

The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

Autumn 2003 Newsletter

[◀ Back](#) [■ Home](#) [▶ Next](#)

ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan, President & Honorary General Secretary._

Contact details 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel/Fax 01753-818308.

In this issue we would like to remember the six members of the Royal Military Police who were shot in Basrah as they put their hands up in surrender. The men were killed during street protests at Majar al-Kabir, apparently due to heavy handed weapons searches. Due to inadequate communications, paratroops nearby were unaware of their plight and reinforcements arrived too late. Eight paratroops were also hurt in fighting in their area. The men had sought refuge in the town police station and the majority were executed there, before it was set alight. Sgt Simon Hamilton-Jewell, 41 was the most senior of the Red Caps. With him were Cpl Russell Aston, 30; Cpl Paul Long, 24; Cpl Simon Miller, 21; L/Cpl Ben Hyde, 23 and L/Cpl Tom Keys, 20. They were flown home with full military honours on 2nd July. To the best of our knowledge the perpetrators of this outrage are still at large. Our thoughts are with their families and with those still serving their country in Iraq.

It may be appropriate to include here one of two poems sent in by James Reeder entitled 'A Common Soldier'.

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was failing fast
And he sat around the Legion telling stories of the past
Of what a war he had fought in and the deeds that he had done
In the exploits with his buddies they were heroes every one

Tho' sometimes to his neighbours his tale became a joke
All his Legion buddies listened for they knew whereof he spoke
But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Bill has passed away
And the World's a little poorer for a soldier died today

He'll not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife

For he lived an ordinary, quiet and uneventful life
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going on his own way
And the World won't note his passing, though a soldier died today

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great
Papers tell their life stories from the time that they were young
But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land
A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?
Or the ordinary fellow in times of war and strife
Goes off to serve his country and offers up his life?

A politicians stipend and the style in which he lives
Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives
While the ordinary soldier who offers up his all
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps a pension small

It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago
That the 'Old Bills' of our country went to battle, but we know
It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys
Who won for us the freedom that our country now enjoys

Should you find yourself in danger with your enemies at hand
Would you want a politician with his ever shifting stand?
Or would you prefer a soldier who has sworn to defend
His home, his kin and the country and would fight until the end

He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin
But his presence should remind us we may need his like again

For when countries are in conflict then we find the soldiers part

Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start

If we cannot do him honour while he's here to hear the praise

Then at least lets give him homage at the ending of his days

Perhaps just a simple headline in paper that would say

'Our country is in mourning for a soldier died today.'

NEW MEMBERS. We would like to welcome the following new members to our association: **Mr Fred Sivewright** from RAF Combined Ops who fell in the bag on Kos in 1943. **Mr Bob Avis** from HM submarine *Seal*. **Mr Ambrose Hunter** who was taken prisoner at St Valery and is a former resident of Blechhammer. **Associate Members; Mrs Mary Kendall** whose late father was a resident of Marlag and Milag Nord. He fell in the bag at Suda Bay in Crete in 1941. **Mr Richard Budd** whose father was in Campo 54 at Fara-in-Sabina in Italy and Stalag 4B in Germany. **Mr Eddy Good** whose father was taken prisoner at Kalamata in Greece. **Mrs E Walker** the sister of L/Cpl Howe, Royal Signals. **Mr John Hinchmore** whose grandfather was captured at Anzio. **Mr Darren Payne** whose grandfather was taken prisoner during the defence of Calais in May 1940. If you are a new member and we have not yet given you a mention please drop a line to Phil our newsletter editor.

BACK ISSUES FOR NEW MEMBERS. When new members join us, we try to send them any back issues they may have missed. If you are missing any back issues please contact Phil and let him know which issues you already have. We have spare copies going back to 2001.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS. We usually include a reminder in every newsletter to encourage those who may have forgotten to renew on 1st January. We usually continue to send newsletters even when a cheque has not been forthcoming. We have now decided that this is not really fair to those members who do pay their subscriptions on time. The last issue of this year will be the Winter edition, going out in December and it will contain a reminder to members to send in their subscriptions for 2004. Any member who has not renewed by the end of January 2004 will be removed from the mailing list, to allow us to concentrate our efforts on those who have.

STAMPS. We are happy to reply to any letters sent in to Headquarters, but would request that a stamp is sent in if a reply is required. Thanks to Mary Kendall, Mr Ambrose Hunter, Mr Jim Harper and Mr Fred Sivewright for the spare stamps.

