

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

FEBRUARY, 1945

THE FOOD SITUATION

By Maj.-Gen. Sir Richard Howard-Vyse, K.C.M.G., D.S.O.,
Chairman of the Prisoners of War Department

I KNOW well that many of our readers are much distressed by letters from Camps which indicate a lack of food, and I am writing these lines in order to explain the situation and, I hope, to provide some comfort.

By the month of May we had established in Geneva a stock of some twelve weeks' supplies, or about two million parcels. Thereafter, while the parcels continued to leave Geneva at the rate of 160,000 a week, they ceased to flow in, because the port of Marseilles was closed, first owing to unfortunate accidents to two of our ships, and then because of the invasion of the South of France.

In September, for fear of being left with no parcels at all, we were compelled to reduce issues to a parcel a fortnight. There could have been no worse moment to do this, with the cold weather approaching, and hopes vanishing of release before Christmas, and it is only too natural that our prisoners should feel depressed as well as hungry.

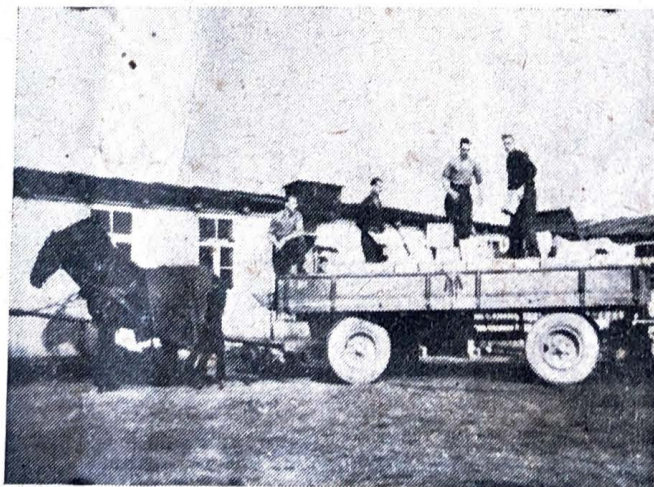
The situation was further aggravated by the decision of the German High Command not to allow reserves of food parcels in Camps, in consequence of which some Camps were compelled to consume not half a parcel, as they should have done, but as much as two or even more parcels in one week. This resulted, of course, in the disappearance of the rest of the Camp reserves which had been built up against just such an eventuality as stoppage of despatches from Geneva. But, from the latest information we have, it seems likely that this order will be considerably modified, so that, as soon as transport is available, Geneva may be able to establish such reserves once more.

In some Camps, too, numbers have been greatly increased by transfers from other Camps, as well as by newly captured prisoners.

The worst instance of this is Stalag 357, which has been swollen by practically the whole of Stalag Luft VI, who apparently were not allowed to bring their food reserves with them. In view of the train shortage which must exist in Germany to-day—and which, incidentally, must be materially helping to shorten the war—it is perhaps unfair to attribute this entirely to ill-will on the part of the enemy.

Now for the brighter side of the picture. In the first place, I want to stress that, while we ourselves are pretty fully informed as to the situation, practically all our news, and more besides, is in the hands of the International Red Cross Committee of Geneva, who of course get it before we do. The Committee therefore possess what everyone must have before they can act; I mean Information. The point is, have they the means to act?

As to this, the situation which originally obliged us to reduce the issue has vanished. The resumed flow via Marseilles, plus supplies which are going in via Sweden, is establishing once more a reserve in Geneva. The full issue of a parcel a week can now be resumed as soon as there are sufficient stocks in Camps. It is entirely a question of rail transport through Germany. It would not be surprising if the shortage of this were acute, but as a matter of fact, we have at the moment two reasons for feeling hopeful. One of the principals of the Relief Section, of whom I happened to see a great deal when I was myself in Geneva, has sent us a distinctly encouraging report of a visit he has just paid to Berlin. And the International Red Cross Committee have told us that they hope to get the Christmas parcels to all Camps by the middle of January. In view of the Russian advance it is dangerous to prophesy about the future. (Contd. overleaf)



Red Cross parcels being unloaded at Stalag 344, one of the largest camps in Germany.

The Editor Writes —

AT the time of going to press no confirmation has been received of reports that camps in Poland, East Prussia, Upper Silesia, in the line of the rapid advance of the Russian armies, have been moved back into Central Germany. Camps likely to be affected include Stalags XXA, XXB, 344, VIIIB, Luft VII, B.A.B. 20 and 21, Oflag 64, Ilag Kreuzberg, and the hospitals at Marienburg and Cosel. The War Office announced recently that assurances on the highest level had been received that provision will be made for the protection and welfare of all British Commonwealth prisoners of war liberated. The War Office also stated that "our plans are complete and the necessary staffs in readiness for action at short notice."

Should any official information of a prisoner's change of address be received, next of kin will be notified immediately; but the chances are that they will themselves hear from the prisoner first.

"Victorious Vanguard"

The Stockholm correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* quotes a French sailor who had escaped to Sweden from the Baltic port of Kolberg, as having said that British prisoners who were being evacuated from camps in East Prussia, Poland and Silesia were in the highest spirits. The sailor said that there was a striking contrast between them and the Volkssturm battalions which filled all the roads leading to the front. "As the British passed them they sang 'Roll Out the Barrel' and 'Tipperary,' and turned up their thumbs."

The way in which these prisoners passed through the town, said the Frenchman, deepened considerably the wave of pessimism which had swept over the whole of that part of Ger-

many. "You would think they were not prisoners, but the vanguard of a victorious army."

Welcome to Repatriates

Of the 1,500 British and Dominion men in the latest repatriation, arrangements were made for British and Australian to come to this country and Indian and other Dominion repatriates to go straight home on another ship via Suez. Besides seven welfare officers who went out to Marseilles to meet the men, Mrs. Boyd-Moriarty, representing Australian Red Cross, made the journey out and home on the *Arundel Castle*, and Miss Noyes went out representing Indian Red Cross to accompany those men who are to go straight back to India. Supplies on the *Arundel Castle* included 600 Indian Red Cross parcels for the use of homeward-bound Indians.

"They Shall Have Music"

Gramophones, records and accordions from the Indoor Recreation Section were in the charge of Welfare officers on board for the entertainment of the repatriates. General comforts included cigarettes, bars of chocolate, slippers, stationery sets, socks, scarves, gloves and news—in the shape of Sunday newspapers and a special sports summary prepared for the Red Cross and St. John Press Section by the *Daily Mail* was flown direct to Marseilles.

Theatre Ban Lifted

Last month I mentioned that according to an order from the General in Command, all theatrical performances in camps situated in Wehrkreis (military zone) VIII had been forbidden, though concert and variety shows were still allowed. Readers will therefore be reassured to hear that in his latest report from Stalag VIIIA at Gorlitz, one of the camps affected, the British Man of Con-

fidence writes: "In the middle of October the ban on theatre entertainments was lifted by the authorities and we are now permitted to put on one dramatic show per month, as well as the usual musical concerts."

Situation Improved

I am most grateful to Mr. W. B. Morrison for a piece of good news which he has recently received from his son in Oflag IVC. He points out that in our December issue the visitors' report on Oflag IVC stated that the prisoners could only take one shower every ten days. His son has written saying, "The past week has been very hot. . . . I spend most of the day getting in and out of hot, beg pardon, cold baths, which fortunately are plentiful." It appears, therefore, that the situation has been much improved.

Marking Time

Under the title of "Marking Time," prisoners of war who escaped from Italian prison camps into Switzerland and were interned in St. Gallen, created a monthly magazine. The first cover design showed an "evadé" sitting at a table, mournfully looking at a bottle of beer, waiting for things to happen. The magazine caught on. Its popularity extended far beyond the scattered community of internees, and requests for it poured in from British subjects in all parts of Switzerland. Donations were received, the paper was enlarged in size, and later, when the technical difficulties were overcome, became a self-supporting weekly.

Channel Islanders

A letter, written by a Channel Islander interned at Biberach in Germany to her nephew in this country tells that she was allowed to write to the Channel Islands. The Red Cross ship *Vega* which took the first batch of relief supplies to the Channel Islands will be familiar to my readers as having carried supplies of P.O.W. parcels on several occasions. Among other Red Cross supplies for the Channel Islands which have been earmarked for the future are 600,000 food parcels, 20,000 invalid diet supplements and further supplies of drugs. These plans will not in any way affect the flow of supplies to p.o.w.s in Germany.

THE FOOD SITUATION (Continued from page 1)

Now I want to ask a favour of you. A curious thing to do, I know, from people who are suffering from disappointment, who are received depressed letters from their prisoners, and who, especially those whose men have been captives for years, are full of anxiety.

Many of you work in offices of one sort or another, and know the difficulties of obtaining office staff. We here are suffering acutely from such difficulties, and, to put it

frankly, have been snowed under with correspondence, etc.

