

Experiences of a Prisoner in World War I

By James Norman Hall*

One would like to give some comfort and encouragement to American parents or other relatives whose sons, husbands, fathers, or brothers may find themselves prisoners in German hands during the course of the present war. This is my purpose here by telling, briefly, something of my own experience as a prisoner during World War I, but it is necessary to say in advance that I do not know whether the Germans of Hitler's Reich may be compared with those of the last war. If the German attitude toward prisoners has not changed, then there is good reason for Americans to expect that those of their relatives who may have the hard luck to be captured will not be mistreated. I speak, of course, from a limited experience, concerned with two German war hospitals—at Jarry-Confians, in occupied France; and at Saarbrücken—and at three prison camps: Rastatt, Karlsruhe, and Landshut. I may have been lucky in the various places to which I was sent. However that may be, I felt that, in all of them, our treatment was as fair as prisoners of war have the right to expect.

During the final summer of World War I, the food problem in Germany was a serious one. We prisoners were not, certainly, pampered in this respect, but the food we received was sufficient to maintain health. We could have survived upon it alone, had it been necessary. Thanks to the wonderfully efficient Prisoners of War Organization of the American Red Cross functioning from Switzerland, we were not compelled to do this.

The moment the Prisoners of War Committee received, from Germany, lists of new prisoners taken—and this was, usually, very soon after the event—

weekly parcels were sent on the way to these men—clothing, food, tobacco, toilet articles, etc.; everything, in fact, necessary for their health and comfort. With our Red Cross supplies, we prisoners lived better than many of the Germans guarding us. Of course, some of the food boxes sent to us were broken into and a part of their contents stolen by the Germans; but our estimate was that about ninety percent of the boxes reached us intact, a much higher percentage than any of us had expected.** The Germany of World

**Under the present careful system of receipts and control, the British Red Cross established that, during 1942, losses in transit were only 0.15 of one percent. Ed.



Group of American aviators captured by Germany in World War I. Captain James Norman Hall is seated. He was shot down when a member of the Lafayette Escadrille, and was captured unconscious with both legs broken. Earlier he had served as a British Tommy. Standing, left to right, are: Lt. Charles R. Codman of Boston, Lt. Henry Corvill Lewis of Germantown, Pa., and Lt. Robert G. Browning of Minneapolis.

War II has looted the whole of Europe for food; therefore, it is to me likely that they will be less inclined to steal food from prisoners of war than the Germans of the last war when their own supplies were so very scarce.

German Concern for Prisoner Health

The German prison camps of my experience were kept thorough clean and sanitary, and situated in healthy localities. We had no complaint whatever to make on grounds of health. The Germans, as particular as we Americans are in such matters; at least, so they were during the last war. As a matter of course, sense and prudence they were concerned about our health, lest our unrest should act upon themselves.

My longest sojourn in a prison camp was at a camp in Bavaria, where we were decently housed in the walls of an old castle on the hill overlooking the town. The Bavarian camp inspector was a decent fellow who, after the war, in excellent health and weighing more than ever, made me hear complaints of my life before; but the added weight was due, in large part, to the fact that he was sufficiently praised—and I am grateful to the American Red Cross whose records for their welfare prisoners will never forget.

The Germans must realize by this time that the game is up for them, and that they realized it in the summer of 1918. Therefore my belief is that the untold weight of world suffering and misery already upon their shoulders, they will not add to the burden to come on the day of their liberation by mistreating their prisoners of war.

officers, we had no work of our kind to do except the preparation of our own meals, and this we were always glad to do as it gave us something to occupy our time. We were permitted to have long moon walks through the countryside beyond Landshut.

These walks were a great boon to me and other Landshut prisoners because myself must still remember with pleasure. Before setting out we were obliged to pledge our honor to make no attempt to escape during the walk. The pledge being given, we were escorted only by a couple of old reservist guards, and, sometimes, by Dr. Jahn, Professor of Modern Languages in the Landshut school, who was accustomed to give lessons to those who wanted them, in German and French. I still think of Dr. Jahn with pleasure and affection. He is living today, I would be willing to take my oath that he is a Nazi by compulsion. He was a real man being, compassionate, sincere, warm-hearted; there was not a trace of the Hun in him. I believe, even under National Socialism, called, there must be some German left of the Dr. Jahn kind. If so, I have hope for the future of their country lies in them.

As it may seem, I left Germany, after the war, in excellent health and weighing more than ever, but the added weight was due, in large part, to the fact that he was sufficiently praised—and I am grateful to the American Red Cross whose records for their welfare prisoners will never forget.

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TRANSFERS FROM ITALY

Word has been received from Geneva that about 800 of the approximately 1,000 American prisoners of war in Italian camps at the beginning of last September were transferred to Germany. Up to the middle of November, the International Red Cross Committee had not been advised of the names of the men transferred or the German camps to which these men had been assigned.

A few American prisoners in Italy succeeded in working their way southward and rejoining the United States Army after the announcement of the armistice with Italy. It will probably be some weeks before the new camp addresses of the American prisoners taken to Germany will be known.

Missing in Action

Prisoners of War Information Bureau of the Provost Marshal General's Office has recently received many letters from families of men reported "missing in action" asking for further news. An official of the Bureau states that families are notified just as soon as the Provost Marshal General's Office receives names of prisoners, and that it is not necessary to write for further information. Until a man is officially listed as a prisoner, his records are kept by The Adjutant General's office (if he is in the Army), or by the Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard. Accordingly, the Prisoners of War Information Bureau will have no word about him until he is actually listed as a prisoner of war.

However, if, as sometimes happens, the family of a missing man receives word from him showing that he is definitely in a prison camp, his letter or card should be sent to the Provost Marshal General's Office so that his record may be brought up to date. That office will make a photostat copy of the letter or card and return the original to the family.

