

The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

Spring 2004 Newsletter

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

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I would like to remind all members to book their tickets for the **HAYWARDS HEATH NEXPOWA DANCE**. Following last years very successful dance at Haywards Heath, Fred Goddard with his wife Jeans help, is once again active and planning another evening. The date is Saturday 17th April and both Fred and Jean would be very pleased if you could give your support to this worthy cause. Last year the couple raised £800 for your charity, so lets see if we can help him beat that total this year. Our Patron Dame Vera Lynn has been invited and we hope she will be able to join us. Tickets are only £10 and can be ordered by calling Fred on 01444-415295 or by post to Mr Fred Goddard, 1 Ash Grove, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 4PZ. Tickets are limited to so book early. See you all there.

ANNUAL REUNION. The association will hold its annual reunion at Warners Lakeside Holiday Village, Hayling Island between 1st and 4th October 2004. Members, family and friends are all welcome. Bookings are coming along nicely and Associate members are reminded that all former prisoners of war are prepared to tell stories all night long if there is a steady supply of beer to refresh their memories. If you would like to know what your relative got up to whilst a guest of the Germans or Italians reserve your place now with Flt Lt Ken Jackson, Haere-Mai, 29 Highwood Avenue, Booker, High Wycombe, HP12 4LS. Telephone 01494-436978.

Kens tells us that "Last years reunion was a 'Baptism of fire' for me following Charlie Jagos 17-year reign as organiser. From the feedback I have received from those who attended it was enjoyed by all and voted a success. It must have gone fairly well for I have already received 40 bookings for October and plans are well advanced to ensure we have a super time. We have some of our members from Belgium joining us this time and I am really looking forward to meeting everyone. Accommodation is being allocated on a strictly first come first served basis, so if you would like a particular room or block then I suggest you book early. Warners have been very good once more, but I must advise you that some of the accommodation we had last year has not been allocated to us this time."

NEW MEMBERS. We would like to welcome the following new members to the association; **Mr Philip Newbury** of the Royal Signals who fell in the bag at Tobruk and was a resident of Campo 70 Monturano near Fermo and Stalag 4B. **Mr Jack Heap** of the Border Regiment who laboured in the coal mine at E51 during his stay at Stalag 8B. **Mr Ron Arnold** of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment who was a resident of Stalag 20B Marienburg. **Mr Reg Dowding** of the Grenadier Guards who fell in the bag in Italy and worked in the coal mine at E579 Nifka. **Mr E J Cowles.** **Mr Gordon Jerrett** of the Welch Regiment taken prisoner in Normandy and a former resident of

Stalag 8B/E902 coal mine. **Associate members;** **Mr Terry Payne.** Mrs Anne Greer whose father James Kenna was a resident of Campo 70 and Stalag 4B. **Mr David Welch** whose father was a resident of Stalag 20A. **Mr Alan Jackaman** whose father was also a resident of Stalag 20A. **Mr David Sumners** whose father was in Oflag 79. **Mr Ewen J Steele** whose father Donald John Steele of the Cameron Highlanders was a resident of Stalag 20B. **Mrs Brenda Buckle** whose uncle Jack Brown was a resident of Stalag 4A and was sadly killed at Brux in 1944. **Mr R F Carr** whose father was a resident of Stalag 7A Moosburg. **Mr Stephen Harris** whose father James was in BAB20. **Mrs Ann Cooper** whose father Ernest Willcockson was taken prisoner on Crete and was later a resident of Stalag 18A Wolfsberg.

