

The Oflag 64 Item

The first year
is the hardest:
— Confucius

The war can't go
on forever:
— Col. Oakes

"One ITEM is Worth 10,000 Pictures"

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Item's First Year Sees Great Expansion in Oflag's Strength, Sports, Entertainment, Kultur and Thirst

OFLAG NEWS ● IN BRIEF ●

● Ed Rinehart had a wash day one Sunday last month. Among other things, he washed an O. D. shirt. After several hours of labor he returned tired but happy in the knowledge that his horrible task was completed.

Then Roommate Dick Davis stepped up and gleefully claimed the shirt. Ed found his on his bed where he'd left it.

● Education note: The education officer was on the library blacklist this month for "Gunman's Gold" by Max Brand.

● Harvey "Pavlova" Davis, ballet star of "You Can't Take it With You," has solved the problem of the "quickie" shower. While doing his laundry he had a bright idea. He heated a big cauldron of water and took a good old tubber in the large rinsing tub, the most satisfying bath, he says, that he's had in a year.

● Jim "Casey" Koch recognized what he thought was a familiar face. Thinking it was that of an old friend who had just arrived, "Casey" rushed up, grabbed him by the arm said, "Say, don't I know you?" The kriegy turned, looked rather surprised and said, "Yes sir. I've been here nine months. I'm an orderly."

● Jim Cockrell just received a pair of socks in a recent parcel. It seems that his wife had started knitting them when he was in Ireland two years ago.

● Dick Van Syckle can be identified now by the black cloud over his brow. In 14 months as a kriegie he has received two food parcels. That's not bad, but — the first had had a 5 lb rum and brandy-soaked fruit cake removed by the U. S. Censor and the second weighed a mere 4 lbs!

● Frenchman Louis Vallette had just kicked his fourth goal in a recent soccer game. Frenchman Saint Saveur was heard shouting, "Good boy, Franchy! Gat ten more!" Then Frenchman Yves Poussier, sitting nearby, shushed him and said, "No, no, ten is too many, only two!"

This is the house that the kriegies lived in.

This is the gate that led to the house that the kriegies lived in.

This is the lock that they put on the gate that led to the house that the kriegies lived in.

This is the kriegie who sighed and sighed When he saw the lock that they put on the gate that led to the house that the kriegies lived in.

These are the kriegies who tried and tried To help the kriegie who sighed and sighed When he saw the lock that they put on the gate that led to the house that the kriegies lived in.

These are the things of reason and rhyme Designed for pleasure and passing time By all the kriegies who tried and tried etc.

Today is the birthday first and last Of the monthly paper (you might remember) We started to publish last November To tell of the things of reason and rhyme Designed for pleasure and passing time By all the kriegies who tried and tried To help the kriegie who sighed and sighed When he saw the lock that they put on the gate that led to the house that the kriegies lived in.

Happy Birthday, Item!

● Latest fashion in military dress was recently introduced by Capt. Rush. It is that brilliant-hued scarf of blue, green, orange and vermillion which has brightened the Appel area lately.

World's Best P. o. W. Paper Marks 1st Anniversary

Today, after a year of the damndest publication problems since Gutenberg, the OFLAG ITEM celebrates its first anniversary as the only American newspaper printed in Germany, the biggest circulator of cheesecake in Europe and the best P.o.W. paper in the world.

Although peace insurance agents refuse to underwrite its future, the ITEM has been a war industry of the first water, increasing its circulation from 250 ex-fighting subscribers last November to 1000 American subscribers this month.

Long has the ITEM labored to bring the latest dope on The War That is the Most Endless of All Wars to its avid readers.

The latest tidings from the outside world brought to the camp by kriegie mail, German publications or by word-of-mouth from touring American officers briefly resting with us, have been rushed into print — at 30-day intervals.

Within the ivy-covered barbed wire of Oflag 64, no activity has escaped the gimlet eyes of the ITEM's devitaminized but tireless reporters. Expansion of our sports activities from the pioneer days of a homemade baseball bat and handsewn ball to the present wide-flung inter-barracks contests in basketball, football, soccer and ping-pong, has been recorded for the benefit of All-American judges.

Nor has Kultur been neglected. The ITEM has celebrated the feats of our stage enthusiasts who have developed the local drama from skits presented on a stage improvised from tables and lockers to our present three-act Broadway shows put on in the Little Theater, with all the professional touches of settings, lighting and costumes.