Will you please try to be patient, and not send us enquiries about the food situation until you have seen whether or not my own forecast proves to be justified. We, for our part, promise to keep you informed, through the pages of this Journal, if anything transpires to alter that forecast.

If you will do this, we shall be very grateful indeed to you, and you will be enabling us to reply more quickly to other, and perhaps more urgent, enquiries.

The Brighter Side

At the Special Request of Stalag XIA, we are featuring this Month Extracts from Their Own Reports of Camp Entertainments and Sport there.



League Champions, July 1944, III Division at Stalag 344.

Left to right: (Back) Dick, Charlie, "Jock," "Steve," "Hank," Ginger. (Middle) Robin, McGinty, "Nobby," "Tanky," "Tidler." (Front) "Jock" and Frankie.

IN sending special reports of camp activities prepared by prisoners in Stalag XIA, the president of their Entertainments Committee requested that these might be published in the Journal, adding: "We wish also to thank the B.R.C.S. and the Y.M.C.A. for the tremendous help they have given us." As a gesture of appreciation the camp music maestro has written and composed a march and called it B.R.C.S. (British Red Cross Society).

Entertainment at Stalag XIA

A sergeant has written the account of camp entertainments. He begins: "On recalling to mind the recent entertainments in our camp, one is struck by the similarity between the presentations here and those that take place in the big cities outside. We in our little world have been presented with a continuous programme which has given almost the same expectations, thrills, laughter and relaxation experienced by all who followed the seasons of theatre-land before the war. Just as the Haymarket in London gives its public that atmosphere and attraction so dear to theatre fans, our 'Haymarket' renders full justice to its existence."

Music and Variety

Music is provided by Roy and his "Music Makers," fourteen in all, "who never fail in obtaining a merited success." Fred's "Haymakers" supply plenty of rhythm, while Sid and his "Mandoliers" give concerts of light music. "Both Roy and Sid have played their own compositions, which have more than shown their ability as musicians." Variety shows have been "outstanding because the players have that skill and enthusiasm to show their talent in various ways, their main theme being laughter

and song." Vic's production of "Leilani" transported them to the South Seas the moment the curtain rose on his show, and the audience was apparently "overwhelmed with fun, song, wit and charm." Then Bob, the president of the Entertainment Committee, produced and presented within three days *Bob's Variety*, a show that proved to be one of the best yet.

Repertory Theatre

There is also a flourishing Repertory Theatre, which appears to have "gaiety" as its motto, for all the plays produced to date have been comedies. Pee-Wee's *Tilly of Bloomsbury*, which was adapted for the stage from the book, provided an hour and a half's hilarity, and Vic's production of *The Man Who Came To Dinner* was also a success. Spud has produced *You Can't Take It With You*—"the antics of the Martin Vanderhof family kept a packed audience in hysterics. We were informed that at times the players themselves had difficulty in not laughing."

Future attractions will include Vic's pantomime, *Cinderella*, and Terry's *The Petrified Forest*.

The sergeant's report does not confine his praise to the stars of these entertainments. He points out: "In every walk of life there are unsung heroes. We owe a great deal to the lads who work in silence to make the entertainment what it is." Particularly praised are "the sterling capabilities and skill" of Harry and Lew, who backstage "perform such miracles as you would expect of the fairy with her magic wand." The report concludes: "Yes, we spectators certainly do appreciate our luck in having such entertainment which goes a long way in relieving the 'barbed wire' feeling."

Sport

Association Football

According to "Onlooker," football in the camp has been "going great guns

these last six or seven months." At the end of March, Alf Smirk, a professional forward from Southend United, arrived in the camp and took over the Lager XI. His team has played five games against combined "other National" sides and has a splendid record, winning four and drawing one, with an aggregate of 22 goals to 8. The first League run in the compound was won by Staff. The first seven-a-side contest was won by 12C (since disbanded), and the second by Staff.

Two knock-out competitions have been held and were both won by M.A., for whom Alf Smirk plays.

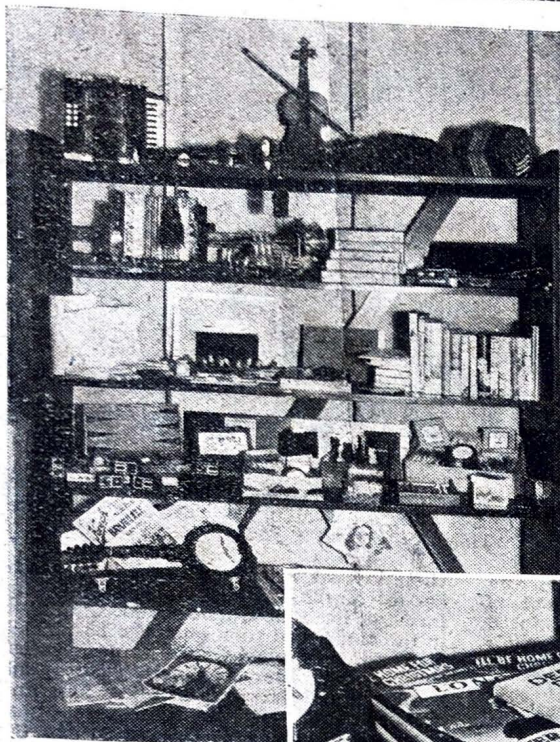
Rugby

Since February of this year Rugby has been played regularly in the cooler months, and, according to the corporal who writes the report of this season's games, "by praying for rain we have worked in an occasional game over the summer." He continues: "Despite the fact that the ground is only 50 yards wide, we play fifteen a side, but even with this congestion the backs, at times, perform very well."

"We have players from the British Isles and all the Rugby-playing Colonies, some very good, some just good, but all very keen—this last has been the means of keeping the game going. We have had some very good games. The first, South Africa versus the Camp, was won by the Camp. England v. Colonies was won by England by one penalty goal in a very strongly contested match. On St. Patrick's Day the Colts played England (with Kiwis, Springboks, and Wallabies included in the side), for which they qualified, and won 6—5."

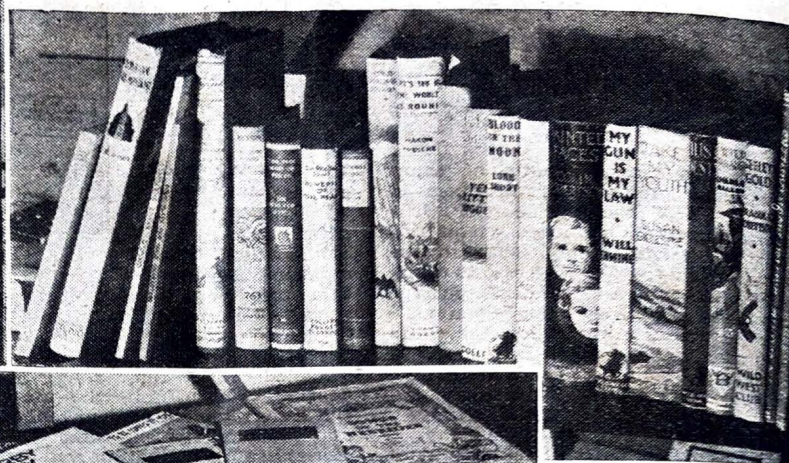
"Since then we have had various new prisoners (mostly recaptured from Italy) v. 'Old,' followed by a series of Anzacs v. Camp, which the boys from

Most of the paragraphs on this page refer to activities in the big base camps and it should not be assumed that they are typical of conditions in all camps or in outlying working detachments where facilities for sport and amusement are much fewer.

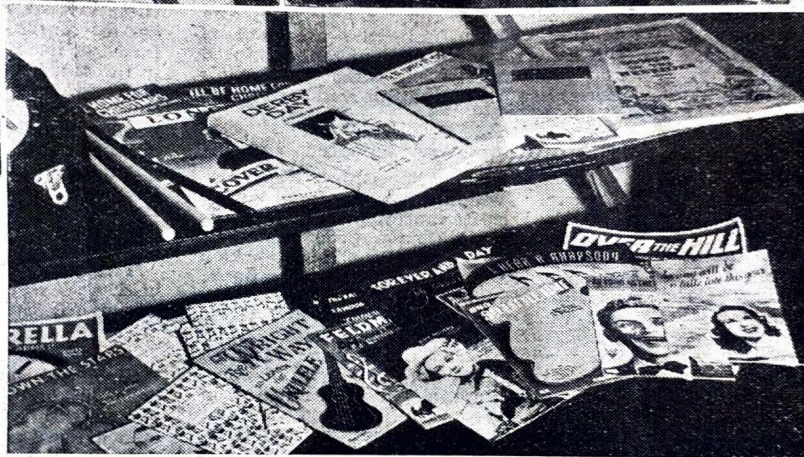


Among the many articles sent to prisoners of war by the Indoor Recreations Section at St James's Palace are musical instruments, artists' materials (paints in pans), crayons, plays, books and games. They go direct from this country and from reserve supplies held by the I.R.C. at Geneva.

