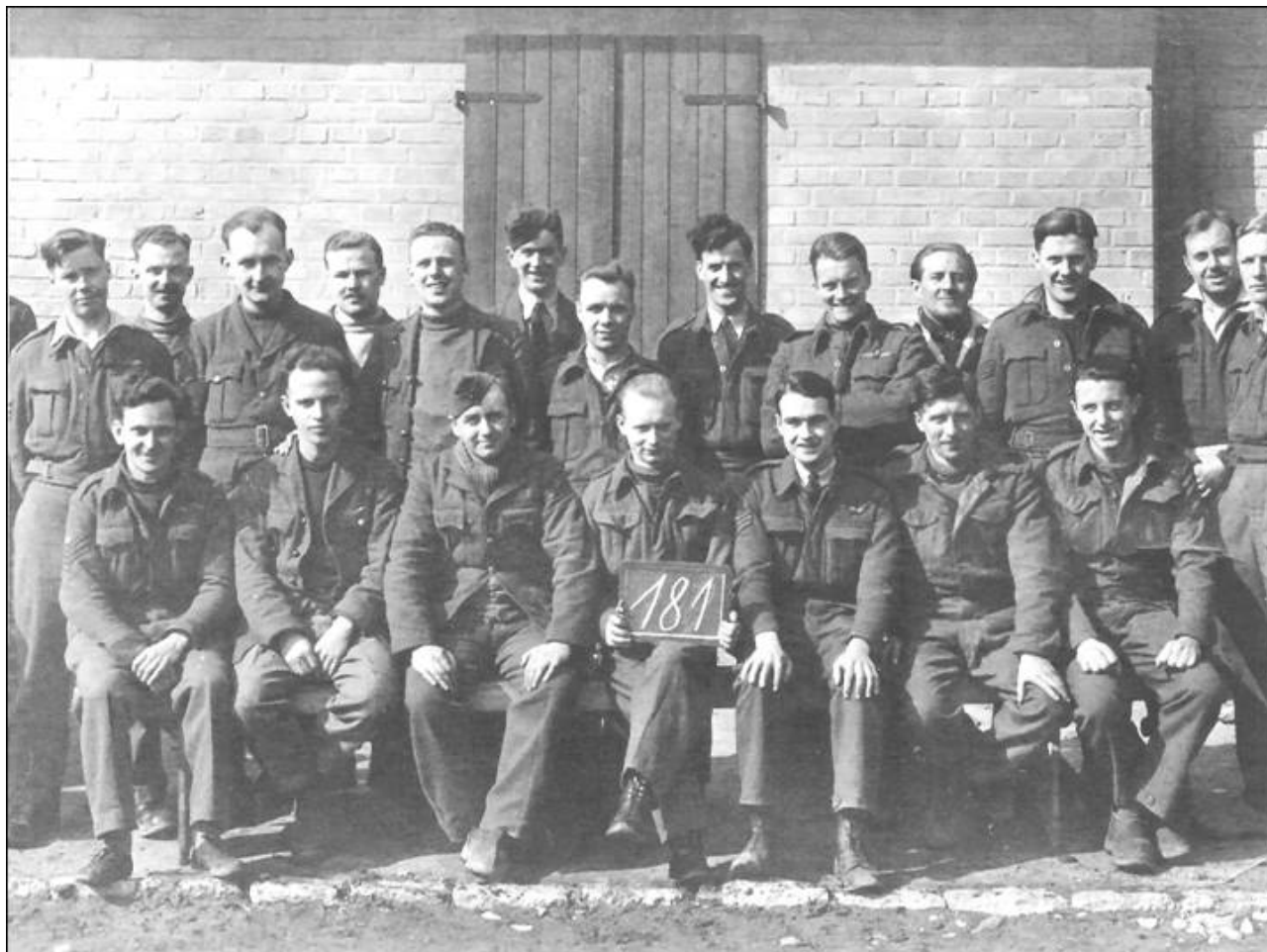


The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

Autumn 2006 Newsletter

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STALAG 9C Muhlhausen. Back row; Hall, Dicks, Hogan, Buck, Doggett, Pryde, Petch, Paris, Carter, Slaughter, Gutteridge, Carden. Front row; Witherspoon, Lewis, Hines, Stockdale, Bennett, Brown, Dawson. Extreme left; Willams (RAMC), Jarvis, Cochran (Not shown).



ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan, President.



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

Greetings to all members old and new. The most important item of news concerns our plans to erect a permanent memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in

Staffordshire. It will be similar to the memorial recently unveiled at Fallingbommel. Fund raising has already begun and donations can be sent to me at the above address. So far about £2,000 has come in towards the estimated £20,000 that we will need. There will also be a requirement to put some money aside for future maintenance of the memorial. All donations whether large or small would be appreciated.

I visited the Arboretum together with Gary Moores our Standard Bearer and met the official in charge. We had a long discussion about what we had in mind and we were shown a spot where Mr Kennedy thought was an ideal place for our proposed memorial. The nearest memorial to the proposed site is one to the Royal Ulster Defence Regiment and a little further over is the First World War 'Shot at Dawn' memorial. We think the site would meet the approval of all and the Arboretum committee will be meeting in October to consider our application.

Our executive committee met in the British Legion in Cippenham, Slough on 24th September and one of the items on the agenda was to decide a date for the dedication of the memorial. We have provisionally decided on Wednesday 9th May 2007. May was the month when most of the prisoners of war were released in Germany in 1945 and it will hopefully give us nice weather as well. We are now looking for an appropriate dignitary to perform the dedication.

We also decided at the meeting to spend a bit extra and make the Winter Newsletter a colour issue. We have done this a couple of times in the past and it has been well received. If any member has a good colour photo of association activities or any colour pictures or postcards from his time in captivity please send them in to Phil Chinnery our newsletter editor.

I am also pleased to announce that Malcolm Bamford our Webmaster has completely revamped our website and we are now receiving around a thousand 'hits' each month. This helps to publicise our organisation and brings in new recruits at the same time. If you would like to see the new format the address is www.prisonerofwar.org.uk Anyone wishing to contact Phil Chinnery, our newsletter editor/historian can do so on his new email address which is: NEXPOWA The old email address of PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk has become such a magnet for 'spam' recently that it will soon be closed down.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION.

The annual subscription for members of the association was due on 1st January. Members will receive four quarterly newsletters during 2006 plus the annual Journal. The cost has remained the same over the years and we plan to keep it so for as long as possible. The annual subscription for full members who were prisoners of war is £5, with the exception of those living overseas who are asked to pay £10 to cover the extra cost of airmail postage. Associate membership is available to family members at £10 for the year. Please send your cheques, made out to NEXPOWA, together with your membership cards, to Les Allan at 99, Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. P.S. Anyone joining us during the year will receive the back issues they have missed. If you have recently joined the association and have not received your back issues please contact Phil Chinnery, address in historians section, who has plenty of spare copies.

NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome the following associate members Mrs Penny Sloman and

Mary Teale.

DONATIONS

We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to the welfare fund; Mrs B Herschel in memory of husband Stan £30, F J Stapleton £25, J A Proctor £15, T W Wetton £5, Mrs J Gosling £10, W Evans £30, B Treers £30, G Buchan £10, J Houston £30, J Green £5, S Miskimmin £15.

Many thanks to John E Cruttenden of Hampshire who sent in a donation for £25 in memory of his uncle, William Yeoman Horton of the Queens Own Cameron Highlanders who passed away at the age of 95. John told us that 'for reasons unknown to me family contact was lost after his repatriation from Stalag 8B. Thanks to the help of you and many others I eventually found him alive and well with a big family in 2001. I was able to reunite him with my mother, his younger sister before she died. They had not seen each other for over 75 years.'

