

LETTERS FROM PRISONERS OF WAR

(Continued from page 10)

word about the size 13 shoes. Anyway that should have convinced you that it was really your dumb husband writing. As you probably know, Tommy P. is here rooming with me. He is feeling fine and looking well. Tell Jean that he has gained about twenty pounds since he had his picture taken and is his normal self again. Here are two of my latest pics for you and mother. We were all elated to hear about Joe and Bill, may they keep up the good work. This is my community letter, so pass it on. It is good to know that you have found something useful to do that you seem to enjoy. Of course it seems impossible to us here that life goes on as usual, but it boosts the spirits a hundred per cent to hear about it. My thoughts are always with you. I am well and safe. Note: Letters to prisoners should be typewritten to facilitate delivery through censors.

(Later from the above prisoner)

For the past eleven years I have longed to settle down. Now I have, sad and oh—so dumb. In spite of the Navy's notification, you probably have been worried, but you have no cause to worry any longer. I am here with Herbie H., our plane crews, the officers and men from Guam and Wake, and some Allied personnel, entirely safe: just waiting and hoping for an early and satisfactory end to the war—

Here we are in barracks with a room about 30 x 20 for six of us, Herbie, two Dutch officers, two Australians, and myself; the entire group of prisoners have complete freedom in a large compound. We have daily classes in a wide variety of subjects of our own selection, then exercise, play cards, or "acey-ducey." We are living each day for the happiness in it—may you do the same until we can be reunited.

Communication will necessarily be much more difficult in this war than in the last; it may be impossible to send a ship in either direction for a long, long time, but try to write, for my heart is with you.

My only desire is that you should make a happy and complete life for yourself. We cannot predict when or how the war will end, we only know now that it will last long enough for there to be many changes at home before we return.

Oflag IX A/Z
Germany

May 5, 1943

Dear Mother and Dad:
We don't do very much here except

Change of Address

The names and addresses of the nearest relatives of American prisoners of war and civilian internees, to whom this Bulletin is sent, were furnished to the Red Cross by the Prisoners of War Information Bureau of the Provost Marshal General's Office. To enable us to keep the mailing list up to date, we must rely on our readers to advise us of any change of address. Please inform your Red Cross chapter whenever you change your address and always give the name of the prisoner as well as your own.

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PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN

eat 2 meals a day and then spend the rest reading and playing cards. We get paid 72 marks a month but can spend it so I usually lose mine 2 times a week playing roulette. I still had to think of being a prisoner after having only been on the front 3 weeks but it's too late to think of it now. . . . The part of Germany we are in is really pretty although we don't get to see much of it. I am attending German classes and hope to be able to speak it soon, or read the German newspapers which are the only ones we get.

PRISONERS OF WAR AND THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COMMITTEE

(Continued from page 5)

prisoned and interned, for the anxious waiting family at home, parcel, an amelioration of treatment in captivity, a word of news, and things that bring back strength and hope and happiness into human lives. That is what justifies the work, yes, even when the only service we can render is to end a long and tiring uncertainty."

PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN

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WASHINGTON, D. C.

SEPTEMBER 1943

Studies and Sports in German Prison Camps

The reports of Delegates of the International Red Cross Committee, based on many visits to prisoner of war and civilian internee camps under German control, demonstrate emphatically that studies, which encourage prisoners to improve their knowledge, and sports, which aid them physically, are growing increasingly popular.

In one German camp, recently visited by an I. R. C. C. Delegate, two new barracks had been erected opposite each other. Above the entrance of one of them were the words, "Reading Room and University." The "University" was set up, at the prisoner's request, as a simple center for studies. To organize this, the prisoner-elected representative issued an appeal for help to all teachers, students, experts, and others who were competent and willing to assist in the studies. In one case motor mechanics divulged the secrets of internal combustion engines to classes of prisoners while another group interested in printing listened to a printer explain his craft. The same university-organized discussions on elementary mathematics, mechanics, chemistry, and physics. These discussions gradually developed into large conferences which took place on Saturday nights. The subjects for discussion were selected by the prisoners themselves and ranged all the way from philosophical problems to colonial politics and the development of art. In some cases, lectures were given by German professors who came from nearby towns.

