

# The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

## Winter 2001 Newsletter

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# JUSTICE !

## FOR ALL FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR!

### PHOTO AVAILABLE ON HARD COPY OF NEWSLETTER ONLY

Photograph. Thousands of British and Commonwealth prisoners of war were killed or maltreated in the hands of the Nazis in Germany and the Fascists in Italy. Contrary to the articles of the Geneva Convention, prisoners of war were used as slave labourers in German factories susceptible to Allied bombing raids. These prisoners of war were killed during an air raid on the I G Farben oil refinery at Brux in Czechoslovakia in July 1944. Dozens more were killed at the I G Farben factory at Auschwitz.

**ASSOCIATION NEWS.** By Les Allan, President & Honorary General Secretary.

### WE DEMAND JUSTICE FOR ALL PRISONERS OF WAR

On behalf of the Association I attended the first meeting of veterans groups with Dr Lewis Moonie, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence and newly-appointed Minister for Veterans Affairs. Unfortunately he limited the number of questions that could be put to him and firmly ignored my outstretched arm. Perhaps it was intentional, for we are now becoming well known in the corridors of power. Maybe it was coincidence that the last person to be allowed to speak rose and thanked the Government for its awarding of ten thousand pounds to each surviving Far East Prisoner of War.

I also applaud this government for standing up for what is right and approving the payment. Compensation should of course, have been paid by the Japanese Government, but they have long had a problem with admitting their abominable treatment of Allied prisoners of war. Not so the German Government. After the end of the war the Germans paid the sum of a million pounds to the British Government to be passed on to former prisoners of war. However, they did not do so. How much is that worth now?

The main reason given by the Government for awarding compensation to the Far East Prisoners of War is because of the magnitude of the ill-treatment that they suffered. Government figures tell us that 25 percent of the prisoners died in Japanese hands, compared to only 7 percent who died in German hands. We have asked for a breakdown of these figures and asked if they include prisoner of war deaths in North Africa, Greece, Crete or Italy, but so far the Government has not obliged us.

Figures of course can be deceptive. Researchers have recently discovered that at least 25 percent of the men who died while in Japanese hands were killed by their own side, by the Allies, by 'friendly fire.' Most were in unmarked Japanese cargo ships, some of which were indeed known to be carrying Allied prisoners, but had to be sunk nevertheless.

How about ill-treatment? The Government tells us that the Germans abided by the Geneva Convention. We have even been told recently by Dr Moonie that the ill-treatment of prisoners in German hands was the fault of individual guards, not as a result of Nazi Government policy. The reply from most ex-prisoners of war when hearing this is usually a series of expletives followed by 'lies!'

Many of our members were taken prisoner in France in May 1940, over a year and a half before the first British prisoners fell into Japanese hands at the fall of Singapore. I was one of them. What was I doing during those 18 months? My world collapsed on 28<sup>th</sup> May 1940, along with the ceiling of the cellar in which I and the wounded from the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry were sheltering. The Jerries pulled me out of the ruins, removed my 'stretcher bearer' armband and medical kit and sent me off on the long march to Luxembourg. Thousands of us were on that march, with little food or water and dysentery was rife. If you fell by the wayside you were shot. Eventually we were packed like sardines into railway cars for the three-day trip to Torun in Poland. Conditions were appalling there and the dark bunkers in which we were kept were like ice-boxes in the winter. When the Red Cross visited the Stalag on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1944 they noted that 136 prisoners of war had died there since 1940, including 22 who had been shot.

Although, as a medic I was a 'protected person' and should have been repatriated or at least put to work in a hospital, I was used as a slave labourer. I cut blocks of ice out of the frozen River Vistula for Jerry officers to have with their drinks and I worked 12 or 18-hour shifts in a sugar beet factory, seven days a week at harvest time. One Jerry guard took a dislike to me and broke my jaw with his rifle butt.

It was not until 1943 that my government finally informed the Germans that I was a protected person and although it was recorded in the German records in 1944 I was still used as a slave labourer and no attempt was made to repatriate me or move me to where my medical skills could be used.

Four and a half years after I was captured, the Russians were approaching from the East and the Germans decided to move the hundreds of thousands of prisoners in Poland and the east of Germany on a thousand mile march to the West. Yes, through the terrible winter of 1944/45 I walked a thousand miles from Danzig to Fallingbomel, wearing wooden clogs stuffed with straw, eating whatever we could steal or scrounge on the way. We slept in unheated barns, or if one was not available we slept in snow-covered fields. Most of us suffered from dysentery by then and men would fall by the wayside, never to be seen again. We would hear shots from the darkness behind us as the guards finished off the unfortunates and the snow would cover their lifeless forms.