What to Send to Your Prisoner Now



This typical selection includes new books of every type from the fine arts to Wild West thrillers. Remember, all books must pass a severe censorship.



Music is scarce and in great demand in the camps. Clean, unmarked copies will be warmly welcomed by the Indoor Recreations Section.

THE BRIGHTER SIDE

(continued from previous page)

'Down Under' won 2 games to 1. We are most grateful to the Red Cross Society for supplying us with the gear to make all this possible."

In Other Camps

In Stalag XVIII A they take their musical entertainment seriously and according to a trooper who writes, just produced a "Cavalcade of Music," illustrating the progress from primitive music, through the minuet, opera, music-hall, ragtime and swing to the modern symphonic jazz, closing on the optimistic note, *The Song of Dawn*. By contrast in Stalag VII A they seem to take a far from serious attitude. One prisoner, writing, admittedly, on a Saturday evening, says: "I

and a chap from Paddington have just finished dancing the Big Apple, Jitterbug, Charleston, and anything that Fred Astaire can do. I don't know what the Germans think of us, but they certainly must think we are a Crazy Gang. The noise and shouting is terrific, with a background of six mouth-organs."

Camp Shows

The Dramatic Club in Stalag 357 have hit on a new idea. They are working on a scheme for producing a series of "Radio Plays" and revues which will tour the huts throughout the camp. The plays are read from behind a curtain of blankets. One is to be a murder play, *The Silent Witness*.

In Oflag IXA/Z they produced *Busman's Honeymoon*, the three "female" characters being afterwards presented with bouquets. Two of these were of a

fairly orthodox nature, but the third, for the charwoman, was composed of a couple of large sunflowers complete with about 5ft. of stem! The lieutenant who has recently produced *Hamlet* at Marlag and Milag Nord writes: "I have never pictured myself before as a producer, and I have been startled at the result. The audience sat on hard seats for three and a half hours, and would have taken more."

R.A.F. Raise Money for P.O.Ws.

At an R.A.F. station in the Midlands they recently presented a play, the proceeds of which are to be devoted to buying play scripts for their colleagues still in Germany. The warrant officer who wrote telling us of this added: "The total collected was £25 from this and neighbouring stations. Might I suggest that other stations follow suit?"

The Letters They Write Home

From a Padre

Stalag IVC.

21.8.44.

AFTER a wait of almost six weeks I am now posted to a working kommando in this stalag. As far as the censorship allows I will proceed to give you an idea of the place. Until just recently it consisted of about 1,200 men, but another kommando has been moved here and we now total about 1,800 British troops. They are made up from men from the British Isles, South Africa, and a few from Australia and New Zealand. The men are at various jobs of work and are extremely fit; most of them are very bronzed, walking about in shorts only.

My billet is at the end of one of the long wooden huts, and at the moment I am sharing it with a Cypriot M.O. The room is about 12ft. to 14ft. square. We have single spring beds and a table with a blue check cloth on it. The floor is concrete, which is clean and cool in this grilling weather. The walls have been painted yellow with a white frieze and ceiling. Altogether a comfortable spot! Two windows overlook the compound, and we have our own tiny entrance hall.

Padre Brown is about a quarter of a mile up the road in a kommando of 2,000 men, so you see that between us we have a pretty large parish.

... The men seem pleased to see a chaplain, and as I have at least a year more of service as a p.o.w. than most of them, I am looked upon as a bit of a Methuselah. I tell them I am a good example of the work of the Red Cross. Bodily fit with the constant supply of food parcels—we have enough here until Christmas—mentally sound through the constant flow of those grand letters of yours and books, etc., sent out by the Red Cross.

A Camp Tour

Marlag und Milag Nord (Milag).

28.8.44.

I'LL just show you round the camp this week for a change.

This is my bunk; twelve men sleep here. Look out of the window and you'll see my tomatoes. Yes, that is where I cut hair, too! Do you like the poster? Over there is the fire pond. See the ducks? They all belong to the inmates here. You ought to see the model steamboats and yachts out here some days. The former run on dubbin fuel.

This is the cinema-cum-galley. There's a film this week, *Hello, Janine*—all German talkie, singing and dancing. I went yesterday. Not too bad.

The gardens look well, intermingled with the rabbit hutches and hen coops.

All kinds of pets kept here. You'll see some puppy dogs presently. You get a good view of the countryside just here. This is the officers' galley and mess hall, which is used for games in the evening.

You cannot go any farther this way, so come back the other side. As we return we pass the hospital. There is the main gate and guard room, adjoining is the ratings' galley and mess hall, which resembles Monte Carlo in the afternoons. There are wheels and games on which you can get rich quick or, like me, broke quick.

The next point of interest is the theatre. The show running is called *Choraina*, a cavalcade of all the shows we've had. No, not seen it yet. Going further we pass into a smaller compound which is the sports ground, where there are pitches for football, baseball and cricket. The Yanks are playing baseball. Football starts next month.

Come back now and the combine will stand you a cup of tea.

From Another World

Stalag 344.

10.9.44.

MET a new chap who has just arrived, only taken 15 days ago. Talking to him makes me feel like a savage from another world. He is only 19 and so he was just a school-kid when I left Blighty. Seems to look on us as relics of a bow and arrow era. Maybe he is right, too!

SEND US YOUR PICTURES AND LETTERS

TEN SHILLINGS will be awarded each month to the senders of the first three letters from prisoners of war to be printed. Copies instead of the originals are requested, and whenever possible these should be set out on a separate sheet of paper, showing the DATES on which they were written. The Editor welcomes for other pages of the journal any recent NEWS relating to prisoners of war.

Ten Shillings will also be awarded for photographs reproduced across two columns, and five shillings for those under two. Photographs should be distinct, and any information as to when they were taken is helpful.

Address: Editor, "The Prisoner of War," St. James's Palace, London, S.W.1. The cost of these prizes and fees is defrayed by a generous friend of the Red Cross and St. John War Organisation.



A few of the prisoners at Stalag XVIIA.

We start on half a Red Cross parcel per week, next week. Cannot think what we should do without the Red Cross—bless them! I shall have to tighten up my belt, but I am not worried as I don't think we shall be collecting them much longer.

New Arrivals

Oflag 79.

22.10.44.

IT is amusing to observe the new prisoners as they come in (we have a number from Arnhem). It reminds one of one's own early days "in the bag." The number of signs and symbols they wear on their arms is amazing to us old kriegies! Of course, they give us the latest news from home. Most of them seem to be very young. They are well looked after as soon as they arrive and given extra clothing and other kit.

I am very well, as we all are, except for occasional bouts of the "crowd-complex." Naturally, living in these conditions we all get a bit tired of being on top of one another and feel sometimes we should like to get to a quiet spot in the country and live alone for the rest of our lives. But the feeling soon passes if you get on with your work, or go to bed, as I am going just now.

His Room

Stalag VIIA.

31.8.44.

THINGS are the same here—work, play and sleep. The room in which I sleep holds six—four other Englishmen, one South African, whom we ag and jape from morn till night. Each night we keep the rest of them awake with our guitar and mouth organs. Our room is called Sunshine Corner if it's quiet.



A group of prisoners at Stalag Luft III where they make a point of celebrating birthdays.

which is seldom. When the orchestra is playing it is called the China Tea Shop.

How They Live

Stalag 357.

3.12.44.

WE live in bungalows, each having four rooms, all joined end on. Each room holds 72 men on double-tier bunks. Four bungalows make "A" compound.

The day begins at 7 a.m. with a brew—on alternate mornings in bed! A wash and shave and then roll call at 8 a.m. We are counted and then dismissed until the next "count" at 4 p.m. We sweep the hut, draw bread and potatoes and then till noon, when we have a hot soup or stew, we play or watch football, rugby, hockey or volley ball.

We have an excellent library, a gymnasium, and use the church hut as a quiet room during the week. We are allowed out and around the camp from rev. till 7.15 p.m., from which time till lights out (now 9 p.m.) we have talks, lectures, whist, bridge or crib drives, quizzes, a dance band or gramophone.

Work and Play

Stalag 344.

5.11.44.

I WAS very amused at the way you go to business, through clover and wheatfields and over stiles. We have a similar three-mile walk (slow pace), then a little work with a little shovel, and back to camp at a faster pace. We take tea with us and brew up on the job, just like a gang of navvies in the streets of London.

I was interested to know you had seen the Prisoner of War Exhibition. The main camps are like that, but I am at a working camp of 55. We have more facilities and much more comfort,

We hold conferences on world events every day—generals and cabinet ministers have nothing on us!

Two Counties Club

Stalag Luft VII.

16.8.44.

