

# The National Ex-Prisoner of War Association

## Winter 2004 Newsletter

[◀ Back](#) [■ Home](#) [▶ Next](#)





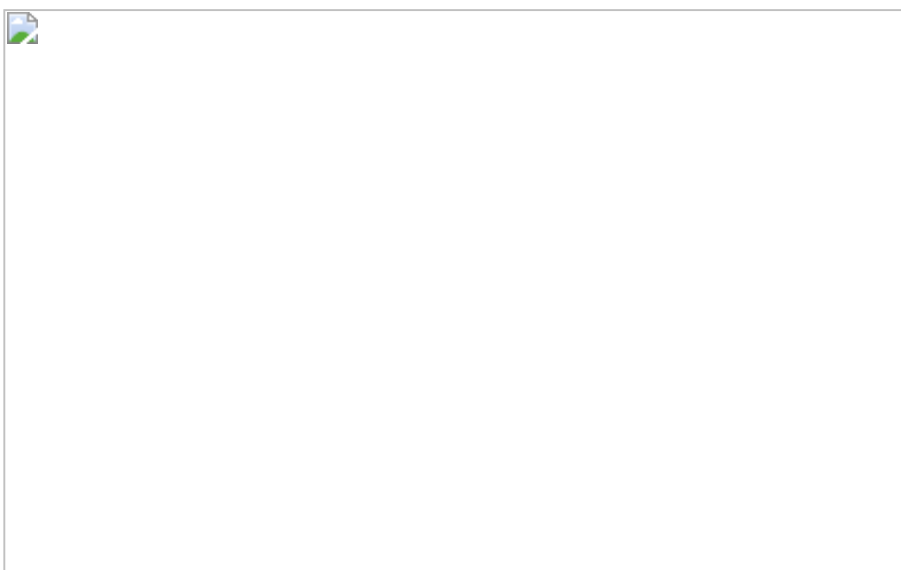
**ASSOCIATION NEWS by Les Allan, President & Honorary General Secretary.**

**Contact address 99 Parlaunt Road, Langley, Berkshire SL3 8BE.**

Well here we are, at the end of another year. It is hard to believe that next year sees the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Doesn't time fly! It was an event that had a major impact on our lives and at this time it would be appropriate to spare a thought for those of our comrades who are no longer with us.

On a more positive note you will see that we have decided to splash out and include a bit of colour in this Christmas issue of the newsletter. The cover is from a French 1943 postcard produced in Stalag 13B and purchased at an auction by our Historian. Unfortunately we cannot include colour in every issue, or we would have to double your dues! As it is we are keeping the annual subscription the same as previous years, so please consider yourself reminded that the 2005 annual subscription is due on 1<sup>st</sup> January. Its not bad value when you consider that it is the same cost as a packet of fags, a gallon of petrol or a bottle of wine.

Talking of wine, I will raise a glass to you all on Christmas Day and on behalf of myself and the rest of your committee I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!





**Opposite page Top Photo North East Branch at Dunkirk Memorial. Left to right; Mrs Crouch, Mrs Fatherley, Mrs Herschel all ATS, Joe Wilson, Amy Hall age 12 'our little helper', Mrs Wallace, Mr A Hunter, Mr A Aiston (Branch Chairman), Mr Howstan, Mr C Smith and Mr R Teasdale, all Tyneside Scottish Black Watch.**

**Bottom Photo 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Slough (Founder) Branch in September. Left to right; Mr and Mrs Les Twigg, Mr and Mrs Les Allan, Mr Pat Hegarty.**

**HAYWARDS HEATH DO 2005.** Our Social Secretary Fred Goddard and his missus Jean are organising a 'Do' to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the end of the war. It will take place from 7.30pm onwards on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2005 at the St Francis Social Club, The Princess Royal Hospital, Haywards Heath, West Sussex. There will be music by the duo 'Reprise', entertainment by a mystery guest and a raffle. Tickets are £10 and are sold in aid of our association. Reserve your tickets now from Fred at 1, Ash Grove, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 4PZ. Telephone 01444-415295.

