What It's Like To Go

about 50,000 teachers. Enrollment totaled 1,078,000 and is expected to be about the same this year.

Vietnam—and are now ready to enter the world of work, including the teaching profession."

Oro. The spraying operation, based at the local airport, is covering almost 2,000 acres a day. (Ledger Photo by Richard Vance)

Back To PW Camp 26 Years After

By Gary Duffy

Officierlager 64 was the name of the German prison camp near Schubin, Poland, where Tony Lumpkin of Mexico was a POW 26 years ago. Today, although the temporary buildings have been torn down along with the barbed wire, the camp still detains people. It is used by the Polish government as a boys reform school.

Captain Tony B. Lumpkin was taken prisoner on April 1, 1943 in Tunisia and escaped from a prison camp in March, 1945. At the time of his capture, he was commandant on leave from Missouri Military Academy here. Since World War II, he has been active in the development of Dairy Queen franchise operations in several states.

Mr. Lumpkin attended a reunion of 30 of the ex-POW's near the camp recently, and says that although he got to see the areas where he was held captive, "The one thing that was driven home to me was that you never fully go back to anything. It's just impossible."

"There's no fence around the camp now; they have an honor system there. But right in the middle of this thing is a monument with the inscription: 'To Those Who Were Here During the Great Patriotic War as Prisoners of the National Socialistic Regieme. May It Never Happen Again.' "

"They're very strong on that thing of 'under no conditions do we want another war'. They give a lot of lip service to it. If the heads of that government would give the same amount of lip service—we'd probably all see the same problem the same way. But it doesn't happen that way."

Recalling his experiences, Mr. Lumpkin told of Dr. Wright Bryan, who was editor of the Atlanta Journal and is a former president of Clemson:

"Dr. Wright Bryan had been in a Russian Army Hospital. He became sick in Rembertoff and had to be hospitalized. We got the Russians to take him into the army hospital. I could have sworn I could take you back to that spot because the town had a trolley. I got this taxi driver in Warsaw and three other men including Dr. Bryan. We couldn't find this big building. I found out later it had been torn down. But I got back to the end of the trolley line and said 'Wright, here is where you were in the hospital.' Now Wright had never seen the outside of it because we took him over there one night. But it kind of brings up what is happening in that country again.

"It was an army post and they wouldn't let anyone in. I was in Rembertoff for two or three weeks. The burgermeister was a very good friend of mine. But I didn't dare throw his name around too much because if he was a German they probably rousted him out to Siberia or something.

"I had the taxi driver go up to the gate and said 'We're Americanskis and I'd like to go in to see a particular building. I told the guard that Wright had been an inmate of this hospital. Well, this guy wasn't going to do a thing. So I got my camera out like I was going to shoot a picture. Boy, that brought action right now!

"I said 'I want to speak to an officer.' In any army that's always a good thing to get any action. So they got to phoning back and forth. All these were Polish soldiers.

"This taxi driver got extremely nervous and said 'Come on, let's leave. They've got my license number.' Well, I didn't want to get him in any trouble, so I said 'Drive us on back, but let's get lost on the way.' We went up about a quarter of a mile. There was a wall made of slabs of concrete stacked on top each other with a wire maze on top. We drove along that a while and finally we got on some high ground. So I said 'Turn around,' so we could see what they'd done.

TONY LUMPKIN

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". . . these people are attached to the horse . . .

". . . if you want to know the economy of a country, go out and see how long it takes to find a shoe shine boy . . ."

"They'd cleared a piece wide enough for a road, put up a line of barbed wire, then a maze, then another line of barbed wire. And this thing had fresh tracks on it. They have a way of patrolling this wall. You first have to climb this wall that's got a maze on top of it, and then there's a road patrolled by vehicles.

"Then you run into the same thing you've got in the prison camp. You have to go through this fence, and this maze, then another fence and then there was a piece of raked ground so any footprints would show up. Later on they told me of a place that had identically the same layout that was a Russian camp.

"So the Russians are there, very much so. You don't see any evidence there. I saw no Russian uniforms. But I know they are in the community. They are particularly in Rembertoff, fifteen minutes from the old ghetto, the center of old Warsaw. They could be anywhere in nothing flat.

"An Associated Press reporter told me that their agreement with the Russians was that if they'd quit wearing uniforms, the AP would quit reporting that they'd seen them. In order to stay there they've got to bend a little bit. So all the Russians are in civilian clothes. But they are in that country.

"I can't remember the Polish word for matches, but you can go up and use the Russian word and they know what you're talking about. You could use Russian words in Warsaw and the local merchants understood. I looked kind of like a Russian, anyhow. There's not too much difference between our looks and the Russians.

"I noticed that where public notices are posted it's in Polish, German, and Russian. You can go down to the newsstand and buy a copy of Pravda. But as I recall I couldn't get a copy of an American newspaper.