University Courses

In due course these discussions grew into full lectures; and courses, terminating with examinations sent to home schools, were drawn up. The completed papers are now sent

for marking, through the intermediary of the I. R. C. C. at Geneva, to a school or college in the prisoners' own country. American schools are not yet participating in this educational program, but arrangements are in hand for the Y. M. C. A. to organize the educational activities of American prisoners of war in Europe. Several months ago a shipment was made to Geneva of about 7,000 textbooks to enable prisoners to study courses which the Armed Forces Institute has found are those most frequently demanded by American enlisted men.

A recent report from London stated that over 70 societies and institutions—academic, professional, and technical—are now holding examinations for prisoners of war, ranging from surveying to chirography or spectacle making, and from history and languages to accountancy and

bookkeeping. Over 20,000 requests for books and study courses have been received by the Educational Books Section of the Prisoners of War Department at Oxford, and the number of applications for examinations now runs into thousands.

Officers can devote more time to study because, unlike enlisted men, they are not required to work by the detaining Power. In some officer camps, therefore, courses may occupy as many as 100 hours a week, so that the prisoners can keep completely occupied with studies. Enlisted men assigned to labor detachments can attend lectures before breakfast or after supper, and a large part of them do. Letters from American prisoners show that they have been taking advantage of courses offered with the help of the London organizations.

(Continued on page 5)



Sports Day at Stalag Luft III.

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Japanese Prisoner of War Camps—Taiwan (Formosa)

By John Cotton

The first report on camps in Taiwan (Formosa) has been received from an International Red Cross Committee Delegate who visited the camps there at the end of May 1943. There are five camps, the main one being at *Taihoku*, the capital, near the northern end of the island. The others are located in alluvial coastal regions at *Karenko*, a port on the east coast, *Taichu*, near the west coast, *Tamazato*, in the east central part of the island, and *Heito* in the south.

Several of the camps were opened in the summer of 1942, but one, *Tamazato*, was opened on April 2, 1943. The prisoners were brought to Taiwan from the Philippines, Hong Kong, Malaya, Sumatra, and Java. Altogether, there are estimated to be about 1,500 British, Dutch, and American prisoners of whom some 500 are Americans. All the camps contain a large proportion of officers, particularly the camp at *Tamazato* where there are 71 high ranking officers, 21 being Americans. The British ex-governors of Hong Kong and Malaya are at this camp, and, according to the report, the camp representatives include 15 generals and ex-governors. A later report by cable states that two of the camps, presumably *Heito* and *Taichu*, are to be closed, and lists have been received of some American noncoms and soldiers moved to the Tokyo area, probably from these two camps.

The transfer from tropical areas has no doubt been beneficial to the prisoners since the climate of Taiwan, a large island off the south coast of China and north of the Philippines, is mild, ranging in temperature from a low of 40 degrees in winter to 95 degrees in summer. The principal industry is agriculture, the chief crop, rice. The coastal areas, particularly in the south and west, and the lower hill regions are quite fertile, producing large quantities of sugar cane, bananas, sweet potatoes, tea, pineapples, barley, coffee, cotton, mangoes, and papaya. A large part of the island, particularly the central and eastern portions, is mountainous; some 6,000,000 acres are covered by primeval forests. Especially noteworthy are the camphor trees which grow with a luxuriance known nowhere else in the world.

Camp Conditions Improving

The five camps are run on practically identical lines. The Japanese commander is apparently a strict disciplinarian who keeps the camps in good order. The subcommanders are reported to be ambitious men who are keen on improving their camps. They appear to be doing their best for the prisoners, and the prisoners' representatives in all the camps confirm that conditions are gradually improving.

The camps are situated in fairly large areas enclosed by bamboo or brick walls, and, in one case, by barbed wire. The area of the camp at *Karenko* is 21 acres. The prison quarters consist mainly of wooden military barracks with good ventilation. Heat is ordinarily unnecessary. The toilet facilities appear to be adequate but far from luxurious. Hot Japanese baths are permitted twice a week and cold showers whenever desired.