DONATIONS. We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to our welfare fund. All donations are welcome, whether large or small. Mr J Aitken £5, Mr A Anderson £20, Mr H Arnold £5, Mr R Arnold £5, Mr D Arthur £5, Mr D Avey £15, Mr J Baker £105, Mr A Balmer £5, Mr John Banfield £20, Mr S Barthorpe £5, Jack and Pat Batt £20, Mr R Beck £5, Mr M Bentley £10, L Bevan £5, Mr D Boyle £30, Mr G Buchanan £5, Mr H Buchanan £5, Mr R Budd £5, Mr I Cameron £5, Mrs V Care £5, Mr J Charters £15, Mr P Childs £10, Mr G F Chrisp £15, Mr G Collins £5, Mr G Cook £15, Mr E J Cowles £5, Mrs Margaret Coxell £30, Mr W Crighton £10, Mr J Crouch £5, Mr J Cruttenden £30, Mr J Deveril £5, Mr G Duffree £20, Mr T East £5, Dr Moira Elliott, Mr L Elwood £5, Mr D Evans £10, Mr W A Evans £15, Mr R Fennell £5, Mr A Foster £40, Mr G Francis £10, Mr D Freeman £5, Mr K Fuller £5, Mrs Sylvia Gammon £15, Mr H Garner £5, Mr F Gill £10, Mr E Good £5, Mr T Grant £15, Mr J Greeves £5, Mr E Haines £5, Mr D Hanson £25, Mr J Harper £20, Mr S Harris £15, Miss A Hayes £10, Mr J Hazell £10, Mr C Hirst £5, Mr C Hoare £5, Mrs M Hume £20, Mr A Jackaman £10, Mr B Jackson £5, Mr Y Jaulmes £15, Mr Jeal £100, Mr A Jenkins £5, Mr G Jerrett £5, Mr A Jesson £20, Mr A Johnson £5, Mr D Johnson £5, Mr S Johnson £15, Mr J Johnstone £5, Mr M Jones £20, Mrs M Kendall £5, Dr Anthony Knight £50, Mrs D Lamisong £10, Mrs C Lawrence £10, Mr R Lee £5, Mr J Lees £5, Miss Corrine Ludford £15, Mr W Manley £5, Mr F Ruse £10, Mr G Marsden £5, Mr E Marshall £15, Mr D Matheson £5, Mr Eric Milner £5, Mr A Mill £5, Mr E Mitchel £20, Mr G Moor £15, Mr M Morecroft £35, Mr C Morris £10, Mr D Mowat £10, Mr D Nelson £20, Mr P Newbury £5, Mr W Nichols £15, Mr M Orr £15, Mr L Parsons £10, Mr E Payne £5, Mr W Pearce £5, Mr C Poffley £5, Mr J Proctor £15, Mr C Quartermaine £5, Mrs Pat Ramsay £20, Mr J Reed £5, Mr J Reeder £5, Mr G Robb £25, Mrs M Rooke £10, Mr H Rose £3, Mr E Sankey £20, Mr R Saunders £5, Mrs J Savage £5, Mr S Seal £5, Mr M Shand £5, Mr W Sheridan £5, Mr P Shurmer £10, Mr J Smart £10, Mr G Smith £5, Mr J Smith £5, Mr C Smithers £15, Mr E Steele £5, Mr C Stevens £15, Mr J Thomas £20, Mr H Tooze £10, Mr F Vokes £10, Mr H Warnke £5, Mr B Warren £10, Mr H Welch £15, Mrs J Wellard £20, Mr S Whyte £5, Mrs D Wildish £10, Mr S Wilkins £5, Mr G Wilson £5, Mrs Sylvia Wilson £40, Mr C Winsor £5, Mr W Witt £5, Mr S Wood £15, Mr J Wort £5, Mr D Worthing £5.

Members may recall that in the winter newsletter we announced our intention to pick a name at random from those who sent in donations and that member would be sent a copy of the book 'Forty men – Eight horses' by Douglas Arthur. The lucky winner is Mr D A Freeman of Coventry and we hope he enjoys the book. Thanks to all who sent in donations.

OBITUARIES. We regret to report the passing away of two of our Northumberland members, Charles Dick from Morpeth and Stan Johnson from Blyth. Both were regular contributors to the newsletter and our archives and will be sorely missed. Alfred George Lawes passed away in Rhondda in February. He served in the Welch Regiment and was a resident of Stalag 344 Lamsdorf. Bert Richings of Bristol also passed away recently. At 91 years old, he was a regular columnist for the Bristol Times having begun his writing career at 80. Philip Newbury was in Campo 70 with Bert and he recalled an amusing story told to him by Bert about the time he joined a party of 50 men working in a deep quarry. They asked the Germans if they could see a bit of the countryside on Sunday when their work was suspended. It was agreed to allow 15 men at a time

under guard to take a stroll. One day they visited another camp occupied by Polish prisoners and rested there. Bert sat with a Pole and gave him an English cigarette and the Pole gave Bert a meat sandwich, which he enjoyed. Of course neither of them could speak the others language. Bert wanted to know what meat was in the sandwich and asked 'Was it MOO MOO or BAA BAA?' 'Oh No No' said the Pole, 'It was ME-OW'. Of course anything tasted good after the monotonous skilly! **We will remember them.**

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION. The 2004 membership subscription was due on 1st January. Despite these difficult times the cost remains the same as previous years; £5 for former prisoners of war and £10 for associate members and members living overseas. Please make cheques out to NEXPOWA and send to Les Allan, 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel/Fax 01753-818308. Please include your membership card for signing. Anyone joining us half way through the year will receive the back issues they have missed so far in 2004. We also have some supplies of back issues for 2001-3, details on request from Phil Chinnery. As mentioned previously, all members who have not renewed their subscription by the end of May will be deleted from our records, so we can concentrate our efforts on those who wish to be members of our association.

STAMPS. We would be pleased to reply to any correspondence sent in to HQ, but please send in a first or second class stamp as well. It would also assist us if you include your membership number or otherwise confirm that you are a member of the association. We often receive requests for help and information from the public and whilst we would like to help them if we can, our first priority is requests from members. So to ensure that your letter goes to the top of the pile, please let us know if you are a member when you write in.

Many thanks to all members who have kindly sent in spare stamps with their correspondence, especially Len Murphy, Jim Harper, Ted Sample, Dr Moira Elliott, James Darrall and David Welch. Special thanks also to Mrs Anne Greer who sent in 125 stamps with her membership cheque! Thanks also to Leonard Rose of the US Stalag 4 Association for the \$20 donation to our mailing costs.

