

106th Cavalry Reconnaissance Ten Who Didn't Return

Less than a week after being captured, Lt Leonard Prosnick, the somewhat odd Jewish Leader of Headquarters Platoon who became an “Aces High” combat officer in the eyes of Cpl Paul Thompson, was dead. In one of the largest accidental POW killings of the war, an officer barracks in Limberg, Germany, was destroyed by a squadron of RAF bombers. Marker flares from the lead Pathfinder plane blew off course due to high winds away from the rail yard target to the POW camp. Forty-eight officers were presumed killed and thirty nine bodies could be positively identified – one was Lt Leonard Prosnick. Also killed was 106th Infantry Division officer Capt. H. Hall Roberts.

One month to the day after that, Lt George Vaream, the 106th Recon Executive Officer, was shot and killed. A post war POW debriefing confirms an eyewitness account to the killing of Lt. Vaream. On January 22, 1945, at Oflag XIII-B in Hammelberg, Germany, an air raid was taking place. Slow to run back to his barracks as ordered, Lt George Vaream was shot in the back and died the next day.

(In late March Gen. George Patton sent an armored column to Hammelburg in order to liberate his son-in-law, Lt. Col. John Waters. Most of the column was killed or captured.)

The deaths of Lt. Prosnick and Lt Vaream were preceded by three Recon men killed-in-action and followed by an additional five Recon deaths from mistreatment as POWs.

106th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DATE OF DEATH</u>	<u>KNOWN DETAILS & SOURCE</u>
Pvt. Edwin Akers Allied Fritz per 102.	7 April 1945	A POW in IV-B Muhlberg, Pvt Akers was killed in an accidental bombing by planes. Source - Eyewitness PFC Bill "Maurice Bombar Recollections" pg.
Pvt. Lloyd N Hamby Source-	16 December 1944	KIA opening day of the Grosslangenfeld attack, Pvt. Hamby was a graduate of the Goodland Indian School. He was returned home and buried in Mount Olivet Cemetery, Hugo, Oklahoma, Plot Section 8 and Row 4. his hometown obituary
Pfc. Joseph R. Jeka	17 December 1944	KIA in the final moments of the 106 th Recon withdrawal from Grosslangenfeld. Last seen in a ditch with a fatal leg wound. Ibid Bombar page 78.
T/4 Charles Koppenhaver Brunswick. map	Unknown	A POW in IV-B Muhlberg and VIII-A Gorlitz, T/4 Koppenhaver died of dysentery and starvation on the death march to Brunswick. Source - eyewitness SGT Roy Mechling and diary.
Cpl. Joseph E. Lynch Jr. on the death march to Brunswick. eyewitness SGT Roy Mechling map	Unknown	A POW in IV-B Muhlberg and VIII-A Gorlitz, Cpl. Lynch died of dysentery and starvation Source - and diary.
2 Lt. Leonard Prosnick the other officers were killed.	23 December 1944	Killed in Limberg, Germany, by RAF in one of the largest accidental bombings of war. High winds blew Pathfinder flares away from the railroad intended target into a POW barracks where Lt Prosnick and 47
Pvt. Charles Roe	17 December 1944	KIA in the final moments of the 106 th Recon withdrawal from Grosslangenfeld. Shot in the

chest below the esophagus, Pvt. Roe died that night in the POW detention area. He was buried there the next morning. T/5 Michael Gresh used a pocket knife to carve a small cross for the grave. Ibid Bombar page 78 and 80.

Sgt. Joseph W. Soulia Unknown
on the death march to Brunswick.
eyewitness Sgt Roy Mechling map
2nd Source – eyewitness T/5 James D
diary Joe Soulia died in Brunswick. pg

A POW in IV-B Muhlberg and VIII-A Gorlitz
Sgt. Soulia died of dysentery and starvation
Source - and diary.
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21.

T/5 Morris G. Tickfer Unknown
on the death march to Brunswick.
eyewitness Sgt Roy Mechling map

A POW in IV-B Muhlberg and VIII-A Gorlitz
T/5 Tickfer died of dysentery and starvation
Source - and diary.

1 Lt. George Vaream 23 January 1945
guard

A POW in Oflag XIII-B Hammelburg, Lt.
Vaream was shot in the back by a prison during a nighttime air raid for not running back to his barracks quick enough. Source-post war eyewitness POW debriefing.

(Note: See following two pages regarding Lt Prosnick and Lt Vaream.)

On December 23rd at 6 PM a squadron of British Bombers raided an American officer's camp at Limburg.