For the record Dr Moonie, I must tell you that the Geneva Convention is supposed to protect you from that. We can quote you thousands of similar incidents from thousands of prisoners of war. These incidents were so widespread that they had to take place with the approval, if not the instructions of the Nazi government. Why do you think we had so many war crimes trials at the end of the war? Why were all of the Nazi civilian and military leaders found guilty at the end of the war? Hitler told the SS "Do what you want for who will question the victor?"

**We consider that the treatment of British prisoners of war at the hands of the Nazis, in addition to the treatment afforded those held in Italian prisoner of war camps, has more than qualified us for similar compensation to that given to the Far East Prisoners of War. To Dr Moonie and to the Prime Minister Tony Blair we say – the money has sat in Treasury coffers for fifty years. It is now time do the right thing and pass it on to those of us who are still left.**

For those in this government who still believe that the Germans abided by the Geneva Convention and that acts of ill-treatment were the fault of individual guards rather than Nazi Government policy, we will now quote some of the thousands of examples in our files. Lest you forget.

**The Rt. Hon. The Lord Russell of Liverpool, C.B.E., M.C. wrote the foreword in 1956 to the book ‘The Vengeance of Private Pooley’. The author was one of the two survivors of the massacre at Le Paradis in May 1940 when nearly 100 men from the Royal Norfolk Regiment were murdered after surrendering to the SS. He said:**

“At the outbreak of the Second World War the treatment of prisoners was governed by the Geneva Prisoner-of-War Convention of 1929, the Preamble of which stated that the aim of the signatories was to alleviate the conditions of prisoners of war.

“During the war, however, the provisions of the Convention were repeatedly disregarded by Germany. Prisoners were subjected to brutality and ill-treatment, employed on prohibited and dangerous work, handed over to the SD for ‘special treatment’ in pursuance of Hitlers Commando Order, lynched in the streets by German civilians, sent to concentration camps, shot on recapture after escaping, and even massacred after they had laid down their arms and surrendered.”

In June 1946, Lord Russell of Liverpool became Deputy Judge Advocate, British Army of the Rhine, and he held the appointment until July 1947, and again from October 1948 to May 1951. During his tenure of this appointment he was legal adviser to the Commander-in-Chief in respect of all trials by British Military Courts of German war criminals. In May 1951, he returned to the Office of the Judge Advocate General of the Forces in London and took up the appointment of Assistant Judge Advocate General from which he resigned on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1954.

In the British Zone of Occupation in Germany alone, 356 war crimes trials were held involving more than 1,000 war criminals. In his position as Deputy Judge Advocate, Lord Russell of Liverpool was ideally placed to form an opinion of the German attitude to the Geneva Convention and of their treatment of prisoners of war. He later wrote a book entitled ‘The Scourge of the Swastika – a short history of Nazi War Crimes’.

**MASSACRE ON THE ROAD TO DUNKIRK.** Gunner Richard Parry was in a convoy of vehicles making for Dunkirk when it was ambushed and destroyed. The men were ordered to scatter and he made his escape by swimming along a stream to the cover of some houses just outside Wormhout. As he made his way through one of the houses to the street he was captured by SS troops.

Parry was ordered to join about 30 other prisoners of war standing against a wall with their hands above their heads. Their guards took turns visiting a vacated café for refreshments before marching the men for about a mile towards Wormhout. Eventually they reached a large field where about fifty men were collected, mostly Royal Warwickshire Regiment and Cheshires and a handful of Royal Artillery. Later a German officer interviewed one of the men and afterwards they were all marched for about two miles across the fields to a cow barn and ushered inside.

No sooner were all the men inside than hand-grenades were thrown in, about five in all. The explosion blew Parry through a gap in the side of the barn and only his feet remained inside. Wounded by shrapnel in the leg, he could only lay there helpless as the events unfolded. Parry heard the Germans shouting 'Raus, Raus' and the British replying with abuse. Later he heard some of the men asking if they could have a smoke before they were shot. It would seem that this last request was not granted because seconds later five men were lined up on the side of the barn where Parry lay and shot in the back.

Five more men were called out and lined up in the field on the far side of the barn. Parry could see them and their last act was to turn around and face their murderers before they too were shot. Unsurprisingly, when the Germans called for five more men to come out, the prisoners refused. Undeterred, the SS men stood at the barn entrance and fired into the mass of men inside. Parry was hit a second time, in the foot and he passed out. When he awoke, he saw a German looking at him from the barn. As he struggled to get to his feet, the German raised his gun to his shoulder and shot Parry through his face.

When Parry regained consciousness it was evening and all was quiet. Two Frenchmen slowly approached the barn, but as soon as they saw the carnage inside they took to their heels. Two long days passed while the lives of the survivors slowly ebbed away. Finally a unit of the German medical corps came on the scene and discovered the half dozen survivors still clinging to life. They were carried on stretchers to a clearing station and thence to Boulogne.