GERMAN POW RECORD CARDS. We have been advised that the current contact point for requests for photocopies of your German POW record card is Cathy Pammenter, in the Veterans Advice Unit, Veterans Agency, Room 6129, Norcross, Blackpool FY5 3WP. Tel 01253-333600.

DONATIONS. We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to the welfare fund; Mr J Darrall £5, Mrs Barbara Duffy £5, Mr G H Francis £15, Mr I Gordon £5, Mr J Green £5, Mr D Hanson £10, Mr B F Jackson £10, Mr Darren Payne £15, Mrs B E Raworth £75, Mr J K Reed £5, Mr F Ruse £10, Mr F G Walker £15, Mr Robert S Ward £15, Mr G Wilson £5, Mr Cal Younger £40.

OBITUARIES. We have been advised that Gordon Reid, formerly of the Gordon Highlanders and Stalag 20B passed away at the beginning of the year. He was a good friend of Frank Ruse having worked together at the gas works in Marienburg. Our thoughts go out to his wife Joanna.

WELFARE REPORT by Flt Lt Ken Jackson. If you are 60 or over on 21st September 2003 you may be eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment of up to £200 from the Government. And if you will be 80 or over, you may get an extra payment of up to £100. If you received the payment last year and your circumstances have not changed, you do not need to do anything. You should automatically receive your payment by Christmas 2003. However, if your circumstances have changed and you have maybe moved house, you will need to let them know on 08459-151515. The Helpline is open from 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday, charged at local rates. Claim forms can be requested from Winter Fuel, Freepost, Darlington DL3 9ZQ and can also be downloaded from the internet at www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel . If you are claiming for the first time, make sure you get the claim form in by 19th September to receive the payment by Christmas. The final deadline for claims this winter is 30th March 2004.

HISTORIANS NEWS.

-

Contact details Mr Philip Chinnery (editor) 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB.

A Thank You to **Michael Booker** for the copy of the paperback book 'Will not we fear' by C.E.T. Warren and James Benson. The book tells the story of the men of H.M.Submarine SEAL, of which more will follow below.

Thank you to **Barrie Walker** in New Zealand for the copy of the memoir of the experiences of Cliff Cavill and Les Hahn at Campo 85 Tukurano and Campo 78 at Sulmona. Especially glad to see information on work camp 78/1 at Aquafredda. We have also received a letter from **Allain Coleman** in Westport, New Zealand. He sent us a copy of his 80 page memoirs entitled 'In those days' for our archives and tells us that there are now only three ex-POWs in the Westport Branch of the New Zealand Ex-POW Association, one of whom is Scot Andrew Russell who emigrated in 1960. Allain was a resident at the factory at Brux, and experienced the air raids on the complex, the results of which were featured on the front cover of the Winter 2001 newsletter.

THE OBERMASSFELD NURSES. Christine Lawrance wrote in regarding the photo on page 8 of the summer newsletter, showing three nurses together with the resident medical staff at Obermassfeld. "I found this information on page 296 in 'The Private Papers of Hore-Belisha' published in 1960. Hore-Belisha, now in his fifty-first year and regarded by his friends as a confirmed bachelor because of his undimmed devotion to his mother, surprised them by announcing his intention to marry. Before the war he had met Miss Cynthia Elliot, who was tall, dark, attractive and vivacious. In May 1940, together with two friends, she had formed the first

British Womens Mobile Canteen Unit, which was attached to the French Army. The following month, when they were in a wood near Nancy, the Germans broke through and they were taken prisoner. Cynthia, in captivity for three and a half years, served as a nurse and ward sister in British prisoner of war camps. She was repatriated with other British women in November 1943 and was awarded the BEM in March 1944, 'for devotion to duty and untiring services in a prisoner of war hospital in Germany'. Hore-Belisha met her again shortly after her return and they were married in June 1944."

MORE ON THE H.M. SEAL STORY. Michael Booker has sent in a copy of the paperback book 'Will not we fear' by C.E.T. Warren and James Benson. The book tells the story of the men of H.M.Submarine SEAL, their escape from an icy tomb and subsequent captivity. Michael is the editor of The Colditz Society Newsletter and he has sent in a copy of their summer edition for our archives. He also tells me that three of the crew were sent to Colditz; Trevor Beer, the 2.i.c of the submarine and two Engine Room Artificers 'Wally' Hammond and 'Tubby' Lister. These two asked to be sent to a working camp near Stalag 8B from where they managed to escape and make a 'home run' to Switzerland. Captain Rupert Lonsdale joined the Church after the war.

