

Vorlager (One-Act)

Subject: Personal Parcels.

Time: March 30, 1944.

Place: Vorlager.

Persons: One lieutenant, parcel sergeant, German parcel inspector.

Sergeant: We have a parcel for you Lieutenant.

Lieutenant: Good.

Sergeant: I'll check it over with the German inspector.

German inspector: (Looks over parcel, notes box containing trick flashlight) What ist? Ah flashlight, verboten, verboten. (German continues to inspect flashlight for workability.) It is kaput, kaput, no work. (Continues to fuss with it, and the cover of the flashlight pops off and a long snake



springs up in front of his eyes. Said German rose three feet off ground. Scene ends after German reenacts the flashlight act several more times.) It is goot!

School

Within a few days, all of the new kriegies in the Center camp will have a new educational program at hand. Lt. Ray Brunn, camp educational officer, mentioned that the program has to be new, to prevent break-ins on established classes.

Of the new classes, Spanish and German, math of elementary and advanced stages, and accounting, will begin at once.

German class will be taught from a new textbook, and is conversationally styled.

At present, the Army lectures are made up of older students, but any of the new men are requested to join them if they see fit.

Books for the future may be a long while in coming, according to the News Room story, concerning the loss by fire of the entire stock of books on hand at Geneva. Thousands of victrola machines were also destroyed.

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PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN

Published by the American National Red Cross for the Relatives of American Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees

No. 10

WASHINGTON, D. C.

OCTOBER 1944

Aid to Prisoners in the Far East

By John Cotton



Prisoners of war at Zentsuji, Japan. Picture taken April 1943 and received August 10, 1944. Left to right: George Trudell, USNR; John F. W. McClure, USNR; Ted Best, AIF; Russell W. Snow, USNR; Meade Willis, USNR. In December 1942 McClure and Snow were transferred from Cabanatuan in the Philippines to Zentsuji.

Recent measures taken for the relief of American prisoners held by Japan include the weekly shipment of 80,000 multi-vitamin tablets; a program to permit each American held in Japan to cable his family at the expense of the United States government; authorization for monthly remittances from government funds to prisoners of war camps in the Philippine Islands in amounts based on approximately \$10 per man monthly; the purchase of supplemental supplies for American prisoners; and development of negotiations to establish a regular route for the shipment of food, medicine, and clothing via Soviet Pacific port. In order to facilitate communications from this country to prisoners held by Japan, the American Red Cross, as already reported, has provided for relatives a simplified post card form, and has established a below cost, flat rate charge for cablegrams to the Far East. Late in July the American Red Cross commenced mailing 80,000 multi-vitamin tablets weekly to the Far Eastern camps. The tablets are mailed in small four-pound packages addressed to American camp spokesmen as well as to Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross in Tokyo and Shanghai. Although, as yet, there is no positive assurance that the vitamins are reaching their intended destinations, if they do arrive, the value of them to our men will be so great that the risk is well worth taking. These vitamin packages go by air to Tehran, along with prisoner of war and civilian internee mail for the Far East.

Collect Cables
The International Red Cross dele-

gation in Tokyo recently advised that the Japanese authorities will permit all prisoners of war and civilian internees to dispatch collect cablegrams to their families. Since it appears that a shortage of funds is one reason why only a few cablegrams have been received so far from prisoners of war in the Far East, the International Committee has been requested by the American Red Cross to arrange for each United States prisoner of war and civilian internee to dispatch, collect, a ten-word cablegram for delivery to his family in this country.

It is hoped that the Japanese government will accept promptly the practical proposal made by the American Red Cross, so that before long a steady flow of cable messages to this country can begin. As the volume of cablegrams under this plan may be considerable, each American prisoner would be limited, for the time being, to one cable yearly. Pending final approval of necessary allocations of funds by government departments to meet the expense of the collect messages, the American Red Cross has agreed to underwrite the plan.