No less publicized have been the activities of the Orchestra, now twenty men strong, and the thirty-voice chorus of the Glee Club, which has put on shows of its own including minstrels and oratorios.

No activity has gone unsmelled by the inquiring beagles of the Oflag news staff. It has faithfully recorded every squirm and turn of camp life from such passing fancies as collecting empty cigarette

The Oflag 64 Item

Published monthly by and for American officers temporarily detained in Offizierslager 64, Altburgund (Schubin), Germany.

Editor: 2nd Lt. Frank Diggs

Associate Editors: 1st Lt. Larry Phelan,
1st Lt. Willard Duckworth,

News: 1st. Lt. David Englander
2nd Lt. Frank Hancock,
2nd Lt. Howard Holder
2nd Lt. Teddy Roggen

Sports: 2nd Lt. Robert Cheatham

Art: 1st Lt. James Bickers, 2nd Lt.
Alexander Ross

NOVEMBER 1, 1944

Altburgund Notes

Interest has been aroused in local circles by reports of a new colony of foreign monks that has taken root in a settlement near Altburgund.

The monks, identified as Americans by their well-fed appearance and unfailingly optimistic outlook, first arrived in June, 1943.

Within the settlement, the faithful live a life notable for its extreme frugality and abstemiousness. The temptations of the flesh are sternly discouraged. The men turn their faces away from female passersby; some hurry for the protection of the barracks; others claw the air.

Their diet is simple and light. The local monastics are extremely temperate in their drink. Unlike other monasteries that have grown wealthy and famous because of their alcoholic beverages, the Schubanites adhere strictly to a light beer, surprisingly mild.

For recreation the men till their gardens, weave on home-made looms or sit quietly in the sun contemplating their navels — or reverently scratching them.

The only excitement in the lives of the monks takes place during their outdoor services which are held on a large cleared field when the weather is good. There several select monks attired in distinctively colored shirts perform certain peculiar rites with a leatherecovered spheroid, evidently the object of their devotions.

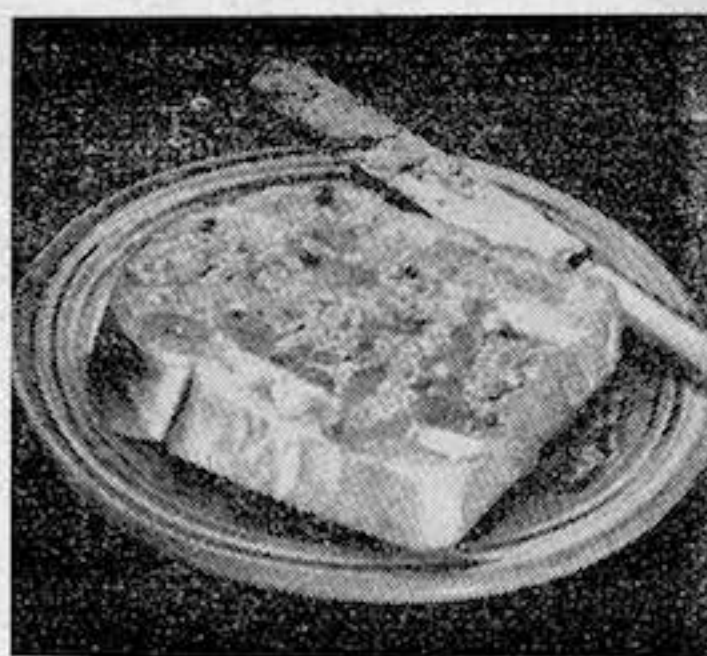
These rites are notable for repeated instances of violent bodily contact among the disciples. It is believed that these bruising clashes serve as a mortification of the flesh for the monks.

Impressive are the fanatical cries — often chanted rhythmically — with which the believers who attend the ceremonies urge on the participants in the rites.

It is not unlikely that when peace has descended on the earth, the great body of monks will take their strange cult to America. Rumor has it, however, that some of the older monks, enamored of their surroundings and steeped in the well-ordered discipline of their lives, will elect to stay in Altburgund and peacefully carry on their meditations.

— David Englander

Remember?



Kriegy Sketches

MAJOR JOHN DOBSON

Enthusiastic sports operator and Sports Director for Oflag 64 is lanky, blonde Major John Dobson of Barracks 7B, whose old man was coach at the University of Maryland.