Mr R Lee formerly with BAB21 wrote in to tell us that he is still in touch with 87-year old 'Happy' Eckersall one of the six remaining survivors of the crew. He also sent in a couple photos showing 'Happy' together with fellow crewmember the late Frank Algar and 'Dolly' Grey from HMS Gloucester (sunk off Crete in 1941) and Horace Jarvis from HMS Kos.

Sydney Barthorpe tells us that the man killed when the submarine was strafed was A.B.Smith. Commander Lonsdale died at his home in Malta aged 90+. Four of the crew were with Sydney at Blechhammer, Geoff Cole, Frank Land, Brigham Young and Albert 'Happy' Eckersall. We are writing to the surviving crew members to invite them to join our association.

UPDATE ON THE ITALIAN POW CAMP LIST. Michael Booker tells us that Campo 145 was at Campolosto. Courtney Smithers confirms that Campo 98 was in Sicily, probably at or near Palermo. Frederic Gilberthorpe writes in his book '*Footprints*' that Campo 82 at Laterina was later used as a transit camp, named Dulag 32. He passed through the camp after being taken prisoner following the Anzio landings. It has taken me two years to find a copy of his 150 page paperback book, that was published in 1993. It was well worth the wait as it tells of his travels from Anzio to Laterina to Moosburg, then Muhlberg and thence to Stalag 344 and the arbeits kommandos in Poland.

Stalag 9C feedback from George Robb in Oxford; "The summer newsletter had two photos which brought back memories to me. I was at Stalag 9C Bad Sulza in 1940 and at the salt mine at Menterode. In 1941 Corporal Hamish Gow (Gordon Highlanders) and I made a clean escape from there. We were captured three days later whilst waiting to hitch a ride on a goods wagon. I was given 21 days solitary on bread and water, then sent to a punishment camp at Rhomhild, a stone quarry. I was later injured there and taken to Obermassfeld, where I told the top doctor, Lt Col Wilson I think, how conditions were at the quarry. I believe he let the Red Cross know about the place and I later found out that things were much better. When I had recovered I was given a job in the wards, so that I would not be sent back to the quarry. I wonder if Jim Charters at Menterode remembers the escape?"

VICHY POW CAMPS IN AFRICA. Member Bernard de Neumann has been carrying out research into the Vichy French POW, concentration and work camps in Africa during WWII. I have logged a copy of his 13 pages of notes into our archives and look forward to seeing the finished report. If anyone would like to contact Bernard please send a letter to Phil Chinnery to forward to him.

FRAU MULLERS CAT. A tale sent in by Bob Jones, one of our members captured at Arnhem in September 1944. Bob went to Stalag 4B at Muhlberg and then to a Stalag 4D arbeits kommando at Merseberg. He would like to hear from anyone who was in the same locations. One hundred prisoners were housed in the concert hall at the rear of a beer parlour in the village of Meuscham on the River Saale, very close to Merseberg, to make up working parties at the local chemical works. Bob was with a team working at some surface mines preparing them as air raid bunkers for the use of the local civilians as the allied air assault was stepped up.

Frau Muller was responsible for cooking the meagre rations for both guards and men. She had a very plump cat that was always draped around her neck. Many a mans eyes followed her movements, very hungry men fancied her bit of 'Pussy'. Eventually the cat disappeared and then its head and skin turned up. Frau Muller demanded to know who the vile perpetrators were who had eaten her cat. She refused to cook for the men until the culprits owned up and they had to scavenge in the fields for eleven days to survive. Bob still does not know how the cat got cooked on the small heating stoves that were available, nor how they masked the smell of cooking. But who did eat the cat?

Bob and Tom Carpenter, who was also taken prisoner at Arnhem, revisited the village of Meuscham recently. They were directed to the house of a family who had lived there during the war and on arrival they were invited into the rear garden and presented with a large iced beer. Bob asked the hostess, Gertrande Kopka, if anyone remembered a Frau Muller who had lived there during the war and she replied 'Yes, she was the lady who always walked around with a stuffed cat around her neck.'