**ANNUAL REUNION.** This is a reminder to all members that the association will hold its annual reunion at Warners Lakeside Holiday Village, Hayling Island between Friday 7<sup>th</sup> and Monday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2005. Members, family and friends are all welcome. If you would like to attend, please contact us NOW. We would especially like to see more of our Associate members, who are hereby 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 Mr Ken Jackson, Haere-Mai, 29 Highwood Avenue, Booker, High Wycombe, HP12 4LS. Telephone 01494-436978.

**STALAG XIB FALLINGBOSTEL MEMORIAL.** We have received enquiries from a few members asking if we are planning a trip to Fallingbostel in April next year for the dedication of the memorial on 15<sup>th</sup> April, which will be the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the liberation of the camp. (see the article in the Autumn 2004 Newsletter). At this moment in time we have not organised an official

Association trip, but we could do if there was sufficient interest. In order to assess the demand, can you let me know by 15<sup>th</sup> January if you would like to join the party.

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION.** It is that time of year again when we ask members to renew their annual subscriptions. They are due on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. You will receive four quarterly newsletters during 2005 plus the annual Journal. The cost has remained the same over the years and we plan to keep it so for 2005. 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 and members of the public who support the aims of the association, 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.

Anyone joining us during the year will receive the back issues they have missed. If anyone joined during 2004 and did not receive all of the back issues, please let us know which ones you are missing.

**NEW MEMBERS.** We would like to welcome the following new members; Mr Bill Hayes who fell in the bag in Libya in April 1941. Mr John Chapman who was a resident of Campo 73 and Stalag 4A. Mr Douglas Anderson of the Rifle Brigade, who was taken prisoner near Tripoli in 1941. Mr G A Coulson of the Coldstream Guards who was taken prisoner at Knightsbridge. Mr Henry Bayne of the Black Watch who fell in the bag at St Valery. Major A J King, a former resident of Stalag 383, Mr Ken Clarke. *Associate Members* Val Richardson whose father was a Royal Engineer, resident in Stalag 21B and D. Barbara and Derek Merrill whose father was in E715 Auschwitz. Mr John Dunn whose father was taken prisoner at Tobruk. Mr Jeffrey Plowman whose father was in E734 at Schoppinitz. Mr Mark Kennedy whose father was in Stalag 20A. Mrs Joyce Richter whose father George Bolt was a resident of Stalag 4A. Bernard and Vera Clark whose late father Roderick fell in the bag at Cambrai in May 1940. Mr Mike Gorman whose father was a resident in Stalag 8B. Mr R J Cuff whose father John served in the Northamptonshire Regiment. Mrs Margaret Henson whose father was a resident in Oflags 6B, 7B and 7C. Mrs Helga and Mr Ron Gerhardi, Mr Brian Oliver and Penny Smith.

**DONATIONS.** We would like to thank the following for their kind donations to the welfare fund; Mr Robert Albert £15, Mr Alan Allport £10, Mrs D A Beaufort, Mr George Buchan £5, Mr Bernard Clark £30, Mr R J Cuff £5, Mrs B Duffy (milestone birthday) £120, Mrs Ruth Gardner £10, Mr Andrew Lister £15, Mrs Anne McKenzie £40, Mr David Miller £30, Mrs Christine Parry £15, Mr H Salmon £15, Mr R Walsh £5, all donations whether large or small are much appreciated.

**OBITUARIES.** We regret to report the passing away of some of our members. Mr Vic Walker of Beccles, Suffolk passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> October. David Davies of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> May. Mr Frank Ruse of New Malden, Surrey passed away on 11<sup>th</sup> August after a short illness. He was a former resident of Stalag 20B. Mr William John Charles 'Jack' Nicholls passed away in Newton Abbot, Devon on 13<sup>th</sup> July. Mr John Angus Harrison passed away on 20<sup>th</sup> October at St Johns Hospital, Chelmsford after a long illness. He was a guest of both the Italians and Germans and served with the Seaforth Highlanders. Mr E A Beer passed away in Paignton in February this year. WE WILL REMEMBER THEM.

