

THE Prisoner of War



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE PRISONERS OF WAR DEPARTMENT OF THE
RED CROSS AND ST. JOHN WAR ORGANISATION, ST. JAMES'S PALACE, LONDON, S.W.1



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Free to Next of Kin

AUGUST, 1944

A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO NEXT OF KIN

FROM

SIR RICHARD HOWARD-VYSE

(Chairman of the Prisoners of War Department)

It will be seen from the Post Office statement printed on page 16 that for some time no next of kin or permit parcels have been leaving this country by the normal route, though it is obvious that the Post Office are by no means without hope of traffic being resumed.

We understand that individually addressed parcels which were handed to the Post Office up to the beginning of March should reach the camps normally, but that owing to a variety of circumstances there is likely to be a very considerable delay in the delivery of parcels handed in after that date.

These conditions also apply, unfortunately, to the majority of our

despatches from the Invalid Comforts, Educational Books and Indoor Recreations Sections.

There remain, however, possibilities, strictly limited, of despatch by air, though the amount that can be carried is very small compared with the vast volume which we have been accustomed to despatch by surface route.

Standard food and medical parcels and clothing need not, fortunately, cause undue anxiety at the moment, as reserves exist both at Geneva and at the Camps sufficient to meet requirements for a considerable period.

As regards our other despatches, we have arranged an order of priority, at the top of which come the most urgent

medical requirements, followed by examination papers.

We look upon the latter as very important because many prisoners of war have now, in the face of great difficulties, prepared themselves for examination and are anxiously awaiting the papers.

As I have repeatedly stressed in talks to relatives, we have anticipated that sooner or later conditions of this sort were bound to appear, as an inevitable adjunct to the approach to victory. We realise that a most cause anxiety to many relatives; to all of them we tender our true sympathy and the assurance that neither we nor our good friends at Geneva will spare any effort to restore despatches to the normal, or fail to utilise any special opportunities.

Relatives will be glad to know that such steps have been taken to explain matters to all Camp Leaders.

The Editor Writes —

THE names of new prisoners captured in Normandy are now being received. A certain number have written from already established camps for British prisoners in Germany, but for the most part our camp addresses are not yet known.

At the moment of going to press no confirmation of reports that camps in East Prussia and German-occupied Poland have been moved have been received. In view of the swift advance made by Russian armies such transfers are not unlikely.

Why We Are Late

Our readers will be aware that we in London are working under difficulties at the present time. These are

partly the cause of the late publication of this issue of the journal, which has been further delayed to await the latest information about the parcels situation. We apologise for any inconvenience or disappointment that may have been caused to our readers.

The Shooting of Prisoners

On the plea that Mr. Eden made "the unheeded allegation" that the 50 officers who escaped from Stalag Luft III were murdered, the Nazi Government have refused in a Berlin broadcast to make a further report on the matter. The broadcast adds that the country which began the bombing war against civilisation has no moral

right to speak in this matter, let alone make accusations. Comment is superfluous.

Recently an announcement was made of the shooting of another 23 prisoners. It appears that these incidents occurred at different times since August of last year, and at different camps. There has been, so far as is known, no repetition of any such occurrence as that which took place at Stalag Luft III.

P.O.W.s Must Not Broadcast

The Secretary for War states that the existing instructions forbid prisoners of war to broadcast messages over the enemy's radio system. He expressed his agreement with the suggestion made by an M.P. that prisoners were being tricked into writing such messages under the pretence that they would be sent by telegram.

A group of prisoners at Colling py (Australia 1987).

Any Questions?

When sending in questions will next of kin kindly always give their name and address so that their letters may be answered by post if, for any reason, it is not possible to reply in this Journal.

P.O.W. in Prussia

Should I be informed at once if my son were transferred from his prison camp in East Prussia?

As soon as information about the transfer of any prisoner is received, the next of kin is informed; but this news is frequently received in the first instance by the next of kin from the prisoner himself.