WE have just formed a Lancashire and Cheshire club and there are only two from Stockport. The majority come from either Manchester or Liverpool. The club is going to contact the *Manchester Evening News*, giving names and



addresses of all who live in the Manchester district. Se keep a look out.

By the way, I was fortunate enough to be selected to play for England at cricket. The match was played on Bank Holiday Monday, and after a very exciting game we won by 46 runs.

A Hard School

Stalag 357.

30.9.44.

WE are in better billets, in spite of the fact that they are not quite completed, and the Detaining Power seems to be helping us to get settled and comfortable as much as they can, for which we are all grateful. We will soon be

wishing each other a "Merry Christmas." It seems hardly possible that I have been away from you so long, and I often wonder if you will think me a lot changed when I return. If I am, I assure you it will be for the better. This is the finest, if the hardest, school in which to learn patience and understanding. I have learned more of human nature since being a P.O.W. than one would normally

learn in a lifetime, but how I long for home comforts, a proper bed and plenty of freedom. Believe me, it will take something to move me once I get back.

A Library Arrives

Stalag Luft IV.

29.8.44.

I HAVE at last got hold of some technical books which will help me. When we moved from Stalag Luft VI, I parted company with my entire kit, including all my notebooks and textbooks, as did most of my companions. However, the technical library has arrived intact, so I can continue studying, and while I have no stationery I am managing on cigarette wrappings.

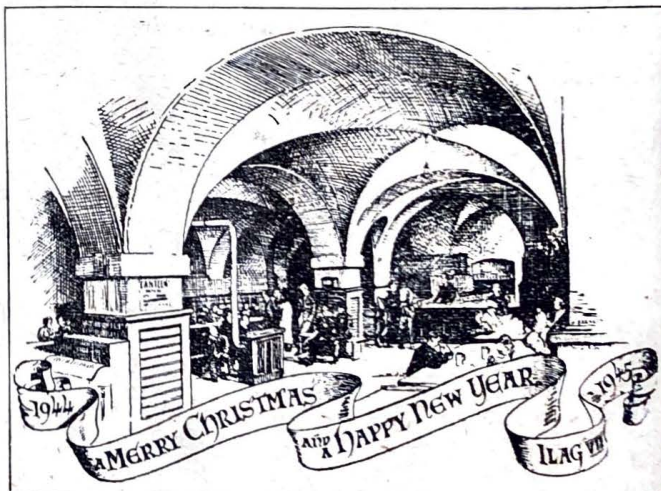
A small amount of Red Cross clothing and toilet articles has arrived and I have been lucky enough to win the cut for the following: 1 toothbrush, 1 comb, 1 razor and soap, 3 razor blades and 1 light vest. This comprises my entire belongings, together with the following which I arrived in: 1 great coat, 1 jacket and trousers, 1 short pants, 1 pair socks and boots, 1 shirt and 1 handkerchief. We are all in the very best of spirits and exceedingly optimistic, and get plenty of fun out of kriegie life.

How He Lives

Stalag IVD.

8.10.44.

YOU ask me if I live at IVD. No, I am at B.E.I., which is a working party of 170 men. As far as the billets are concerned, they are fairly good. We



A drawing of the canteen at Ilag VII sent as a Christmas and New Year Card by a Guernsey civilian internee to his mother.

live in rooms; three rooms in a bungalow, twenty men to a room, two men to a bed, one above the other. I am on the top as I think it is better—it is for reading, anyhow.

We now have our own shower-house and wash-place, which is very convenient. Of course, we are locked, barred and bolted in every night, not to mention being counted far too often for my liking.

From German to Drawing

Stalag IVG. 17.9.44.

I HAVE given up trying to learn German; it would take too long. Instead I've been spending most of my time lately drawing. I have been able to borrow some paints, but I'm not much of a hand with these.

Our tomato crop must have reached the 5cwt. mark, but it is falling off now as the weather gets colder. It is just about cold enough for snow at the moment.

A Good Cake

Stalag 344. 1.10.44.

I THINK it's unfair that you torment me with writing about special apple pie! Of course, by now I'm a pretty good cook myself; last week Gus and I made a grand cake out of the bread ration, two tins biscuits (hard), sugar, raisins, salt, Klim and Nestles. Apart from the fact that it was slightly burnt outside, slightly undone in the centre and slightly heavy, it was a good cake.

Sport—and Stitching!

Stalag Luft III. 15.9.44.

THIS week there was a big volley-ball competition, with a tote to make things interesting. All the boys wagered with cigarettes, and it was just like Derby day. Through "inside information" I managed to make a few, but as I smoke the old pipe most often, it mattered little.

One America v. Britain series which I mentioned before, ended in a win for the "Yanks," but it was a lot of fun and time well spent.

Have just finished knitting a khaki scarf, which is useful at this time. What with the sewing, washing, knitting, etc., that I do, I would make a good wife for someone, but I guess that is out of the question.

Varied Activities

Stalag IVB. 26.9.44.

THINGS here are not bad, bags of entertainment such as football, boxing, etc. We also have a theatre, and last week I saw a show, *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, and it was excellent.

I do some tailoring now and again and so earn a few cigarettes a week.

We get our Red Cross parcels every week and receiving them is the main event of the week.

I have read in the camp newspaper that the black-out is finished now. I guess it suits you fine.

PERSONALITIES AT STALAG XXB

DESCRIBED

BY

A P.O.W.

THERE



BACK ROW.—I will begin from left with the big blonde, "Spite" H., Liverpool, whose ambition is bigger and better boxing gloves and cowboy books. Next is "Bull," who is happy with a car, the dirtier the better. I come next: I want a good armchair and a radio. Next is my pal "Bun," London, whose ambition in life is parties. Next is Lewis, also from London. He is not fat but can he eat! Next is "Wog" from Bradford, our interpreter, the Lover No. 1. His pal Ron next, also from Bromley, London, whose hobby

is cycling, now aims to learn the piano accordion and don't we know it!

FRONT ROW from left.—The chap with the beret, Bull's brother, just loves to argue and waits for the time when he will be slicing bacon again (by the way they are Scotsmen). "Pudding" comes next from Leeds, who just lives for his bed and says, "Why can't you stay in bed all day?" Next is "Fitz," also Scotch, who longs to be home with his wife and kiddy. Last is "Busty," our singer, whose ambition is to be on the films.

Birthday Celebrations

in the Camps

TIME-HONOURED birthday traditions are observed in the camps with great gusto. They are made occasions for special celebration as a change from the usual routine.

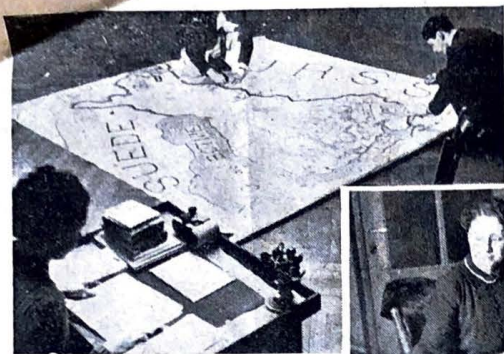
"A happy birthday to you" in chorus greeted a member of Stalag Luft 3 on the morning of his anniversary, and he was treated to a cup of tea in his bunk. On the previous day a companion had spent six hours grinding up biscuits, dried barley and semolina to make flour for some "wizard" meat patties. Corned beef and onions were used for the filling, and the savoury result marked the occasion at lunch. A "gorgeous" chocolate pudding was produced for sweet at dinner after an excellent course of fried spam in egg-powder and vegetables, and apricot tarts at supper completed the day's menu. Rations had to be saved for weeks to make enough for this "real do."

A flying officer, also at Stalag Luft 3, writes home that he did not expect to spend his 21st birthday in a prisoner of

war camp, but says that the best was made of a bad job. He was presented with an iced cake and much speculation was aroused as to how the colouring had been obtained. The cake was voted an excellent effort and later the secret was revealed—a drop of red water-colour paint!

One prisoner in Oflag 79 tried to keep his birthday dark, but someone had not forgotten it. The result was a very fine cake for which the ingredients were ground biscuits, raisins, egg flakes and margarine. The mixing and decorations in chocolate and jam were carried out by a fellow-officer, who before the war demonstrated cake-making and was able to add the deft professional touch.

On roll call at 8.30 a.m. a letter arrived from home wishing him many happy returns—timed almost to the hour!



Linking Relief for the World

THE WORK OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

By Colonel Charles de Watteville (Chief of the London Delegation of the I.C.R.C.)



(Left) Working on one of the large maps showing German prison camps at the Central Office at Geneva, and (Right) sorting letters into alphabetical order. Each square represents one letter of the alphabet.

I WAS particularly pleased when I was asked to write this article for *The Prisoner of War* because I am often struck by the number of people I meet who are confused by the term **International Red Cross**. I shall begin with a very brief description of the Red Cross movement as a whole.

