

Gottfried Dietze, From Guard at the Oflag 64 Parcel Hut to Johns Hopkins University

Pfc Dietze was drafted into the German Army in 1941 at age 18. Because he spoke English, in August of 1944 he was sent to Oflag 64 as a guard and there assigned to the Parcel Hut to check all incoming POW packages for contraband. It was during the 6 months working there that he met and became friendly with Kriegies Tony Lumpkin and Amon Carter. As he said in a 1998 letter to Kriegy Robert Thompson, "When you work with the same people for months, it is natural you get closer, especially under circumstances you do not like... Conversations of a personal nature develop. Tony Lumpkin came to know that my father had suffered under the Hitler regime and that I did not like that regime, a feeling that was shared by Oberst Schneider (German Commandant) and some of my comrades." As a result of their rapport, shortly before leaving Oflag 64 in early January 1945, Dietze warned Lumpkin to be cautious since it was rumored a radio had been smuggled into the camp through the Parcel Hut. Because of that warning, Lumpkin was removed from his assignment by the Senior American Officer to protect him from any reprisal.

After the war Dietze was a refugee in Germany and reconnected with Lumpkin (presumably they had exchanged addresses at Oflag 64). Tony responded in June of 1946 and included a letter of recommendation that helped Dietze get admitted to law school at the University of Heidelberg, and later on, to Harvard and Princeton. Using Amon Carter as a reference he said "helped me getting a teaching fellowship at the University of Texas for 1951-1952." In 1954 he acquired a PH.D. from Princeton University with a dissertation on the concept of "free government" in America based on the Federalist Papers. Gottfried spent the next 50 years teaching Comparative Government at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

Dr. Gottfried Dietze stayed in touch with many Kriegies and even attended Oflag 64 POW reunions in 1968 and 1997. In a 1979 letter to Kriegy John Slack, Dietze said about the POWs who made it home, "I am glad that they, and all of us, survived the war. For at Schubin (Szubin), I often asked myself who of us would be lucky enough to survive." He passed away in 2006.