Cooking is done by Army cooks among the prisoners. The food available consists of substantial quantities of rice and barley; irregular quantities of meat and fish; vegetables, potatoes, fruit; small quantities of eggs, butter, and cheese; and black tea, but practically no coffee. The prisoners are raising some livestock and poultry to provide more meat and eggs. At the *Heito* camp, pigs, ducks, and chickens are being raised, and there is also a vegetable garden of about two acres where sweet potatoes, peanuts, watermelons, etc., are grown. On the whole, the food supplies, although sufficient to live upon, do not appear to be entirely adequate for a balanced diet. The small amount of Red Cross relief goods distributed from shipments sent to Japan on repatriation ships in 1942 slightly improved the situation, but were not sufficient to correct the deficiency. One general, however, speaking for the *Tamazato* camp, declared they had saved the situation.

In all cases prisoners brought their own clothing from the south and some clothes have also been issued by the detaining authorities. It is reported that in the camps men wear Japanese clogs and that some shoes sent by the Red Cross are being kept

in reserve. The spokesman stated that heavier clothing would be needed before next winter.

It is reported that when the camps were opened there were a considerable number of cases of colitis, diphtheria, aggravated by exhaustion as a result of the journey from the south and the sudden change of diet and climate. Since then there has been a gradual improvement as the prisoners have become acclimated and conditions have improved. Preventive inoculations were made against dysentery, typhoid fever, cholera, and smallpox. Yeast preparations were used for beri-beri cases.

Malaria is reported to be endemic in *Heito*, and to a lesser extent in three of the other camps. Quinine and other drugs similar to those used by the Japanese army have been provided for treatment. The Delegate reported that he would send atalapha and, if possible, plasmochin and certain small amounts of medicinal supplies purchased in Japan by the I. R. C. C. In addition, the sanitary measures have been taken for preventing the development and to exterminate, the anopheline mosquito, which is the malaria carrier. Eucalyptus trees and citrus grass have been planted widely in the camps. The prisoners have been provided with mosquito nets, and electric thrum fumigating coils are used in the barracks. A tropical medicine search institute at *Taihoku* is being visited by the Delegate, who received promises of further assistance.

Each camp has an infirmary staffed by several doctors and attendants, some of whom are prisoner doctors. There is a regular medical inspection once a day, and at times in case of emergency. Dental and optical treatment in most camps are available in nearby towns. Though complaints have been received that the treatment is not always satisfactory.

Canteen Facilities

The financial condition of the prisoners appears to be good. Officers use part of their allowances for food, clothing, cigarettes, and daily necessities, while the men spend their money for tobacco and such other items as are available. Each camp has a canteen with a limited supply of



The Kentanji Temple at Taihoku, visible from the Taihoku Prisoner of War Camp on the Island of Taiwan, was originally built by the Chinese in 1740. The temple enshrines the Goddess of Mercy.

confectionery, sweets, fruit, black tea, salt, clothing, and stationery. The articles which can be bought, however, are not sufficient. Excess funds are deposited in Postal Savings Banks, and the total savings have now reached a fairly large figure.

Officers and the few civilians in the camps may work if they desire. The enlisted men and noncommissioned officers must work if they are to receive pay. The pay for work is the same as for the Japanese army receives, and amounts to from 15 to 30 sen (\$0.04 to \$0.08) per day. At the *Heito* camp the prisoners' tasks for which they are paid is to remove stones from gravel plains which are being transformed into sugar cane fields. At the time of the Delegate's visit he saw 347 men from this camp at work in straw hats and shorts. He said they were lean but in good physical condition.

The prisoners' recreation consists largely of walking, gardening, and sports such as football and basketball, as well as indoor recreation which includes cards and chess. Several of the camps have gramophones which are played in the evening. Reading material apparently is inadequate, consisting of a few books and English editions of Japanese newspapers, including the *Nippon Times* and *Osaka Asahi*. The Delegate reported that after his return to Tokyo a few hundred books were sent to the camps through the International Y.M.C.A. Religious services are held in the camps on Sun-

days and on memorial days. The services, apparently, are conducted by Army chaplains who are prisoners. Very little mail has been received in these camps, and the prisoners in all cases have expressed a great desire for better mail service. In most camps postcards are permitted once a month. Some of the high ranking officers have been allowed to dispatch radio communications and letters.