The Red Cross first came into being eighty-one years ago as the result of the experiences of a Swiss citizen—Henri Dunant—on the battlefield of Solferino, and the conclusion in August, 1864, of the Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field. To-day the International Red Cross movement, which is governed by Statutes drawn up at The Hague in 1928, is composed of:

The **national Red Cross Societies** (numbering sixty-two in 1939) with a total adult membership of over twenty millions.

The **International Red Cross Committee**—founded in Geneva in 1863 by a Committee of five Swiss citizens (now limited to a membership of twenty-five), and the forerunner of the whole Red Cross movement.

The **League of Red Cross Societies**—a federation of all the national Red Cross Societies, founded in 1919.

These three aspects of a world-wide movement are linked by the **International Red Cross Conference** which meets every four years and is described in the Statutes as "the highest representative of the International Red Cross."

The aim of the Red Cross is always to bring relief, whether in war or in peace, to suffering humanity, and to this object the various national Societies, organised on a voluntary basis, devote themselves in every country. The **International Red Cross Committee**, with its headquarters in Geneva, is a completely independent and neutral organisation, composed entirely of Swiss citizens. It is in wartime the link between the national Societies and is the only organisation which, as

the result of the trust placed in it by all belligerents, can work for the welfare of the war victims of both sides.

History of the Movement

Ever since 1870 the International Committee has set up in spheres of conflict, agencies for information and the relief of wounded and sick soldiers and prisoners of war. On the outbreak of the 1914-18 war the International Agency for Prisoners of War was created in Geneva with a staff of 2,000 Swiss citizens, the majority of whom were voluntary workers.

The agency dealt with requests from thirty belligerent countries; its delegates visited five hundred internment camps; facilities were obtained for the evacuation of civilians from occupied territories and for the repatriation or hospitalisation in neutral countries of sick and wounded soldiers and medical personnel. The Committee organised the repatriation and exchange of prisoners of war of all nationalities after the first World War and co-operated closely with the national Red Cross Societies and other organisations in medical relief and reconstruction work in war-stricken countries. And between the two World Wars the Committee's services were called upon for China and Abyssinia, in the Gran Chaco in 1933-34, and in the Spanish Civil War in 1936-39.

In 1929 there was signed in Geneva the Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, and under this Convention the International Red Cross Committee is expressly charged with the

establishment of a **Central Agency for the Exchange of Information about Prisoners of War**.

In 1939, therefore, the Committee immediately began this work, as it had done in previous wars, and in June, 1944, its staff numbered 3,289, all of whom were Swiss and more than half of whom were voluntary.

By September, 1944, the index of the Central Prisoners of War Agency contained over 23,000,000 cards relating to permanent delegates in forty-five countries had made some four thousand visits to camps, and in all seventy-seven coun-



tries had been covered by delegates and special missions. The incoming mail numbered 36,489,000 letters and cards, and the outgoing 38,225,000; in one month 134,200 letters and 5,900 telegrams passed through the Committee's different departments. Over 1,000,000 books had been forwarded to prisoners of war and civilian internment camps, and over 26,000,000 parcels, valued at approximately 24 milliard Swiss francs, had been handled by the Committee's Relief Division up to September, 1944.

Civilians, Too

The Committee's work does not, of course, stop at caring for sick and wounded prisoners of war and interned civilians, but has been extended, in the face of almost superhuman obstacles, to bring aid to civilian populations—especially women and children—in countries overrun by the war.

For this purpose what is known as the International Red Cross Joint Relief Commission was set up in 1940 by the International Red Cross Committee and the League of Red Cross Societies, and it was this organisation which, together with the Swiss and Swedish Red Cross Societies, was able to bring food and medical relief to the famine-stricken populations of Greece and to the children of Belgium.

Another activity of the International Red Cross Committee is the **Civilian Message Scheme**, by which civilians in one belligerent country can make contact with relatives and friends in another enemy or enemy-occupied country. By September, 1944, nearly 17,000,000 of these messages had been transmitted to and from people separated by the war.

The Committee's **Section for Civilian Research** had handled over 500,000 cases by the same date, some necessitating as many as fifty separate enquiries. The Central Index of the **Dispersed Families Section** will no doubt form the basis of a great post-war task of linking members of families who have become separated.

The Committee has its own **Maritime Transport** system known as the "Foundation for the Organisation of Red Cross Transport." It runs a fleet of twelve ships (three of which

This huge card index system contains over 23 million cards relating to prisoners of war and interned civilians of all nationalities.



(Left) Parcels for p.o.w.s. who were transferred to Germany from Italian camps, at Basle Station ready to be addressed by the International Red Cross. (Above) The routine inspection of parcels of goods for the camps.

are owned by the "Foundation") which ply between North and South Atlantic and Mediterranean ports, and carry relief goods for prisoners of war and civil populations. These ships, which are marked "International Red Cross Committee" and sail under neutral flags, all have on board a representative of the Committee. By September, 1944, they had transported 265,486 tons of relief goods.

Countless Services

Possibly one of the Committee's most important and delicate tasks is that of watching over the application of international conventions and in constantly appealing to belligerent Governments on behalf of war victims.

It will be realised that all this work, of which only a bare outline has been given here, is very costly. The Committee's expenses for the year 1943 amounted to 8,700,000 Swiss francs. Two-thirds of all the donations received came from Swiss sources; the remaining third is contributed by certain Governments and a small number of national Red Cross Societies.

I feel I cannot do better than conclude this article with a quotation from a recent publication of the International Red Cross Committee:

"It is not to be avoided, in an organisation of such dimensions as the Red Cross, and so largely dependent upon

* "The International Red Cross in Geneva—1863-1943."—Page 5.

helpers who are neither trained experts nor, in all cases, permanently available, that errors and delays sometimes occur. Where special, privileged channels are open to certain groups, or can be used for an isolated case here and there, it is obvious that enquirers will be satisfied more promptly. But the International Committee and its Agency view their mission above all as a service, not for some only, but for all without privilege or distinction. They rejoice to know that tens and hundreds of thousands are helped by other means than theirs; but the millions who have no access to special favours and whom nobody takes care of otherwise must also be served, and served first. The services demanded of the Committee are countless; they range from the transmission of prisoners' names by the tens of thousands from Government to Government, to the search for a single missing individual; from supplying a sick prisoner's request for some remedy indispensable to him but unobtainable in the enemy country, to rescuing whole sections of populations, such as the children in countries suffering from famine."

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.

Official Reports from the Camps

In every case where the conditions call for remedy, the Protecting Power makes representations to the German authorities. Where there is any reason to doubt whether the Protecting Power has acted it is at once requested to do so. When it is reported that food or clothing is required, the necessary action is taken through the International Red Cross Committee.

OFLAG VIIIB, EICHSTAETT

Strength on the day of visit, 1,504 officers and 236 other ranks. Since the last visit in June, 1944, two new huts are in the course of erection for further living quarters. A small kitchen in each hut allows for the cooking of private parcels.

Prisoners can only have two hot showers a month. The general health of all prisoners has remained good. Recreational facilities inside the camp are good, but all parole activities such as walks and visits to the cinema have been suspended for no given reason.

Censoring at this camp is unsatisfactory and mail is reported to be very slow. There is a new Commandant who is considered reasonable and fair. The camp is still overcrowded.

(Visited October, 1944.)

STALAG LUFT VII BANKAU

There are 800 British prisoners of war of the R.A.F., Royal Australian Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force in this camp. They are all non-commissioned officers.

At the moment the prisoners are all in temporary "standard huts," of which there are 190, each accommodating six prisoners. New barracks are being complete, and when these are ready for use it should be the best accommodation so far found in any prisoner of war camp in Germany. There is no lighting or heating in the temporary huts, but due to the very hot weather and the long days, there was, up to the time of the visit, no necessity for such facilities. When the new accommodation is ready there will be both lighting and heating.

Sixteen of these huts are available for special purposes, such as sick rooms, school rooms, offices and library. A large barrack for the kitchen has been erected. The prisoners cook their own food, the only complaints being that there were not enough kitchen utensils, and so far no ration scale has been supplied. There is no stock of Red Cross parcels, but a supply has been despatched from Geneva. As is usual in most of the camps, there is very little on sale in the canteen.

There is no provision for either hot or cold showers, but the men take daily cold showers underneath a pump in the open air.

There was no British doctor or medical orderly in the camp; the German authorities have asked for them. The German medical officer calls twice a week, and a German medical orderly looks after the sick. All prisoners have been inoculated against typhus.

The clothing situation is poor. There is a cobbler and a tailor attached to the camp, but there is very little repair material to be had.

The German authorities have asked for a Roman Catholic and a Church of England padre, who are expected to arrive shortly. At present a Methodist Minister is holding services.

Outdoor recreation is very satisfactory. There is a large free space where all sorts of games are played. Half of the kitchen barrack is being used as a ping-pong room where there are three tables available.