QUARTERMASTERS STORES. Ken Jackson has recently taken over Charlie Jagos role as Quartermaster and will be issuing a revised and updated stock list soon. In the meantime if you have one of our old lists and would like to order something, please contact Ken at the annual reunion address above.

NAMES AND ADDRESSES. Do we have your correct name, address and postcode? Please check the label on the envelope that contained this newsletter and let us know if anything needs amending.

DOXFORD HALL. We have been advised that the 'Do' at Chathill in Northumberland will take place on 1st July this year. All are welcome to attend. For more information contact Alan Burnie on 0191-2615135.

WEBSITE. Members are reminded that we have a website at <http://prisonerofwar.freesevers.com> Our webmaster Malcolm has begun work on the Photo Gallery. If you have any photos that we can scan and display on the website please contact [Malcolm Bamford](#) or send them to Phil Chinnery, address elsewhere in this newsletter.

USEFUL ADDRESSES. To obtain a copy of someones **Military Service Record** you will either need to be that person or his next of kin. Contact Army Personnel Centre, HQ Secretariat, Historical Disclosures, Mail Point 400, Kentigern House, 65 Brown Street, Glasgow G2 8EX. Telephone 0141-224-3303/2023. The Veterans Agency, formerly the War Pensions Agency hold most of the **German POW Record Cards** that were captured at the end of the war. They are willing to provide copies of your card if you ask them nicely. Contact Carmel Ellis in the public relations office on 01253-332126/333600. If you encounter any difficulties do let us know.

STALAG XIB/357 PROJECT. Allan Purcell the Project Manager at Fallingbistel tells us that the memorial project will be completed this year. Though not the initial plan of building an information centre on the site, there will be a memorial. It will take the form of a wall, in the centre of which will be two gates slightly ajar to commemorate the liberation of the camp on 16th April 1945. On each side of the gates a brass plaque telling the story, one in English, one in German. In front of the memorial there will be a walkway in natural stone, the rest made to look like a small garden with at least two benches for those who would like to reflect on days gone by. The gates are now complete, made by the engineers of 2nd Bn REME and a builder is waiting for better weather. They have also been given an original hut, but it lies some miles away and as soon as funds are available it will be move to the site and used as an information centre. If you would like to contribute to the project fund please write to Allan Purcell, Mess Manager, 2nd Bn and Fallingbistel Station, WO and Sgts Mess, BFPO 38.

BATTLEFIELD TOURS FOR VETERANS. Remembrance Travel inform us that they have attended a number of meetings with the New Opportunities Fund and the Ministry of Defence in regard to the new scheme by which veterans who served overseas in the Armed Services and Merchant Navy between September 1939 and September 1945 will receive **very significant travel funding** to return to one of the countries/operations areas in which they served during this period. They may be accompanied by their spouse, and a carer (where necessary) who will all receive considerable subsidy towards their travel costs. Widows may also apply.

Remembrance Travel of the Royal British Legion will be one of the main organisers of this programme which will operate through to November 2005. Trips planned for this year include the 60th Anniversary of the Normandy landings in June and Arnhem in September. 2005 trips include Berlin, Colditz and the POW camps in Poland in April; South Italy, Greece and Crete in May plus the POW camps in the Bavaria area. Dieppe in August and North Italy, Thailand and Singapore in September. North Africa veterans might consider the Egypt trip in October, from Cairo to Salum, including Alex and Alamein. If you would like a copy of the programme of visits write to Remembrance Travel, Royal British Legion Village, Aylesford, Kent ME20 7NX. Tel 01622-716729 or 01622-791939. You can email them at heroesreturn@britishlegion.org.uk or visit their website at www.heroesreturn.com

WELFARE REPORT by Flt Lt Ken Jackson. I must apologise for the lack of information reaching you from the Welfare Office. It would appear that our Post Office has its own 'Bermuda Triangle' or 'Black Hole' or it may be that there are many gremlins eating my reports. During 2003 the Association was able to assist in a number of cases whilst keeping within our limited means. Usually we 'team up' with other organisations like the Royal British Legion, SSAFA, Naval Benevolent Fund or a regimental association and this allows us to give the assistance the applicant needs. 2004 has started, on the welfare front at least, in a very quiet way with only a couple of requests for aid. One, which with the best will in the world our organisation could not possibly meet, was for a very substantial sum **each week** to pay for a shortfall in a residential home accommodation charge. We cannot possibly enter into any such agreement, for to do so would

very quickly bankrupt the association. Our support has to be channelled into single payments to relieve a short term problem where NEED is clearly demonstrated, not to be an ongoing extra income for a few people. I learned this very important lesson from our previous welfare officer, the late Colonel Tom Jagger who for many years looked after the fund in a most commendable manner. I will continue to follow his example and be very careful with your welfare funds.