Financial Aid in the Philippines

The United States government has for some time been providing financial relief for civilian internees in the Philippines. The Swiss minister in Tokyo has standing instructions, upon which he has acted from time to time as the needs arose, to increase this financial assistance whenever necessary in order to maintain an adequate subsistence level for these internees. Continuous endeavors by the United States government to secure Japanese permission for the extension of similar financial assistance to prisoners of war in the Philippines have finally resulted in a Japanese agreement to permit such relief. The Swiss government has accordingly been requested to make the necessary remittances from United States government funds on deposit with the Swiss government to the maximum amount which the Japanese authorities will permit. That amount is based on approximately \$10 a month per capita. These payments will be converted into local currency to be used for the purchase,

on a group basis, of supplies available in the Philippines.

The arrangement reported in the June issue of PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN, whereby United States government funds in the amount of \$25,000 monthly were to have been sent to the neutral representative in the Philippines of the YMCA War Prisoners' Aid, unfortunately has not yet been made effective—for reasons quite beyond the control of the United States government. This arrangement, in effect, would have continued on a larger scale the aid previously furnished by the YMCA in the Philippines.

Continued refusal of the Japanese government to approve the appointment of a Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the Philippines is a matter of concern. Although there is some hope that the representative of the War Prisoners' Aid of the YMCA may be able to visit some Philippine prisoner of war camps and describe their conditions, as yet no reports of camp visits have been received from him.

A similar situation also exists in Thailand, Burma, Malaya, and the Netherlands Indies. The American Red Cross deplors the lack of vital information about the many camps in all these regions, but until the Japanese permit neutral representatives to make inspections, most of the questions about the treatment of prisoners, camp locations, and other important details must necessarily remain unanswered.

Relief Shipments via Russia

Realizing the urgent necessity of establishing a regular route for the shipment of food, medicines, and clothing to prisoners in the Far East, the Department of State since the spring of 1942 has actively engaged in negotiations to open up such a route. As was announced last June, a message was received from the Japanese government regarding the onward movement of relief supplies which were shipped from a west coast port to Vladivostok a year ago, and for further shipments of relief supplies to go via Soviet territory. The Soviet government in due course expressed willingness to cooperate, and named a Soviet Pacific port adjacent to Vladivostok where the relief supplies already on hand might be picked up. A second port for the transfer of future shipments was also named. The Soviet government furthermore suggested as an alternative

the possibility of forwarding subsequent shipments by rail across Russia to Japanese territory.

Later, the Japanese government agreed to send a ship to the Soviet port adjacent to Vladivostok, but it imposed additional conditions which had to be met before it would actually dispatch a ship to pick up the supplies. Certain of these conditions affected the Soviet government, and their acceptance by that government was necessary. The Japanese government has been informed of the acceptance of the conditions imposed.

As the situation now stands, the Soviet government has granted permission for a Japanese ship to enter a Soviet port to pick up the supplies now on Soviet territory. The Japanese ship will be granted safe conduct by the Soviet government within Soviet territorial waters, and by the Allied military authorities outside those waters. The United States government has agreed to pay all costs connected with the transportation of these supplies to Japan. The United States government has also confirmed its willingness to reciprocate in regard to the transportation and distribution of relief supplies sent by Japan for Japanese nationals in United States custody.

As regards subsequent shipments of relief supplies, the Soviet government has again suggested to the Japanese government that shipments be sent overland to Japan, if the Japanese government continues in its refusal to utilize the Pacific port named by the Soviet government for this purpose.

The United States government, for its part, has urged the Japanese government to use this or any means by which regular and continuous bulk shipments of supplementary supplies needed by American and other Allied nationals in Japan and Japanese-occupied territories can be made. The difficulties involved, however, do not permit hopes to be held out that it will soon be possible again to send private parcels from families here to prisoners in the Far East.

Distribution of "Gripsholm" Supplies

From time to time detailed reports have been received confirming the distribution of supplies shipped on the *Gripsholm* last fall. The International Red Cross Delegate at Shanghai has reported that relief supplies were distributed to the prisoner of war camps and civil as-

sembly centers in and near Shanghai during the five days preceding Easter. After commenting on the effect of the deliveries on the morale of the internees, the Delegate quoted a letter from Col. W. W. Ashurst, USMC, senior officer at the prisoner of war camp, who announced that the 100-pound food packages would be issued to the men over a period of four months.

Details of the supplies shipped to Camp Hoten in Manchuria have also been received. They consisted of 2,600 13-pound food packages, 31 cases of medical supplies, 202 cases of men's clothing and comforts, and 5 cases of tobacco and cigarettes. The distribution of supplies at other camps in the Far East has been reported in previous issues of the BULLETIN.