**WELFARE NEWS.** I noticed an interesting article in the Daily Mail recently regarding the payment of pensions. As we all know the Royal Mail are trying to make the local post offices extinct and would prefer everyone to have their pensions paid directly into a bank account. Convenient for them, but not always for the pensioner. It appears that the Department of Work and Pensions have

not only been telephoning pensioners at home to try to persuade them to have the money paid straight into a bank account, but they have even been sending people to visit pensioners at home to 'explain direct payment'. Please be advised that you are still entitled to receive your pension in cash at a post office and you do not need to speak to any DWP employees over the phone. If any of them turn up on your doorstep you are quite entitled to tell them to go away. Nicely of course.

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

Mr Fred Sivewright, 128 Ellengowan Drive, Dundee, DD4 6HX would like to hear from any former residents of Stalag 4B as well as any associate members who may have had family members in the camp. He is also searching for copies of the camp newsletter 'The Hut'.

Mr Mark Kennedy, 8 Knockbreda Drive, Belfast, County Antrim, Northern Ireland BT6 OHJ would like to hear from anyone who may remember his grandfather Patrick (Paddy) Ramsay of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. He was a resident of Stalag 20A at Thorn and is believed to have been wounded during an escape attempt.

PHOTO OPPOSITE. Sent in by Jim Crouch, whose father James 'Nobby' Crouch of the Kings Royal Rifle Corps is standing second from right. Others include Ken Gaylor, KRRC standing at extreme left; Bruce 'The Scribe' Soul sitting second from left; Sgt Norman Guard, KRRC sitting third from left; Reg Ward sitting third from right. Most of the items of clothing and inadequate footwear appear to be ex-Polish army issue. Nobby Crouch is wearing a Polish officers jacket. Taken at Stalag 21B Warthelager in early 1941.

Author Mr David Miller, 5 Alder Close, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 4TJ (Tel 01626-336037 or email [petard249@btinternet.com](mailto:petard249@btinternet.com) ) wishes to contact anyone, or their descendants/friends, who was repatriated (exchanged) during the war. That is between May 1940 and April 1945 in Europe and

between February 1942 and July 1945 in the Far East. They would probably have sailed aboard the Swedish liners *Gripsholm* or *Drottningholm*, although there may have been other ships involved. Please do not send valuable original documents or photos in the first instance.

Mr Mike Gorman, 4 Fairbourne Drive, Wilmslow, SK9 6JF would like to hear from anyone who knew his father, a Green Howard, who was captured with 150 Brigade at Gazala and spent time in Campo 52 in Italy and arbeids kommandos E715 at Auschwitz and E393 at Mittel-Laziek. If you were in any of those places please drop him a line.

Australian John T George is trying to locate his old pal Bob Goddard. He was taken prisoner in Greece in 1941 and worked as a farm labourer in the Austrian town of Rechberg. A young Austrian lad who they met in 1943 would like to meet them again. If you know where we can find Bob please write to Phil Chinnery, address in the historians section.

Dr Barbara Merrill, 12 Shaftesbury Road, Earlsdon, Coventry CV5 6FL would like to hear from anyone who knew her father Frank Merrill or who may have been in arbeids kommando E715 at Auschwitz.

Mr Douglas Anderson, 25 Oak View, Stangrove Park, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 5JH would like to hear from anyone who may have shared his experiences in Campo 35 at Padula, near Salerno, or Stalag 7B Moosberg or Oflag 12B Hadamar.

Mr Christopher Cole, 12 Worcestershire Lea, Warfield, Berkshire RG42 3TQ is searching for anyone who knew any of the crew of a 44 Squadron bomber that was shot down on the Augsburg raid in April 1942; P/O. Garwell, Flt/Sgt Laurie Dando, Flux and Watson. It is known that Dando who came from Rhodesia, passed through Stalag Luft 3 and 6 and Stalag 357.

Mrs Susan Collins, 49 Bramblewood, Ipswich, Suffolk IP8 3RS would like to hear from anyone who was resident in Campo 146 at Bussolengo, to the west of Verona. Her late father George Gilpin Miniken was in the camp before going on the run. He was recaptured in northern Italy in January 1944 and taken to 'Carceri San Vittore' which was a prison in Milan. If you knew George or have any information on the camp or prison Susan would appreciate a line from you.