On another note, regarding your money, I have recently been advised by bank security officials that there is a new 'scam' doing the rounds. You may receive a telephone call and the caller states that he is with the Fraud Office of your bank. You are then given a telephone number and extension and told if you wish to verify the authenticity to ring back on this number. He or she will then ask you if you have purchased something with your Visa/Mastercard/Switch or other card to the value of say £490 in the last couple of days. The conmen stick to an amount of just under £500 as this is the trigger point for your bank to look closely at the transaction. When you say 'No' they state that such a transaction is showing on your account and to confirm if this is a fraudulent transfer will you please confirm your name, address, telephone number, post code and your card number and the last three security numbers on the back of the card. **DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES DO SO.** One person recently went through this and gave the details. Twenty minutes later he telephoned his bank only to discover that £490 **HAD** just been taken from his card, by the thieves, using the details that he had unwittingly supplied. The correct action if you receive a suspicious call is to tell the caller **NOTHING** as your bank already has all the details it may need. Hang up on the caller and phone your bank immediately. Don't let thieves steal your money!

THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD! Frank Ruse sent in an interesting letter recently. He saw an article in his local newspaper celebrating 100 years of a local barbers shop and they were giving haircuts on that day for the pre-war price of six pence. The article mentioned a Mr Ken Harvey who had used the shop since he was a boy. Frank knew Ken and he told us; "The last time I saw him was when I was on the march through France after being captured at St Valery in June 1940. We arrived one night in a field near Lille and in one corner was a group of wounded POWs being looked after by the Red Cross. I wandered over to see if there were any from my battery, when to my surprise I found Ken Harvey. I didn't even know that he was in the army. He said the Red Cross were going to write to England to say he was a POW and that he would include my name as we lived near each other. I said I would do the same when I got the opportunity, which wasn't until I got to a Stalag in April 1941. When my parents received my card they went round to Kens parents with the good news as they hadn't heard anything from Ken and thought he was dead. Through this newspaper article I obtained Kens phone number and the first thing he said was 'I thought you were dead!' to which I replied 'and I thought you were!'"

PHOTO IN HARD COPY OF NEWSLETTER ONLY.

Some of the residents of Stalag 8Bs arbeits kommando **E373 a sawmill at Blaschke** in Czechoslovakia in 1944. Left to right; Don ? from the Tower Hamlet Rifles; Kirby (3rd Coldstreams); Dai Davies (Kings Royal Rifle Corps); McTaggart (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders); Jack Clements, (Rifle Brigade); Unknown from the Royal Engineer Commandos; Alf Solomon, (Royal Navy MTB622); Harry Spanton, (3rd Coldstreams); Able Seaman G Burton, (HMS Usk); Unknown from the Royal Engineer Commandos; Unknown from a London Regiment who was the cook. The Royal Engineers are believed to be commandos captured in Italy and one was named Ross. Sent in by Alf Solomon.

HISTORIANS NEWS.

Contact details: Mr Philip Chinnery, 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB. Email PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk

I must apologise for the later-than-planned publication of the Spring Newsletter. I have been plagued with a kidney stone the size of the Rock of Gibraltar and had to spend a few days in hospital and a few more recovering. All being well the Summer Newsletter will go out at the end of June and will feature a rundown of the POW camps in Wehrkreis 8 plus more on the Far East prisoner of war camps. If you have any FEPOW photos or anecdotes please send them in.

ITALIAN POW CAMP LIST. An update to our listing in the Summer 2003 newsletter follows: Campo 53 Sforza Costa near Macerata. According to a letter from the Air Attache of the British Embassy in Rome dated August 1954, the exact location was Urbisaglia. (Thanks to Mr A J Coles). Alan Bowgen at the public record office tells us that Campo 44 was at Leghorn and we have also been given the name Livorno from another source. Alan also has Campo 60 at Lucca, presumably post October 1942. He also has three new camps; Campo 87 at Benevento, Campo 93 at Bolzano, also known as Prato all'Isaro and Campo 132 at Foggia. We had no information on Campo 145 but Alan tells us that it was at Campotosto, also known as Poggio Cancelli and Campo 146, a work camp, was at Bussolengo/Bussalunga near Verona. There were also a number of military hospitals including 201 at Bergamo, 202 at Lucca, 203 at Bologna, 204 at Altamura, 206 at Nocera and 207 possibly near Milan. Any additions or corrections would be most welcome.

Many thanks to his son for the copy of Sgt T Biggarts YMCA diary recording his time in Stalag Luft 4, together with the photocopy of the 'Handle with care' cartoon book. Both are now logged into our archives. Thanks also to **Nick Phythian** for a copy of his fathers memoirs. Private Ellis Phythian of the Cheshire Regiment was a prolific escaper who eventually escaped from a working party near Posen in March 1943. He stowed away in the brake van of a train which carried him across Germany to Nancy in France. He contacted one of the escape lines and with their help he made his way to Spain. He was interned for seven weeks before being released to the British authorities and he was back in England in time to see his award of the Distinguished Conduct Medal published in the London Gazette on 9th December 1943.