OBITUARIES

We regret to report the passing away of Life Vice-President Harold Hewitt, MM. Harold worked tirelessly for many of his associations early years as Chairman before becoming by popular acclaim its life vice president. His expertise and dedication to the good and aims of our elite association will be sorely missed, especially by the executive committee members past and present as Harold put in a 98 percent attendance at bi-monthly meetings and official engagements. Firm and loudly critical of matters detrimental to the good of the association he was also firm but quiet when promoting the strength of the National Ex-Prisoner of War Association. Vice Chairman Eric Reeves and Standard Bearer Gary Moores represented the association at Harold's funeral. It was also announced at the funeral that Harold had paid for the association Standard and accoutrements some years ago, but asked that it be not made public knowledge until after his death. We will remember him.



The photo above first appeared on the cover of our Summer 2000 Newsletter. It shows Staff Sergeant Harold Hewitt, MM being carried on the shoulders of Russian civilians celebrating the signing of the German surrender. The photo appeared on the front page of the News Chronicle on 12th May 1945.

Ernie Cattermole of Ipswich passed away on 27th July. He was a very kind, thoughtful and generous man who made frequent donations to the welfare fund. Mr R J Condon passed away in Poole on 22nd April. A former resident of Stalag 8B he was aged 86. Mr Jim Costen of Gravesend passed away in December 2005. We will remember them.

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

Mr R Dowding £25, Mr Tom Burling £100, Mrs M R Mirtle £50, Mrs S Ward £20, Mr G H Francis £50, Mr and Mrs D Arthur £10, Mr Stan Daines £5, Charles A Ackerman £50, Gordon Jerrett £10, W E Sutton £10, P G Greer £20, Dierdre Naylor £100, Miss C C A Windsor, MA £10, 8th Army Veterans Association(Manchester Branch) £25.

PHOTO CAPTION

Corinne Ludford writes in to tell us that her father James Ludford is the man second from left in the back row of the photo of men at Stalag 20A that appeared on the front of the summer newsletter. She has a copy of the photo as well as some others of groups of POWs. If she sends them in to us we will include them in future newsletters.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

If anyone can help with information on any of the requests below please write to

Phil Chinnery
60, Carnarvon Drive,
Hayes, Middlesex
UB3 1PX.
Email NEXPOWA



1) Photo above shows some of the men of Stalag 20A Arbeits Kommando 52 at Gorsdorf in 1942. Henry Owens is in the middle of the front row. Henry would like to hear from any of his mates who worked at Herr Korner's Metalwerk Fabrik in Elbing, East Prussia. He also walked the same route as the map reproduced in the last newsletter. If you worked with him or came home the same way please drop a line to Phil Chinnery, Newsletter Editor/Historian and we will put you in touch with Henry.

2) "Hallo Philip, I wonder if you are able to give me any info re a number of POWs who were in Italy. I have been researching my father and godfather's stories and in the course of this had a meeting recently with staff at the Istituto della Resistenza at Reggio Emilia. They asked if I could try and find out anything about the following men:-

Sidney Petrie of Hexham, Clifford Ingleson (Leeds), R W Smith (Castle House London)

C Barratt (Ilford), Edward Everitt (Middlesbrough), G Mc Corry (Greenford, Middlesex),

R Weir (Shotts, Lanarkshire), Paddy Mulvey (Slough).

I understand that the names are all from chits left with Italian families that looked after them. Any information will be much appreciated. Thank you, Rosemary Clarke. PS I am trying to find Able Seaman Michael A McLean D/SSX 22068 who walked South through Italy with my father. He was in Campo 49 Fontanellato in September 1943."

3) Mrs Dot Wildish, 14 Ropemakers Court, Chatham, Kent ME4 5JD would like to hear from anyone who sailed on the troopship *Empress of Britain* which left Southampton on 4th August 1940 for the Middle East and fought in any campaign there up to Christmas 1941. Most of the Buffs were said to have been either killed or taken prisoner at Gazala on 15th December 1941.