Mr Bernard Clark, 73 Elvington, Springwood, Kings Lynn, Norfolk PE30 4TB would like to hear from anyone who knew his late father L/Cpl Roderick Clark, RASC who was captured at Cambrai in May 1940 and spent 8 months in the hospital there until moved to Stalag 8B. He was with arbeids kommandos E25 at Rauschwalde, Kreis Falkenberg in 1941, E479 at Tarnowitz and E578 at Peiskretscham, Kreis Gleiwitz in 1943.

Henry Bayne, Flat 2, 60 Woodend Road, Rutherglen, Glasgow, G73 4DY, Scotland would like to contact any of his former comrades from 1<sup>st</sup> Black Watch, 51<sup>st</sup> Highland Division or anyone who remembers him from Stalag 20B.

Mrs Valerie Richardson, 5 Osburn Drive, Macgregor, ACT 2615, Australia would like to hear from anyone who may remember her late father Sapper Edward John Smith of the Royal Engineers who

was a resident in Stalags 21B and D.

Mr Graham Johnson, 26 Somersham, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire AL7 2PZ is seeking the location of Stalag 4D Torgau arbeits kommando W/610. It was possibly a factory in Wittenberg for converting coal from a nearby mine into coke.

John Chapman, 1 Ashford Court, Moana Heights, South Australia 5169 would like to hear from the following who spent Christmas with him in Campo 73 in 1942; T Porter (Mousey) – Wembley, Mick Dunstan – Exeter, Devon, Wilf Hall – Bacup, Lancs, Con Lavatt – Round Oak, I Lowden - Grimsby, Lincs, T Crone (Jock) – Glasgow.

**BOOK REVIEW. HELGA by Helga Gerhardi.** We were pleased to have Helga as our honoured guest speaker at the annual reunion at Hayling Island. Although not a prisoner of war Helga took part in the awful winter march back to the west, keeping one step ahead of the advancing Russians. Helga has chronicled her experiences in two books that were both on sale at the reunion. In her first book Helga breaks the silence about the horrors faced by the civilians in the Eastern states of Germany as the Soviet Armies fought their way onto German territory. The author was born near the Lithuanian border and as a young girl she met Hitler and supported her mother when the SS repeatedly searched their home. As a medical student she cared for some of the thousands of wounded soldiers returning from the Russian front in cattle trucks. Alone, she joined the tens of thousands of refugees trekking westward in the severe winter of 1944/45. Across frozen land and lakes, with no food, shelter or warmth Helga's courage helped her to survive the nightmare of those terrible winter months which brought death to so many. With the war at an end, having lost everything and living in total poverty, Helga travels the long dangerous road south, in search of her family. Finally they are reunited and their dream of returning to Switzerland is fulfilled. ISBN No 0-9521933-0-2, 430 pages softcover.

The story continues in Helga's second book. Neutral Switzerland had little compassion for poor returning emigrants. Helga had to abandon her medical studies and took a job as a secretary in a hotel. She met her future husband in very romantic circumstances and left Switzerland. Blessed with two sons, Helga soon discovered that the eldest was handicapped. Then followed a long struggle to give him a good education and treatment. Eventually at the age of 40 Helga became a teacher. The remainder of the book describes the life of the family up to the present day. ISBN No 0-9521933-1-0. Softcover, 433 pages. Ordering details are still enroute, in the meantime please send all enquiries to Phil Chinnery, address in Historians section.

**BOOK REVIEW. SHOWERS ON THURSDAY by John Bellamy.** From the icy north of Canada – to an English market town – to war torn Tunisia, John Bellamy takes you on an inspiring journey. He was part of the first ever Parachute Field Ambulance. His World War II experiences in the Royal Army Medical Corps include the airborne assault on the bridge at Arnhem, being captured by the Germans – and after liberation by the Russians, walking from Neubrandenberg to Wittenberge on the River Elbe with a friend and a dogcart!

I was impressed with some of the anecdotes in the book, including that of the British Naval Lieutenant who was captured at Arnhem. Apparently he was on leave in England when he heard what was going on in Holland. He persuaded an RAF friend to let him travel as an unofficial dispatcher in his cargo plane, to help push supplies out of the doors. The plane was shot down and he became a prisoner of war! Another fellow prisoner was Corporal Howard Jones who had been captured in Tunisia. He later escaped from an Italian prisoner of war camp and made his way back to Allied lines in Southern Italy. He rejoined the Parachute Field Ambulance and found himself in the bag again at Arnhem.