Mail is rather poor—in particular the receipt of private parcels. The German camp commandant is said to be satisfac-

for the other patients to walk to a nearby wood, where there are natural shelters.

Owing to the number of other Allied prisoners of war in this hospital, the one barrack assigned to British and American patients remains overcrowded.

Every patient has a hot bath once a week. There has been no shortage of water this summer. The food is reported to be better now than it has ever been in the past. There is a good stock of Red Cross parcels. Beer and a few matches are occasionally on sale in the canteen. Clothing is still satisfactory.

A new recreation hall has been opened which gives great satisfaction to all the prisoners. The mail from England has just started to arrive again. Medical treatment is most satisfactory. The British and American doctors are given an entirely free hand to run their section of the hospital, and all essential drugs have so far been supplied by the Germans. Surgical dressings are rather limited, but the gap is filled by Red Cross supplies. There were no complaints.

(Visited September, 1944.)



STALAG IXC

A group from a concert party held in this camp where there are 380 British prisoners of war. The general health of the camp is good.

tory and on good terms with the prisoners of war. When the new barracks are completed this camp should be very good indeed.

(Visited September, 1944.)

HOSPITAL RESERVE LAZARET, EBELSBACH

The number of patients on the day of the visit was 10 Americans and 47 British. There is one British medical officer and three medical orderlies. The only material change since the last visit in May, 1944, was the construction of an excellent air-raid shelter; a second is still being built. At present bed-patients are taken on stretchers to the completed shelter and doors are opened

STALAG IXC, MUEHLHAUSEN

The strength of this camp is 380 British prisoners of war, including 178 N.C.O.s, one medical officer and two chaplains. More than 100 prisoners had left this camp since the last visit in July.

Bathing and washing facilities are satisfactory and there were no complaints about food or cooking facilities. The order sent by the Red Cross to cut the issue of parcels to one per man per two weeks was accepted by the prisoners with understanding. The clothing situation was satisfactory.

Church of England and Roman Catholic services are held in the camp, but a recent order by the Germans forbidding chaplains to visit work detachments at

the Camps

any great distance from the main camp rather limits the padres' activities.

Outdoor recreation is very satisfactory. The prisoners are able to go out for sports every afternoon from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., as well as on Sunday mornings. Indoor entertainments were curtailed after the prisoners had written and acted a sketch which, in the opinion of the Germans, insulted their country.

Mail, as everywhere else, has become very slow, the arrival of private parcels being particularly bad. The general health of the camp is good, and in spite of the recent orders mentioned above, the spirit of the camp is still excellent.

(Visited September, 1944.)

LABOUR DETACHMENTS

DEPENDENT ON STALAG IXC

Working Detachment No. 1278, Gleichenberg was visited for the first time. The compound is situated in a beautiful wood about 1,800 feet above sea level. The present strength of the camp is 37 British prisoners of war who work in a stone quarry near the camp. Working hours are 10 per day, Sundays are always free. There were no complaints about working conditions.

The prisoners live in a stone-built house containing one dormitory, one day room, a kitchen and wash-room. There are double-tier beds with two German blankets for each prisoner, and most of them possess additional private ones. Lighting and heating are satisfactory. The roofs are reported to leak very frequently, but repairs are promised. Washing facilities are somewhat primitive, but cannot be considered as inadequate. The men receive the correct German heavy workers' rations. The prisoners have their own cook, and had a supply of Red Cross parcels for four weeks.

Medical attention is given by a civilian doctor and there is a British medical orderly in the camp. Dental treatment is good. The general state of health is satisfactory.

Although there is only a small stock of clothing in the camp, each prisoner has at least one uniform. Some have two. The camp has never been visited by a padre due to the recent order of the German High Command. The prisoners have had little chance to play games, but have been granted permission for a regular Sunday walk. In general this camp makes a good impression.

Labour Detachment No. 1401, Bleicheroede, is still reported to be a good working camp. 133 British prisoners work in a salt mine. The air-raid shelter provided at the mine for civilian workers is also available to the prisoners. There

OFLAG VIIIB

A group of officers at this camp which is still reported to be overcrowded.



are no bugs now. The Men of Confidence from Detachments No. 1416, Sollstedt, and No. 1015, Bischofferode, came to Detachment 1401 for interviews with the visiting delegate, and their detachments are reported to be good.

At No. 1416, 65 British prisoners of war work in a salt mine for nine hours a day, with every Sunday free. The Man of Confidence confirmed that this is the best accommodated camp in the Stalag area. The 127 prisoners at No. 1015 also work in a salt mine for nine hours per day; every second Sunday is free. There were no serious complaints.

Detachment 737, Menterode.—The 138 British prisoners of war are employed in a salt mine near the camp. Some men work underground and others on the surface. There is no overcrowding in the barracks and the interior arrangements are satisfactory. Some of the sleeping rooms are slightly infested with bugs, but arrangements for gassing the rooms are being made. Facilities for cooking private parcels are most primitive. Clothing is in order. Medical attention is given by a civilian doctor. Detachment 199, Springen, was expected to be moved shortly. The conditions at Springen were satisfactory. Detachment No. 106, Dornoff, where 58 British prisoners of war are employed in a potash mine, is also a good Detachment. Some clothing had arrived recently, and this matter is now better except for a lack of small-size shoes. The potato ration had been increased.

Detachment No. 1039, Craja.—The work in the salt mine at this Detachment is considered dangerous, and the delegate insisted that the 90 prisoners should be moved.

(Visited September, 1944.)

STALAG 357, OERBKE, nr. FALLINGBOSTEL

This camp was transferred from North-eastern Germany at the beginning of August, 1944. It is situated in a country area about 2 km. from the very small

town of Oerbke. The camp is composed of six compounds, the prisoners being able to move freely from one to another. The centre compound (E), which is very large, has plenty of spare space which can be used as sports fields. Also in this compound are several buildings for general use, such as four brick barracks installed as kitchens, six wooden barracks used as offices for the Men of Confidence; chapel, libraries, schoolrooms, workshops and two large laundries.

Compound "R" has 16 wooden barracks. Each of these barracks composes one large room, 72 prisoners sleeping in each on double-tier beds, and have two blankets each.

Compounds "A," "B" and "C" each have six large brick barracks, which are divided into eight large rooms, each one accommodating 72 prisoners with the same sleeping arrangements as for Compound "R."

Compound "A" is not yet occupied, as the barracks are still undergoing repair. When it is ready for use the Camp Commandant hopes to be able to reduce the number of prisoners in each room to 60, which will alleviate the overcrowding which at present exists.

Compound "D" is also unoccupied, but it is intended to use one of the two large brick barracks as a theatre and some schoolrooms and library, and the other as a church and some store rooms. The prisoners will be able to help in the work of repairing these barracks.

Air-raid trenches are being prepared, but as the camp is situated in a rural district it is said to be relatively safe.

On the day of the visit there were 6,512 prisoners in the camp, of whom 3,162 are R.A.F. N.C.O.s, who are not segregated from the Army personnel. This total also includes 945 Canadians, 349 Australians, 225 New Zealanders, and 415 South Africans. There were only three British prisoners of war in the camp hospital.

Daylight is insufficient in most of the brick barracks. It is intended to en-

large the existing windows and to open new ones in the two end rooms. There will be no electric lighting at all in the camp until the work of installing the fittings throughout the camp is finished. Each room has two stoves, except for Compound "R," where the stoves are ready for installation.

Washing and toilet facilities are adequate; in Compound "R" there is a large wash-house with 150 cold water taps, and hot water in large boilers every day.

Compound "C" has wash-rooms at the end of each barrack. Compounds "A" and "B", when completed, will have the same arrangements; in the meantime the prisoners from these compounds can use one of the large laundries in Compound "E." Each man is able to have a hot shower about once in ten days.

The prisoners cook their own food. They receive the same German rations as all other British prisoners of war. There was no complaint about the quality of the food. The chief difficulty is the lack of fuel for the boilers. There is no canteen at present in the camp, but the camp authorities promised to open one as soon as Compound "D" is completed. However, there is very little for sale.

At the time of visit there was no stock of Red Cross food parcels, owing to the large increase in personnel. Nor was there any stock of clothing, and some prisoners were without greatcoats.

There are three chaplains in the camp, one Church of Scotland, one Church Army, and one Methodist. Arrangements are being made for Roman Catholic and Church of England clergymen to visit the camp.

So far little has been done in the camp with regard to recreational facilities. The prisoners will be allowed to start on the work of completing Compound "D" so that they may have a theatre, library, school, etc. There is plenty of room for exercise within the compounds, including football and cricket, for which the prisoners have the necessary sports gear. The general state of health in this camp can be considered as good.

STALAG XIB, FALLING-BOSTEL

Of the 56 British prisoners of war in the main camp, four are N.C.O.'s and remainder other ranks. 1,981 British prisoners of war are in 10 work detachments based on the main camp.