The following officers were killed:

Major Wright	56743	1st Lt. Michaud	O—131 1090
Cpt. Sperry	O—130 3219	1st Lt. McClelland	O—426 588
Cpt. Monson	O—411 306	1st Lt. Bowman	O—131 6007
Cpt. Freas	O—412 670	1st Lt. Golash	O—219 5343
Cpt. Mondragon	O—262 199	1st Lt. Birnie	237 921
Cpt. Chateaneuf	O—287 807	1st Lt. Bincent	P 83995
Cpt. Griffin	O—322 297	2nd Lt. Lane	O—887 793
Cpt. Cashron	O—292 520	2nd Lt. Staub	O—105 8659
Cpt. Wilmot	O—394 678	2nd Lt. Newman	O—550 095
Cpt. Roberts	O—354 592	2nd Lt. Miller	O—131 2196
Cpt. Wolf, MD.		2nd Lt. Shaak	O—104 5249
1st Lt. Earnest Wenberg	} Medical staff	2nd Lt. Rafferty	O—105 4759
Cpt. Kistner		2nd Lt. Prosnick	O—103 2549
1st Lt. Lubinski	O—131 4930	2nd Lt. Procopio	O—100 0934
1st Lt. Dabney	O—541 596	2nd Lt. Kilkenney	O—551 265
1st Lt. Mallette	O—523 165	2nd Lt. May	O—554 652
1st Lt. Welsh	O—110 9742	2nd Lt. Badwanski	O—117 7600
1st Lt. Flewelling	O—104 9153	2nd Lt. Hodder	O—131 2768
1st Lt. Tracy	O—104 4414	2nd Lt. O'Toole	O—535 618
1st Lt. Lavin	O—129 2719	2nd Lt. Kramer	O—106 0851
1st Lt. Dainotto	O—129 7167	2nd Lt. Semple	O—118 5132
1st Lt. Halpin	O—383 429	Wrt. Off. jr. Stec	W—212 7855
1st Lt. Gelbach	O—131 3088	Wrt. Off. Taylor	W—210 6927
1st Lt. Hillo	O—105 6411		

Post War POW Debriefing from Eyewitness to Shooting of Lt George Varem

remained there for five (5) days thereafter.

Q. While you were a Prisoner of War, did you witness the shooting of any American soldiers?

A. Yes. FIRST LIEUTENANT GEORGE VAREIN was killed while a prisoner at the camp.

Q. Will you relate what you know concerning the shooting of LIEUTENANT VAREIN?

A. It was a rule of the camp at Oflag XIII B that all Prisoners of War had to run immediately to the nearest building and remain under cover in the event of a fifteen (15) blast air raid alert. This type of blast was signified by fifteen (15) short blasts on the air raid warnings and meant that the planes were fifteen (15) miles away. All prisoners were to remain under cover for the duration of the alert. About 1 February 1945, or within a week either way, a fifteen (15) blast alert sounded about 2055 hours. I was in the dispensary at the time, playing bridge. At about 2102 hours, I heard a shot fired and almost immediately afterward a request for a doctor to come to building 12 was delivered. CAPTAIN FRANK LASKETZ, M. C., USA, and I went to building 12 to examine the patient who was an American officer who had been shot by a guard. We brought him back to the dispensary. The patient's name was LIEUTENANT GEORGE VAREIN. He had been shot through the back, the bullet entering from one side of the back and coming out at midline in front. It was a nasty wound and nearly blew his guts out. We applied a dressing at the dispensary and VAREIN was sent immediately to the Yugoslavian hospital about three hundred (300) yards away.

Q. Have you any knowledge of the manner in which the shooting took place?

A. VAREIN was conscious when we brought him to the dispensary and he told us what had happened. He said that he and an American Lieutenant Colonel and two or three other men had been speaking to some Yugoslavian officers through the barbed wire fence surrounding their compound, several hundred yards from the building where VAREIN was quartered. They were talking to the Yugoslavians through an interpreter when a fifteen (15) blast air raid alert sounded. VAREIN said that they did not leave the fence immediately but said goodbye through their interpreter and after a delay of about five (5) minutes after the alert sounded, ran back to their building. In doing so, VAREIN and his companions were in full sight of a German guard station and as they turned to run up the steps of building 12, they were fired at once by the guard in the tower. It was a cloudy night, jet black, with a foot or more of snow on the ground. The visibility was very poor. The shot struck LIEUTENANT VAREIN just as he was going up the steps.

Q. Did LIEUTENANT VAREIN give any indication that he had knowledge of the guard's identity?

A. VAREIN had no idea who the guard was and had no way of knowing.

Q. Did VAREIN have any idea how seriously he was wounded?

A. No, he did not, but he died the next afternoon about 1600 hours. I attended his funeral.

Q. Can you identify the guard responsible for the shooting?

A. No. I cannot.