Thank you to **Mrs Beryl Barma** who has sent in a copy of husband Bobs memoirs 'Autobiography of a prisoner of war'. Bob managed to escape from his working party in Italy and eventually joined the partisans. He was later recaptured and spent the rest of the war in Stalag 7A Moosburg. Bob is a bit under the weather now and we wish him all the best. Thank you to **Neil Beck** who sent in a photocopy of the diary of the late Bombardier R G Lewery who began the diary in an Italian A5 notebook during his time in Campo 102 at L'Aquila and continued it in Stalag 4B. He was one of a number of soldiers captured after the Italian Armistice of September 1943 and was sent by train through the Brenner Pass to Stalag 7A Moosberg enroute to a permanent camp. Another good addition to our archives.

I have recently purchased a copy of a 64 page German booklet issued in 1939 by the OKW (German High Command) on the subject of WW1 POWs and the kind of sabotage and dodgy

activities that they got up to during the 1914-18 war. I would like to recruit a fluent German speaking member to try to translate it for me. Any volunteers for this worthwhile project?

David Mowatt of the 4th Bn, Seaforth Highlanders and a former resident of Stalag 20B has sent in a copy of his memoirs starting with the surrender of the 51st Highland Division at St Valery-en-Caux and including his time at Stalag 20A, 20B and arbeits kommando 50 at Zeyersvorderkampen. In January 1945, with two others he escaped from the Death March and made his way towards the Russian lines. After eight weeks and nearing the Lithuanian border they were captured by the SS and put before a firing squad. Luckily an officer came along and called it off. As the Russians bombarded the harbour, they were shipped out of Danzig with 120 other escapees on a Belgian coal boat and after a week in the hold they docked at Lubeck. They were put on a train to Hannover but the RAF bombed the line ahead of them and they returned to Lubeck to await liberation. Have you written about your time as a prisoner of war? I urge all members to do so, not only for our archives but for family and friends as well.

CAMP PLANS. How good is your memory? Can you remember the layout of your POW camp? I am trying to increase our archive of camp plans and would appreciate any sketches, drawings, maps, plans or even scribbled notes on your camp or compound. The same goes for the arbeits kommandos. Can you remember the location and layout of your farm or factory? If you can please put pen to paper and help to record your history. Eric Payne has sent in a sketch of Campo PG 118 at Lavoro in Italy. This is one of the lesser known camps, comprising two large barracks with 60 men in each plus hut for the 40 guards. The camp was next to a school in the village of Gargazzone/Gargarzon and the address of the camp was Campo Lavoro, PG 118 VII PM.3200. Were any other members guests in this camp?

Tom Lewis has sent in two copies of 'Far East' the companion journal to the 'Prisoner of War' newsletter published bi-monthly by the POW department of the Red Cross and St John War Organisation. Volume 1 No 8 is dated June 1945 and Vol 1 No 9 is dated August 1945. They will be a valuable addition to our archives. Does anyone have numbers 1 to 7?

David Welch writes in after reading the item about Bernard de Newmanns research into Vichy POW camps in Africa. Apparently a book by Charles Lamb entitled '*War in a stringbag*' gives accounts of being a prisoner of the Vichy French in Africa. I would like to obtain a copy for our archives, so if you see one please let me know.

Many thanks to new member Philip Newbury for the copy of his autobiography 'My War' for our archives. Printed for friends and family this 124 page booklet describes his time in Campo 70 after capture at Tobruk and life in Stalag 4B in Germany.

New Associate member Anne Greer has sent in a photocopy of a programme for '*Freital Frolics*' a production put on at Stalag 4B. Does anyone remember seeing the show? It featured the Dresden and District Dance Orchestra with Saxes C.Hammond, E.Maxwell and D.Reynolds; Brass E.Homewood; Strings C.Lawson; Rhythm Alan Childs on Piano, Dick Green on Drums, Terry Murray on Guitar and Ron Farman, Bass. Compared by 'Fair Enough' Mac.

I have recently purchased two postcards sent to England by Sgt Charles Frederick Lush while he was a resident at Campo 78. Both feature extremely good quality water colour illustrations and one was sent to his son Robin whose birthday was on 6th June 1942 and the other a 15th anniversary card sent to his wife in April 1942. At that time the family lived at Homefield, The Withies, Leatherhead, Surrey. Does anyone know Sgt Lush or the current whereabouts of his family?

Nola Muller has sent me an email from South Africa regarding the poem 'Prisoners of war' that appeared in the Winter 2000 newsletter. The same poem was found in a notebook that belonged to her late uncle Mr Mervyn Whittle, who was a POW in Stalag 4A. The poem was credited to Dr Mustardie, RAMC. Does anyone remember Mervyn or Dr Mustardie?