It was apparently accepted that one did not try to escape until one had been officially registered as a prisoner of war. If you were shot before being registered there would be no official

enquiry and you would be listed as killed in action. If you escaped and were shot after being registered as a prisoner of war, at least there would be an official enquiry!

John was incarcerated in Stalag 2A at Neubrandenburg along with about 150 other airborne prisoners. After a few weeks large numbers of Americans began to arrive, taken prisoner during the Ardennes offensive. They all faced a hard winter with often an inch of ice on the inside of the windows of their huts. Finally in April 1945 the Russians arrived to liberate the camp. John and Howard were not about to wait around the camp until the Russians decided to send them back to Allied lines. They set off walking and made their way to the River Elbe where the Americans kindly ferried them across. ISBN No 0-9750548-3-X. Softcover, 246 pages with photos. Available from Maygog Publishing in Australia at [www.coop-Bookshop.com.au](http://www.coop-Bookshop.com.au) price 24.95 Australian dollars.

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**HISTORIANS NEWS by Phil Chinnery.**

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**Contact details – 10 Lambert Ave, Langley, Berks SL3 7EB Email [PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:PHIL@chinnery49.fsnet.co.uk)**

I would like to thank all members for their assistance during the year. Please keep the stories, photos and memoirs coming in, for without them the newsletter will grind to a halt. As usual the annual reunion at Hayling Island was a great success, with attendance up from 117 last year to 151 this year. It was nice to renew old acquaintances, especially Sid Whyte, Johnny Wilkinson, Alf Solomon, Bob and Tom Jones, Eric Reeves, Ray Eaton, Ron Redman, Stan Wade, Geoff Bryden, John Crowe, Anne Greer and Mr H Salmon. May I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Thank You's. A Thank You to Norman Norris for a copy of the book 'People at War 1939-45' for our archives. The book was published by David and Charles in 1974 and includes a chapter on Normans experiences in Stalag 3D near Berlin, following his capture on Crete. If you are seeking information on captivity on Crete or Stalag 3D the 24 pages in this chapter will be of interest to you. The author is Michael Moynihan and the ISBN No 0-7153-6274-7. Thank You also to Bernard Clark who sent in some photos from arbeits kommandos E25 and E479 together with some interesting booklets, including one produced aboard the 'Duchess of Richmond' which carried his father home from Odessa.

**PHOTO BELOW.** Some of the men from Stalag 3D working party 428 at Zernsdorf railway station near Berlin. Norman Norris, mentioned above, is standing at the right hand end of the rear row. They were employed repairing railway tracks in the Berlin area.

**STALAG 20B - THE STORY CONTINUES.** Andy Lister writes in from South Africa; "Stalag XXB was situated on the outskirts of the town of Marienburg, now called Malbork, its original Polish name. The camp was called Willenberg not Willenburg. I arrived there from Stalag 21B Warthelager near Posen in June 1941. We were billeted in what was known as the Erdhuts, two long platforms on either side of a passage about a metre wide, there was a door at one end and a window at the other and ten men above and ten below on each side a total of 40. Luckily I managed to get out on a working party that was being sent out to farms, actually I was a qualified electrician but kept that to myself and said I was a farm labourer."

**CAPTIVE DRONES FEEDBACK.** Adam Lindsay writes in to tell us that the Captain Grant referred to was a Padre in a Scottish Regiment and also Roman Catholic Padre at Stalag 383. Padre John Weir Foote, also in the bag in 383, was the Canadian Chaplain who was awarded the VC for his valour at Dieppe. He was serving with the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry at the time and was the only member of the Canadian Chaplain Services ever to be awarded the Victoria Cross. The Citation for the award reads; 'Upon landing on the beach under heavy fire he attached himself to the Regimental Aid Post which had been set up in a slight depression on the beach, but which was only sufficient to give cover to men lying down. During the subsequent period of eight hours, while the action continued, this officer not only assisted the Regimental Medical Officer in ministering to the wounded, but time and again left this shelter to inject morphine, give first-aid and carry wounded personnel from the open beach to the aid post. On these occasions, with utter disregard for his personal safety, Honorary Captain Foote exposed himself to an inferno of fire and saved many lives by his gallant efforts. During the action, as the tide went out, the RAP was moved to the shelter of a stranded landing craft. Captain Foote continued tirelessly and courageously to carry wounded men from the exposed beach to the cover of the landing craft. He also removed wounded from inside the landing craft when ammunition had been set on fire by enemy shells. When landing craft appeared, he carried wounded from the RAP to the landing craft through heavy fire. On several occasions this officer had the opportunity to embark, but returned to the beach as his chief concern was the care and evacuation of the wounded. He refused a final opportunity to leave the shore, choosing to suffer the fate of the men he had ministered to for over five years.' He passed away in May 1988.