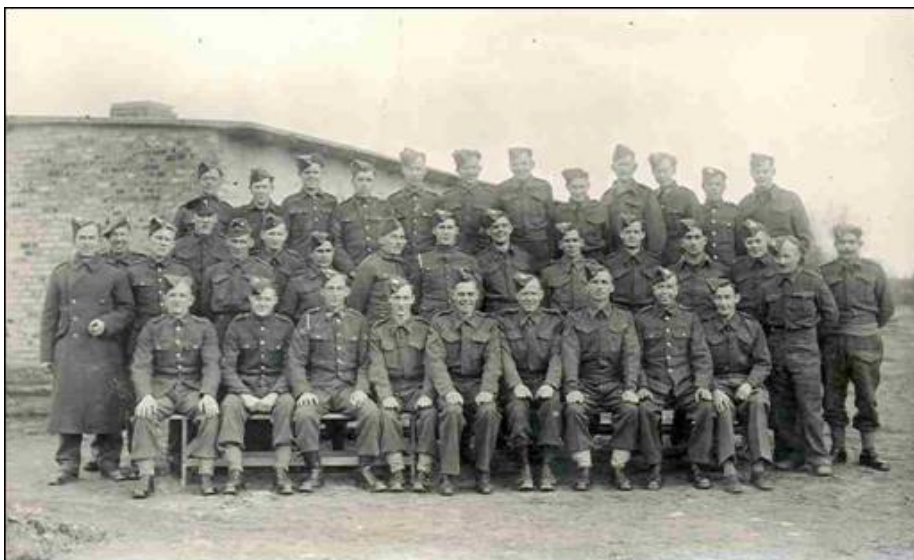
4) Brigadier Ian G Townsend, CBE, the Director General of the Royal British Legion wrote to us recently. He said; "I read your latest newsletter (Summer 2006) with much interest. Not only was my father, Corporal K Townsend, 4th County of London Yeomanry, a prisoner of war in Stalag 4B, but I am a Trustee of the National Memorial Arboretum. I was delighted recently to offer full support for your new memorial at the NMA. It is possible that the photo of Campo 70 includes someone who knew my father. I thought he had moved on to Stalag 4B before the photo was taken, but the chap on the right hand front row bears a striking similarity though! If you were in Campo 70 or knew Corporal Townsend please drop me a line at 48 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JY."

5) Mr D C Horsley-Buck, 162 Wooton Road, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE30 4BU kindly sent in the photo used on the front cover. He was with 86 Squadron Coastal Command until he was shot down in July 1941 whilst attacking shipping off the island of

Schermonihoo. He was fortunately recovered from the sea, but his pilot and observer were drowned. He was the wireless operator and only survivor of the crew. Taken to Dulag Luft at Frankfurt and thence to Stalag 9C, an Army camp where he stayed for a few months before being taken to Stalag Luft 3 at Sagan. He was there for just over a year, then moved in June 1943 to Heydekrug Stalag Luft 6 and then to Stalag 357 at Fallingbomel where he was released by the Essex Regiment in May 1945. If you were resident in any of the above places or recognise any of the men in the photo on the front cover, Mr Horsley-Buck would be pleased to hear from you.

6) Fred Heathfield, ex Stalag 4B tell us; "In 1943 I was being passed down an Evasion Line in Belgium. In August I was picked up by the Belgian Gestapo Agent, Prosper de Zitter, known as "The Captain." On the same journey he collected two Canadian Air Gunners and a Lt. Edward Denis Pollock, who claimed he had escaped from an Oflag IXA. I was very suspicious of Pollock, who spoke fluent German and French. I have recently found out that he was a Private Soldier acting as a "stool pigeon" in two Oflags, and I have copies of correspondence between MIS, SIS, MI9 and MI6 in 1944. After that the trail goes cold. I have spent £75 employing a Researcher at Kew who has come up with nothing about Pollock. I am sure he must have been Court Martialled and sentenced. Do you have any information about him, or his fate? I will send a second e-mail with copies of the mentioned letters."