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D. A. R. Aids Red Cross

Office space for the entire national headquarters staff of the Prisoners of War Relief section of the American Red Cross has been most graciously provided by the Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution. The third floor of Memorial Continental Hall, the beautiful marble building on 17th Street, Washington, D. C., which is the national headquarters of the Daughters of the American Revolution, has been turned over to this section for the duration. No rent is charged for the spacious quarters provided, and the Red Cross assumes only actual maintenance expenses.

The Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution has moved out priceless museum collections of old American furniture, rugs, china, and old home settings, storing them in other parts of the building to make room for the Red Cross workers and their office files and desks. Beautiful crystal chandeliers, grandfather clocks, and some rare paintings remain to remind the workers of the peaceful and dignified atmosphere they have invaded.

All those who have been sightseeing in Washington will surely remember the rooms in this building—each named for a particular state in the Union, and furnished as a memorial to that state by respective state chapters.

In taking this occasion to express our appreciation, we hope that the work done by this section will serve to demonstrate the gratitude of the American Red Cross to the Daughters of the American Revolution for their contribution to our common humanitarian effort.

Christmas Reminder for German Prisoners

Through the International Red Cross Committee the German Red Cross has sent about 500 tons of supplies to be distributed at Christmas to German prisoners of war in the United States. Each individual package contains cake, chocolate, nuts, raisins, preserves, sardines, candy, and cigarettes, with a greeting card and a sprig of green.

*Mr. Hall, the noted author, sent this article for PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN from Paapeete, Tahiti.

Notes on Prison Camps

Stalag Luft I

In the middle of July 1943, a Delegate of the International Red Cross Committee visited Stalag Luft I, situated about 75 miles northeast of Stettin and close to the Baltic coast line. At that time the camp contained a total of nearly 1,000 prisoners, of whom about 100 were American noncommissioned officers. All the prisoners in this camp were captured while serving with the RAF or the USAAF.

Sanitary conditions at Stalag Luft I were reported to be good—with adequate wash stands, latrines, and shower baths. The infirmary, located in a separate barrack, contained 20 beds in 4 rooms; 16 beds were occupied by slightly sick prisoners. None of the prisoners at Stalag Luft I was working at the time of the visit.

Barracks with rooms containing 24 beds each were occupied by American prisoners. The beds are double deckers with good mattresses. The rooms were stated to be clean, well lighted, well ventilated and heated. There is a camp theater and both indoor and outdoor sports are well organized. Protestant religious services were held, and efforts were being made to obtain the services of a Roman Catholic priest—if necessary. German Red Cross food packages, clothing, and comfort articles were reaching the camp regularly, and larger shipments of food packages were requested so that an adequate reserve could be accumulated to meet the increased number of prisoners expected at Stalag Luft I. The food contained in Red Cross packages was cooked collectively on four stoves reserved for prisoners' use.

Correspondence was reported to be irregular, with mail from the United States taking as long as 7 or 8 months to reach prisoners. As has already been announced in this BULLETIN, all letters for American and British airmen in German camps is censored at Stalag Luft III, and should be addressed there. If the designation of the camp where the prisoner is actually held is other than Stalag Luft III, it should be added in brackets, for example—[Stalag Luft I]. This form of address is not to be used on packages; they should be addressed to the camp where the prisoner is actually held.

Stalag Luft III

The number of American and British airmen in Stalag Luft III seems to be growing steadily, with the result that the need of relief supplies, clothing, recreational equipment, etc., is also constantly increasing. A large shipment of clothing for American prisoners reached the camp in July so that the men's needs for the present winter should have been met.

Practically all the prisoners in this camp are young, and—according to a recent report from a neutral Y. M. C. A. secretary—they spend most of their time playing at one game or another. In consequence, sporting equipment wears out rapidly. American games, it is stated, are growing increasingly popular—especially football, baseball, and basketball, and a large amount of sporting equipment is now needed for American games. No separation between American and British airmen appears to have been made at Stalag Luft III, and they are reported to get along very well together.

Like the British, the Americans in this camp are said to be eager for the opportunity to take examinations, and are anxiously awaiting university and high school programs. "On the whole," the report concludes, "the Americans are rather well here, and I have not heard any

complaints. They receive, in British, Red Cross parcels each week. I had the opportunity to visit several of them regarding their needs, but in most cases they received what they had requested. They seemed to be quite ready to their new life and intend to use of their enforced leisure to prove themselves."

Stalag VIII B

A recent report stated that there were over 22,000 British prisoners of war carried on the rolls of Stalag VIII B which is located in a healthy spot east of Dresden and near the town of Lamsdorf. There are also about 100 American prisoners at Stalag VIII B. It is probably the most complex camp in Germany, with only 8,000 men in the base camp (some 300 *Arbeitskommandos* and 700 detachments), ranging in actual strength from 30 to 100 prisoners, and subordinate to the officer in charge of the VIII B. The men in the *Arbeitskommandos* are engaged in coal mining, stone quarrying, road repair, manufacturing, agriculture, and so on. The report states, in part: "The steadily increasing number of the Stalag, more reconstructions has of late been necessary. A distribution center for relief supplies has been moved from the camp, and is now in the form of a new and independent camp about a mile from the main

camp. Twenty representatives of senior British officers have also been appointed to look after carefully selected areas of the camp. Each of these has his subordinate office and storeroom at the central *Arbeitskommando* in his own camp, or at the one nearest the railroad. In this way 250 or more of the *Arbeitskommandos* are brought under close control. This control over relief supplies is now as near perfect as can be expected, and is due entirely to the cooperation and support of the present Commandant and his staff, who do everything possible to ensure that distribution is correctly and quickly effected."

