

Independence Day 1943, Oflag 64, Szubin, Poland

How were the POWs in Oflag 64 celebrating July 4th? The Kriegies had been at Oflag 64 for nearly a month and were still getting themselves organized. They had not yet established their theater group and it would be months before they received musical instruments from the YMCA. But they were undeterred. As described in an article in the July 1944 camp newspaper, *The Item*, "...a year of entertainment began on July 4th of last year with a stageless, lightless, sceneryless variety show produced in the mess hall by Frank Maxwell. That night Wilbur Sharpe sang 'This Is Worth Fighting For' accompanied only by Bob Rankin on the trumpet". A choir sang songs of the States, Kriegy Jim Bickers drew cartoons "accompanied by patter" and a skit entitled "If Men Played Cards as Women Do" was presented by Kriegies Bill Farrell, John Cramer, Jim Koch and Harry Schultz.

Some 70 years later, Ex-Kriegy Bill Sharpe reprised the song "This Is Worth Fighting For" which was captured on video. You may view that video at: <https://youtu.be/iz5r-yMR1fk>

Page Four THE OFLAG ITEM July 1944 Theater

Oflag Theater Hits Broadway Stride in First Year

By: Larry Phelan



"The Petrified Forest", the first serious, full-length theatrical production at this camp, climaxes a year of entertainment which had its debut on July 4th of last year with a stageless, lightless, sceneryless variety show produced in the mess hall by Frank Maxwell.

That night Wilbur Sharpe sang "This is Worth Fighting For", accompanied only by Bob Rankin and his trumpet. A choir consisting of Seymour Bolten, Harry Carlson, Jack Carpenter, Tony Cipriani, Craig Campbell, Jim Fraser, Howard Holder, Ken Johnson, Charley Jones, Frank Maxwell, Wilbur Sharpe, Stanley Stetson and Keith Willis sang songs of the states, and Jim Bickers drew lightning cartoons accompanied by patter. And finally, a skit with props (1 table, four chairs) entitled "If Men Played Cards as Women Do". The actors: Bill Farrell, John Cramer, Jim Koch and Harry Schultz.