



A German POW in New Mexico (Historical Society of New Mexico Publication Series)

Walter Schmid

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Walter Schmid, a member of Rommel's Afrika Korps, was one of hundreds of thousands of POWs interned in the United States during World War II. Drafted into the German army at twenty, he had fought for only five months when captured in Tunisia in May 1943. Schmid was sent first to POW camps in Oklahoma (Gruber, Bixby, and McAlester) and was soon transferred to New Mexico in July 1944.

Walter Schmid worked in southern New Mexico's Mesilla Valley picking cotton and harvesting melons alongside Mexican-American laborers. He recalls playing trumpet in the camp orchestra and watching Sunday soccer games between the teams of rival POW camps.

Based on his diary and the letters he sent home to his German girlfriend, whom he later married, Schmid's memoir was published in Germany in 2000. This abbreviated English translation begins with his capture in North Africa and his voyage to the United States and ends with his work experience in England, where he was transferred after almost three years of captivity in the United States, and his return to Germany in 1947.

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