

THE Prisoner of War



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RED CROSS AND ST. JOHN WAR ORGANIZATION, ST. JAMES'S PALACE, LONDON, S.W.1



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Free to Next of Kin

OCTOBER, 1943

The Editor Writes —

THE turn of events in Italy meet, I fear, have caused anxiety in many homes. Following hard upon the good news of the Armistice which provided for the liberation of their men in Italian hands, they learnt of the German advance which brought with it an uncertainty as to their position. At the moment of writing I have no information beyond what was given by Mr. Churchill and Sir James Grigg to Parliament. This may be summed up as follows:—

Italians Will Help Them

Before the fall of Mussolini about 2,400 prisoners of war were transferred from Italian to German camps, and though their letters express indignation at their transfer they do not complain of their treatment.

It is possible that the Germans are transferring prisoners to Germany from across in which they are now in control. The Italians, however, gave orders for the release of all Allied prisoners in their hands, and Mr. Churchill has no doubt that "they will be succoured by the Italian people among whom they are dispersing."

A comparatively small number of prisoners have been released from Southern Italy (where we are in control) and others have escaped from Northern Italy into Switzerland.

Why I am Optimistic

With this information we

must for the time being be contented, but Mr. Churchill has given his assurance that "in all these matters we are acting with the greatest vigilance and earnestness and everything in human power will be done." My own feeling is optimistic. If the advance of our armies proceeds as we hope and believe it will, I have such confidence in the resourcefulness of our men and the readiness of Italian civilians to help them that I believe they will filter through to our lines in considerable numbers. That is my personal hope and belief.

Anzac Way

A P.O.W. at Stalag 383 writes home about the wide range of sports for the 4,000 men at this camp. "We have a swimming pool, football, rugby, hockey and cricket pitch." He also mentions that their hats are laid out

in streets "with appropriate names such as 'Springbok Avenue' and 'Anzac Way.'"

Stalag Gardeners

The Editor of *The Countryman* has shown us an interesting letter from Stalag XVIII-A describing a "mixed plantation" in the camp as it was in mid-June. There were lettuce, cucumber plants, "a yard of beet," radishes, kohlrabi, tomatoes and a spinach bed "divided from the salads by a row of dwarf peas." The letter concludes: "Although somewhat cramped for room the herbaceous border will, we hope, make quite a good show in late summer with wall-flowers, scabious, stocks and violas. The holding is under the anxious care of five townsmen and one countryman and we have no 'experimental stations' to call up for advice, but our only unsolved problem is space."

Ingenious Make-up

From a sergeant at Stalag-Luft 1 comes a letter describing a recent revue produced in this camp. One of its highlights was "a marvellous pianist, an American one who has played in concerts in London." The costumes for the show came from Hamburg, and make-up "from a box of crayons and vaseline mixed together."

His Two Reasons

"I don't mind how long the war lasts so long as England comes out on top. My two reasons for this are John and Mary and all other children." Thus typically writes a P.O.W. at Stalag VIIIIB to his wife in Devonshire. His letter ends



UNLOADING Red Cross parcels at S.B.S. 21.

1000

100

1	2
3	4

100

100

Answer: The student says "negative." But it's not.

100

REFERENCES

Figures: The Accounting of Assets



MORE CHOCOLATE FOR P.O.W.'s.

THE Ministry of Food has sanctioned the increase of 1 lb. in the amount of chocolate which may be purchased from the Red Cross Next of Kin Packing Centres at Finsbury Circus and Glasgow for inclusion in next-of-kin parcels sent to prisoners of war and civilian internees.

The maximum amount which may now be bought from the Red Cross is, therefore, 4 lbs.

It should be noted that this does not affect the arrangement whereby the Red Cross will add 1 lb. of chocolate as a gift to every parcel of weight allowed; nor to the amount which the next of kin may, themselves, include.

The price of the chocolate remains the same as before, i.e., 9d. per 1 lb. Next of kin are reminded that allowance should be made for the full weight of chocolate and soap to be added at the packing centres.

At the end of the year, are availing themselves of the opportunity to send relief supplies to all prisoners of war and interned civilians in Japanese hands to whom access is still made by these means.