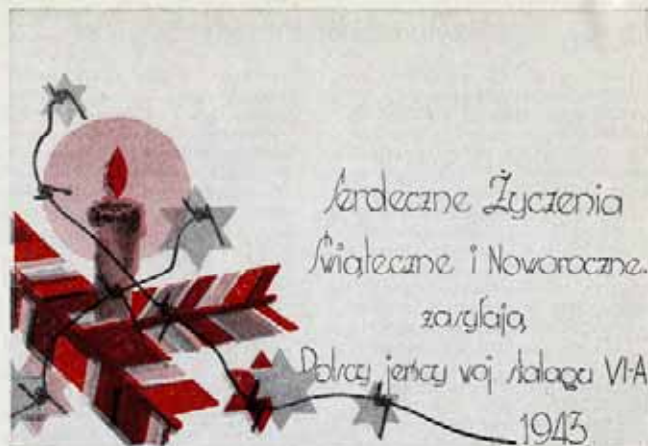
Fukuoka—Japan

Fukuoka camps, numbering seven in all, are situated at the western end of the main Japanese island of Honshu. The camps derive their name from the large city and prefecture of Fukuoka located at the northern tip of the adjoining island of Kyushu, presumably because Fukuoka is the military headquarters of the region. Most of the camps are centered around the cities of Ube and Omine, but two camps are on small islands—Innoshima and Mukama—in the Inland Sea about 150 miles east.

When visited by a Delegate of the International Red Cross Committee in May it was reported that these camps housed only British prisoners, but later advices have indicated that there are now over 600 Americans at the Fukuoka camps. Prisoners in these camps are principally employed in coal mines and shipyards.

Hakodate—Japan

Camp Hakodate is the designation of a main camp and a divisional camp both located near the city of the same name at the southern extremity of the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido. These camps were opened on December 1, 1942. A Delegate of the International Red Cross Committee visited them in August, reporting about 60 Americans among the 600 prisoners in the two camps, from Java and Singapore. In the principal camp, prisoners are housed in one-story frame buildings with wooden floors. In the divisional camp, newly constructed permanent wooden blockhouses with concrete floors are used. Prisoners are working in a coke manufacturing plant, a machine plant, a mine,



Translation

Polish Prisoners of War in Stalag VI A send Hearty Greetings for Christmas and the New Year.

Messages from Philippines

Sixty-four cablegrams from prisoners of war, internees, and United States nationals in the Philippines were received by the Red Cross during the month of October for delivery to relatives and friends in this country. This was the largest number received in any one month from the Far East, as well as the largest number to arrive from United States internees and prisoners of war in any enemy or enemy-occupied country.

While communications from the Philippines have been trickling in through Red Cross communication service since last January, this is the first time personal messages from individuals have been received in any quantity. Many of the cables were replies to messages sent through Red Cross channels from persons in the United States.

It is hoped that this influx of communications from the Far East is indicative of a continued increase in the number of messages and welfare reports from that territory.

and also as mechanics and carpenters. The men work eight hours daily and have three days' rest a month. The report says they receive "standard pay with bonus up to 5 sen (1-cent) per day for qualified workers."

Mail for Japan

The International Red Cross Committee has been informed that the Japanese authorities have created a central post office for prisoners of war at Higashi Shinagawa—the main Tokyo camp. This post office is charged with the distribution and reforwarding of mail to prisoners of war held by Japan, and its staff is composed of American and British officers. These officers, it is stated, have complained that insufficient address frequently makes it difficult, if not impossible, to locate the prisoners they are intended for, and the request is made that the utmost care should be taken in writing out the exact address on mail for prisoners of war in Japanese hands.

Filming Prisoners

Arrangements have been made, through the International Red Cross Committee, to make a film of American prisoners of war in some of the German camps. Similar pictures have been made, and sent to the United States by the I. R. C. C., of French, Belgian, and other prisoners, but the distribution of these has been held up pending the completion of arrangements for filming American prisoners.

When the film showing American prisoners reaches this country, every effort will be made by the Red Cross to arrange for its nation-wide exhibition.



A German prison camp in winter—Stalag VIII B. This is mainly a British camp but it contains American prisoners.

Exchange of Prisoners

Under an agreement between the United States and Germany for the mutual repatriation of seriously sick and seriously wounded prisoners of war, 2 American officers and 12 enlisted men who had been prisoners in Germany were repatriated in the second half of October and returned to the United States by way of Sweden and England. Under a similar agreement between Great Britain and Germany, a mutual repatriation of sick and wounded prisoners from both sides took place.

This was the first repatriation of seriously sick and seriously wounded prisoners of war from Germany during the present war, and the procedure followed was that prescribed in the Geneva Prisoners of War Convention, Article 68, which provides that:

"Belligerents are bound to send back to their own country, regardless of rank or number, seriously sick and seriously injured

prisoners of war, after having brought them to a condition where they can be transported. Agreements between belligerents shall accordingly settle as soon as possible the cases of invalidity or of sickness entailing direct repatriation."

Doctors, chaplains, and enlisted medical personnel who are not needed for the care of their fellow prisoners are also entitled to repatriation under the agreements and in accordance with the provisions of the Red Cross Convention. The non-combat forces in the October exchanges included all chaplains and medical personnel over and above two doctors, one chaplain, one dentist, and six enlisted personnel for each 1,000 men who continue to be held as prisoners of war. The ships carrying repatriated prisoners sail under safe conduct guarantees and carry neutral International Red Cross Delegates as observers.

Prison Camp Money



Prisoners of War Camp Money.

SCRIP GOOD FOR 1 REICHSMARK

This scrip is valid as legal tender for prisoners of war only, and may be spent by them or accepted only in the specially designated stores inside the prisoner of war camp or at the work camps.