VISIT TO STALAG XXA THORN. Associate member Tim Grimes has just returned from Poland. He went in search of locations visited by his father Private George Hugh Grimes of the Queens Own Royal West Kents. 'Freddy' Grimes was captured at Hazebrouk and was liberated by the US Army near Schwerin on 2nd May 1945. "I found Fort 13, south of Thorn. It is now an operational Polish Air Force camp. They have a lot of photographs and a growing collection of artefacts and documents. I believe Graham King visited the fort a couple of years earlier. I enclose a photo of the fort as it is today. It was very moving to stand in the corridors and rooms of the fort where my father had been, over 60 years ago. One thing which particularly struck me is that Graham had mentioned sun bathing on top of the fort. In my fathers notes about 1940 he too refers to; 'a very pleasant afternoon spent on top of the fort. Sun quite warm'. Some very poignant POW graffiti survives.

"The pale blue three-storey Kommandantory (Camp 13A) in ul Okolna, was probably built for its purpose as the Stalag HQ. It is outside the present military units, although used by the armed forces. It can be seen externally, from the public road. There is quite a lot of information about the 16 forts generally, although some are decrepit or inaccessible. Fort 4 (very similar to Fort 13) can be publicly visited, I believe that there is even a hotel there. I located Fort 12 and Fort 14 nearby and there are maps and books available about the forts generally.

"I tried to ascertain where the main Stalag XXB Marienburg camp had been, based on Red Cross descriptions of the site, but although I saw several sites, I found no convincing evidence. I am writing to the local museum, but wonder if any of the members know the answer? What I did find, at Malbork, was the Commonwealth War Graves Commission POW cemetery. Amongst others, was the grave of A.A.Buxton, who had died at 21 years old, on 16th August 1940. He had been in my fathers regiment and was the same age.

"I found Marynowy, (Ak 170 roadmaking) which, graves at the local church confirmed, had been Mairenau, but I found no evidence of POW activity. I shall write to the parish priest. I also visited Koscierzyna and made enquiries at a sawmill just out of town. The owner of the sawmill explained that there were many sawmills 'near' Behrent, but only one 'at' Behrent, which we went to see. It is now owned by a fairly large Polish building materials business called Tartak. (Ak 717).

"I had no luck finding the sugar factory at Altefelde. Again I shall write to the parish priest. If any members have trodden these paths before and have some answers, please let me know. I hope to visit Poland again next spring."

PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF NEWSLETTER ONLY.

Caption - Fort 13 at Thorn as it is today.

BOOK REVIEW. **'Von der Front aufs Feld'** by Edith Petschnigg. Roughly translated as 'From the front to the field – British prisoners of war in the Steiermark 1941-45'. The Reichsgau Steiermark is an area of eastern Austria on the border with Hungary. Known during the war as Wehrkreis XVIII (18) it contained the following POW camps; Oflag 18B and Stalag 18A at Wolfsberg; Oflag 18C, Stalag 18B, Stalag 18A/Z and Ilag 18 at Spittal an der Drau; Stalag 18C at Markt Pongau; Stalag 18D and Stalag 18B/Z at Marburg and der Drau; Oflag 18A at Lienz and Stalag 18B and Oflag 18A at Wagna. Yes, the numbers and locations were moved around a bit. For instance Stalag 18B was at Spittal from Feb 41 to Oct 42 and then moved to Wagna until it became an officers camp in August 1943.

As we know, most of the British, Australian and New Zealand residents of the POW camps were employed on arbeits kommandos and the bulk of the book covers the experiences of these working parties. I was particularly pleased to see an 18 page list of kommandos as an appendix and a list on page 297 of the files in the public record office which mention Wehrkreis XVIII. The kommando numbers ended with an 'L' for Landwirtschaft or 'GW' for Gewerblichen Wirtschaft. Basically farming/forestry or factory/construction work respectively. The book also contains some good photos of groups of men in the kommandos and a very good picture on page 72 of British POWs working at the bomb damaged Graz railway station.

This excellent book tells you everything you would like to know about the camps with the designation XVIII, unfortunately it does it in German. Edith, a heartfelt request on behalf of our members – can we have an English edition please? Available in softcover, 307 pages with illustrations and maps, from the Ludwig Boltzmann-Institut für Kriegsfolgen-Forschung, Schorgelgasse 43, A-8010 Graz, Austria. Price Euro 19.90. ISBN 3-901661-09-3. Their homepage is at www.bik.ac.at and their fax number 0043/316/822500-33.

