to be decidedly overcrowded, and the delegates commented unfavourably on the fact that the beds had only one sheet and two blankets, and that the only heating was a small oven in the centre of the room. “This seems inadequate heating,” they said, “during a severe winter, and the health conditions seem generally defective.”

Dr. Marti also visited some of the camps reserved for R.A.F. prisoners. In one Stalag he found 231 N.C.O.s and 57 privates; the camp leader was Flight-Sergeant Hall, No. 569838. These were housed in three wooden barracks, which Dr. Marti described as comfortable; “food, good; prisoners, satisfied.” The men, he went on, “like to work in the labour detachments, in which they receive a minimum of 20.8 marks per month, and are well treated.”

In Oflag IX there are 44 naval officers and 17 doctors. Dulag Luft, a transfer camp for airmen, consists of three large, well-heated barracks, with running hot and cold water, accommodating 102 men. Here are Dr. Marti’s notes on the place: “Rooms with one to three beds; tables, easy chairs; exceptional comfort; dining-room; whisky every evening; papers; various games; walks outside camp; food excellent, similar to that received by the German officers of

January 31st, 1941

The War Illustrated

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Where the Nazis Hold Our Men in Captivity



P.O.W. CAMPS in Germany and Poland are shown in this map. There are 106 within the boundaries of the Reich (including Poland and Austria) and 62 in France. OFG ("Oflag") denotes a camp for officer prisoners; STG ("Stalag"), a camp for other ranks; "Luftlager", a camp for airmen; "Dulag", a transfer camp. This map, compiled from a list supplied by the Nazi authorities, was published in the French newspaper "Paris Soir," and reproduced in the "Daily Telegraph."

the camp; well-stocked canteen; receiving pay; correspondence received irregularly."

Another delegate, Dr. Marcel Junod, was commissioned by the International Red Cross to visit prisoner-of-war hospitals in Brussels, Malines, Ghent, Paris, and Rouen, amongst other places. On the whole his report was not unsatisfactory; thus the wounded at Malines hospital are "satisfied," being under the care of two Army doctors, Major R. W. Gundersen and Major D. N. Stuart. On being passed fit the men are given a complete double set of underclothing by the Belgian Red Cross before being sent to the prison camps in Germany. But warm underclothes were badly needed in some of the hospitals, and the wounded often asked for soap.

Now here is a letter from a British officer who is imprisoned in Oflag VII C/H; it was dated December 10 and was received by his



BRITISH PRISONERS in Germany lead a monotonous life, and after their day's work, which may be arduous road-making or canal construction, games provide a very welcome diversion and keep their minds occupied. Two prisoners above are keeping their wits alive with a game of chess, while their comrades follow the moves closely.

Photo, Fox

Lives of Toil and Boredom Are Their Lot



wife on January 8 by air mail via Lisbon. "We rise at 7.30 a.m. and have a half-litre of ersatz coffee. Parade or roll-call is at 9.15. Lunch is at 11, and usually consists of soup, sometimes thin and sometimes thick, and potatoes. Twice a week we get a meat and potato mash instead. Next meal is at 4 p.m., of more soup and potatoes, or on Sunday a 2-oz. Camembert and some jam with coffee, or Red Cross tea if we have any. Two other meals a week in the afternoon are

either cheese or sausage, tea or coffee. We get half a litre of milk two or three times a week, which we pay for. Our supper comes out of the above, with 10 oz. of bread which we get every day. Naturally, parcels are we comed for a change of diet!"

Thus it is clear that, while the prisoners may receive rations comparing quite fairly with those issued to their Nazi guards, they may well complain about the quality and monotonous character of their diet.



PARCELS OF FOOD and comforts, dispatched through the British Red Cross, are eagerly awaited by our men who are prisoners-of-war in Germany for the rations of a prisoner are by no means lavish. Small wonder, then, that the arrival of the parcels post at a P.O.W. camp in Germany is a red-letter event in these men's lives. Lower photo, British prisoners are seen clearing away the debris of bombed and shelled buildings in Calais, work that puts a keen edge on the appetite. Centre, parcels are being stamped prior to dispatch at a parcels centre of the British Red Cross.

Photos, Fox, Photopress and Planet News

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