STALAG 383. Tug Wilson has written in with some comments on the photos from Stalag 383 that appeared in the last newsletter. "It is my opinion that none of the photos are of Stalag 383! About mid-April 1945 news was spread that the camp was to be evacuated. Apart from a couple, the huts were slightly posh chicken hutches, 14 men to a hut and closely packed. I lived with my mates in hut 287. A motley crew including three Palestinians from Tobruk. We refused to go and the move was postponed for two days, when the Gerries said that the Swiss were insisting on us going as they knew that there was to be a battle in that place, there would be no electricity and we were in great danger. The majority decided to go and started to move the next day. The sports ground atop the hill was used to gather blocks of POWs into bundles of 100, wrap a few guards round them and march them off. Some kriegies, a surprising number, hid under the hut floors. As we reached the sports field a chap fainted. Badgie and I grabbed him, we bellowed at the line of guards and dogs and took him to the M.I. room where we dumped him on the floor. (You'll know it is always good to shout at a dubious Gerry.) Knowing our hut had been searched by the dogs, we went back to it. On the way we spotted a regimental copper (one of ours) escorting a 'sick' man to the hospital outside the camp and up the road. 'Trust a copper to be in on a racket' we observed. Then I remembered I had a R.P. band so I put it on and with Badgie marching properly and me escorting, we walked through the Vor Lager, saluted the Commandant with a smart 'eyes left!' marched on without breaking into a run and were out. When under cover we broke into nearly hysterical laughter."

Were you in Stalag 383? Can anyone confirm that the photos are of that camp?

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

As per our usual practice on the website, we do not include addresses or telephone numbers of our members. If you feel you can assist with any of the requests please write to Phil Chinnery at 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berks SL3 7EB.

Eric Payne in Farnborough, Hants was one of half a dozen British POWs to survive a direct hit on their air raid shelter at Bau 66 within the Herman Goering Works at Lager 22 (Stalag 4C) in Brux in Czechoslovakia. Dozens of prisoners were killed in the July 1944 air raids. Eric is searching for a fellow POW **G. Reeves** who came from Leeds and was a paratrooper taken prisoner on Rhodes.

Mrs Margaret Hume in London would like to locate former **Rifleman Robert Walter Hallam** 6845738 who was captured in November 1941 at Sidi Rezegh in North Africa. He was a resident of Campo 146 in Italy and Stalag 4A, arbeits kommando 1169.

Mrs Anne Greer in North Somerset would like to contact anyone who may have known her father **Trooper James Kenna** of the 8th Kings Own Hussars who fell in the bag in Egypt in 1942. He was a resident of Campo 70 Monturano and Stalag 4B. If you were there, perhaps you could drop her a line.

Mr Geoff Berry in Solihull, West Midlands is searching for **L/Cpl W S Grant** of D Coy, 5th Bn Gordons. A young French boy picked up his prayer book from a ditch near St Valery in May 1940 and would now like to return it to him or his relatives. We know that he was a resident of Stalag 383 and that he survived the war. Does anyone know his whereabouts? Please contact Phil Chinnery or Geoff at the address above.

Kate Prideaux is searching for anyone who knew her grandfather **Corporal Stanley Phillips**, RAMC, who was a resident of Campo 78 at Sulmona in Italy from March 1941 to mid 1943, following his capture at Tobruk. He attended a number of meetings of the Sulmona Society before he passed away in 1977. If you were a member of the society or you remember Stanley, please contact Phil Chinnery.

Mr David Welch in Cornwall would like to hear from anyone who remembers his father Alfred Welch of the **9th KORR** who was a resident at Stalag 20A.

Mr Alan Jackaman in Kent would like to hear from anyone who remembers his father **James George Jackaman** of the Royal West Kents who was sent to Stalag 20A after his capture in May 1940.

Mr T King in Manchester is trying to locate an area near Dunkirk called Lavallo or Levelle where his father was taken prisoner in 1940. He was a Lancashire Fusilier and was possibly a part of the rearguard.

Mr Ewen J Steele in the Western Isles, Scotland would like to locate **Arthur Babbs** and **Leslie Parish**. They were friends of his father Donald who served with the Cameron Highlanders and was a resident of Stalag 20B Marienburg.

The Red Cross Tracing Service are looking for **Mr George Crane**, born March 1922 in London, who was last known to have returned to London via Hamburg in 1945 after release from Stalag 20B Marienburg. If you have any information please contact Phil Chinnery, address in Historians News section.

June Carson in New Zealand is looking for some of her late husband Ian's mates. Do you know the whereabouts of **Leonard George Belson**, **Fred Petterley**, **Ronnie Mayne (the 'mole')** or **Harry Moore**? Ian was captured on Crete and was a former resident of Stalag 8B.

Mr Bill Evans in Kent would like to hear from anyone who was in Marlag and Milag Nord, especially his friend **James Cook** who used to live in Nelson Street, Middlesbrough.

Mr Jim Crouch in Essex would like to hear from anyone who may have known his father **Rifleman James 'Nobby' Couch** of the 2nd Bn KRRC. He was captured at Calais and was resident in Warthelager, Posen Stalag 21D, Schubin Stalag 21B and BAB21 at Heydebreck.