The exchange of this scrip into legal tender can be made only at the authorized cashier's office of the camp administration. Violation, imitation, or counterfeiting will be punished.

The Chief of the German High Command.

By order

(Signature)

The negotiations for the October exchanges began several months ago and their successful conclusion largely because of the unflinching operation of the Swiss government. The Swedish and Spanish authorities also gave ready cooperation for the ports of transfer. For other reasons, negotiations for the repatriation of sick and wounded prisoners need to be handled with discretion, but it is expected further repatriation movements will be agreed upon from time to time with Germany.

Discussions have also taken place looking toward an exchange of seriously sick and seriously wounded American prisoners of war in these hands, and exchanges of American and Japanese civilians in addition to the two that have already taken place. These discussions have not yet been concluded, but are having the close attention of the United States government.

Size of Next-of-Kin Parcel

The box or carton for the monthly parcel which the next of kin is allowed to send to the prisoner of war is an important part of the package. It should be strong and the contents will be undamaged when they reach the man after a long, hard trip. It is better to be light so that it will use less than necessary of the permitted pounds. The usual corrugated board carton is recommended by the War Department and the Consular Office.

As to the measurement, the parcel should not be longer than 18 inches (in the other direction) to its length should not be more than 42 inches. That is, with a box 18 inches long, if you took a tape measure and started at 18 inches to wrap it at the smaller girth, it should be no further than 42 inches on the other side. If your box were less than 18 inches long it could be somewhat larger in length. Thus for a box 12 inches long, other dimensions could be 36 inches or 6"x9". But if it is the latter, the other dimensions should not be more than 6"x6" or 6"x8".

Matches are often found in next-of-kin packages, according to the Department official, who has had the matter called to his attention by the Post Office. Families are asked to omit matches as they are not on the permitted list for packages sent to prisoners of war or internees.

Repatriates Arrive Home from Germany

Much information of interest to all relatives of prisoners of war in Europe was obtained from talks with representatives of the American Red Cross who have had with several of the 14 American prisoners (2 officers and 12 enlisted men) recently repatriated from Germany as unfit for further combat service. A summary of the men's statements is given below.

None of the repatriated flyers brought down in Germany was molested by the civilian population, and, apparently, none of them actually met an Allied airman who had been seriously molested by German civilians.

If flyers are brought down unobserved in German-held territory, they do their utmost to evade capture and, with such help as they can obtain from sympathizers in the occupied countries, to get back to their bases. Some probably succeed. Even those who land unseen in Germany usually try to get away. For the most part, however, they are picked up promptly by the authorities and, if wounded, sent to the nearest hospital. If unwounded, they are immediately dispatched to *Dulag Luft*, the main transit camp for airmen, where they are given a number (which means that they are officially listed as prisoners of war) and then assigned to a "permanent" camp. The transit through *Dulag Luft* takes about three weeks. No complaints were made of mistreatment of prisoners by the German authorities. Several of the repatriates who were in the hospital throughout their period of capture said they received the best of care and medical attention, although they would have felt the lack of nourishing food had it not been for Red Cross parcels. They further said that other seriously wounded Americans hope to be repatriated soon.

Mail Delays

In the case of prisoners taken during operations in North Africa and later in Italy, long delays, and frequently much hardship, were experienced before the men reached German hospitals or prison camps. Many prisoners refrain from writing home until they can give their relatives a prisoner of war number and "permanent" camp address. The prisoners understand that about six

months will elapse after they have a definite camp address and number before mail from home will begin to reach them.

Attempted escapes from camps are frequent, but, as a rule, the men do not succeed in keeping their regained liberty for long. Unless the escape has been well planned, they are generally picked up by the authorities in the nearest village or town and immediately returned to the camp to spend the next week or two in the guardhouse.

The men in the camps and hospitals are fully informed about their rights and obligations under the Geneva Prisoners of War Convention. The articles of the treaty, in several languages, are prominently posted in the main camps. Representatives of the Protecting Power (Switzerland), Delegates of the International Red Cross Committee, and neutral secretaries from the YMCA are also seen by the men on their visits to camps and hospitals. The camp spokesmen (elected by the men) freely exercise their right to complain in private, if they have any complaints to make, to representatives of the Protecting Power, which is charged under the treaty with the duty of seeing that the Convention is properly observed.

Control Over Relief Supplies

The German authorities, in collaboration with the camp spokesmen, maintain strict control over relief supplies. Red Cross food parcels are locked in a storeroom which is opened jointly by the camp spokesman and the German camp commander. The men may take out of their parcels whatever food, soap, or cigarettes they need for that day, after which the storeroom is again locked. The men usually prepare, and share, their relief food in groups. Whenever they take a can of food from their parcels, the camp authorities puncture it so that it must be eaten promptly. The main reason for this is to prevent prisoners' hoarding canned food for use if they succeed in escaping.

The men were positive in stating that those in the camps could not maintain their health without Red Cross parcels; the rations supplied them by the Germans (consisting chiefly of black bread, potatoes, a poor quality of margarine,

and a thin soup) were described as "quite insufficient." When asked how Russian prisoners in Germany, who receive no relief supplies from outside, manage to survive, the men were quick to explain that Russian prisoners do not benefit from the Geneva Convention but that in all camps where Russians are interned with other nationalities, the other prisoners form Russian Aid Committees which "salvage" left-over German rations, and also make contributions from their own relief supplies for the benefit of Russian prisoners. They even collect cigarette butts which the Russians remake into cigarettes, using whatever paper is obtainable.

Pay For Work

All privates who work are paid 70 Pfennige (\$0.28 at the official pre-war rate of exchange) a day in *Kriegsgefangenen-Lagergeld*. This special prisoner of war currency (each "bank note" is about the size of a cigarette paper) can be spent only at camp canteens where there is, in fact, not much in the way of goods to select from. The articles purchased most frequently at canteens, when available, are matches, beer, razor blades, combs, mirrors, and tooth powder.