Hailing from Richmond, Va., he entered the University of Richmond in 1931 where he took his first Bachelor of Science degree.

The United States Military Academy beckoned shortly after, and the indomitable Major was appointed in 1934. Here he won his second BS.

During that time he presented a triple threat in the field of sports, playing a fast end on the Academy football team, holding down first base for the Black-Gold-and-Gray, and hurling the javelin when the track season rolled around.

Since his graduation in 1939 he has seen varied tours of duty with the cavalry, T.D.'s and finally the Rangers, where his career met with an abrupt curtailment. But he is confident it will be resumed in the near future.



Anniversary...

(Continued from page one)

packs to the bitter but stalemated war between the Grow Old Gracefully Club and the Home By Xmas Club which has divided Oflag 64 into two unarmed camps.

In spite of its mounting circulation the ITEM has scorned to make use of it for advertising purposes and is devoting itself exclusively to maintaining the high journalistic standards expected of the best — and only — American newspaper published in Germany. Noblesse oblige.

18 Medical Officers Staff Well-equipped Gefangener Hospital

"On call for any emergency" isn't an ersatz idiom but a reality for kriegies requiring treatment in the Oflag Infirmary.

With a staff of twelve medical, two dental and three administrative officers, and one warrant officer, under the direction of Capt. Floyd Burgeson, the hospital is equipped to take care of any minor medical or surgical case and has beds for twenty patients.

For more serious ailments provision is made for the transfer of the patients to the Altburgund hospital, where X-ray treatment and expert care are provided. These cases must, however, be first presented to the German medical officer for approval.

Capt. Burgeson points out that most of his medical supplies, including dressing, instruments, medications and pajamas for bed patients, comes from the American and British Red Cross.

The hospital operates a kitchen of its own, and the diet of patients is closely supervised, with proper foods provided as nearly as possible under present conditions. With regard to regular chow the Senior Medico states that for healthy men in camp the most beneficial foods available in the parcels are powdered milk, cheese, biscuits, margarine and meat, when parcels are available.

Anticipating an increase in business during the touch football season, and desiring to preserve the physical condition of gefangeners as well as may be, Capt. Burgeson prescribes to all the observance of the general rules of hygiene, plus the elimination of mental anxiety in regard to health.

It sounds easy — but just try it.

Canteen Has Popular Subs for Real McCoy

"The canteen's biggest demand is for what it hasn't got —" says Capt. Frank Smith, who co-manages the Oflag canteen (?) with Lt. Col. Louis Gershenow.

When Nescafe and soluble were plentiful, the name "Ersatz coffee" was only a reminder of something vaguely distasteful. But when the Number 9's reappeared, Oflagites threatened to break down the doors of the canteen — all because some joker said "Ersatz" tasted better than "Hasty Maid."

"Scouring Pulver" also worked its mob psychology. When a few bought it just before inspection day the whole camp rushed down to get its supply... just as if they'd never heard of Old Dutch Cleanser.

Shoe-grease to canteen customers is just another way of saying "lamp-lighter."

Face-cream, translated, means shoe grease.

Little can be put into a canteen billfold — but oh what a picture frame it makes.

And athlete's foot just ups and dies under the stringency of mouth wash pulver.

Since January, an average of 1650 bottles of beer per month have passed over the counter... for sentimental reasons only.

BARBED WIRE HOBBIES

Kriegies do the damndest things!

In a recent ITEM survey of hobbies, Oflag inmates were discovered to be doing everything from making badges to learning the latest dance steps, in an all-out effort to make time fly. For instance:

Red Bancker says you can't ever tell, so he's studying Russian diligently.

Hugh Gilmore Hogan, the smiling paratrooper, is an expert at designing the latest type homes.

Harry Frazee receives lots of pictures, so his pet hobby is making frames.

Sports Operator Ed Spicher's greatest enjoyment is saving German cartoons and confiscating all German pictures of American troops and tanks.

If you smell a delicious aroma of stew or chocolate pie, the man behind it is big John Truett.

Bill Swanson, of Dixieland Swing, spends plenty of uhrrs working out intricate Arthur Murray dance steps.

Harold Craft wants something to laugh about so he clips all Deutsch political cartoons.

Lt. Col. Max Gooler guarantees smokeless heaters that are flawless.