Whilst on the subject of books, Jean McDevitt tells us that she still has a small number of copies of her husbands book **'My escape from Crete'**. The cost is 44 New Zealand dollars or the equivalent in British bank notes or Sterling cheque. Write to Jean at 43 Cambridge Terrace, Papatoetoe, Auckland 1701, New Zealand.

ROYAL AIR FORCE NEWS.

-

Mr Fred B. Sivewright in Dundee would like to hear from anyone who knew him in Stalag 4B. He was an L.A.C. with 6 ALG when he was taken prisoner on Kos.

Chas Marshall, our Chairman tells us that Mr Kevin Wilson is writing a book about Bomber Command and he is very keen to locate anyone who flew on the Berlin raids in December 1943,

especially on the 29th. If you were involved in bombing operations between 1943 and 1945 Kevin would like to hear from you at 120, Heathbank Road, Cheadle, Hulme, Cheshire SK8 6HX.

Our Dutch associate member Ben van Drogenbroek has sent us in issue number one of the Stalag Luft 3 newsletter that he and some friends have published. If you have an interest in Stalag Luft 3 this 8 page newsletter is for you. Ben can be contacted at Stadhouderslaan 32, 3417 TW Montfoort, The Netherlands.

-

BOOK REVIEW. **KIWI SPITFIRE ACE** by Jack Rae. The author gained his wings in New Zealand in 1940 and was posted to Britain as a Sergeant Pilot. He converted to Spitfires in early 1941, becoming an 'ace' and completing more than 50 operational sorties with 485 (NZ) Squadron. He was subsequently posted to Malta as part of a group of fighter pilots reinforcing the islands defenders. In Malta Rae served with the famous 'Screwball' Beurling, Buck McNair, Ray Hesslyn, 'Laddie' Lucas and 'Jumbo' Gracie among others. At the height of the Luftwaffes all-out onslaught designed to neutralise the island in preparation for invasion, more than 90 percent of the squadrons aircraft were lost. Ray was shot down and wounded but recovered and was posted back to Britain.

The same day as he was promoted to Flight Commander he was forced to crash-land his aircraft in France due to engine failure. He was captured and spent the next 20 months in POW camps. Most of his time was spent in Stalag Luft 3 where he suffered a spell in solitary confinement for a failed escape attempt. As the Russians advanced during the bitterly cold winter of 1944-45 the camp moved westwards, an ordeal that killed many prisoners and guards. He escaped from one temporary camp but became so hungry that after a week he broke back into the camp again. He was finally freed near Bremen by advancing British troops. Hard cover, 183 pages with photos. Published by Grub Street, 10 Chivalry Road, London SW11 1HT. £17.99. ISBN 1-902304-78-0.

John Nichol tells us that his book **'The Last Escape'** will be published by Penguin books this September, priced at £7.99. A great amount of research went into this book and it is a must for anyone seeking information on the death march to the west through the winter of 1944-45.

Photo right; sent in by Vic Reid

and featuring some of the men of
arbeits kommando 137 at

Unterbriehach in Thuringen. It

was a salt mine and factory that

produced a fertiliser called Kainit.

Around 100 men lived in the camp.

HARD COPY OF NEWSLETTER ONLY

FREEDOM GATE – KOREA.

One of our members, Henry O’Kane, was in a group of eight former prisoners of war who were recently invited by the Federation of Korean Industries to spend six days in Seoul, with all expenses paid. On his return he sent in this report:

On Sunday 27th July 2003 twenty-one nations gathered together in Panmunjom, South Korea to celebrate the 50th anniversary since the signing of the armistice agreement ending the Korean war. 1,600 attended the ceremony, which included 1,200 veterans who were a part of the United Nations forces in Korea. The rest were made up of various statesmen from the 21 nations in the UN. The United Kingdom was represented by the Minister for Veteran Affairs, Ivor Caplin, MP. Also represented were members of the 27,000 US Army Command currently stationed in South Korea, together with serving Republic of Korea soldiers.

During the early days of the war, which began on 25th June 1950 when the communist North Korean army crossed the border into the South, many Americans were taken prisoner. At the end of the war over 8,000 men were still unaccounted for. Over 1,000 British and Commonwealth men were taken prisoner and about 140 of them died in captivity. Whereas the early American captives faced the brutality of the North Korean guards, most of the British were taken prisoner by the Chinese and there was a higher rate of survival. Nevertheless the Chinese did not recognise the Geneva Convention and no Red Cross parcels were ever seen in North Korea. The lack of medical treatment and poor diet took its toll. The POW’s uniforms were confiscated and blue Chinese peasant suits were worn. Communist indoctrination continued for all of our time there. Most POWs were released in August 1953.