Noncommissioned officers are not required to, but they may volunteer for, work at the 70 Pfennige a day rate. The repatriates said, however, that British and American non-coms rarely volunteer.

There was complete agreement among the men interviewed that morale of the American prisoners in Germany was excellent, and that their high spirits and good humor were a constant joy to the prisoners of other nationalities who have now, for the most part, been "Kriegies" for several years and who have thus felt the full force of the boredom, privation, and monotony which are the inevitable consequences of POW life. The comradeship among Allied prisoners of all nationalities was also said to be very high; selfishness was the one element conspicuously lacking in all prison camps and hospitals. Greek and Pole, Russian and British, Yugoslav and American, French and Dutch, colored and white, are comrades in misfortune who are sustained by one hope—getting back to their homes and families as quickly as possible.

Letters

(The following letters have been furnished to the American Red Cross by relatives. All prisoner of war mail is censored by the Detaining Power.)

Bucharest, Rumania
August 13, 1943

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, what do you all think about all this? I hope you didn't worry about me. We all are okay, though it was a little rough for awhile. At present I am spending a "little" free time in the hospital. Don't worry about me because I am fine, well, and dandy. Keep Ole Bob on the ball, and don't let him get any wild ideas. Hope everyone around home are well and happy. I'll be doggone if I'm not running out of things to say already. Anything you are allowed to send me I'll no doubt need. You can get full details from A. R. C. on everything. Say hello to everyone for me, and I'll write you all whenever I can. That's all for now. Be seeing you all—soon?

(Note: A recent cable from Geneva advises that most of the American airmen captured in the Ploesti raid are at Camp Lagarul Prisonieri, No. 2, Sublagarul Timis, Brasov, Rumania.)

Stalag Luft III
August 19, 1943

Dear Folks:

I hope that you folks are doing as well as I am. Santa Claus has visited me here and left three parcels. Friday I received the January 25 parcel and, as usual, wonder at the ability of my parents to know exactly what the young one needs. Nothing could have taken the place of a single article and nothing more could have been added for my comfort—it was a wonderful parcel. The March and May parcels were likewise complete and I can now ask for nothing more than some day to show my gratitude. If I should never receive another parcel, I will be well taken care of and the ones to come will be more than enough. I received the parcels in good shape and the shipping tags checked with the contained endearments.

I received a letter from you today and one from Wally. I have received 40 letters since June 5 and most of them from you and Dot, dated up to April 9. The people at home are really swell to write and when I get a letter from you folks, I can for-

get my surroundings for a while. I manage to play a game of softball every day and we stir up quite a competition here in camp. There is nothing like keeping as fit as possible. (Note: A cartoon sent by Lieut. Leonard E. Hamaker, the writer of the above letter, to his family in California appears elsewhere in this issue.)

Stalag VII A
July 1943

Dear Mother:

Well here are a couple more lines to let you know that I am still all right and in good health. I have been in Germany now for about five days. They treat us very good here. You are allowed to send packages. Inquire at the Red Cross and they

Communications to Prisoners

Cable service through Switzerland to American prisoners of war and civilian internees in enemy countries is limited under present conditions to emergency cases, such as the birth of a child in the prisoner's family. It has been found impracticable to send holiday greeting cables, and Red Cross chapters throughout the country have been so informed.

Those who communicate with prisoners in Europe should soon begin to notice a great improvement in postal communications. All the Philadelphia-Marseille International Red Cross ships now carry regular prisoner of war mail, with sailings out of Philadelphia as often as three times a month.

Steps have also been taken by the Post Office to expedite the airmail service from this country to prisoners held in Europe. This service, in fact, now may be almost as rapid as cable service, when one considers that cables have to be relayed through several successive points and several censorships. Letter mail or airmail letters to prisoners in Europe pass through a single American (or Allied) censorship and one corresponding censorship in Germany.

All the mail aboard the Gripsholm which was transferred to the Teia Maru at Mormaggio in mid-October should reach the addresses at most points in the Far East before Christmas.

will show you on a map just where I am and also just what you can send. How is everything at home? We get the regular Red Cross parcels once a week. There is really a nice variety in them, including sugar, coffee, meat, crackers, butter, and almost everything.

Zentsuji War Prison Camp
January 26, 1943

Dear Folks:

I will take advantage of the opportunity to write to you I had for nearly a year. I wrote you a letter last February while in Baran, but doubt that it ever got through. I hope that everyone is well and that everything is going smoothly at home. I am anxious to know what Vincent is doing. I hope he got a better deal than I got. I sure wish I could be home to see the action and the changes the war has caused also to lap up some of the old home cooking. I hope the war has caused you any hardship. I am glad to say that I am unscratched so well. My experiences during the war were not too horrible and I was not exposed to much danger, being in the rear areas most of the time doing various kinds of engineering work. I was one of a large group of war prisoners moved to Japan in the P. I. last November. We are quartered in large two-story barracks, sleep on mattresses with piles of blankets and have plenty of room. There are English, Australian and New Zealand war prisoners quartered here, also some American sailors and marines from Guam and Wake. These fellows have treated us swell since we arrived here. They are all in good spirits, healthy, optimistic, and our morale has risen considerably since our association with them. We have received articles, sewing kits, tobacco and some food from the American and Canadian Red Cross. The Japanese army gave us overcoats and additional clothing to supplement our light tropical clothing. It gets quite cold here during the winter, the temperature going below freezing, so hope to hear from you soon.