**LETTER FROM MR NICK HARVEY, MP FOR NORTH DEVON** to Dr Lewis Moonie, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans Affairs, on behalf of his constituent Mr H Davie formerly with the Parachute Regiment. Sent on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2001.

"Mr Davie was captured at the Battle of Arnhem and was brutalised by German officers who repeatedly beat his spine with the butts of their rifles; he has been crippled ever since. I understand that after his capture he spent time in a German medical unit and from there was transferred to Stalag IVB where the incident took place. I further understand that it is widely thought that the Germans adhered to the Geneva Convention during the war when it comes to POWs, however given the above account of Mr Davie's incarceration, I put it to you that the German officers present at that time did not pay heed to the convention and were utterly guilty of extreme cruelty.

I believe that the International Organisation for Migration [who are paying compensation to civilians used as slave workers by the Nazis] differentiates between those POWs who were sent to concentration camps or who were discharged from the Army and then taken by the Germans for forced labour [such as French and Dutch soldiers] and those who like Mr Davie were captured and held in makeshift prisons. I can scarcely believe that such fine distinctions can be made when injuries such as those of Mr Davie were made in breach of the Geneva Convention and it has affected him for all of his life since.

I understand that the 1950 report into Prisoner of War matters by the Foreign Office is much quoted and that the general belief is that there were few, if any, really clear breaches of the convention. However the War Pensions Agency must have detailed records in their possession of many cases where POWs suffered severe beatings during their capture. In the light of this case and I suspect many others there should be a new enquiry into the ramifications of those who were injured in this way and Harold Davie is one of many who deserve compensation for having been disabled through POW sustained injuries. In the light of the recent Japanese Prisoners of War compensatory payments it seems extremely harsh to deny other POWs any money at all which is a long time coming and the very least they deserve."

Extract from Dr Moonies reply dated 21<sup>st</sup> September 2001. "There is no doubt that there were indeed cases of improper treatment by individual Germans of our servicemen held prisoner of war.

However, the point being made by the Foreign Office report was that these represented improper acts by individuals, rather than acts authorised or encouraged by the German government. The German authorities did in general, implement the provisions of the Convention with respect to prisoners of war.

This was, of course, a contrast to the actions of the Japanese whose government singularly failed to take such steps. It is because of the unique, collective experience of our personnel detained by the Japanese authorities, that we have made the ex-gratia payment to these former captives of the Japanese.”

**A comment by Philip Chinnery, Association Historian;** “Are we to take it then, that Dr Moonies opinion is that the individual Germans who ill-treated or murdered our men in Germany did so without the authorisation of the German government and therefore compensation is not warranted, but the ill-treatment meted out to the men by the Japanese was authorised and encouraged by the Japanese government, therefore only those men deserve compensation? Or is it simply because you do not think enough of our men died from their treatment or were murdered? Remember the film ‘The Great Escape’ Dr Moonie? Starring Steve McQueen and a host of other stars. So the story went, seventy-nine RAF prisoners of war escaped through a tunnel from Stalag Luft 3 on the night of 24<sup>th</sup> March 1944. Most were recaptured and 50 of them were shot by the Gestapo on the direct orders of Adolph Hitler. Well, the story was true. Hundreds more RAF airmen were lynched or murdered by German civilians or uniformed personnel after bailing out of stricken aircraft. Did you include these men, who were all taken prisoner before they were murdered, in your statistics? And yes, the German government did condone and encourage this treatment.

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## THE ‘KILL COMMANDOS’ ORDER.

The seven commandos were taken prisoner in May 1943. Their original task was to sail into a Norwegian Fjord in the west of the country and attempt to sink the German ships at anchor there. Unfortunately their engine failed them as they made their night approach and they drifted ashore.

Reluctantly the commandos decided to abandon their boat and try to get across the country to Sweden. The men made drawings of some of the German coastal gun positions and then moved further inland. They made the mistake of taking shelter one night in a field next to a small farm. They were spotted by the farmers wife who assumed they were German sailors and informed the authorities. They were soon rounded up and taken to Gestapo headquarters in Oslo. After interrogation they were taken to Hovedoya for execution, but the orders were changed and they were taken back to Oslo and incarcerated at Grini.

In view of Adolf Hitlers order to kill captured commandos they were kept isolated and then transported to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Although they were captured wearing naval uniform they were treated as civilian prisoners and made to perform hard labour in the camp.

The commandos made contact with some Norwegians who were also imprisoned in the camp and associated with them whenever they could. In the Autumn of 1943 the Royal Air Force began to bomb Berlin and in an act of retaliation the seven men, plus one other who had been taken prisoner in Belgium were transferred to a penal company.