Photograph from left to right;

T. McConaghy, J. Lavery, M. Vance captured 3rd January 1951 and Henry O’Kane captured 25th April 1951 all Royal Ulster Rifles; J. Kenworthy Royal Leicesters captured 17th November 1951; A. Hogg Royal Engineers captured 25th April 1951; E. Curd and John Underwood from 41 Marine Commando captured November 1950.

Front cover photos sent in by David Welch. (Hard copy of newsletter only). The small photo shows his fathers Stalag 20B arbeits kommando posing for the obligatory photo for the folks back home. The large photo shows the day of liberation. Their guards have just taken to their heels and the men are having a brew up while waiting for the Yanks to arrive.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

-

If you can help please contact Phil Chinnery, address above.

We have been contacted by the German Nature Protection Federation who are responsible for the 'Hohen Forest' in **Kirchberg**, Saxony. They are reconstructing a small tunnel built by English and South African prisoners of war, searching for wolframit/tungsten. The work took place from April 1944 onwards. If you may have been involved please contact Daniel J Hahn, Bahnhofstrasse 5, 82223 Eichenau, Germany. Tel 0049-8141-437043.

Mrs E Walker in Thirsk would like to hear from anyone who was at Campo 21 Chieti in 1942/3 and was transferred to Stalag 8B/344 and Blechhammer. Her brother L/Cpl W V Howe of the Royal Signals was taken prisoner 1st June 1942 and later followed that route.

Mr Eddy Good in North Tyneside would like hear from anyone who was in **Stalag 18A** Wolfsburg arbeits kommando A10084GW at Lassach or A11079GW Mallinitz on road work. His father Driver Edward Good of the RASC was a resident in both places having been taken prisoner at Kalamata in Greece.

Mr Colin J Savage in Nottinghamshire would like to hear from anyone who may have been in any of the following Stalag 8B arbeits kommandos with his father L/Cpl **James Savage** of the 4th Bn Gordon Highlanders; **E ???** at Schalkendorf in the Kreis (Area of) Oppeln. **E131** Stone Quarry Tiefbau Pollok at Gogolin in the Kreis Gross Strehlitz. **E460** railway bridge? **E276** which was a sugar beet factory at Ottmachau. **E114** at Gross Kunzensdorf in the Kreis Neisse, which was a stone factory. **E234** at Tonhain, in the Kreis Bunzlau where he worked for T Schirner (The owner) in a Tonwerke. **E538** at Sosnowice where he worked in a mine.

Mr David Brown, 8324, Scottingham Drive, Richmond, VA 23236-2674, USA is a former 4th US Infantry Division soldier who was taken prisoner during the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944. He was taken to Stalag 3A Luckenwalde and sent to arbeits kommando 340 at Neues Lager,

Jueterbog which was a tree-cutting work party. If you were at **Stalag 3A** he would like to hear from you.

Member Barry Jackson in Barnstaple was a Sgt in the Glider Pilot Regiment who fell in the bag at Arnhem and took up residence at **Stalag 8C Sagan**. If you were also at Sagan he would like to hear from you.

A Czech historian would like to hear from any member who was in the following working parties registered to **Stalag 8A Gorlitz**: 14502 Bodish (Railway), 14503 Unter-Weckelsdorf (Saw Mill) or 14504 Weckelsdorf (Woods). His address is Mr Petr Hnyk, B.Nemcove 160, 549 57 Teplice nad Metuji, Czech Republic.

Professor Simon Miller, 52 Brookburn Road, Manchester, M21 8FE is writing a biography of Alison Uttley, creator of the little grey rabbit, believer in ghosts and time-travel and first woman undergraduate at University of Manchester. Her son Gunner John Uttley spent time in **Stalag VII B Memmigen** in 1943. Simon would like to hear from anyone who knew John or who was in Stalag VII B.