**PHOTO BELOW.** Sent in by John Trenchard, who is fourth from the right in the middle row, this photo comprises mainly men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, Hampshire Regiment in Campo 70 Monturano in 1944.

**DERBY DAY IN CAMPO 70.** An obituary for Bert Richings appeared in the Spring Newsletter. His pal Philip Newbury has written in to us; “Bert was one of 50 POWs under L/Cpl Charlie Barnes who were put to work in a deep quarry for over 18 months whilst they were in Germany. Charlie was one of the best and Bert constantly referred to his splendid leadership and the efforts he made to keep up the spirits of the group. Charlie like me was in the Royal Corps of Signals and we became very good pals in Tobruk. In the early hours of 20<sup>th</sup> June 1942 the Afrika Korps broke through our defences and over-ran the town. Charlie was on a truck carrying a relief staff for the Signals office and drove up to the entrance unaware that it was occupied by Germans. They were met by a burst of machine-gun fire which killed the driver and Signal Master Captain Phillips and the remainder of the group were taken prisoner.

“Charlie and I became good muckers throughout the 15 months we were in Campo 70 in Italy, but were separated when he was sent with Bert on the quarry working party. One of the things which Charlie did to entertain the men was to arrange an ‘Orchestra’ comprising 15 men. Of course they had no instruments so each man had to make the sound of a particular instrument whilst Charlie conducted. As you can imagine the resultant sound was hilarious and tickled the German guards who thought the British were mad. Fortunately they were unable to recognise the Orchestras version of ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ or it might have caused some trouble.

“I expect, like Stalag 4B, the working camp was freed by the advancing Russian army and I can imagine the excitement among the men thinking of an early return home. Then tragedy struck. Charlie was on an American truck carrying a number of POWs to Halle airport for a home flight

when the vehicle overturned and Charlie was killed. After enduring three years behind the wire he deserved a better fate.

“I enclose a photo of ‘Derby Day’ in Campo 70 on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1943. The cardboard horses were each moved forward according to the throw of a dice whilst several enterprising men acted as bookies taking bets paid in cigarettes and winnings were paid out in the same currency. By skilful manipulation of the odds I think the bookies made a small fortune. I recall that one of the races was called ‘The Benghazi Handicap’, recalling the number of times that we fought our way to that city and then had to withdraw because of our over-stretched supply lines all the way from Egypt. Other races were the ‘El Alamein Sprint’, ‘Fillies Flight’, ‘Malnutrition Stakes’ and ‘Owners Handicap’.”

**GERMAN PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS.** It was usual practice in wartime in Germany to divide the country up into 19 military districts. Each district or Wehrkreis was numbered after the Army Corps responsible and the prisoner of war camps within that district were numbered with the prefix of that Corps. Army Corps Area VIII had its headquarters in Breslau and was responsible for Silesia. This was extended in 1938 to include the Sudeten districts of Bohemia, in Summer 1939 to include parts of Moravia and in Autumn 1939 to include part of South-West Poland. A list of the camps under its control is reproduced below. The camps were known as Durchgangslager (Dulag) – Transit camps; Offizierlager (Oflag) – Officers camps; Stammlager (Stalag) – Other ranks main camps; Luft – aircrew camps. Nearer the battlefield one would come across Frontstammlagers, or Front Stalag for the collection of prisoners. In 1945 the whole of Wehrkreis VIII was overrun by the Russian Army. Any comments or correction will be welcome.