The men in the penal company spent the whole of their day marching around the parade ground on a fixed route which took them over different kinds of terrain, ie mud, sand, broken rocks, shingle, cement etc and on their backs they carried rucksacks with bricks in them. They were forced

to march 45 kilometres each day and to add to their discomfort they were also made to wear different sized German army jackboots to 'break them in' for their captors.

Surprisingly, the seven commandos managed to survive until 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1945. On that fateful night a total of 137 men were ordered out of the barracks to be murdered by the SS guards, including five of the British. Victor Cox, Harold Hiscock, Neville Burgess, Andrew West and John Goodwin always knew they were living on borrowed time. It was later said they had tried to overpower their guards on the way to the place of execution and that they had all been shot. Keith Manor was sent to Belsen concentration camp on 8<sup>th</sup> February and Alfred Roe on 12<sup>th</sup> March. Neither man was seen again.

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### **TRANSLATION OF HITLERS 'COMMANDO ORDER'.**

THE FUEHRER  
TOP SECRET

No 00383/42 Top Secret. OKW/WFSt (Wehrmachtfuehrungstab)  
F.H.Qu 18.10.42

12 copies.

1. For some time now our opponents have been using in the prosecution of war, methods which do not conform with the international agreements of Geneva. Especially brutal and cunning is the behaviour of members of the so-called Commandos who themselves (as has been established) are partly recruited from among hardened criminals released in enemy countries. It appears from captured documents that they are instructed not only to bind prisoners but also to kill defenceless prisoners out of hand as soon as they believe that the latter, in the further pursuit of their purpose, as prisoners represent merely dead weight or in other ways could be an obstacle. Finally, orders have been found in which the killing of the prisoners has been demanded on principle.
2. For this reason it was already announced in a supplement to the Wehrmacht Communique of 7.10.42 that in future Germany would take the same measures against these sabotage-parties of the British and their accomplices, ie that wherever they may be found they will be ruthlessly exterminated in battle by the German troops.

3. I therefore order: From now on all opponents brought to battle by German troops in so-called commando operations in Europe or in Africa, even when it is outwardly a matter of soldiers in uniform or demolition parties with or without weapons, are to be exterminated to the last man in battle or while in flight. In these cases it is immaterial whether they are landed for their operations by ship or aeroplane or descend by parachute. Even should these individuals, on their being discovered, make as if to surrender, all quarter is to be denied them on principle. A detailed report is to be sent to the OKW on each separate case for publication in the Wehrmacht Communiqué.
4. If individual members of such commandos working as agents, saboteurs, etc, all into the hands of the Wehrmacht by other means, eg, through the Police in any of the countries occupied by us – they are to be handed over to the SD immediately. It is strictly forbidden to hold them in military custody, eg, in prisoner of war camps etc, even as a temporary measure.
5. This instruction does not apply to the treatment of those enemy soldiers who are taken prisoner in open battle or who surrender in the course of normal battle operations (offensives, large-scale landing operations and large-scale air landing operations). Equally little does this regulation apply to enemy soldiers who have fallen into our hands after naval encounters or are seeking to save their lives by parachute after air battles.
6. In the case of non-execution of this order I shall make responsible before a Court Martial all commanders and officers who have either failed to carry out their duty in instructing the troops in this order, or who act contrary to this order in carrying it out.

Signed A Hitler.

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## **TREATMENT IN THE PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS.**

‘Life behind barbed wire’ by Doug Bond, POW No 32851. Arbeits Kommando E715 Auschwitz.

“It is Sunday morning, our only day off from work in the local I G Farben chemical factory. From my top bunk I can just see through the ice on the windows. It is 30 degrees below freezing with a couple of feet of snow outside. Just inside the wire I can see a ‘Goon’ a German sentry, sometimes called a ‘Toadstool’ a fit name he is proud of, in his sentry top coat which goes over his greatcoat, more like a tent. He is pegged down firmly in two pairs of boots, the outer pair like a couple of barges, and he glares glumly through the wire, frozen, bored and cursing he envies us in our little wooden huts.

Being a Sunday we have a little laugh at him, here am I in bed with my balaclava, greatcoat and mittens on, my legs swathed in old pants and stuck in a kitbag, only my clogs being removed, I’m fairly warm. The hut is typical of all huts inside the cage. The asbestos lining on the walls is coated with ice, so is the roof, there are icicles on the few remaining beams from which hang shirts, pants etc frozen stiff, some have been there for several weeks.

The camp has reached a low ebb, out of Red Cross parcels, out of fags, out of fuel and out of action, some lie in bed too weak to stand on their feet. We just lie there all day thinking of food. There is none to be had, no one speaks out loud on this subject as this causes many arguments and fights.”