There was an adequate supply of Red Cross parcels in the camp and labour detachments at the time of the visit. A new shipment of clothing had arrived and the position had consequently improved. Boot repair material is still short.

A Church of England padre arrived during June and is able to visit the working detachments. The camp leader is also able to go and visit the men stationed away from the main camp whenever he wants to.

The conditions in the camp hospital and infirmary are very good. On the day of the visit there were 22 patients in the hospital and three in the infirmary. The German authorities agreed to the transfer of four tubercular patients to the sanatorium at Elsterhorst as soon as transport was available.

No. 7004, Barum (Labour Detachment dependent on Stalag XIB) was visited for the first time since it was opened in December, 1943. 179 prisoners of war are engaged in laying a private railway line and live in two barracks situated in open country. There are nine rooms, each accommodating 20 men. A third barrack is used for washing purposes.

Interior arrangements are very satisfactory. There is plenty of space, and the heating, lighting and ventilation are good. Each man has two German blankets. A stove is available for cooking Red Cross and private parcels. Washing facilities are adequate. Cold showers daily and one hot shower weekly. The prisoners do their own laundry. Health is at a high standard and there is a good supply of medications in the small six-bed infirmary.

Every Sunday afternoon the prisoners are allowed to swim or play football. There is a supply of indoor games and musical instruments in the camp. Beer is delivered, but other canteen stocks are practically non-existent. Mail is rather slow at present.

(Visited August, 1944.)

Reports from other detachments dependent upon Stalag XIB, Nos. 7002-3 and 7004-7, appeared in last month's issue.



The funeral with full military honours of a prisoner of war from working detachment 855 attached to Stalag IVA, who died in hospital last year.

STALAG IVC

Repeated representations have been made through the Protecting Power concerning British prisoners of war in Stalag IVC, who are said to be working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, with one Sunday off a month. Sir James Grigg said in answer to a question in the House of Commons on January 16th that so far no satisfaction had been received, but that representations would be continued to be made as long as there is the slightest hope of achieving results.

CIVILIAN INTERNMENT CAMPS

ILAG WURZACH

Since the date of the last report on this family camp (see issue for May, page 6) there have been some improvements, but the camp cannot yet be considered as entirely satisfactory. It is crowded; there are still vermin, and there is little free space within the camp perimeter, although walks can be taken in the monastery garden every day and the sports ground is available once a week.

Kitchen equipment is very modern and the internees can prepare their own food from the official rations and from the contents of Red Cross food parcels. White bread and milk are provided for the sick and for the children. Each internee can have one hot shower a week. Medical attention is satisfactory, and the state of health is good.

The camp library contains several thousand books and the internees have some musical instruments and indoor games. They have formed an orchestra and a theatrical company. The children receive instruction from professional schoolmasters and the kindergarten is well equipped.

The situation as regards clothing is satisfactory, but there is a lack of repair material.

Last visited by the Protecting Power on the 1st June, 1944, and by the International Red Cross on the 7th September.

ILAG LIEBENAU

Since the date of the last report on this civilian internment camp (see issue for May, 1944, page 6) there have been no great changes. Materially, the camp makes a good impression, the convent and adjoining buildings being of modern construction, while the garden and courtyard are well looked after. It has, however, been necessary recently to take steps against vermin. Each internee can have a hot bath or shower every week.

(Continued on page 15.)

Groups from the Camps



STALAG XXA



OFLAG VA



STALAG IVB



HEILAG IVD/Z



STALAG IIID



STALAG VIII B



MARLAG U. MILAG NORD



STALAG 383

EXAMINATION SUCCESSES

DURING 1944 the number of examination entries more than doubled that of the previous year. Over 6,000 examination scripts have now been received, and over 3,000 results were announced last year. The proportion of total passes for the year was 78.5 per cent., a figure reflecting great credit on instructors and candidates.

In a recent pass list issued by the Royal Society of Arts, there were 29 first classes out of 147 entries. Two of those who gained first classes also obtained distinction in the oral test in French.

Information has been received from the Institute of Book-keepers that one of their examination candidates, who was awarded a prize in the summer examinations, has written to them saying that the certificates he gained have been instrumental in obtaining for him a good position since his repatriation to Australia.

A Rover crew has been started in Stalag 383. Some of its members have sent home studies for Part I of the 1943-44 Scout Woodbadge Papers, and they have been forwarded to the Scout headquarters in London.



A pass list for July to December, 1944, is in preparation and will be available soon. Application should be sent with 3d. in stamps to the Educational Books Section at the New Bodleian, Oxford.

The Theological Society at Oflag 79. This photograph was taken during the summer of last year.

Y.M.C.A. SPORTS MEDAL Won by District Man of Confidence

THE Y.M.C.A. sports medal, which was described in the January issue of the journal, may be awarded to any prisoner of war who has done especially good work in the interests of his fellow-men in captivity, as well as for outstanding sportsmanship. It has recently been won by a district man of confidence at Stalag IVA for carrying out his duties in "a most efficient and whole-hearted manner during his term of office" on the recommendation of the chief man of confidence as a token of esteem.

His Tasks

The tasks of a district man of confidence in looking after the interests of the detachments in his area are exacting and varied. He is responsible for the distribution of Red Cross parcels, cigarettes, clothing and boots, Y.M.C.A. sports equipment and games.

He also sees that boots are repaired and clothing renewed when necessary, organises inter-detachment sports and football matches, and changes books and gramophone records to ensure that there is a steady flow of new material.

Infinite patience and understanding are required in answering the numerous questions put to him by the men; and his settlement of any little troubles which may arise must be just.

THOSE who have been fortunate enough to be repatriated do not forget their companions they have left behind in the camps, and from many of them have come sums to be devoted to those who are still prisoners of war. Among them, Pte. F. Harfey, of Hastings, who was released from Switzerland, sends a contribution in appreciation of what the Red Cross was able to do for him and "to help my fellow-prisoners who are having a bad time in Germany." Men who are still in the camps frequently ask their relatives to forward donations for them to the Red Cross, and Mrs. Burton, of Stafford, is one of the next of kin who has forwarded £5 from her husband.

At the present time money from many of the past year's efforts is arriving. Mrs. McKinder forwards £55 from Hull, her third annual contribution, achieved by pickling onions, selling garden produce and fancy articles. "It has been hard work, but I have loved it," Mrs. McKinder assures us, and she is already planning another year's work. Mrs. Crowson, who lives in Lincoln, saves sixpence for every issue of "The Prisoner

How They Help

In addition to those mentioned below, we wish to thank the many kind readers whose help to the funds this month we cannot find room to record here individually

of War" which she receives, and among a host of regular supporters are Mrs. Huxford, of Woodbridge, and Mrs. Galloway, of Maida Vale, who send contributions every month.

Christmas sales of work find eager customers and once again we are indebted to those who have so successfully planned them to help the Red Cross. From a sale of home-made gifts and toys organised by Mrs. Francis (who had previously raised £69 by her own efforts) and three helpers at Wrexham has come £168. The 4th Whitby (County School) Guides have sent a cheque for £20, the result of a Christmas sale and entertainment which they arranged, while the Rayleigh Methodist Youth Club raised £60, also from a sale and concert, their fourth effort of this kind. A money order for £4 15s. has been sent by the pupils of Tynyrheol Council School, near Bridgend, as a special Christmas greeting and a Christmas gift of £10 came from

Percymain School, Cullercoats.

Mrs. Brinkworth, of Forest Gate, has been busy stitching gloves for sale among her friends, and slippers made by Mrs. Fry have been purchased by people in And-

over to the value of £10. £1 6s. has been sent by Mrs. O'Neill, of Preston, for her daughter, Pat, whose uncle is a prisoner of war, and has sold some of her precious story books to collect this money.

P.O.W.s Gifts for Children

Members of the Lothians and Border Yeomanry who are in Stalag 357 have sent home £100, asking that it should be spent to provide presents at Christmas-time for the children of their less fortunate comrades who have fallen in action.

£50 has also been received by the Welfare Fund of this regiment from men at Stalag 383, who made the same generous gesture of remembrance and loyalty to their comrades. As the money reached this country too late for Christmas, it will be used to send the children toys and savings certificates for Easter.

Red Cross Exhibition Coach

OVER 23,000 people in five Lancashire towns have now visited the Red Cross mobile Exhibition Coach, which continues its 4,000-mile railway tour of England. The Exhibition is contained in a bomb-damaged dining car which has been repaired, equipped with show-cases and lent to the Red Cross and St. John Penny-a-Week Fund by the L.M.S.

Red Cross activities displayed include services to prisoners of war of food parcels, comforts and training schemes; and work for the wounded shows their transport to hospital, comforts, medical and surgical stores, and some of the reconstruction done during convalescence.

The coach will be on view at the stations of at least 60 towns, and this month's programme is as follows:—

February.

1st, 2nd, Bradford (Forster Square).

3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, Leeds City (South).