Oflag VIIIA at Kreuzberg/Oppeln. In use from 14/12/39 to 1/7/42.

VIIIB at Silberberg/Eulengeb. In use from 15/12/39 to Dec 1943.

VIIIC at Juliusburg, Kreis Oels. In used from 20/5/40 to Dec 1943.

VIIID at Tost. Opened 22/7/40, renamed Ilag Tost 1/10/40 then Ilag VIII 28/3/41.

**VIIIE** at Johannisbrunn, Wipstadt/Ostsudenteland. In use from 28/7/40 to 1/7/42. One report states that 56 high ranking officers of various nations were in residence from 1/9/41 to 1/9/42.

**VIIIF** at Wahlstatt/Liegnitz. Opened 24/7/40. Designation passed to camp at Mährisch-Trubau in XI Corps district Querum/Braunschweig from 1/7/44.

**VIIIG** at Weidenau/Sudentenland. In use from 1/8/40 to 22/9/42.

**VIIIH/H** at Oberlangendorf by Steinberg. In use from 1/8/40 to 18/8/43.

**VIIIH/Z** at Eulenberg, Romerstadt until 1/4/42.

**Oflag 6 (VIIIH)** at Tost, Oberschlesien with branch camp at Ilag Kreuzberg, Breslau (VIII/Z).

**Oflag 64** at Altburgund, Warthegau in use from 1/5/43 to 1/8/43. Later used as camp for American officers.

**Stalag VIIIA** at Gorlitz. Formed 23/9/39 from Dulag VIIIA.

**VIIIB** at Königsgratz. Formed 4/10/39 from Dulag VIIIA. Number transferred from Lamsdorf to Teschen, Sudetenland on 1/1/44. At one time held 64,665 men including 150 officers (13,625 British).

**Stalag 344** at Lamsdorf from 1/1/44 to 30/1/45 when evacuated.

**Stalag VIIIC** at Kunau, Sprottau/Sagan.

**Stalag VIIID** at Teschen in use from 5/5/41 to 16/9/42.

**VIIIE** at Neuhammer from Stalag 308. In use 1/12/41 to 1/10/43.

**VIIIF** at Lamsdorf, Oberschlesien from Stalag 318. In use 1/12/41 to 1/10/43.

**Ilag VIIIZ** at Kreuzberg. Civilian internees camp.

**VIII.** Formed from Oflag VIIID as Ilag Tost 1/10/43. Renamed Ilag VIII on 28/3/41. Renamed Ilag VIIIH 4/6/42 later known as Ilag VIIIZ. Transferred to France 15/11/43 at Ilag Giromogny. There was also an Ilag at Bad Schwarzbach. Residents later evacuated in 1945 to Spitzberg bei Eisenstein, Upper Bavaria.

**BAB 20.** At Heydebreck. Bau und Arbeits (Construction) Battalions.

**21.** At Blechhammer.

**108.** At Kanth.

**Stalag Luft 3.** At Sagan. Luft 7 at Moritzfelde. In use from 1/1/44 to 1/9/44. Then at Bankau from 1/9/44.

Hospitals No 1 at Lumisdorf, 2 at Tost, 3 at Cosel, 3 at Troppau, 4 at Hindenburg, 5 at Kattowitz (Emmanuel – Sagen), 6 at Gross Strehlitz, 7 at Teschen, 8 at Sosnowitz and 9 at Laurahütte. Hospitals were also reported at Waldenburg, Trautenau, Lamsdorf, Loben, Gleiwitz (Hindenburgstrasse), Kreuzberg.

**Stalag 8B/344.** The prisoner of war camp at Lamsdorf was established on the site of a former artillery range during the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 to hold around 3 thousand French prisoners. During WWI it was in use again and accommodated about 90 thousand Allied prisoners of war. Following the outbreak of WWII the Nazis established at Lamsdorf one of the largest complexes of POW camps run by the Wehrmacht – Stalag 8B, Stalag 318/8F and Stalag 344. It is estimated that around 300 thousand POWs of different nationalities passed through the camps, including some 200 thousand Russian prisoners. The majority of the men were employed in

labour brigades to provide a workforce for the economy of the Third Reich. The camps were liberated by the Russian army on 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March 1945. Renamed Lambinowice in 1945 the camp was used for two years to house displaced German civilians.