Supplies on Exchange Shipment. The Japanese exchange ship used to carry supplies for British prisoners of war in Japan. It is expected that the ship will be used to carry supplies to the prisoners of war in the Far East. It is expected that the ship will be used to carry supplies to the prisoners of war in the Far East.

The reason for this request is that it is difficult to account to the Board of Trade for all the coupons issued each quarter if some of them are retained by next of kin for a longer time.

GREETING CARDS

It has been announced by the Conscription that no Christmas Cards, New Year Cards or calendars may be sent this year to prisoners of war and civilian internees in German and Italian hands.

The reason is that their despatch last year caused great congestion in the camp canteens, with the result that the delivery of ordinary letters to prisoners was very much delayed. This caused disappointment and anxiety, and it was suggested by a number of camp captains that cards and calendars should not be sent this year.

NUMBER, PLEASE!

PLEASE be sure to mention your Red Cross reference number whenever you write to us. Otherwise delay and trouble are caused in finding previous correspondence.

Any Questions?

Mosquito Nets for Far East P.O.W.'s

Do the Japanese provide mosquito nets for our men in the Malayan climate? If not, cannot the Red Cross get the Swiss authorities to do something about it? Having lived on there many years, I trouble to think what will happen to our men if they do not sleep under mosquito nets or in mosquito-proof houses.

We are informed that in Formosa the Japanese are providing mosquito nets where necessary; this information being furnished by a delegate of the International Red Cross who has inspected the camp. These delegates have been refused permission to visit the camps in Malaya, but the Japanese authorities have stated that nets are provided where necessary for the welfare of prisoners.

Cards Prohibited

May I send a pack of cards in any clothing parcel?

No. Please see the list of prohibited articles issued every quarter with the next-of-kin parcel label.

Football Boots

May I send football boots in any parcel?

Yes. These may be sent in next-of-kin parcels.

No Puzzles for P.O.W.'s

May I send a book of crossword puzzles to Germany?

Cross-word puzzles may not be sent to prisoners of war.

Sleeping Bag Allowed

May I send a sleeping bag in my parcel to my husband, a P.O.W. in Germany?

An ordinary blanket sleeping bag—not the pads! variety—may be sent in next-of-kin parcels. This is clearly stated in the instruction leaflet.

For Artist P.O.W.

My son is an artist; may I send him water-colour paints, brushes and a block of painting paper?

Water-colour paints in pans, not in tubes, and brushes may be sent in next-of-kin parcels. Sketching blocks or drawing boards may be sent through permit holders. If any difficulty is experienced in having these despatched, you should write to the Indochina Recreation Section of the Prisoners of War Dept. giving full details.

Our Chocolate

May I send my chocolate (very hard)?

No form of chocolate other than that made in solid slabs without filling of any kind may be sent in next-of-kin parcels. This is made clear in all the instruction leaflets. Nut chocolate particularly is most unsuitable as the nuts develop moulds very quickly.

He Wants Cooking Recipes

My husband wants some cooking recipes. May I send them in a letter? May I order a cookery book from the canteen?

There should be no objection to the despatch of a cookery book by a permit holder, but the permit holder should be able to give information on this point. We do not think there would be any objection to the copying of a recipe in a letter, but the only way in which to find out would be to try it and see if the letter gets through.

Maps Prohibited

My husband would like a map of Europe. May I send him the one issued by the "Daily Telegraph" through the canteen?

No prisoner of war would be allowed to receive a map of Europe.

Far Eastern Mail

A postcard received from my husband lately says he is alive, unharmed and well, although there is space for more. Do the Japanese limit the number of words they may write? Also why are my letters undated?

Postcards that have been received are, in many cases, printed with various sentences to be utilized by the prisoners. In some camps such printed postcards are not available, and typed copies are made for the use of P.O.W.'s. Such cards are in the nature of capture cards. We can assume that, in future, the prisoners will be allowed to write fuller details. Already we have received considerable correspondence from a number of camps in which the prisoners have written up to 150 or 200 words. We do not know why some of the cards are undated; in most cases dates are shown.

FREE TO NEXT OF KIN

THIS journal is sent free of charge to those registered with the Prisoners of War Dept. as next of kin. In view of the paper shortage no copies are for sale, and it is hoped that next of kin will share their copy with relatives and others interested.