Air Mail Letters

Can I now send a letter by air mail to my son, a prisoner of war in a camp in Prussia?

Yes, the G.P.O. has announced that the air mail service to prisoners of war, including the three-way air-mail letter-card, has been resumed.

Civilian Repatriates

Are all civilians being repatriated from Germany?

We understand that, with certain exceptions, all British and Dominion civilian internees will, by degrees, be repatriated from Germany.

Soap

How many tablets of toilet soap may I send to my husband in his net of his parcel?

The answer to this is to be found in the leaflet sent to all next of kin every quarter with their label, etc.

Enemy Action

We recently lost our home "by enemy action." May I send our son the news?

This is a matter for the censorship; but we know that prisoners do receive news of this kind from their families.

Next of kin Parcel

My husband's camp has taken up knitting; may I send some steel needles to him and to his friends?

Knitting needles are included in the list of articles which may be sent in next of kin parcels. Please see the leaflet of instructions which is issued every quarter to all next of kin with their label and coupons.

New Prisoner

My son, recently taken prisoner in Italy, tells me that he has lost all his kit. Will the camp be able to fit him out before my first parcel arrives?

On his arrival at a permanent camp, he should be supplied with clothing sent to the camps for distribution.

He Was Wounded

Would the camp doctor inform the Red Cross should my son require special food for his wound caused through a severe wound in the back?

Supplies of special foods are sent to all the camps for the use of prisoners who require them; but if any very unusual diet were required, the doctor would inform the Red Cross.

Mail for Officer

Can you tell me how many letter-cards and postcards officers may send each week from prisoner of war camps, and about how many are they allowed to receive?

Officers prisoners of war are usually allowed to send four postcards and three letters every month. There is no limit to the number which they may receive.

CUT ALONG THIS LINE

The badge should be sent to—

Name of applicant —

(in block letters)

Address —

Relationship to prisoner

The quarterly parcels for the prisoner to whom this application refers are despatched through the Red Cross by—

(Name and address of special tender of parcels to be filled in below)

Signature of applicant —

Date —

PARCELS

IMPORTANT NOTICE

THE Postmaster-General has announced that, in view of the continued interruption of railway communication in occupied France, next of kin and permit parcels for prisoners of war in Germany cannot be forwarded.

As there is already an accumulation of parcels in this country, and en route, to good purpose will be served by the posting of further parcels until conditions become more favourable, and the Postmaster-General therefore strongly advises the public to refrain from posting next of kin parcels, or giving orders to permit holders for the despatch of tobacco, cigarettes, books, etc.

A further announcement will be made when parcels can usefully again be sent.

By agreement with the G.P.O., next of kin parcels now being received at the Packing Centres at Finsbury Circus and Glasgow will be repacked and handed to the Post Office as usual unless next of kin apply for their return. Every effort will be made to comply with such applications, but no guarantee can be given that any parcel can be stopped.

Parcels will be held by the G.P.O. until they can be forwarded, but if further shipments from this country prove impossible, they will eventually be returned to the senders.

No further issues of labels, etc., will be made unless they are applied for at the Packing Centre at 24, Finsbury Circus, E.C.2, or to 421, Southchill Street, Glasgow.

People in possession of labels and complete sets of coupons which they do not now wish to use may return them to Finsbury Circus or Glasgow to be reissued later if applied for.

If some coupons have already been used, the remainder should for the present be retained, together with the garments and, if possible, the bills.

Further instructions about parcels will be published in this Journal.

CAMP LIST

OFLAG VIIIIF (at Wagmann) is now resumed Oflag 75.

A special section for those eligible for repatriation has been opened at STALAG IVD/2. It is called STALAG IVD, Zweiglager, Heilig Annaberg. (Map reference Hg.)

A new camp, STALAGLUFT VII, has been opened at Borkau, near Krenzberg. (Map reference Hg.)

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.