PHOTOS. The three pictures overleaf were taken at Stalag 8B. Sent in by Sue Hook, daughter of the late Henry Victor Hook, 2nd Battalion, Gloucester Regiment. Henry was captured 28 miles from Dunkirk and saw one group of men shot to death as they hid in a haystack, so he and his comrades came out of their haystacks and surrendered. Do you recognise anyone?





HISTORIANS NEWS.

Contact address Mr Philip Chinnery, 60 Carnarvon Drive, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1PX.

CHARLIE COWARD. In the last newsletter we invited comments from members who may have known CSM Coward. Doug Bond wrote in to tell us; "I have read and heard many of his exploits, also go to know him as a camp leader of E715 at Auschwitz, where I was also a POW. Personally I think he had a very vivid imagination. I think he based his book and film on other POWs experiences. As a camp leader at E715 he would have had very little contact with the Jewish community, as he did not go out to work like we did at the local I G Farben factory. I think we had more contact with them, working alongside. I went to the first showing of the film, which I thought was badly made. I am still in contact with several others who were at E715 and they are all of the same opinion."

Ronald Redman wrote in to tell us; "My first recollections of Battery Sergeant Major Charles Coward were on being transferred to Auschwitz E715. He was appointed senior British POW to liaise with the German Commandant. After a short time he organised an evening concert dominated by himself. Amongst his collection of jokes and a homespun song 'escaping through the sewer' which I believe was referring to a sadly unsuccessful attempt in Campo 66 at Capua in Italy. He impersonated a typical Jewish prisoner in genuine pyjama suit, cap and clogs. Although rather cruel, he mimed all the nervous shuffling and cap-doffing mannerisms to a 'T'. He was hilariously funny and with his own cockney accent – I think the German guards observing were most amused. He must have studied the Jewish prisoners to a fine detail. When the bombing of Auschwitz began and life was very uncomfortable, I think Charlie returned to Stalag 8B at Lamsdorf using his authority. That was my last recollection of the cockney comic until the film 'The Password is Courage' was made after the war with Dirk Bogarde acting as CC. (There was no acceptable likeness!) CC appeared in a crowd scene – I believe he acted as a technical adviser for the film. To his credit CC was a natural entertainer, always appearing to be a cheerful Charlie!"

CAMPO 70 Monturano. Janet Gosling wrote in to tell us that the camp was in Monte Urano, which is in the Le Marche region. She told us "I have visited Monte Urano and the area which I believe was where the camp was based, going on information from the Red Cross reports and information that you gave me in 2001. I also visited Tutturano near Brindisi where Campo 85 was situated. Does anyone know anything about a prison in Merano? Going through letters my Dad received after the war I found one from an Italian sea captain who met my father in a prison in Merano."

Member Brian Sims has sent in a list compiled by Australian Bill Rudd of the main Italian POW camps and their locations as of 1943, together with various notes including associated work camps. If you were in any of the camps and can send in any stories or anecdotes, or you can add to the information we would be pleased to hear from you. We are also looking for plans or diagrams of the camp layouts.

Camp	Location/District	Notes
5	Gavi-Serraville/ Liguria. Alessandria.	20 miles north of Genoa. Work camp 5/1 at
10	Aquapendout/ Central Italy.	
12	Vincigliata/ North Italy. Generals.	13 th Century castle near Florence. Held British
19	Bologna/North Italy. Germany.	Transit camp for officers ex 78 Sulmona to
21	Chieti/Central Italy. Pescara area.	Large camp of solid bungalows nr station,
27	Perugia/Central Italy.	Old convent used as hospital.