Stalag 8B was established at Lamsdorf in 1939, utilising some of the remains of the WWI buildings. Initially it was used as a transit camp but soon achieved permanent status. The number 8B was also applied from 1943 onwards to Stalags 318/8F at Lamsdorf and 8D at Teschen (Cieszyn). After a subsequent reorganisation in 1943 Lamsdorf was renamed Stalag 344 and 8B continued to apply to the camp at Teschen.

The grounds of the former Stalag 8B are not accessible to visitors because the area is still used as an artillery range. All that remains are the fragments of the foundations as well as water basins for fire control purposes. The site of the former Stalag 318/8F is accessible to visitors. One of the huts is being reconstructed and foundations of the barracks, fire tank, washrooms still exist. This camp was established in 1941 for Soviet POWs and became part of the 8B complex in June 1943 and, subsequently of Stalag 344. Of the 200,000 Soviet POWs that were housed in the camp and worked in the Upper Silesia area, around 40,000 died there and were buried in mass graves. In 1964 the Monument of Martyrdom was erected on the site of the mass graves. It was dedicated to all the prisoners of war who had died in the POW camps of Lamsdorf in the years of WWII.

The Central Prisoner of war Museum is situated in Lambinowice in a building which used to be the seat of the German headquarters of the artillery range. The museum now has guest rooms to accommodate visitors. The old prisoner of war cemetery is situated 2 km east of the museum and covers around 4.5 hectares. Around 6,500 graves can be found here, although most of the British and Allied dead were exhumed after the war and moved to central cemeteries in Germany in Poland. Contact details are; Central Prisoner of war Museum Lambinowice, ul. Minorytow 3, 45-017 Opole, Poland. Tel/Fax 077/4537872. Email [cmjw@wp.pl](mailto:cmjw@wp.pl) or [cmjw@polbox.pl](mailto:cmjw@polbox.pl)

PICTURE BELOW. Painted by Sid Whyte from memory. A scene remembered from the march to the west. Sid and his mates spent the night under the covered bridge in the picture. He recalls the fleeing German civilians relieving themselves over the side of the bridge onto the unfortunates trying to sleep below!

**STALAG 21B – LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY.** Another tale sent in by Andy Lister. “Whenever I hear ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ sung or played it brings back the memory of a concert in which I took part in December 1940 at Stalag 21B Warthelager. The German Kommandant had given permission for us to use a hall adjacent to their barracks and the show ran for four nights in order to accommodate everyone in our camp. On the final night a section of the auditorium was reserved for a number of German officers accompanied by their lady friends. When the show ended Sergeant Ford of the Lothian and Border Yeomanry, who was the Master of Ceremonies, went on stage, held up his hands for silence and said; ‘It would be customary for us now to sing the National Anthem, but I am afraid that would be out of order, instead I would ask you all to remain seated and sing ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ and raise the bloody roof off.’

It was an unforgettable experience, the air was electric, the Germans looked uneasy as if they didn’t know whether to remain seated, stand up, or walk out. When we marched back to camp we were in great spirits that night, Christmas Eve 1940. Maybe it was just as well we didn’t realise then that we would spend another four Christmas’s before we would be reunited with our families.”

**CAMP PLANS.** I now have a plan showing the ground and lower floors and the roof of Fort 15 at Thorn. It is one foot wide by three feet long. Before I attempt to have copies made I would like to assess the demand. If you would like a copy, at cost, please let me know as soon as possible.

**STALAG 4F.** Associate member David Webb has recently returned from a pilgrimage to the site of Stalag 4F at Hartmannsdorf in the former East Germany. The headquarters building is just as it was during the war, a four story brick building with a railway line behind it. The nearest town is Chemnitz and the B95 Leipziger Strasse will take you north west to Hartmannsdorf. Davids father worked in the large marshalling yard close to the camp, coaling up the trains along with some elderly civilian workers. See Photos below.

**We would like to thank our friends at Vario Press for their help and expertise in producing this newsletter. They can be contacted at Marish Wharf, St Marys Road, Middlegreen, Slough, Berkshire. Tel 01753-548944.**

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