Horticulturist John Creech is occupying himself by collecting data on the classification of flowers.

Amon Carter has a sample of every cigarette cover that has ever hit the Oflag.

All-round Lou Otterbein makes badges that would put some of the commercial firms to shame.

Ed Kitchens uses Ranger tactics to embroider some classy organizational insignia.

John Patterson just "asks questions."

Lt. Col. Charles Jones notifies the folks at home that he has mastered the German language by sending out postal cards in German, and printing them in old German script.

Sgt. John O'Donnell has been working over a year designing and embroidering division insignia of Uncle Sam's troops.

Richard Ortiz, barber orderly, makes watch bands, leather cigarette cases, insignia, and carves and whittles wooden chains. Ortiz also goes a step further and whips out leather gloves and jackets, as well as hand-made overseas caps.

It Might Have Been

Lt. James Jordan hates private parcels!

For five months he's been sweating out just a lone parcel.

After his parcel toured Germany with stop-overs at Stalag 344, Oflag 7-F, Oflag 69 and Oflag 64 his heart gladdened, because he now had something tangible.

A hasty inspection revealed two pencils, one handkerchief and tissue paper.



SPORTS



Weather, Chow Shortage Combine To Foul Up Oflag Sports Program

Prison Daze...



By DeMartino

"Tank battle, hell — touch football!"

Curiosity Killed the Crease

Lt. Henry Perry had his curiosity aroused recently because he had never seen the word "Bavaria" on the bottom of the cups issued by the Germans.

While eating in the mess hall one day he thought of no better time for investigating than the present, so Henry turned his own cup over.

Drastic results took place as Lt. Perry emerged from the mess hall with one trouser — G. I. — all wet.

Nature Calls, Teel's Caught

Lt. Patrick Teel says it's double tough to escape from Oflag 64.

Nature's call brought Pat to the outside latrine, and the ex pugilist had a hell of a time breaking out — the German guard had locked him in by mistake.

Kriegieitis Epidemic Spread

It happens to the best of them!

An unnamed kriegy wandered aimlessly about seeking a lighted cigarette. Finally he caught sight of Capt. Joe Emerson who happened to have an unlit cigarette in his mouth.

The Lieutenant nonchalantly placed his cigarette against Emerson's — a few hurried puffs and he went off after thanking the Captain for the light — both cigarettes had never been lit.

Kriegies Return To Sack for Winter

Rugged Arctic weather and the local food shortage combined last week to knock the camp sports program for a loop and retire kriegies to the sack.

Major Jack Dobson, recreation officer, announced the suspension of organized soccer, football and basketball and announced plans for ping-pong, bridge and chess tournaments beginning this month. A handball tournament and boxing classes will be held when the renovation of Barracks I is completed.

Soccer, new to the Oflag and most Americans, attracted an enthusiastic following. Capt. Siegler's Passons and Bill Gedde's Celtics finished the season in first place, losing only one tilt each. The league, although sparked by the Frogs and former American players, was composed mainly of newcomers to the game.

With a perfect record of six wins and no losses, Rocco Pravidica led his quintet to victory in the season's final basketball tournament.

Eddie Berlinsky took his revenge on Bill Luttrell when he led his Midgets to a 12-6 victory over Luttrell's Cubs, after losing the all star football game to his adversary by a score of 52-25.

Bob Bingham and ex-pro Bill Geddes captained picked teams to a 4-4 tie in the camp's first all-star soccer exhibition.

Tripp Makes First "One" on Ersatz Course

The first hole-in-one to be scored on the local ersatz golf course (and the second in his golfing career) was made by Francis "Cactus" Tripp of 3-A, who is also co-holder with Fred Johnson of the lowest score for amateurs — 59.

His other (or pre-kriegie) hole-in-one was made on the Esso course on Aruba Island, Dutch West Indies.

"Full Swing", Swingland Top November Entertainment

First All-Original Musical Leads off Nov. Show Schedule

"Full Swing," announced in last month's ITEM for the end of October, will have its opening tomorrow evening, November 2. This first all-original show will have the most elaborate setting yet to be seen here—three new sets designed by Justin Ware and constructed by Lou Otterbein. The show will have a six day run, closing on November 7.

The rest of the entertainment program this month includes:

A three-day Swingland program by Bob Rankin and his orchestra starting November 9; and —

Tom Holt's second baritone recital on November 14 and 15.