Improvement in Mail

Several indications are available of an improvement in mail to and from the Far East. Numerous reports show that prisoners and internees in the Philippines, Formosa, Japan, Manchuria, and China have received during the past year a substantial amount of mail. One prisoner has acknowledged receipt of 70 letters. The large shipment of letters and cards which reached the United States from the Far East late in July was in transit from four to eight months.

To assist in the more rapid delivery of mail to the Far East, the American Red Cross recently printed a post card form. This is an optional form which is being distributed by Red Cross chapters to relatives and friends of prisoners of war and internees held by Japan.

In June a flat rate cable charge to all Far Eastern camps was also established. The charge is \$6, plus tax of 10 percent. Each cable message may contain 10 words of text, excluding the names of the addressee and sender as well as other identifying data.

There is no wish to exaggerate the importance of the steps recently taken to get relief and encouragement to prisoners in the Far East. Much more needs to be accomplished before there can be any feeling of satisfaction at what has been done. But relatives may rest assured that every department of the government involved, and all the interested relief agencies, are cooperating wholeheartedly and exploring every possible avenue in the effort to fulfill their responsibilities.

AMERICAN AIRMEN AT STALAG LUFT III



Left to right: Lt. Col. Clark, executive officer; Lt. Col. Klocko, in charge of education and entertainment; Colonel Goodrich, senior officer, and a prisoner identified only as Joe.



Backstage in the new theater. Wood from Red Cross boxes and camp-made tools are used in making props and scenery.



Unidentified group sent by Lt. Rayford Deal, fourth from left.



Military funeral.



Prisoners study model planes made in the camp.



Examining New Zealand and American Red Cross packages in the Vorlager.



Studying a German newspaper. Left to right: Capt. Griffiths, Lt. Spire, Lt. Frazier, Lt. Carlberg, Lt. Austin, and Lt. Eder.

Letters

(Continued from page 6)

Oflag 64
May 15, 1944

Darling:

Nothing new has happened, only the weather is getting much warmer. Right now I'm taking a sun bath in front of the barracks. The sun sure feels good. The whole gang is here sitting around, including Herm and Fabian. They all send their best regards. We have a phonograph out here and we are playing an album of theme songs of the various bands. We have a pretty good selection of records.

Our play "Three Men on a Horse" went over swell. Everyone seemed to enjoy it. My stage crew did a swell job in changing sets. We averaged 2½ minutes in changing five sets. One of our experienced producers said the changes were as fast as those on a professional stage, and that made me feel good. Our next play is "The Petrified Forest," to open the first week in June. A couple of weeks ago we had a gambling night at the theater, the proceeds of which go into the camp fund. The place was fixed up like an old western bar called "The Bloody Gut." We had a few new arrivals who got quite a kick out of it. Entertainment means so much to everyone.

Oflag VII, Laufen
May 30

Dear Sirs:

I wish to acknowledge, with best thanks, receipt of the Prisoners of War Bulletin for October 1943 you kindly sent me and which I have read with considerable interest. I understand my mother, Mrs. Lilly Compertz, is receiving this Bulletin quite regularly, and so are all the close relatives in America of U. S. internees in this camp. I should greatly appreciate it if you would kindly send me, possibly by air mail, the Bulletin whenever it appears, including a few numbers previously issued.

In this camp, beautifully situated on the German-Austrian frontier near Salzburg and at the foot of the Alps, we are some 440 American internees (including a few Latin Americans) and about 460 British internees. Thanks to the generous donations of the American and British Red Cross, the YMCA, as well as a few other organizations, we are well taken care of as regards Red Cross food parcels; medicines; clothing and boots, as well as repair materials; books, both fiction and educational; games and sports articles. We are all extremely grateful to these organizations whose splendid humane work makes our long confinement easier to bear. In addition, we receive a fair number of next-of-kin parcels. Letters are usually sent by air mail, both from camp to the United States and from home to camp. On the average, they are three months on the way.

Yours sincerely,
(Signed) Herbert Compertz,
American Camp Senior

Oflag 344 (VIII B)
January 1

Hello:

Greetings to you both for the New Year. Maybe we'll see the next one in together. Nothing much to tell. I remain in blooming good health, passing the time learning to speak Spanish and French, and dabbling in the theater. The old life dies hard!