8th, 9th, 10th, Darlington.

12th, 13th, 14th, Newcastle-on-Tyne (Central).

16th, 17th, Sunderland.

19th, 20th, West Hartlepool.

21st, 22nd, Middlesbrough.

23rd, 24th, 26th, York.

27th, 28th, March 1st, Hull (Paragon).

CAMP REPORTS

(Continued from page 12)

Food is still excellent and there is a good supply of Red Cross food parcels. Medical treatment is satisfactory and the general state of health is remarkably good. The supply of clothing, however, especially shoes, is proving something of a difficulty.

Recreational and educational facilities are as good as ever, although it was reported in June that the camp theatre had been closed for three months. The German authorities promised, however, to take the necessary steps to enable the internees to give performances again.

Last visited by the *Protecting Power* on the 2nd June, 1944, and by the *International Red Cross* on the 7th September.

ILAG KREUZBERG

Since the date of the last report on this camp (see issue for July, 1944, page 6) there have been no outstanding changes. There are approximately 370 internees in the camp, some of whom are volunteers working in four different working detachments.

Every internee enjoys a weekly bath. Arrangements for private cooking are satisfactory, and there is a stock of Red Cross food parcels. There was, however, a complaint that too many dried vegetables were being received.

The state of health of the internees is generally satisfactory. Recreational and exercise facilities are still excellent.

Last visited by the *Protecting Power* on July 24th, 1944.

KNIT THIS Cosy Cap

MATERIALS.—2 oz. 3-ply. Two No. 5 Knitting Needles.

TENSION.—4½ st. to the inch in width (not stretched) must be obtained. If, using the needles recommended, more than 4½ st. to the inch are obtained, needles a size coarser should be tried; if less than 4½ st., then a size finer. Whatever the size of needles found suitable by the Knitter, it is absolutely essential that the fabric should measure 4½ st. to the inch.

TO MAKE.—Cast on 90 st.

1st Row.—K. 2, * P. 1, K. 1, repeat from * to the end of the row. Repeat this row sixteen times.

18th Row.—Knit plain.

19th Row.—K. 1, purl to the last st., K. 1. Repeat the 19th and 20th rows for four inches. Shape for the crown as follows:—

1st Row.—* K. 16, K. 2 tog., repeat from * to the end of the row.

2nd and alternate rows.—K. 1, purl to the last st., K. 1.

3rd Row.—* K. 15, K. 2 tog., repeat from * to the end of the row.

5th Row.—* K. 14, K. 2 tog., repeat from * to the end of the row.

7th Row.—* K. 13, K. 2 tog., repeat from * to the end of the row.



By courtesy of Patons & Baldwins

Continue decreasing in this manner in every alternate row until 40 st. remain.

Proceed as follows:—

1st Row.—K. 2 tog., * P. 6, P. 2 tog., repeat from * to last 6 st., P. 5, K. 1.

2nd Row.—* K. 5, K. 2 tog., repeat from * to end of row.

3rd Row.—K. 2 tog., * P. 4, P. 2 tog., repeat from * to last 4 st., P. 3, K. 1.

4th Row.—* K. 3, K. 2 tog., repeat from * to end of row.

5th Row.—K. 2 tog., * P. 2, P. 2 tog., repeat from * to last 2 st., P. 1, K. 1.

Break off the wool, run the end through the remaining st., draw up and fasten off securely. With a damp cloth and hot iron press carefully. Sew up the seam. Turn back the brim.

A Prisoner's Poetry

SGT. R. P. L. MOGG, a journalist by profession, who was shot down over Germany and taken prisoner early in the war, vividly expresses his experiences of flying with the R.A.F. in six moving poems written during captivity.

A fellow prisoner of war, Sgt. J. W. Lambert, has contributed striking pictures to illustrate the poems which he has lettered beautifully in Gothic style.

The collection, under the title of the first poem, *For This Alone*, published by Basil Blackwell (8s. 6d.), is printed in facsimile just as it was received from the prisoner of war camp. It includes verses on the vigil of airmen's wives and a flight of bombers, which reveal a sensitive imagination, and the "Requiem for Dead Airmen" with which the book ends is remarkable for its simplicity.

An introduction by Edward Alderton reminds those who might accuse the

author of being morbid that the dividing line between operational flying and death is of a very nebulous character.

For This Alone is an unusual book which demonstrates once again the patience and creativeness with which prisoners of war master their circumstances.

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.

Please Study This Carefully

NEXT-OF-KIN PARCELS

WITH reference to the instructions on p. 16 of the Prisoner of War for December, please note that the allowance of 20 extra coupons (and extra chocolate and soap) made to compensate for 1944 issues missed owing to the suspension of despatches, can be made only up to the end of February and only next of kin who still hold a 1944/3 label (or a 1944 issue) with 20 coupons.

Next of kin who qualify, and apply for, the extra coupons for use with a label already in their possession, are particularly requested **not** to despatch a parcel with this label before they receive the extra coupons, **because these must be accounted for at the same time as the issue already held.**

If a parcel is sent in without the extra coupons being accounted for at the same time, they will have to be sent back to the Packing Centre for clearance, before any subsequent label can be issued.

The extra allowances cannot, in any circumstances, be made with a 1944/4 or any 1945 label.

Applications should state clearly whether the next of kin holds an issue of label and coupons, and if so, its number.

IMPORTANT.—Please note that no applications for an extra allowance of coupons to be used with a 1944 label will be considered after February 28th, 1945. Applications received after that date will not be answered.

DESPATCHES FROM FINSBURY CIRCUS AND GLASGOW

In consequence of the very great number of parcels received since the beginning of December and the difficulty

of obtaining extra labour, the despatches from the Packing Centres at Finsbury Circus and Glasgow are about one month in arrears.

The issue of labels and coupons is also consequently delayed.

All possible steps are being taken to overcome the difficulties, and next of kin are asked to help by not making enquiries about the despatch of their parcel and the issue of their next label and coupons until at least two months have elapsed since they posted their parcel.

FOUR REMINDERS

Here are four reminders from Finsbury Circus Packing Centre which, if followed, will help Red Cross workers to deal with your parcels with the least possible delay:—

1. When packing your parcel, please be careful to see that it is not overweight. If it is, some important article may have to be returned to you.
2. When ordering chocolate and soap it must be remembered that the final weight of the parcel after the addition of these articles must not be more than 10 lb. Money for chocolate or soap, also invoices, coupons and acknowledgment card must be sent inside the parcel—not by separate letter post.
3. All articles intended for inclusion in a parcel should be sent in together; it is exceedingly difficult to link up articles sent in at different times.
4. All three copies of the invoice which accompany each parcel to the Packing Centre should be clearly written so that they can be checked quickly.

STAFF WANTED

THE Prisoners of War Department, St. James's Palace, S.W.1, is urgently in need of staff, i.e., correspondence, filing and indexing clerks; shorthand and copy typists (**women only**). Full time or part time (30 hours weekly).

Offers of assistance, voluntary or salaried, would be much appreciated, and should be addressed to:—

The Personnel Officer, Prisoners of War Department, B.R.C.S. and St. John, St. James's Palace, S.W.1.

Hours of interview: 10.30 a.m. to 12 p.m. or 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., with the exception of Saturday afternoons.

Money from P.O.W.s

As many enquiries about remittances from prisoners are still being addressed to St. James's Palace, we reprint this notice.

Arrangements have been made with the German Government which enables a prisoner of war to transfer any part of his credit balance in Germany to this

country. These arrangements operate as from November 1st, 1943.

Notifications of the prisoners' wishes are received by the Government on lists transmitted through Switzerland, and relatives will understand that these lists take longer to reach this country than letters from individual prisoners informing them of the impending remittances.

Enquiries should not be addressed to the Red Cross, which is not concerned in such payments. Relatives will hear in due course from the Paymaster or bank concerned.

YOUR ENQUIRIES

The Prisoners of War Department at St. James's Palace is very busy and very short of staff.

To enable essential enquiries to be answered with as little delay as possible, will you please make your letters as **SHORT and CLEAR** as you can.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

If you are expecting your prisoner home in the forthcoming repatriation, do not forget to notify the appropriate Service Department or Record Office and the local, Red Cross P.O.W. representative of any change of address.

P.O.W. Exhibition Catalogues

A few copies of the catalogue of the Prisoners of War Exhibition held in London last year are still available (price 6d., or 7d. including postage).

Those who wish to order a catalogue as a record of their impressions of the exhibition should apply to:—

Mr. Tomlins, Red Cross and St. John War Organisation, Publicity Department, 24, Carlton House Terrace, London, S.W.1.

COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Please note the following change of address:—

ESSEX: Mrs. Hanbury, The Central Library, Duke Street, Chelmsford.

HAMPSHIRE: The p.o.w. representative is:

Mrs. T. Dodd, Old Library House, Dean Park Road, Bournemouth.