Camp 21, Itabashi
June 28, 1943

Dear Folks,

We're having a real hot day, but it's usually cool inside the building. We get a picture show here once in awhile now. They are old and (Continued on page 12)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q. You stated in the July issue that the PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN could not be sent by relatives to American prisoners. Could I tell my son about it in a letter? He is a prisoner in Germany.

A. There would be no objection to writing your son about the BULLETIN.

Q. In June I received word my son was missing and later that he had been reported a prisoner in Germany. We started writing him immediately, but have just had a letter from him dated August 29 saying he has had no mail. What has happened to all the letters we have sent him?

A. Three months is not an unusually long delay for letters going from this country to prison camps. Your son has very likely had part of his mail by now, though if he has been moved from one camp to another, so that it had to be forwarded, it might take still longer. It should be remembered that mail moving to the camps is subject to all the difficulties of wartime interruptions and transportation delays, and sometimes even to the destruction of trains through bombing. Prisoner of war mail is also censored in at least two, possibly three, countries.

Q. I write my son once every three weeks, addressing him with his rank, name, U. S. A. Air Corps and serial number, "interned by Japan, formerly of Philippine Islands, c/o Japanese Red Cross, Tokyo, Japan, via New York, N. Y." Do you know whether he receives the mail often? If so, I would write oftener. Do you know how often the mail leaves U. S.? Can you inform me as to the camp my son is in?

A. We are sorry we cannot give you a definite camp address for your son. Many men captured in the Philippines were reported by the Japanese as prisoners of war but without any camp address being given. Regarding the mail situation, we cannot determine whether your son is receiving mail from you. But, although the mail is doubtless very slow, if it is typewritten and properly

addressed, it should eventually reach him. We have heard of no restriction on the number of letters a prisoner may receive, and we would therefore encourage you to write regularly. We would refer you particularly to the information on this matter which was published on the last page of our October issue. That report, incidentally, said that letters to prisoners of war held by Japan "must not be more than 25 words in length." It should have read "must be less than 25 words in length."

The Japanese government has announced that prisoners are allowed to write their families and friends, although no general ruling on the number of letters and postal cards they are permitted to send has yet been officially reported. Of course, you realize that, even under the most favorable circumstances, mail will take several months at least to reach the United States from prison camps in the Philippines.

Q. Can my son in a German prison camp execute and send a power of attorney?

A. The Geneva Convention in 1929 Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War states in Article 41: "Belligerents shall assure all facilities for the transmission of instruments, papers or documents intended for prisoners of war, or signed by them, particularly of powers of attorney and wills. They shall take the necessary measures to assure, in case of necessity, the authentication of signatures made by prisoners." One power of attorney, received in this country from a prisoner of war in Germany, recently came to the notice of the American Red Cross.

Q. What are prisoners of war supposed to be paid for work? There seems much confusion in newspaper reports on this subject.

A. Article 34 of the Geneva Convention, referring to the pay of prisoners of war, states that belligerents shall agree on rates to be paid for work other than that connected with the administration and maintenance of the

camps, and on the manner of payment. Until such agreements are reached, the following rules are to govern payment:

(a) Work done for the State shall be paid for in accordance with the rates in force for soldiers of the national army doing the same work, or, if none exist, according to a rate in harmony with the work performed.

(b) When the work is done for the account of other public administrations, or for private persons, conditions shall be regulated by agreement with the military authority.

Q. May I send a Bible or a book made up of articles from the Reader's Digest to a prisoner of war in Europe?

A. A new Bible may be ordered sent from a book store or a publisher, with or without other books, to make up a 5-lb. package, if the prisoner has not been sent a book package within 30 days. (That could not send a book made up of clippings, since nothing but new books direct from the bookseller may be sent.)

Q. I believe my son should have been awarded a medal for his part in the action before he was taken prisoner in Germany. Would such an award be made to me, or sent to him?

A. Since your son was in the army, presumably, any award, if announced after he became a prisoner of war, would be sent to you (if you are his officially listed next of kin). If such an award were announced before capture, it would be assumed that the man had himself received it. The practice in the navy is somewhat different: All distinguished service honors are frozen during internment, and presumably awarded after repatriation.

Q. Is it possible to send books to a prisoner of war of the Japanese government in the Philippines?

A. No. Packages for the Far East from individuals are not being accepted at the present time. All the shipping space that can be arranged for is being used for sending the vital necessities needed by prisoners in the Far East, but these collective shipments include books and recreational equipment sent by the Y. M. C. A.

Mail and Relief Supplies for German Camps

Mail and relief supplies for prisoners of war in Europe now go almost entirely from Philadelphia to Marseille in Swiss or Portuguese ships protected by safe-conduct guarantees from the belligerents concerned. From Marseille the goods are moved free of charge on French railways to Switzerland. When shipped direct to Marseille the goods usually reach Switzerland within 30 to 35 days after leaving Philadelphia.

Promptly after the ship docks at Marseille and the freight cars are drawn up alongside, the mail is unloaded. One steamer recently carried some 10,000 sacks of letter mail and next-of-kin packages, or enough mail for an entire train. The mail train, sealed and guarded by the French authorities, leaves the same night for Basel, Switzerland, and from there goes direct to the main German censorship and distribution center for prisoner of war mail at Stuttgart.



Prisoners' hope for 1944 at Offag IX A/Z—to leave for home by plane.

The unloading of food packages, clothing, medicines, etc., follows at Marseille as rapidly as stevedores can be hired, the shipments checked, and freight cars obtained. As in the case of mail, the supplies are loaded directly into freight cars—under the supervision of the French dock police, the German occupying authorities, and neutral representatives of the International Red Cross Committee. By unloading direct from ship to train, relief supplies are never left on the docks at Marseille. The cars are then sealed and leave for Switzerland as soon as complete trains are made up. Armed French guards travel on these trains as a precaution against attempts at pilferage during the 24-hour journey from Marseille to the Franco-Swiss border, where they are taken charge of by the International Red Cross.