Unidentified Americans at Stalag III B, sent by Cpl. A. Gaskin.

Extracts from Letters from Germany

Lt. Thomas E. Mulligan, Jr., editor of *Kriegie Times*, wrote from the Center Compound at Stalag Luft III to his family at Albany, N. Y.: "We have permission to use a typewriter, and artists do cartoons and comic strips for me. The paper looks like a professional job, and it is. We even have an ex-UP man on the staff."

In a separate letter Col. Delmar T. Spivey, American senior officer at the Center Compound, wrote that Lt. Sidney Shore, of Pittsburgh, Pa.; Lt. Leslie Breidenthal, of Topeka, Kans.; Lt. Harry X. Ford, of Santa Ana, Calif.; Lt. James R. Regan of Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Lt. Ted Pochily, of Connecticut, N. Y., assisted Lieutenant Mulligan in producing *Kriegie Times*.

A complete file of the 17 issues of *Kriegie Times*, published from January 1 to April 24, 1944, has been sent to the American Red Cross for turning over to Lieutenant Mulligan's family. Likewise a complete file of *Gefangenen Gazette* from October 15, 1943, to April 9, 1944, which is also produced at the Center Compound, Luft III, but under the editorship of Lt. Ronald T. Delaney, has been received for transmission to Lieutenant Delaney's wife at Waterbury, Conn.

From Stalag Luft I, dated March 8 and received at Charleston, W. Va., on July 24: "I am feeling fine, and, thanks to the Red Cross, I have the essentials for living O. K. If the Red Cross ever asks for donations, do not hesitate about giving. They have done everything in their power to help us. Tell everyone you meet about this so that the people will know of their fine work."

An American officer in Oflag 64 wrote on April 30 to his mother, who is a volunteer worker in Food Packaging Center No. 3 at New York: "Have just received some of the

Red Cross No. 10 parcels packed only six months ago, so figure they were packed by you. They are the best parcels yet because of the jam, peanut butter, and good coffee. These are very good items here and much appreciated. Also the small tropical chocolate bars instead of the 'D' ration bars, and the cans of roast beef. All these seemingly small and ordinary items are rare here, and much looked for."

From an American staff sergeant at Stalag XVII B: "I had diphtheria, tonsillitis, and acute nasopharyngitis, but I am O. K. now and eating like a horse. There are French doctors here, and the attendants are French and Serbian. I have a Frenchman in the room with me. We have a good time, and about a dozen language classes a day. I receive a Red Cross parcel of food each week, which is good. Write often. Letters and parcels are what we look forward to. I have all my buddies here and a few YMCA guitars in the bunch. Don't worry, I'll be home soon."

From a noncom airman at Luft III, dated June 8: "Well, your kid's done passed another birthday. Never expected to spend one in a place like this, but it wasn't bad at all. Baked myself a great big cake and gave it around to the boys. Wouldn't be much of a cake in the U. S., but here we grind up the biscuits from our Red Cross parcels, add sugar and powdered milk and water, and flavor it with concentrated orange juice and then set it on the stove and dry it out. Then we make icing out of D-bars (chocolate), powdered milk, and sugar, and smear it around. My masterpiece was five layers high (about six inches) and eight inches across, and weighed ten or fifteen pounds. At least, it seemed a bit heavy to me."

Reports on German Camps

Stalag Luft I

The camp for British and American officer-airmen at Barth, in north Germany, known as Stalag Luft I, also carries the designation "Kriegsfliegerlager No. 1 der Luftwaffe" (Prisoners of War Camp No. 1 of the Air Force). The American strength at this camp at the end of 1943 was about 3,000 and substantially in excess of the British strength. Lt. J. R. Byerly was American senior officer and Maj. M. S. Dillingham, assistant. Noncoms served as orifices for the officers.

The camp, which was run entirely by an Oflag (officers' camp), was composed of a "Vorlager" and three compounds—north, southwest, and west. The American and British prisoners were not separated, and the camp was run by a joint British-American staff. The men could move from one compound to another during the daytime.