Mr Richard Bryson in South Africa would like to make contact with anyone who knew his father **Private John Louis 'Jack' Bryson** of 2nd South African Divisional Workshops. He fell in the bag at Tobruk in June 1942 and spent time in the Italian military hospital 202 at Lucca, then Campo 52 at Chiavari and thence to Stalag 8B where he worked in arbeits kommando E727 at the power station in Beuthen (Bytom). If you knew him or were in any of those locations why not drop Richard a line.

Mr Philip E Newbury in Nottingham would like to contact his old mate **Bombardier Johnnie Gates** who was with him in Stalag 4B.

Bill Sheridan in Accrington, Lancs would like to trace any of the following members of **The Buffs**; J Finnigan (Stalag 20A), J Hamill (8B), H A Styles (20B), J D Poulter (20A), J Jessop (383) and E F Barnes (Campo 53 and Stalag 8A).

Mr Stephen Harris in Kingswear, Devon would like to hear from anyone who knew James Llewellyn Norton of the Cheshire Regiment, who was taken prisoner at Rouen on 7th June 1940 and joined **BAB20** in January 1942 and remained with the kommando when it was renamed E794 at Reigersfeld in November 1944. His photograph appears on the front cover of this newsletter.

RED CROSS PARCELS IN THE FAR EAST. They were few and far between. The following are a selection of letters written on liberation by Far East prisoners of war concerning the elusive parcels;

From Major T Stapleton a resident of No 2 Camp, Thailand. "It may interest you to know that in a jungle camp some 90 miles from Bangkok, on 17th August 1945, the food parcels dispatched to us from London in June 1942, were handed to us. We were like children with Christmas stockings!"

From Lance Sergeant S H Palmer. "When in Rangoon on the way home we met Lady Mountbatten, who told us how hard the Red Cross had tried to get parcels and comforts to us, but the Japanese would not co-operate. However, she promised that the Red Cross would make up for it now we were free, and her promise has certainly been fulfilled – at least to me. The kindness and spontaneous sincerity of your workers in helping POWs from the Far East has touched me greatly, and I felt I must record my appreciation and grateful thanks for the help given to me."

From a Brigadier in Hoten POW camp, Manchuria, 19th August 1945. "The Red Cross parcels were just marvellous when we got them, but this was not very often. I do not know on what scale they were issued, but it must have been more than one for every three months; in fact we know that the Japs just stole them right, left and centre – one sentry boasted that he had had seven parcels all to himself. We lived for the first two and a half years on rice three times a day, a cupful each time, plus a little so-called vegetable soup, but as the guard stole most of the vegetable, it was mostly coloured water. There was no bread or anything else. At this camp there is no canteen, but a special show case is kept with various packets in it, all priced. When the Red Cross representative comes to inspect the camp, this case is brought out and dusted and a notice put up alongside it stating what the canteen hours are etc. In Manchuria we exchanged rice for beans made with a vegetable soup twice a day and corn porridge one day. We got three rolls of bread for some months, but then it was cut to two and we all started to lose weight again."

From Major W J Winkfield, Gurkha Rifles. "May I take this opportunity to thank your organisation for all your kindness to officers and men of the 2/1st Gurkha Rifles, who have been prisoners of war in Malaya, Thailand and Singapore for the last three and a half years. Your task must have seemed hopeless; we all knew that you were doing everything to help us. This fact also cheered us up, and your tremendous efforts did bear fruit; we received supplies once in 1942, once in 1944, which included much-needed medical supplies, and then, of course, when the end came in August we received thousands of tons which had been held back from us. In addition to this we got regular local supplies bought with money sent by you to Siam. We can never repay you; but if you will let me know how, we would like to help you."

The Red Cross representatives in the Far East also deserved special praise for their courage in dealing with such a merciless enemy. On 20th December 1943 Dr Vischer, who was the proposed delegate for the International Red Cross in Borneo, was executed with his wife by the Japanese. M Schweizer, the IRC delegate in Singapore reported that many Swiss citizens in the Netherlands East Indies experienced great persecution and oppression under the Japanese.

PHOTO BELOW. I purchased this damaged photograph recently for our archives. It was taken at Stalag 8B in mid-1943. The home towns of the men are included in brackets. Rear row from left to right; Bert Dubber, mandolin (Stouerport); Ken Blythe, guitar (Wimbledon); Harry Peet, accordion (Mayfair); Sgt Steve Reeder (Shipton); Bert Waterman, guitar (Paddington); Fred Simpson, guitar (Fraserburgh); Taffy Lydiard, mandolin (Swansea). Front row seated; Tony Wiles, mandolin (Hull); Den Smith, mandolin (Glasgow); Frank Lucky, drums (Stepney); Pat Davidson, mandolin (Fraserburgh). Does anyone know the fate or whereabouts of any of the men in the photo?

