



# Alton Resident WWII P.O.W. Memoir Released

August 9 2022 7:38 AM

ALTON - The memoir of life-long Alton resident, Henry Eugene “Gene” Maul, has been released by LuLu Press, Inc. The memoir, *Diary of Henry Eugene Maul, Prisoner of War*, is a compilation by his eldest daughter, Diana Maul Halstead, a 1970 graduate of Alton High School. The Maul family was a fixture of Alton going back to the late 1830’s.



Gene Maul was influenced and angered by the attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Shortly after graduating Marquette High School, Gene enlisted in the United States Army Air Force, training to take on one of the most dangerous positions in the

Air Force as a waist gunner. As a member of the 96<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and the 338<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron he completed 8 missions before his plane was downed by enemy fire, May 8, 1944, causing him and his crew to be captured by German scouts.

This diary is not a story told in the typical day-to-day accounting of time, but a visual drawing-by-drawing, poem-by-poem, note-by-note diary. Gene used the intense solitude of POW life to draw his thoughts, his observations, and his fears. Within each drawing, each poem, each note is symbolism of what he, his crew, and fellow POWs were enduring.

Included in this book are letters from home, photographs, and formerly classified documents Allied Prisoners of World War II in Germany. The documents describe how POWs were treated, from starvation to appalling food, loneliness, poor hygiene, and the community the men built. According to Gene's former Marquette classmate, Leo Hohnstedt, The Marches were the most difficult ordeals for him to experience. Gene's timeline of one of those marches is included. What Gene brought back from his year as a POW, not only shaped the rest of his life, but how he raised his daughters.

Diana Maul Halstead is the eldest of the three daughters of Henry Eugene Maul and Dixie Davis Maul. From when she and her sisters were children, they were told to never ask their dad questions about his time in the war. They never did.

Diana's journey to creating this memoir started as a small project to protect the war diary she had never seen, and only knew existed for the past few years. Once she saw it for the first time, reading her dad's poems and touching the pages of each drawing she knew there was more to her dad's story than the words and drawings before her. She set out to learn this never mentioned story of her dad's journey as a POW. Her own journey taught her more about World War II, Nazi Germany, what man can endure if he has family, faith, and comradery, and why her dad did not want to relive or share his hell with his daughters. This man, the quiet soul that barely spoke, but always listened, was one of the bravest men she would ever know, and dearly love.

The book, *Diary of Henry Eugene Maul, Prisoner of War*, is available at Barnes & Noble, Ingram, Amazon, LuLu.com, or social media @TheKriegiesDaughter. A copy will also available to read at Hayner Public Library in the Genealogy Department after September 1st.