## **RED CROSS REPORTS on Arbeits Kommandos (working parties) from Stalag 4F dated 18th/21st March 1945 –**

Kdo No 57 Himmelfahrtsgrube bei Freiberg. A coal mine. "The man of confidence complained that, in four cases, POWs have been struck by the director of this firm with a rubber truncheon. The delegate spoke to this man who, in the presence of the accompanying officer of the High Command, admitted striking the men. He added that he would continue to strike any POW who did not work to his satisfaction. Also, the POWs in this camp get stomach troubles every time they are served with meat. The Oberstabsarzt promised to look into this strange 'Erscheinung' personally."

Kdo No 124 at Gleina. "The American chief man of confidence reported that conditions here are very bad, especially the health of the POWs. On the 18<sup>th</sup> March only 38 men out of the total strength of 109 were working, the rest being ill in camp or at the hospital. Although a German civilian doctor visited this camp every day, seven men had died within the last three weeks, the last two in the barrack itself. The chief man of confidence suggested that the cause of death was complete exhaustion, pneumonia and undernourishment."

Air Raid deaths. Eight British prisoners of war were killed in air raids between 6<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 1945. Prisoner of war George Roberts was shot by a German guard on 24<sup>th</sup> February and died the next day. James Duncan killed in an accident at work the same day.

### **TREATMENT DURING THE WINTER MARCH TO THE WEST.**

Private Frank Lofthouse, British POW number 19721, who marched with a column of prisoners from Graudenz. 'My comrades and I had to sleep 3 nights out in open fields on 2 feet of snow and 19 degrees of frost. In 21 days we never received a hot meal. We had to march 25 to 30 kilometres a day. Sick men were forced to carry on for 21 days without attention. I have seen a British Medical Officer (Capt Sapsford, RAMC) beaten by a guard with the butt of a rifle while he was sick. Red Cross Report Stalag 2A Feb 45.

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RSM W G Cockaday. British POW number 20699, on the march of prisoners of war from Stalag 20A Torun to Stalag 2A Neubrandenburg. "600 British POWs of Lager 3 started on the march on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1945. They passed through the following towns; Thorn, Bromberg, Immelheim, Flatow, Jastrow, Tempelburg, Schivelbein, Swinemunde, Griefswald, Demmin; they arrived on 18<sup>th</sup> February at Neu-Kalen where they rested for 3 days. From the 600 British prisoners who left Thorn, only about 350 arrived at Neu-Kalen. A big party was left behind at Bromberg and about 50 men were caught by the Russians – some of them were recaptured by the Germans. On 21<sup>st</sup> February 56 sick left Neu-Kalen by train and arrived the same day in Stalag 2A at Neubrandenburg. The rest of the 300 men continued to march. Their destination is not known.

The first night, prisoners were compelled to sleep in the open, lying in two feet of snow. Afterwards they were primitively accommodated in barns etc. No hot food was given out in the four weeks of the march. When passing through Zirchow RSM Cockaday was informed by civilians that a British soldier was lying in a house. The man was dead and had no identification paper whatsoever. The only thing known is his POW number 19355". Red Cross Report Stalag 2A Feb 45.



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One thousand British prisoners of war were assembled in the Freystadt area on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1945 to begin a three-month march of 1200 kilometres to Bitterfeld in the West. Bandsman Charles Houston of the Royal West Kent Regiment later stated in an affidavit at the war crimes trial of some of their guards; "During the first fortnight no German rations of any kind were issued except one loaf of bread. We had to live upon Red Cross parcels that we took with us. Prisoners of war were normally accommodated in barns that were always overcrowded. If it had been raining during the march there was no means of drying clothes during rest periods. At no time during the march were facilities available for baths and I myself did not have one for four months. There were no latrine facilities except as constructed by ourselves. There was no medical officer in the column nor were there any German medical orderlies. During the march a number of prisoners of war died from dysentery and malnutrition. On 28<sup>th</sup> February 1945 Trooper Smith of the 15<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Hussars collapsed with dysentery, along with a number of others. There was no transport with this column and sick had to be carried by other prisoners. In the early hours of 3<sup>rd</sup> March Smith died." Source file WO309/47 Public Record Office.

**PRISONERS PUT IN HARMS WAY. Letter from British Embassy, Berne to Foreign Office 13<sup>th</sup> April 1945.** "24 British were killed during raid on Leipzig on 27<sup>th</sup> February (names by bag). Revier in Gneisenaustrasse is within zone of military importance, 600 to 700 yards from main central Leipzig station, general conditions unsatisfactory. State of health of all new prisoners, especially Americans, extremely bad due mainly to long marches from western front and lack of sufficient food. In Russian camp at Grosszoessen and at detachment No 106 Kalkschacht there are approximately 50 British evacuated from Eastern camps unable to continue march."