- 29 Viano/North Italy. S W of Piacenza in Lombardy plains.
- 35 Padula/Naples area. Monastery POWs to 19 Bologna.
- 38 Poppi/North Italy. Ancient monastery 38km NE Arezzo.
- 47 Modena/North Italy. Newer hub for officers particularly New Zealanders.
- 49 Fontanellato/North Italy. Four storied orphanage Reggio Nel'Emilia?
- 51 Altamura/South Italy. Transit camp. Associated hospital 204.
- 52 Chiavari/Liguria. Large camp – Piani Cariglia 14km from Chiavari.
- 53 Sforza Costa/Central Italy. Macerata area. Large camp of 10,000 men. Working camp at Riverolo?
- 54 Fara in Sabina/Central Italy. Large percentage of escapers under Italian officers.
- 55 Busseto Pia/North Italy. Four satellite work camps.
- 57 Gruppignano/North Italy. Near Udine, main camp for Anzac other ranks.
- 59 Servigliano/North Italy. Ascola/Piceno, associated hospital in old palace.
- 62 Grummelino/North Italy. 3 miles south Bergamo. Indians, Cypriots. Seven work camps including Gamba, Cremona and Torbole.
- 63 Aversa/Naples area. Carinaro. 2 miles north of Arezzo. Modern barracks. Indians.
- 65 Gravina-Altamura/Naples area. Near Taranto Modern School.
- 66 Capua/Naples area. Transit camp 30 km north of Naples. Moved to 82 Laterino.
- 70 Monturano/Central Italy. Macerata area Porto S. Gorgio on east coast.
- 73 Carpi/North Italy. North of Modena in Fosseli valley. New bungalows.
- 75 Bari/South Italy. Transit camp. POWs ex-campo 66. One work camp.
- 77 Campello/Central Italy. Tented camp near railway station.
- 78 Sulmona/Central Italy. East side main road to Poppoli. Annex villa for senior officers.
- 78/1 Aquafredda/Central Italy. Work camp constructing roads controlled by campo 78.
- 82 Laterino/North Italy. Near Arezzo. New camp ex-66. 8,000 men. 50% escaped.
- 85 Taturano/Brindisi area. Transit camp.

- 91 Avezzano/Central Italy. New stone barracks.
- 102 Aquila/Central Italy. Transit camp and medical facilities just outside town.
- 103 Ampezzo/North Italy. Work camp 6 at La Maina.
- 106 Vercelli/North Italy. Complex of 25 work camps, mostly ANZAC POWs.
- 107 Terraviscosa/Liguria. Five work camps; 2 at Prati, 4 at Piava, 5 at Confine, 7 at La Salute. New Zealand and South African POWs.
- 113 Aviotrento/North Italy. Marsciano Perugia. New work camps near aluminium factory.
- 115 Marsciano/North Italy. Near Perugia. Associated camp 113.
- 120 Padua/Liguria. Work camps at Fattoria Bianco, Cetona, Abando, Fogolana.
- 122 Sinecitta/Central Italy. Old film village 5 miles SE of Rome. Several work camps.
- 129 Macerata/North Italy. Work camps at Montelurone/pone?
- 145 Campotosto/Central Italy. Work camp at Poggio Cancelli.
- 148 Bussolengo/North Italy. Bussalenga? 1 km east of Verona Campagnola.
- 201 Bergamo hospital. Large modern almshouse.
- 202 Lucca hospital. Former monastery in Bergamo district.
- 203 Bologna hospital. Castel S Pietro 12 miles from city.
- 204 Altamura hospital. Modern school Altamura.
- 206? Teramo hospital. 24km from Adriatic coast.
- 206 Nocera hospital. Near Rovello, Montecervino.
- 207 Milan hospital. Took patients from Nocera.
- 454 9 miles west of Brindisi. Mainly Indians.

This is a photo taken at Stalag 18A of a drawing of 8748 Sgt R Gray and Mrs Gray sent to her home in County Durham. The drawing was done in Italian POW camp 73 at Carpi.

Campo 49 Fontanellato showing escape route from sports field to barbed wire. Two officers escaped this way after hiding in a hole during exercise period.

DOCTORS IN CAPTIVITY

As usual I was very pleased to receive a letter from Bert Martin, one of the medics at Obermassfeld, giving his comments on a recently published book as well as his opinions of some of the doctors that he worked with in captivity. The letter reads as follows; "Before I fall of the edge of time, I feel I should put in a word to counter the sustained story first publicised in 'The Miracle of Dunkirk' and perpetuated in one or two subsequent books on the subject. It is that regarding the dramatic episode where the CCS (Casualty Clearing Station) in which Major Newman was surgeon held their 'draw' to decide who should remain with the seriously wounded and enter into captivity with them.