An Tobac in Belgium would like to reconstruct the five years her grandfather Alphonse Joseph Tobac spent as a POW at **Stalag 8A**. He was in kommando 3101 Spindelmuhle 12/7/40 to 24/10/41; kommando 3121 Arnau 24/10/41 to 24/9/44. Then Stalag 8B from 14/1/45 to 22/1/45 before marching 825 kilometers to Arnberg with 153 fellow POWs. Please email tobacarnold@skynet.be

Ian Anderson in Suffolk would like to hear from anyone remembering his late father **R.J. 'Jack' Anderson**, 7th Bn Royal Norfolks, captured with 51st Highland Division at St Valery on 12th June 1940. He was at Schubin July 40, Warthelager July 40 to July 43, Posen March to July 44, Wykowitsch near Bendsburgh, Poland July 44 to Feb 45 and working camps at Kzotoschin June to Dec 43, Ostrowow Dec 43 to March 44. Were you in any of those places? If you were, why not drop a line to Ian who would appreciate the info.

Seeking any ex-prisoners of war, especially RAF who were liberated from Stalag Luft 7 and repatriated via Odessa in February/March 1945, to Egypt aboard the **Highland Princess**, eventually reaching Liverpool aboard the **Samaria** on 30th March 1945. Please contact Graham Salt, 6 Flamingo Court, Fareham, Hants PO16 8PQ.

Mr J Hinchmore in the West Midlands would like to hear from anyone who may have known his grandfather **L/Cpl Isaac Hinchmore**. Serving with 'C' Company, 7th Bn Oxford and Bucks he was captured at Anzio and taken to Stalag 5A Ludwigsburg, thence to Stalag 344 Lamsdorf. He went on to Stalag 8B at Teschen from where it is said he escaped.

Robert Hale in South Wirral would like to hear from anyone who knew his father **Ronald Hale** of the Kings Own, captured on Leros 16/11/43. A resident of Stalag 4B and 4G in 1944-45. If you were

in the same places Robert would like to hear from you.

ABOVE. Sheila O'Connor in Birmingham sent in this photo of her father Albert Merricks, front row fifth from right, together with his mates. We think it was taken at Stalag 18A or B in Austria. Does anyone recognise Albert, his friends or the camp?

RIGHT. Mr John Desmond, 394 Hillcroft Street, Oshawa, Ontario L1G 2M2, Canada would like to hear from anyone who may have known his late brother Trooper Henry Dennis Desmond of the 15th/19th Kings Royal Hussars. He is the middle figure in the photograph which was believed to have been taken in Blandford, Dorset. He died on 12th January 1941 at Marinelas, Gottenhafen, Germany. Does anyone remember him?

Were you on the run in Italy? Ever visit **Lettomanoppello**, in the province of Pescara? Sara and Joseph Addario live in the USA and his grandparents assisted escaped POWs in Lettomanoppello, including George Coulson who escaped from Campo 53 and sought refuge there. If you visited the town or know the current whereabouts of Rifleman Coulson, please contact Phil Chinnery, editor.

Brian Brock, 5913 ¾ Willoughby # 5, Los Angeles, CA 90038, USA is writing the memoirs of Pierre Berg, an Auschwitz survivor who was imprisoned at Monowitz and worked in the I.G. Farben plant. He is looking for information on the civilian camps next to E715. Did you see a spectacular fire on a summer night in 1944? Were they burning down the gypsy camp? If you were in the area Brian would be pleased to hear from you.

A friend in Poland, Jan Chodacki, would like to contact anyone, especially 'Phil' who was in work camp 1747L in Leibenfeld near Deutschlandsberg, Austria. It was an agricultural camp assigned to a farmer called Reiner of Leibenfeld 3. Please contact the editor for further details.

Darren Payne in Aberystwyth would like to hear from anyone who was at the defence of **Calais** or who might have known his grandfather Bertie Payne of 1st Bn, Rifle Brigade. Bertie went to Stalag 20A Thorn then 20B Marienburg and was presumably sent out on a working party.

Fred Walker in Yorks is looking for anyone who may have been at **Bromberg** during 1940. Leonard Walker of the RSF 'died' there on 9th November 1940. His phone number is 01423-528008.

Below a view of the fire pool at Stalag 4B, sent in by one of our Dutch colleagues.

FAR EAST NEWS.

Mr John Monroe in Brighton would like to hear from anyone who may remember his uncle Captain John G Monroe, 2nd Bn Gordon Highlanders. He was taken prisoner in Singapore and died in Kanchanaburi on 3rd August 1943 aged 24.