The requests of the prisoners invariably were for more mail, more food, medicine, clothing, games, and recreation equipment.

A comparatively large number of Americans are at Camp *Karenko*. Out of a total of 248 prisoners in this camp, 166 were Americans, of whom 132 were officers. The camp is located near the town of *Karenko*, which has 30,000 inhabitants and is situated near the sea. The camp was opened on July 26, 1942, and is near a hill in park-like scenery. Out of a camp area of 21 acres enclosed by a brick wall, prisoners' buildings cover three-fourths of an acre. Quarters consist of two-story permanent wooden military barracks. Each man has a bed with a straw mattress, a mattress cover, two sheets, and four thin blankets. Only the officers have pillows.

Good drinking water comes from a nearby reservoir. The cooking is done by seven Army cooks among the prisoners. The food is estimated to contain about 2,800 calories per day

per man. In this camp the prisoners' weight is stated to have increased from an average of 144 lbs. on arrival to 146½ lbs. at the end of May 1943. The camp has a vegetable garden which covers five acres and, in addition, the men are raising goats, pigs, rabbits, and chickens, which should help to improve the diet.

The camp has work benches for tailors and cobblers, and chairs for barbers. Agricultural work is voluntary, at the rate of 2 yen (\$0.50) per month. As in the other camps, the spokesmen expressed the desire for more food (particularly for those working), more clothing, as well as towels, soap, books, games, and sports equipment.

The visit of the International Red Cross Committee Delegate should result in improved conditions at these camps. As reported above, on the Delegate's return to Tokyo, some books and medicines were forwarded. A later cable stated that at Camp *Tamazato* new roomy quarters, which were being constructed, would be available in July, with a consequent improvement in conditions.

Deliveries to British Prisoners of War

Figures recently received from Geneva show that during the year 1942, 25,807 tons of relief supplies in parcels (containing food, tobacco, clothing, and miscellaneous items) were shipped from Geneva to British prisoners of war held by Germany and Italy. Of the total amount of 25,807 tons shipped, only 39 tons were lost, through pilferage and other causes, in transit to the camps. The amount thus lost was less than one-fifth of one percent.

THE S. S. GRIPSHOLM

The exchange of American and Japanese nationals at Marmagao, in Portuguese India, was set for October 15, 1943. The diplomatic exchange ship GRIPSHOLM is carrying relief supplies for American prisoners of war and civilian internees in the Far East valued at over \$1,500,000, as well as next of kin packages. Full details of the supplies shipped will be given in our next issue.

The American Red Cross has confirmed that the relief supplies shipped a year ago for American prisoners in the Philippines were received and distributed last January, and that their arrival was most timely.

Newspapers in European Prison Camps

By Marion Hale Britten

Most prisoners of war and civilian internee camps in Germany and Italy have their own newspapers which serve as a link between the different camps and their working detachments. In some camps prisoners are also permitted to subscribe to approved local newspapers, but, as a rule, they much prefer their own sheets which furnish them with camp news and information about entertainments, sports, educational activities, the arrival of Red Cross supplies, and so forth.

There are two kinds of camp newspapers in Germany. The first is issued biweekly by the German authorities and published in the large towns which have prison camps in the vicinity. It circulates from one prisoner of war camp to another throughout the country, and it is the publication which deals with all matters of a general character—such as repatriation, world news, official notices, etc. It usually runs to about 10 pages, with large headings in heavy type and a lay-out somewhat along the lines of an American daily. It is illustrated with photographs.