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### **MORE ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan.**

We must apologise for the absence of some of our regular features in this newsletter, but we considered it more important to commence our campaign for compensation while there are enough of us still around to make a difference. We would urge all members to contact their local MPs and ask them to pledge their support for us. Many MPs will be receiving a copy of this newsletter and we have plenty to spare if you would like to pass on copies to your local newspaper, TV or radio stations. We would like the whole country to know how this government treats its war veterans.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS!** Phil Chinnery and I would like to join our committee in wishing all members of the Association a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

**RENEWAL OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION.** The 2002 annual subscription is due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. If you would like to continue to receive the quarterly newsletters and annual journal please send a £5 cheque (£10 for Associate/Overseas members) made out to NEXPOWA to Les Allan at 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE. Tel/Fax 01753-818308. Please enclose membership card. If you are not sure what to give your family or friends for Christmas, give them a subscription to the newsletter.

**FORTHCOMING REUNIONS.** The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association will be holding its 2002 Annual Reunion at Warners Lakeside Holiday Village, Hayling Island between 4th and 7th October. Members, Associates, family, friends are all welcome. Reserve your place now with Mr Charlie Jago on 01722-333599. The 2001 annual reunion was a great success as usual and we hope to include a report for those who could not make it in the next newsletter.

The Stalag 4B Association will be holding its annual reunion at the Peterborough Moat House Hotel between Friday 19<sup>th</sup>- Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2002. Estimated cost is £38 per person per night, for bed and breakfast, plus £20 for dinner Friday and Sunday and £25 for dinner Saturday. Anyone interested in attending please contact Lew Parsons at 44, Furlongs, Vange, Basildon, Essex SS16 4BW. You can speak to Lew on 01268-527524 or Alex Wood on 01582-712151.

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**STALAG 4B ASSOCIATION visit to MUHLBERG** took place in September. The photo below of the group was taken at Holzdorf Luftwaffe Aerodrome in front of a static Russian helicopter. On the extreme right is Burgermeisterin (Mayoress) of Muhlberg, Frau Hannalore Brendel and on the extreme left a Luftwaffe officer. We hope to include a full report in the next issue.

**PHOTO AVAILABLE IN HARD COPY OF NEWSLETTER ONLY**

**NEW MEMBERS.** We would like to welcome the following new members to the Association; **Mr Clifford Winser**, Royal West Kents and Stalag 20A. **Mr A J Coles**, RAF 39 Squadron, ex Campo 66 and 53 and Stalag 4B. **Mr Philip Felton** of 21 and 87 Squadrons RAF and Campo 78 and Stalag 4B. Associate members; **Mr Kevin Manifold** whose father Harold was a member of the RA and a resident of campo 52 and 66 and Stalag 4G. **Mr Christopher Cole.** **Mr Robert M Bowen**, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Div, US Army. **Mr John Green.** **Mr Michael Cunliffe-Lister.** **Mr Hyman Charniak**, a former American resident from Stalag 18A. **Mr Ben van Drogenbroek**, a friend of the association in The Netherlands. **Mr Neil Pudney** whose father was in 133 Field Ambulance. **Mr Malcolm Potter** whose father was in 44 Battery, RA at St Valery. **Alice Giunta** whose father Horace Johnson escaped from Stalag 20B.

**DONATIONS.** We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to the welfare fund. All contributions gratefully accepted. £10 **Mr E A Cattermole.** £10 **Mr Christopher Cole.** £5 **Reverend Tom Chapman.** £10 **Mr Bill Crighton.** £10 **Mr Ben van Drogenbroek.** £10 **Mr J R Johnstone.** £50 **Mr Malcolm Potter.** £20 **Mr Jack Batt.** More to follow in the next newsletter.

**OBITUARIES.** We regret to announce that Joseph Sidney Emerson of Hexham passed away on 6<sup>th</sup> March. He was a prisoner of war in Stalag 4B. Mr Joseph C Hill of Dunfermline passed away on 30<sup>th</sup> September. Mr Richard Hall of the 4<sup>th</sup> Green Howards from Redcar passed away on 13<sup>th</sup> July.

**NOT FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION.** We have had the opportunity recently to send one or two of our war disabled members on outings organised by the 'Not Forgotten Association.' In the event that we again have a chance to participate in the sterling work done by that association, we would like to compile a short list of interested members. Please let Les Allan know if you would like to be listed.

**Stamped Addressed Envelopes.** We would be pleased to reply to any letters sent in to us, but please enclose an SAE or at least a stamp. Thank you.

### **BOOK REVIEWS.**

We have received a 24 page booklet written by Maurice E Jones of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn KSLI, entitled "**For you the war is over...**" Subtitled 'Prisoner of War Recollections 1944-1945.' Maurice was taken prisoner in Italy and spent time in Moosberg and Lamsdorf before embarking on the long march to the west. Available from; Shropshire Regimental Museum, The Castle, Shrewsbury SY1 2AT. Price £3 post paid.