"I wish to clarify the fact that it was tacitly and sometimes overtly stated that medical personnel should remain with their patients wherever and whenever it became impractical to evacuate them from a situation of inevitable capture. Many surgeons other than Newman found themselves in such predicaments. Some volunteered to remain, some were selected, some trapped in the tide of enemy advance, all of the many that I met accepted their fate with a will to continue doing their work behind the barbed wire which later ensnared them. Major Newman has been lauded for escaping whilst on the abortive repatriation of October 1941. Others went through that terrible anti-climax to return to Germany and continue their work amongst the influx of new

patients from Greece and Crete, Dieppe, Italy and other incidental raids whilst also dealing with injured and sick men from the working camps.

“Meanwhile the trickle of airmen casualties swelled to a flood and, especially at Obermassfeld Lazaret, Stalag 9C, Kommando 1249, some doctors and surgeons who had been captured at Dunkirk Time and subsequent catastrophes were fully engaged in their work even for some until the end of the war in Europe. The setbacks of Arnhem and Bastogne, even if affording some staffing assistance, brought more work.

“Amongst those who did yeoman service was Major W ‘Bill’ Tucker, repatriated in 1943. Major W ‘Willie’ Henderson, held for a time at Colditz for, it is said, refusing to devote his time to working on enemy neurological cases, in which he was a surgical specialist of distinction. He was returned to Obermassfeld eventually and experienced the final explosive liberation of the place in April 1945. Much of his work was in general surgery and his captivity meant that his career was virtually on hold for five years, though he did some fine work in his own speciality. His colleague, Major George Smythe was not a surgeon, but brilliant diagnostician and physician. Probably on the 1943 repatriation, though doing some refined work prior to that. Major Challis, a man of distinction in the field of anaesthesia who was very justifiably repatriated in 1943 because of his age. Major Charteris, an ophthalmic surgeon, never based at Obermassfeld but well known in the lazarets for his devotion to those with eye injuries, especially at Kloster Haina where they were later concentrated prior to repatriation.

“Captain Cooper who for four and a half unrelenting years worked on the wards with conspicuous conscientiousness and always immaculate however heavy the demands on his time. Captain Leek, an Australian surgeon of registrar status who undertook delicate mastoid surgery when it became an imperative, undoubtedly saving the life of our C of E Padre the Reverend G David H Smith. Captain Tom Barling, another Australian of registrar status who made an immense impression on the patients he worked on. One American airman post war wrote a book dedicated to Tom Barling. It included a lengthy chapter on the life and work within the building at Obermassfeld.

“The extra-ordinary accomplishments of Major John Sherman, who minus the essential tools initially, set to work skin grafting the scores of burnt airmen who came into his care. Pre-war he had been medical officer of the Cadburys factory at Bourneville and it would seem his insights into the skills of transplanting must have been limited. Yet he achieved remarkable results and many ex-airmen lived on to appreciate his timely intervention to, at least, prevent the grossest of distortions and disfigurement which must have been their fate otherwise. Apart from those who have expressed gratitude for his surgical intervention, he has remained unrecognised over the years.

“Some British doctors and other medical personnel died tending Russians suffering from Typhus or black-water fever. Theirs was a form of heroism differing from exposure to bomb, shell and bullet but demanding a courage only stemming from devotion to their profession and the true expectation of the Royal Army Medical Corps. They did not escape from captivity save by giving their lives for others.”

This photograph was taken at Stalag 8B and was sent home by 14790 C S Fitzpatrick to his sister in law Amy. Do you recognise anyone, the group or the location?

Number of Visitors to this Newsletter

05 October 2006

The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association is a member of the Council of British Service and Ex-Service Organisations.

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