The "Home Town" Sheet

Besides this general newspaper for prisoners there are also the camp sheets which appear usually about once a week, and which are posted on a large notice board fixed against the wall of the canteen. The following description of one of these sheets has been obtained from the International Red Cross Committee, which keeps a complete file in Geneva of all camp news sheets:

This one happens to be called *The Flag*, the newspaper of, let us say, Camp X. On the front page under the national colours is the motto "Hold Out." In the middle of the page a bold heading announces that the prisoners' representative (the elected camp leader) has a message. In it he not only gives good advice and encouragement, but also, for example, states that prisoner Bill M. has saved the life of a child who was drowning, and that an anonymous prisoner has made a gift to the paper's editor of 50 Reichsmarks for the family of a less fortunate fellow.

Let's turn over. Here we come to the home news section. Prisoners

usually leave this to read last, as they can then return to their work refreshed by the thoughts of home. Turning over again we come to more spicy stuff—jokes about the camp doctor's nose; the monocle of Captain X, who rather fancies the cut of his uniform; and many other little tidbits about colleagues.

Further on there is a lesson in grammar headed "Modern Languages without Tears," and, still further, printed on red paper, we read a heading "Hello, Hello, This Is the Doctor Speaking," followed by some sound hygienic advice. Then follow the sports reporter and the musical reviewer. There are also recipes, one describing "how to convert Red Cross sardines into fresh trout." And, finally, a puzzling heading worded "Do you know it?" This informs us, among other things, that water polo was first played in England in the 18th century as an imitation of horse polo; and that the artificial creeper commonly described as barbed wire is a rambler very common in Central Europe.

All Work Done by Volunteers

A great amount of painstaking effort and resourcefulness is devoted to getting out these camp sheets. Pre-



Group of American aviators, including at least two pilots of Flying Fortresses, are among the approximately four hundred American flyers at Stalag Luft III, Ger-

war lawyers, doctors, actors, and publicity experts now labor side by side in "the editor's den" to entertain and enlighten their comrades. Some prisoners devote their Sundays to making copies of the paper. Others, returning from a mine or a brickyard at the end of a hard day's work, with pen and pencil for several hours. The entire camp, reports the Department of the I. R. C. C. enthusiastically cooperating to achieve the success of its paper.

The following notes, taken from letters from prisoners of war in Italian camps, show that inter-camp news sheets there is just as common in German camps:

"My first book review was published by the camp newspaper last week, and I hope to make regular contributions of this feature. The news which is posted in the camp is from the Italian press, but we have details of conditions in England, as given by two aviators who were brought down some time ago and are now at this camp. The 'Grip' enters its third volume shortly. It is going strongly. We are running a series of motor racing articles which, with their illustrations, would do credit to any of the best motoring journals.

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Additional Relief Supplies Shipped to the Far East

By John Cotton

With the exchange of American and Japanese nationals set for October 15, 1943, at Mormagao, in Portuguese India, the *M. V. Gripsholm* on September 2 sailed from Jersey City carrying a large cargo of relief supplies provided by the Army, Navy, and other United States government agencies, and the American Red Cross. The cargo is destined for United States prisoners of war and civilian internees held by the Japanese in the Far East. When the relief supplies are transferred from the *Gripsholm* to the Japanese ships at Mormagao, they will be consigned to the International Red Cross Committee Delegation, Dr. Fritz Paravicini, in Tokyo. Paravicini will supervise the distribution of these supplies to the prisoners and internees in Japan and Japanese-occupied territories.

The Japanese exchange ship will stop at various ports in occupied territory before reaching Japan, and plans have been worked out for the discharge of a large part of the supplies directly at Manila in the Philippines. Over 50 percent of the Red Cross supplies shipped are destined for delivery to Philippine camps. Other cargo will be unloaded at Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai, the balance being consigned to Japanese camps in Japan, Formosa, and Manchuria.

The present *Gripsholm* cargo is valued at over one million three hundred thousand dollars and consists of 10,000 special Far East food packages, clothing, and comfort articles provided for, or supplied by, the government of the United States; medical supplies and tobacco furnished by the American Red Cross; books and recreational supplies provided by the M.C.A.; and religious material from the National Catholic Welfare

Conference. The *Gripsholm* also carries United States mail and relief supplies from the Canadian Red Cross for Canadian prisoners.

Great care was taken to see that the cargo contained all the items most urgently needed by prisoners (Continued on page 6)



The *Gripsholm* loading in the river across from New York City.