**ZWISCHEN FIKTION UND ZEITZEUGENSHAFT** by Barbara Stalzl-Marx. This book tells the story of American and Soviet prisoners of war in Stalag 17B Krems-Gneixendorf in Austria. This book is probably the best that you will ever find on Stalag 17B. It is well researched and comprehensive. My only criticism is that I would have liked to have seen a detailed list of the arbeits kommandos which were administered by the Stalag. Unfortunately, the book is written in German and at present there are no plans to produce an English edition. If you were there, or know someone who was, it is worth buying the book and learning German or going in search of a friendly translator. ISBN No 3-8233-4661-X. Softcover, 332 pages including photographs and drawings. Available from Gunter Narr Verlag, Dischingerweg 5, D-72070 Tübingen, Austria. Cost DM96-

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### **WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

If anyone can assist with the following requests would they kindly contact the newsletter editor, Mr Phil Chinnery at 10 Lambert Avenue, Langley, Berkshire SL3 7EB. Email [PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk)

Mr K N Taylor would like to hear from anyone who served with his late father Vic. Enlisted Royal Engineers 1940, posted to 'A' Company, 1 M.T. Depot, Aldershot. To Egypt with 10<sup>th</sup> Railway Construction Company, Technical Experimental Section, HQ Coy – 2 Depot Battalion and 6 Bomb Disposal Coy. In 1941 was with 144 Section, 11 Field Coy. 1943 with 4 Field Squadron, part of the 7<sup>th</sup> Armd Div advance that was halted at Villers-Bocage. Captured and was in Stalag 12A Limberg, 8A Gorlitz and Arb Kdo 4001 Maltsch (8C) where he worked as a 'chemist' in a sugar factory. Escaped on the march to Sagan in January 1945 and liberated by Soviets in February 1945.

Mr Malcolm Potter would like to contact anyone who was taken prisoner at St Valery, especially survivors from **44 Battery**, 101 Regiment, Royal Artillery.

Mr Ivor Gordon would like to contact anyone else who was with Arbeits Kommando **A942GW** at Schladming, Austria.

Mr Archie Balmer was a member of the Royal Scots Greys, captured in Greece and a resident of working party **94/GW** at Niklasdorf, in Austria. He would like to hear from Charlie Atkins/son and Joe Ainslie from his regiment, plus Colin Millington (lost his foot?), David Millar – Edinburgh, Arthur Thompson, Len Slater, Bobby Parks – Black Watch, Fred Brooks, Bert Reid.

Mr J R Johnstone would like to locate **Jackie Lockwood** with whom he escaped from Stalag 20B. Jackie was in the York and Lancs and the two of them were on the run for ten days.

Mr Hyman Charniak would like to hear from any ex-POW (or family or friends) who were interned at **Bernstein Castle** (Stalag 18A?) in eastern Austria in WWII. They might include Bert Jackson, a gunner/driver in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Royal Tank Regiment; Fred Coulter; Rod Finlayson, Eddie Hopwood; Arthur Kemp; Ron Tudor; 'Ginger' and 'Jim.'

Mr J Semple would like to contact a prisoner of war whose story appeared in the Sunday People magazine a couple of years ago. Apparently the writer had been at **Tabarz** and wanted to return but could not find the place on the map.

Mr John Green would like to know if anyone has any information on Private **Lionel Brown**, Army Air Corps No 1070071 who died at Ascoli Peino in Italy on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1944. Believed to have been in Campo 70 Monturano.

Does anyone know the whereabouts of former Bombardier 784059 **J C Barber** of the Royal Artillery. A former resident of Campo 53 Macerata, he had found his way to Switzerland by 1944. Please contact Phil Chinnery if you can help.

### **HISTORIANS NEWS.**

A **Thank you** to new member **Clifford Winsor** for the photos taken of the stage acts at Stalag 20A. Also a **Thank You** to **Ken Lock** for the photos of BAB20. We will include some of them in a future issue of the newsletter. Are any more photos out there? Thank you also to **Bill Crighton** for a copy of his memoirs detailing his experiences with the 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division and at Stalag 8B/E51. **Thank You** also to **Stan Johnson** for the photographs of Danzig and the story of the cheese. **Thank you** also to **Mr M H White** for the two page instructions to relatives on 'how to communicate with prisoners of war.'

A **Thank you** to **Harry Fagg** who kindly sent me a copy of the October 1943 issue of HOT POT, the Stalag 21D camp newsletter. This unique 24 page newsletter is full of news about sporting events and entertainment and news from some of the arbeits kommandos, including D13 and D14. A **Thank You** also to **Mr C J Quartermaine** who kindly sent me four copies of the New Zealand Association POW-WOW newsletter plus the final July 1945 issue of the Red Cross newsletter 'Prisoner of War'. **Thank You** to **John Coles** for Part 2 of his memoirs covering his time in Italy. As usual I recommend that all members try to record their experiences not only for our archives, but for family and friends. **Thank You** to **Jim Sawyer** for the booklet 'News in Pictures from British Prisoners of War' produced by the POW Relatives Association in July 1942. All items have been logged into our archives where we also record the date and name of the donor.