Prisoner of war relief supplies, the I.R.C.C. representatives report, are very rarely pilfered or tampered with during operations at Marseille and in transit through France. The French authorities cooperate in every way possible in getting these supplies promptly and safely into the hands of the Swiss, and the controls are so strict that pilfering is practically impossible. Before leaving the docks after a day's work is done, every stevedore and checker is rigorously searched by the police. Under French martial law which prevails at Marseille the death penalty or a sentence of many years at forced labor awaits anyone caught attempting to steal relief supplies. The Marseille newspapers recently reported that a dock worker was sentenced to six years' forced labor for pilfering one pound of food.

The Red Cross News

In September, the American Red Cross began a news service for American prisoners of war and civilian internees held in European and Eastern camps. It is expected that this news letter, size 8½x11 inches of 8 pages at first but since increased to 12, printed on very cheap paper, will be distributed regularly to the camps in Europe through the International Red Cross Committee at Geneva. It is called *The Red Cross News* and the aim is to publish once a month.

The purpose and contents of the news letter were explained in the following message from Norman Davis, Chairman of the American Red Cross, which was published as page one of the first issue:

This is the first issue of a bulletin of news from home which the American Red Cross hopes to send to United States prisoners of war with such regularity as is consistent with available transportation facilities.

The contents of this bulletin must naturally be limited in character, and deal with subjects which are connected with the war. During the course of time, we hope to present information on many subjects which will be of special interest to you. News of American sports will be included each issue. Other facets of the life at home will be touched upon. In each issue we will write of something that has happened in your home state.

In sending this publication to men and women in distant places we send greetings from the members of the American Red Cross. You are always in our thoughts, as we are in those of your families and friends. Everything that can be done for your benefit and welfare in the Convention will be carried out by the American Red Cross. A bulletin of news about your welfare, containing news of life in camps, also published by the American Red Cross and mailed monthly to the families of all United States prisoners. I send good wishes to each of you.

One thousand copies of the first issue were prepared in time to go on the *Gripholm*, for camps in the Far East. Subsequent issues of the news letter are being sent for distribution in the Far East as shipping opportunities are available.

Extracts from Letters

Larry Allen, naval correspondent of the Associated Press, who was captured at Tobruk in September 1942, wrote on July 14, 1943, from Camp No. 21, Italy: "Your letters have been coming in a flood and I have just received those mailed as late as May 31. I have not received any of the packages yet, but things move slowly in wartime. These are busy days for me just as hard as if I were free. I'm translating songs into Italian."

An American flyer reported as missing near Hamburg on July 26, was officially listed as a prisoner of war on August 8. During the week ending October 9 his family at Otis, Kansas, received two letters from him from Stalag Luft III—one dated August 1, and the second September 9.

From a Brooklyn, New York, prisoner of war at the Mukden (Manchuria) Camp: "Came through the war in good shape. Arrived here this winter. Am well treated, clothed and fed here. Do not worry about me as the worst is over, and am in fair health now. Am mess officer of camp here. Send me telegrams, letters, photographs and packages. Check with Red Cross regarding regulations. Looking forward to seeing you all soon."

(Note: It appears that cheerful letters from prisoners in the Far East reflect at least as much the manliness of the writers and solicitude for their families as the conditions under which they live.)

A reader in Abilene, Texas, writes that an American prisoner in Camp No. 2 in the Philippines has acknowledged a picture of his daughter, three letters, and a telegram from his family. He added that his health was excellent.

The following card was received on September 20, 1943, at Orleans, Indiana, from an American at the Mukden (Manchuria) Prisoner of War Camp: "I am a prisoner of war since April, 1942. I am well and hope to be home soon. We have our own doctors and everything is going along nicely. Guess I had better close, so I'll say goodbye and send my love to all."

C. S. Burgess, R. S. M., spokesman

at Italian Camp No. 66, P. M. 3400, wrote on June 11, 1943: "On behalf of the American prisoners in this camp, I thank you very much indeed for the shipment of food parcels which are greatly appreciated."

Writing to his wife in England, a prisoner in Camp No. 65, Italy said: "You will find my sense of values has changed considerably when I come home. In fact, I think I will be much more tolerant and not quite so critical."

On April 1, 1943, an American officer at Zentsuji, Japan, wrote to his wife, who is with the Red Cross in Africa: "Three more months have rolled by since my last letter, and each one past is a cause of genuine rejoicing for it brings me that much closer to you. During this time I received one letter from you, one from mother, and one from Beryl. Many thanks. That touch of home and friends means so much to us here.

We really need nothing but your good, perhaps foolish, faith in us. Tommy and I are as healthy as ever—probably better—for we are doing a little work growing vegetables for the camp. The rest of the time seems to pass surprisingly fast for we keep busy with our classes, but time can't pass rapidly enough while you are so far away.

A prisoner of war in Stalag XX B wrote to his wife that he never realized before he had to do his own laundry what "a heart-breaking and back-breaking job being a washerwoman is."

Sergeant Gray, secretary of the New Zealand Society at Stalag 383,

Germany, wrote on June 6, 1943, to New Zealand House in London: "I feel that you would be interested in learning of a very touching example of comradeship in this camp. One of our men was recently very ill, and we were warned that he would probably not recover. While his illness was at its height, we were informed that a certain natural food tonic, two tins of which are contained in American food parcels, was of the greatest benefit to persons in his condition. With the permission of the Camp Spokesman, I discovered that eight of these parcels had arrived in this camp within the previous week. Sergt. Major G. T. Secombe and I approached all the men concerned, and after being acquainted with the position, they immediately gave the tins and refused to accept any payment whatever. Thanks to their generosity, the sick man has survived the most dangerous part of his illness and is well on the way to recovery."