From November 22 through 27, there will be two one-act plays: "Pot Luck," a comedy to be directed by Carlos Burrows, and "In The Zone," a drama by Eugene O'Neill, under the direction of Howard Holder.

Beware of G. I. Nurses, Says Cobb



G. I. nurses just can't be trusted, according to Lt. George Cobb, of 8-A, who knows.

It seems that while George was gallivanting around Italy, he ran into the above covey of cuties and had this picture taken.

Which was fine, except that one of the nurses knows his sister.

So, naturally, his sister got the picture. But so did Mrs. Cobb.

George hasn't heard from Mrs. C. since.

Sixty Students, Ten Profs Pursue Higher Learning Inside Wire

Beset by a lack of classroom space and scarcity of working materials, ten instructors under the direction of Capt. Philip Foster, with approximately sixty students, are now carrying on the pursuit of higher learning within the local barbed wire.

Most thriving classes on the campus are in the Law group, with twelve members meeting five times weekly for two hours each day, and Beginning German with ten students.

The Law class is taught jointly by four lawyer captains, Clarence Ferguson, formerly a practicing attorney — at — law of Grosbeck, Texas, and Garvin Fitton, Leonard Warren and Lumund Wilcox, of the University of Arkansas, Yale and the University of Iowa, respectively.

Capt. Wilcox has, in addition, a class in Business Law, with a half dozen regular attendants. The courses are designed, according to Capt. Ferguson, to produce lawyers.

For Kriegies who want the Deutsch to sprechen, Lt. Col. Charles Jones, Jr., who has learned German since his incarceration, provides the instruction three times weekly.

Other language studies include Italian, taught by Lt. Anthony Cipriani, Advanced German by Lt. Carl Hansen, and English, also taught by Lt. Hansen. The latter course deals primarily with vocabulary and usage, according to the instructor. Besides the above, Lt. Col. Robert Cheal is doing his best to further international relations by teaching four of our French-speaking allies to talk American.

Instruction in Economics, dealing with various economic problems, is delivered to a class of five by Capt. Foster, who holds a degree of Master of Arts from Penn State. For shorthand students, Lt. Eugene Ball teaches the Gregg system.

Coming into direct conflict with the heavy summer sports program, a number of courses have been discontinued but may be resumed in the early future. These include Primary and Advanced French, Spanish, Geology and Mathematics. Kriegies who wish to enroll in any class may do so by seeing the educational director, Capt. Philip Foster.

Post-War Pyrotechnics Plans Previewed

By: Ken Goddard

So the blond babe slides her stool closer to the bar, crossing her gams with a slither of silk. It'll help decrease the posterior hang-over, or over-hang, if you look at those things.

All of a sudd'n in comes this jerk and bangs this tin gadget on the bar. Gimme a jigger of rum, sum butter, an a gless uv water, he says.

He's rollin up the N. Y. Times into little balls an all th' time yellin' somethin' like snail or snell then he pops these little balls into this tin gadget and keeps sayin' oboy oboy oboy oboy, like a mystic rite.

Personally I'm thinking he's nutty as a fruit cake.

He drops in a whole penny box of matches and this piece of machinery goes off like Coney on the fourth. The blond slides her stool over an' takes a hefty swig. Mabel ain't seen nothin' like this since she got raided.

Then he unwraps this package and pulls out a pyrex beaker which he lovingly sets on th' fire.

Oboy oboy oboy oboy, nothin but the best for me he says and pours in the stuff. This here beaker gets black as your hat an' pretty soon this screwball say OK OK a glass an' a rag snell, an' pours the stuff out.

It goes down his gullett like water an' the guy keeps sayin' oboy oboy oboy oboy, these fire-proof bar tops are preema.

Then he sees Mabel's gams swingin' like penjoolums. Lemme buy ya a drink huh sis he says an' he fires up this gadget again.

Well it ends up with this guy getting slightly inebriated and walking out the door talking about Aarabs and other funny little people and he gives a public address on a klink, then he looks at Mabel and says oboy oboy oboy oboy — what a country!

Those Were the Days

This time last year, THE ITEM printed in its first issue the following menu of the Oflag's '43 Thanksgiving dinner:

- Breaded Prem
- Mashed potatoes
- Peas and carrots Gravy
- Schubin Pudding

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