**PRISONER OF WAR CAMP REPORTS.** I can obtain copies of camp histories or Red Cross visit reports for most of the German and Italian prisoner of war camps. If you require information on a particular camp, drop me a line with an SAE for details.

**STALAG XIA ALTENGRABOW.** I would like to contact any member who was a resident at this camp and who may have been there at the end of the war when British and American troops were parachuted into the camp. (Operation Violet). Phil Chinnery.

### **ROYAL AIR FORCE REPORT.**

Michael Cunliffe-Lister is seeking information on his late father **Sqdn Ldr Philip Ingram Cunliffe-Lister, DSO**. He served in 1409 (Met) Flight of which he became CO in June 1943. On 18<sup>th</sup> July 1943 he made a forced landing in Germany after his Mosquito ran out of fuel following a navigational error. He and his navigator, P/O Pat Kernon evaded capture for 4 days but were rounded up and sent to Dulag Luft and thence to Stalag Luft 3 at Sagan where he remained until the end of the war. He died in 1956 when Michael was 7 years old.

We have been contacted by Russel Anderson, an American officer who was a prisoner of war in Stalag Luft 3. He would like to track down some of his British comrades or their relatives. They are Group Captain MacDonald, Mr Kelshaw from Trinidad, Vic Foster, Joe Hounan, George Newberry, Peter Williams and Lt Ron Dubbur of the Royal Navy. If you can help please contact Phil Chinnery, Newsletter Editor.

Do you live near 16, Maidstone Road, **Heaton Mersey**, Stockport, Cheshire? We are trying to trace the relatives of George and Nellie Poland who lived there in 1942. Their son Dennis was an RAF Flight Sgt who was killed in Java in May 1942. We have an item belonging to Dennis which we would like to return to the family. Would anyone living in the area like to make some enquiries on our behalf? Details from Phil Chinnery.

### **FAR EAST REPORT.**

Associate member Meg Parkes has written a book entitled '**Notify Alec Rattray**' concerning a young Scottish soldier and his family during wartime. Captain Andrew Atholl Duncan of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders served as a cipher officer attached to GHQ in Java before being taken prisoner by the Japanese in March 1942. This is a true story about his captivity, his family and his life after repatriation. A full review of the book will appear in the Spring Newsletter. There will also be an exhibition to mark the launch of the book between Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> February and Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2002 at Voirrey Embroidery Centre, Brimstage, Wirral and from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March to Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2002 at St Andrews University Library, St Andrews, Fife, Scotland. More details from Meg on 0151-632-2017.

**BOOK REVIEWS.** '**KILL THE PRISONERS!**' by Don Wall. This is the authors sixth book and is a result of years of research into the fate of British and Commonwealth prisoner of war in the Far East. Concentrating on the RAF and Royal Artillery personnel who were taken prisoner on Java and used to build airfields for the Japanese. The nine chapters detail their movements to Kuching, Jesselton, Rabaul, Ballale Island and Sandakan. One chapter covers the sinking of the prison ship *Suez Maru* with the loss of most of the prisoners. It is a story of murder, massacre, ill-treatment, cruelty and starvation. The cause of death of the men lost in Borneo was kept from the next-of-kin at the end of the war. Now the truth can be told. This book is excellent value for money with 392 pages including an 85 page Honour roll. ISBN No 0646-278-347. Published by the author and available in the UK from Peter Moore Bookseller, PO Box 66, Cambridge, CB1 3PD. Price £19.95 plus £3 postage. Tel 01223-240559.

Also available from Peter Moore is '**PORTRAIT OF A NURSE**' by Pat Darling at £14.95 post free. When the Japanese took Singapore in 1942, 65 Australian nurses were evacuated on the *Vyner Brooke*. Two days later the ship was sunk by Japanese bombers near Banka Island and Pat

spent 18 hours in the water before reaching the shore. A Japanese patrol found some of the survivors and bayoneted the men; nurses were ordered into the sea and machine-gunned. Only 32 nurses survived the sinking and the massacre and eight of those were to die in captivity in Sumatra before the end of the war. Written by one of the 24 survivors this book is a timely reminder that where war crimes are concerned, the Japanese did not discriminate between men, women or children. 98 pages softcover, ISBN No 0-9585418-1-7. Contains photos, maps and Honour Roll of the nurses. Those members living 'Down Under' wishing to obtain copies locally can contact the author at 98, Darley West Street, Mona Vale, NSW 2103, Australia.

Printed by Vario Press, Marish Wharf, St Marys Road, Langley, Berkshire. Tel 01753-548944.

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