"They are very proud of the steps that Poland has made. They've done it with Russian help, a Marshall Plan of sorts, and they tried to reproduce in Warsaw what we did in West Berlin.

"Warsaw at one time was considered one of the key capitals of eastern Europe. It was the center of the culture. They are very proud of Chopin. They are good people. But they, like any country based on agriculture, have plenty to eat, but they don't have two cars in every garage.

"Another thing that is interesting is the great number of churches there. They've

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The Lumpkin Story

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restored a lot of churches. The country is orthodox Catholic. But in Warsaw you can go to the Baptist, Catholic, or any church service you want. "Their rate of exchange is a peculiar thing, too. If you go to a bank somewhere, the rate is 23 zlotys to the dollar but they also give you some coupons. These coupons you can't spend like buying a shirt, but you can buy room and board with them.

"If you want to get a better rate of exchange go out on the street carrying a camera. And some clown will come up right away wanting to buy some money. The going rate out on the street is 110 zlotys, probably the real rate that you could get. I wanted to know where the real level on the dollar was supposed to be and it should be about 115. One character offered it to me for 120 and another offered 98. But that's four times the official rate.

"When I asked that Associated Press reporter he said it was very much against the law to trade money on the black market but they don't look at it like the Russians do. In Russia it's a felony and that's as bad as robbing a bank.

"But here they frown on it, but they know it's going on and they need the dollars so bad that no one makes any motion to try to stamp it out.

"During the war, Warsaw was 80 to 90 per cent destroyed by artillery. I was there on three occasions and I didn't see one building that hadn't been hit. Now the thing is completely rebuilt and very progressive. I think it could eventually be a great tourist attraction. They have rebuilt the old ghetto identical to the way it was . . . just exactly. "The Russians are there . . . the signs in hotel rooms . . . and the menus are in Russian sometimes. . . many Russian books and newspapers. I don't believe the Poles like the Russians' presence. They would just as soon have them out. A long time ago the capital of Poland was Kiev, now a large Russian city. They treated the Russians about the way we treated the Indians . . . they ran them off.

"Now the Russians have got the top hand. They've never been really close friends. I tried to talk to the man in the street and I'm not sure I got a representative opinion. I went out to a coffee shop and by sign language I could buy a cup of coffee. This one fellow told me, in pretty good English, that they'd sent his son to Copenhagen to get his education, and then he kind of looked around and said 'I think he'll be better there.'

"One said the Poles would gladly sacrifice another 100,000 men to get the Russians out. Hell, there wasn't 100,000 able-bodied men left in Poland at that time. They're great talkers that way.

"Most of the land is in collectives but there are many small farmers and they sell produce and they really are the present day millionaires in that community. But they farm like they did in 1890 . . . all of it horse drawn. . .one plow, sowed by hand. It was evident that they didn't drill anything in. They do have tractors, but it's just the way they farm. When we think of farming, we've got the best farmers in the world, particularly in this belt through here. And they go at it scientifically. Those people are still attached to the horse.

"It definitely is a police state. The Poles have a citizenship that says once you're a Pole, you're always a Pole. One of the former POWs had married a lady whose family name was Czech. It has a border with Poland. So they tried to give her a hard time going through customs. When they found out that none of us were going to move until they cleared her . . .we completely clogged that [illegible] airport. . .somebody up [illegible]ine came down and took responsibility.

"There were no hippies around. I didn't see a single one.

"Poland and Russia have gone strictly for the essentials, that is, shelter and food. They've got that now and they're starting to branch out a little bit. Apparently they're having no great trouble feeding the people. I never saw a beggar. If you really want to know the economy of a country, go out and see how long it takes to find a shoe-shine boy. During the war in Naples you couldn't walk a block without seeing one or two. After the war that kind of died down. My estimation is that they all made enough money shining shoes that they all bought taxis. I've seen the same thing in Cairo and Athens. If the economy is good, the shoe shine boys are the first to go out of business.

"Their month is 30 days, regardless. They couldn't care less. If you get a visa for one month, they mean 30 actual days.

Mr. Lumpkin, drawing a parallel between his term as a prisoner and the POWs in Vietnam at this time, said: "We had an advantage in that we were highly organized. I was in the first 100 officers captured in the European theatre. And the Germans didn't know what to do with us. They didn't have an American Officierlager, so they put us in with the British. That was the biggest mistake they ever made. Because the British had been prisoners for many years and they knew exactly every angle.

"They taught us pretty fast. They said, 'Now, don't ever let a German come into the camp without someone telling him. We kept a record of where they were. We knew exactly where they were all the time.

"We were well disciplined. I don't think they've got that kind of organization in Vietnam. The fact that we handled the interior of the camp. . . we never had enough food. . . but we could demand and get some things from the Germans that I don't think the boys in Vietnam can get."