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PHOTO BELOW. Eleven of the twelve cast members of 'Pygmalion' a show put on by the residents of Campo 70 at Monturano near Fermo in Italy in July 1943. The cast were (not in order) Freddie Eynsford –Hill played by Fred Whiting, Mrs Eynsford-Hill (Jack Sheldrick), Clara Eynsford-Hill (Norman Mulson), Professor Higgins (Fred Kindle), Mrs Higgins (Watson Copland), Mrs Higgins Maid (John Swallow), Mrs Pierce (Joe Doughty), Eliza Doolittle (Phil Greensteen), Alfred Doolittle (Bernard Greenburg), Colonel Pickering (Arthur Stephenson), 1st Bystander (Jack Mercer), 2nd Bystander (J.Sherward). Photo sent in by Philip E Newbury.

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CAMPO 70 ITALY.

Philip Newbury remembers that Campo 70 was in a village up in the hills and five miles inland from Porto St. Georgio on the eastern coast. The camp was a disused factory of some sort with large concrete warehouses standing in a large field, surrounded with high barbed wire fencing. Not long after their arrival one of the men donned a pair of heavy gloves and tried to scale the barbed wire fence. He was seen by the guards as he reached the top and was shot dead. His body was left on the wire for three days as a warning to others.

The men were billeted in three tier bunks with straw filled palliases. A pile of old clothing arrived consisting of coats and tunics which were the uniforms of different armies of the countries conquered by the Nazis. They could pick what they required and the large letters P.G. were painted in red on the back of every uniform. A home made wireless set was used to receive the BBC overseas service and a transcript of the news was read out in the billets every night. The Italians heard the men discussing the news and searched high and low for the radio. They never found it because it was hidden in the seat of the stool they had made for use in the barbers shop.

At least one successful escape from the camp occurred before Italy surrendered to the Allies in September 1943. A group of women used to do the laundry for the Italian garrison and once a week came into the camp carrying bags of clean washing and then left again with bags of dirty washing. Having studied these movements an enormous black South African prisoner dressed himself in women's peasant clothing and with a bonnet on his head and a bagful of his own clothes on his shoulder hiding his face, calmly followed the women past the sentry on the gate. They never saw him again and hope he got clear away.

When Italy surrendered a message was received telling the prisoners to stay put. This was attributed to General Montgomery who did not want thousands of prisoners wandering around the enemy rear areas. Soon however the Germans arrived to take over the camp. In the sentry box close to Philips billet was a Polish soldier who had been forced into the German army. He agreed to turn a blind eye if two men broke into the building which housed the transformers for the camp lighting system. At an agreed time this was done and the transformers were smashed, plunging the camp into darkness. Immediately the lights went out, two ladders were put against the fence and two at a time, men began scaling them and dashing to the nearby woods. The Polish soldier was shouting 'Goot, Goot, cum, cum' at the same time firing his rifle into the air.

Philip and his friend Charlie joined the queue of would-be escapers by the brick wash houses which concealed them from the sentry boxes. When there were only two men in front of them the flood lights suddenly came on when the Germans got a portable generator working. The ladders were brilliantly illuminated and the two men on the top were killed by a burst of machine gun fire. At the same time they could hear rifle fire outside the camp as other escapers were chased. They quickly returned to their billets. Later they learned that a tunnel had been dug under the wire and about seventy men had got out before it was discovered by the Germans. Two days later they were packed off to Germany in cattle trucks on a long tedious journey that lasted for seven days and six nights.

ROYAL AIR FORCE NEWS.

Does anyone know the whereabouts of George Rushbrook who was in a Lancaster which was shot down on the night of 23rd June 1944 on the way to bomb a V-1 site at Coubronne in France? George was a resident in Stalag Luft 3 and his room mate Vince Murphy is looking for him. Please contact Phil Chinnery if you can help.

William Morison has sent in a copy of his paperback entitled FLAK AND FERRETS for our archives. In the book he describes his life in the RAF from 1939 to 1945 and despite his modesty he tells a fascinating story in which he evokes the flavour of life in the barrack room, the officers mess and the prison camp. We sit beside him in the cockpit as he teaches raw pilots to fly heavy bombers and as he flies over the target. We cling to his parachute as, in June 1942, he escapes from a near fatal collision. We hold our breath as, a year later, he marches out of Stalag Luft 3 escorted by fake guards, and we see the gleam of Sweden in his eye as, with Lorne Welch, he climbs into the cockpit of a Luftwaffe aircraft, only to be caught and sent to Colditz, where finally, with American and German shells criss-crossing the castle, he is liberated. 196 pages with photos. Published by Sentinel in 1995 signed copies are still available from Walter for £10 post free at Fiddlers, Smugglers Lane, Bosham, West Sussex PO18 8QP.

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PHOTO ABOVE. Clive Smith in Basingstoke sent in this copy of a torn photo that he literally 'picked up' on his travels. We believe it belonged to 2364699 Driver Leonard Ronald Stevens of the Royal Signals, a former resident of Stalag 344 Lamsdorf where we think the photo may have been taken, when it was still known as Stalag 8B. Do you recognise the location or anyone in the photo?

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

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