I would like to begin to describe some of the many Japanese prisoner of war camps, using war crimes reports, some of the few Red Cross visit reports available and the recollections of residents. We will start with the Fukuoka group of camps, situated in the south of Japan. There were probably a couple of dozen of them, but when the Red Cross finally got to visit the area in April 1943 they were only taken to six. The six camps were numbered 6 to 11 and were spaced widely apart between Hiroshima and Shimonoseki, basically situated on an inland sea and under the overall command of Colonel Sugawara. It was very difficult for the International Red Cross to gain access to these camps and the visits had to be handled with kid gloves. When delegate Mr C. A. Kengelbacher visited this group of camps he found 50 year old Sugawara to be very amiable, of sympathetic disposition and speaking some English. All but one of the men of confidence told Kengelbacher that they could not really complain, being much better off compared with what they went through in Java. They had all been sent to Japan on the 'Singapore Maru' cargo ship. It was packed to capacity and in their sick, half-starved state some 500 men died during the voyage. Indeed a further 91 out of 980 survivors died after arrival due to the strenuous voyage. Since arriving in Japan the rate of mortality and sickness rate had greatly reduced.

One complaint common to all prisoners was the nine-day working week in the mines. The prisoners wanted it reduced to seven days but the employers refused, claiming that Japanese workers worked for nine days without complaint. The delegate considered that all of the camps except number 7 were in sunny, healthy and pleasant locations and he was satisfied with the living quarters, food supply and treatment at the hands of the Japanese authorities and the civilian firms who employed the prisoners.

Camp 6 was at Omine, one hour by train northwest of the large coal mining town of Ube and comprised coal mines amongst hills. A thousand men were employed here, including 10 officers. The 20 acres of barracks included half a dozen two storey wooden buildings. There had been 18 deaths due to enteritis, pneumonia or peritonitis and a dozen others were in the sick bay. The men had been working a six day week, with one day off, but had recently been put on ten days on with one off. **Camp 7** at Ube was reported by the delegate as being in a sunny and healthy location within the Ube industrial district, close to the inland sea about 50 miles from Shimonoseki. This was the worst of the camps visited, with the men being underfed and overworked, with even the sick being forced to work in the coal pits. The camp was also possibly subject to air raids due to its location. Between Ohama and Ube **Camp 8** at Motoyama, near Shimonoseki was represented by Major Petrie and Flying Officer Trilwood. 160 men lived there in a single story wooden barracks. The delegate mentioned that they were allowed 10 cigarettes per day and pipe tobacco. However it was hard to exist on just rice and a more varied diet was requested. **Camp 9** was at Ohama, about 70 miles from Shimonoseki, amidst forest and hills overlooking the inland sea. Established in October 1942 it was occupied by 13 officers, 43 NCOs and 95 others in April 1943. Lt Col Matthews was the man of confidence. They had been forced under duress to sign written paroles renouncing all attempts to escape and wanted them cancelled. Food and clothing was inadequate. **Camp 10** at Higashi-Misono was one kilometer from the seashore near Shimonoseki. It had a spacious single story mud and wooden barracks, formerly used as a workers dormitory. There was adequate light and electricity but inadequate charcoal heating. Lt Col Hazel was the man of confidence for the 113 men in the camp, all of whom were in need of underclothing, socks and

shoes. Flying Officer Sefton was the man of confidence for the 79 prisoners at **Camp 11** at Mukojima, Onomichi on the inland sea near Hiroshima. They lived in a newly built single story wooden barracks.

Two other camps were discovered off Onomichi in the Granite Islands. Camp Mukojima was 45 minutes away by launch and held 80 men including four officers and Camp Innosima was an hour and a half by launch and held 192 men. At Mukojima 20 men had died from heart diseases or pneumonia and five others were suffering from beri-beri due to vitamin deficiency. The men only had one rest day out of fourteen.

Readers will note that there has been no mention of Red Cross food parcels and their issue was the exception rather than the rule. Visiting delegates were often under pressure to keep their visits as short as possible and were often prevented from speaking to men of confidence. Those who did speak up for their men had every word written down by expert interpreters, for possible retribution afterwards. I will cover more of the Fukuoka camps in due course, but in the meantime more information on the above camps can be found in file WO224/190 in the public record office in Kew.

END. COPYRIGHT 2003 NATIONAL EX-PRISONER OF WAR ASSOCIATION.

A button with a small icon of a document and the text "Back to".

**The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association is a member of the Council of British Service and
Ex-Service Organisations.
Code: 948, Registered Charity No 292804**