Another cartoon from Lt. Leonard Eugene Hamaker, Stalag Luft III, Germany.

Change of Address

All next of kin officially listed for prisoners of war and civilian internees have the PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN addressed to them in the Office of the Provost Marshal General. The same address stencils are used for the mailing of information and parcel labels from that office. Therefore, if next of kin inform the Provost Marshal General, War Department, Washington, D. C., of a change of address, the BULLETIN as well as official notices should reach them promptly. In advising of a change of address, next of kin should use the following form:

"I am officially listed as next of kin of Pfc. John Smith, prisoner of war No. 600 (or service serial number) held at Camp _____, Germany, or Camp _____, Japan. I have moved from _____ to _____ and wish all mail sent to me there."

If it is more convenient for next of kin, notice of change of address can be sent to the local Red Cross chapter.

Many names in addition to next of kin are on a separate Red Cross mailing list for the PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN. For those who are not next of kin, therefore, the following form should be used in advising the Red Cross (through the local chapter or by letter addressed to PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN, National Headquarters, American Red Cross, Washington 13, D. C.) of a change of address:

"I receive the PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN although I am not officially listed as next of kin of a prisoner of war. I have moved from _____ to _____ and wish the BULLETIN sent to me there."

LETTERS

(Continued from page 8.)

sound track is in Italian. We get the same pictures as Chiete, a little town near by. We're starting a new soft-ball league next week. We have to make our own balls out of scraps but some very good ones are turned out. The game is our favorite pastime. We have some new fellows coming in this week. Maybe I'll know some of them. I'm still looking for my first letter. We're still getting news about strikes at home. I hope Roosevelt sticks to his promise to draft them if they refuse to return to work.

Oflag 64

August 5, 1943

Dear Mayme and Sam:

Well, I'm still getting along fairly well. Have received only two letters so far. It's hard to find something to write when you're cooped up like this. I'm studying a bit of Spanish and shorthand just to help pass the days and keep from being hungry all the time.

We haven't received any parcels or communication from the International Red Cross for two months, or ever since we have been at Oflag 64. Can you report that to the American Red Cross?

Haven't had so many dry days since leaving the desert. Had all my hair clipped off again. My printing almost worse than my writing!

After this taste of being cooped up, I'm going to be the most obedient abiding citizen you ever saw.

(Note: Several letters from prisoners at Oflag 64, complaining about the nonarrival of relief supplies, have reached us. For a while this seemed to be the most difficult spot in the whole European picture, but there were regrettably long delays in reaching American prisoners at Oflag 64. There appears to be no doubt that these delays, in part, were caused by bombing operations while supplies were in transit across Germany, but reports and cables received from Geneva during October show that 800 standard food packages, 800 parcels, and some miscellaneous supplies were delivered to the American officer at Oflag 64, August 5. Also during August, 100 standard food packages were shipped from Geneva to Oflag 64, while in July a large shipment of clothing, toilet, and comfort articles went forward from Geneva and should have been distributed in the camp during August.)

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Published by the American National Red Cross for the Relatives of American Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees

NO. 1

WASHINGTON, D. C.

JANUARY 1944

American Airmen in Rumania

Most of the American airmen, numbering in all about 110 officers and noncommissioned officers, who survived the raid on the Ploesti oil refineries last August and became prisoners of war in Rumania, are in a "permanent" camp at Sinaia, near Brasov. Brasov is an old frontier town on the northern side of the Carpathian Mountains and before the 1919 peace settlement was the last station in Hungary on the railroad to the old kingdom of Rumania.

Sixty-nine airmen, mostly suffering from burns, were wounded before the raid, but almost all of them have recovered sufficiently to join their un wounded comrades near Brasov. They are still convalescing in a hospital at Sinaia—Rumania's foremost health resort, and the summer residence of the royal family, on the southern slopes of the Carpathians. This hospital, now called the "Officers' Convalescent Home," belongs to the Rumanian Red Cross and is a converted hotel occupied at present only by these American prisoners, the medical personnel, and Red Cross attendants.

Within a few days of the raid a delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross obtained permission to visit the wounded airmen in hospitals at Filipesti, Ploesti, and Sinaia. The one man at Filipesti was promptly moved to Sinaia, and at the time of the delegate's report only one wounded man remained in the military hospital at Ploesti. Although progressing satisfactorily, he could not be moved.

The delegate spent a full day at the Sinaia hospital and saw the following meals served to the wounded prisoners, of whom all except 12

took their meals in the main dining room:

Breakfast:

Two pieces of bread, marmalade, tea.

Dinner:

White cheese, tomatoes, soup, meat, fritters, fruit.

Supper:

Macaroni and cheese, cabbage stuffed with meat, stewed fruit.

At noon each prisoner received half a bottle of beer and on Sundays half a bottle of wine.

All the wounded prisoners expressed satisfaction with the treatment they were receiving from the doctors, the Rumanian officials, and the Red Cross personnel. The sur-

geons looking after the patients, the report stated, were chosen from among the best in Rumania; the accommodations provided for the men were described as "luxurious." Not a single complaint was made, but desires were expressed for relief supplies; a shipment of food parcels, clothing, toilet articles, tobacco, and invalid parcels was sent promptly from Geneva and reached Rumania before the end of November. A second shipment left Geneva during November. The unwounded prisoners in the camp at Timis will get a share of these relief supplies. The men there will need additional clothing, because winters in the Carpathians are usually severe. Arrangements have also been made so that

(Continued on page 7)



Convalescing American flyers, with International Red Cross delegate and Rumanian Red Cross nurses, in the hospital grounds at Sinaia.