In all the barracks the men slept on triple-tier wooden bunks, with the overflow sleeping outside in tents. The building of new barracks has not kept pace with the rapid influx of prisoners, with the result that practically all the camp's facilities were reported to be seriously inadequate.

Considering the lack of facilities for cooking, laundry, and bathing, the state of health at the camp was reported to be "amazingly good." This was perhaps partly due to the camp's healthy location, near the seashore.

The mail situation was very unsatisfactory, many prisoners having received no word from their families for over six months. Censorship at Stalag Luft I was probably responsible for delays to both incoming and outgoing mail, and another delaying factor was the shortage of letter forms at Luft I. For several months, it appears, the German authorities were able to supply Luft I with only a fraction of its quota of printed forms.

Strong representations have been made to the German authorities about the urgency of improving the chronically overcrowded conditions.

Stalag Luft III

The following list of barracks commanders in the South Compound at Stalag Luft III was published in the camp newspaper, *The Circuit*, on April 17, last:

No. 125—Maj. G. L. Ott
No. 127—Maj. W. C. Beckham
No. 128—Maj. J. E. O'Brien
No. 129—Maj. J. C. Egan
No. 130—Maj. H. R. Mills
No. 131—Maj. W. W. Inghenhuitt
No. 132—Maj. J. M. Sage
No. 133—Capt. J. C. Griffin
No. 134—Capt. R. A. Aldridge
No. 135—Maj. C. H. Diamond
No. 136—Lt. Col. S. R. Edner
No. 137—Maj. D. M. Jones
No. 138—Maj. F. L. Ferguson
No. 139—Maj. T. B. Fleming

Stalag III B

Sgt. Clyde Bennett, according to a cable from Geneva, is no longer American camp spokesman at Stalag III B. The name of the new spokesman has not yet been received.

Several reports from neutral sources had spoken of the outstanding ability and energy of Sergeant Bennett and of his persistent efforts to bring about an improvement in conditions for American prisoners.

Stalag III B has been visited several times in recent months by representatives of the Protecting Power (Switzerland) and Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross, who appear to be making every effort to bring about a better understanding between the German authorities and the Americans.

Stalag IV B

Stalag IV B at Muhlberg, on the river Elbe north of Dresden, is a large mixed camp housing United

Nations prisoners of several nationalities, but mainly British and Russian. In July over 2,000 British Air Force noncoms were included in the camp strength, and about 50 United States nationals who were captured while serving with Canadian forces.

This camp is well equipped with recreational facilities, and a recent report stated that Red Cross food and clothing supplies were being regularly distributed.

Miscellaneous

Delegates of the International Red Cross during July visited Stalag 357 (location not given), where there were 6 Americans among a total of over 6,000 prisoners; Stalag VI G, which had 7 Americans out of nearly 19,000 prisoners; the Lager Lazarett at VI G, which contained 4 wounded Americans; and the Lager Lazarett at Stalag VI J (near the Rhine, north of Cologne), where there were 2 Americans among nearly 1,200 patients.

General conditions at all these Stalags were reported to be satisfactory.

At the end of July over 500 American prisoners were reported at Stalag VII B, which is believed to be, for Americans, a transit camp. It is located at Memmingen, and can be added to the map of European camps (published in the June 1944 BULLETIN) in square E5 on a line between Stuttgart and Nurnberg.



Skating at Oflag 64. Left to right: 2nd Lt. Harry W. Frazee, 2nd Lt. William C. Guest, Jr., 1st Lt. John L. Creech, 1st Lt. William C. Burghardt, 1st Lt. Gaither Perry, Jr., and 1st Lt. Foy M. Straight.

"BARBS AND GRIPES" AT STALAG II B

Sgt. Harry Galler, American camp spokesman, and Sgt. Henry Wintjen, editor and entertainments leader, have sent through the International Committee of the Red Cross a copy of the May issue of *Barbs and Gripes*, published by and for American prisoners of war at Stalag II B, Hammerstein. For a long time French, Belgian, and Yugoslav prisoners at II B have had their camp newssheets. The Americans began in a modest way last October, but by May the monthly issue had grown to 18 pages of single spaced type-writing. Each issue is mimeographed in sufficient numbers for copies to be sent to all Kommandos (work detachments) dependent on II B. There is attractive art work, done with a stylus, on each page of the May issue.

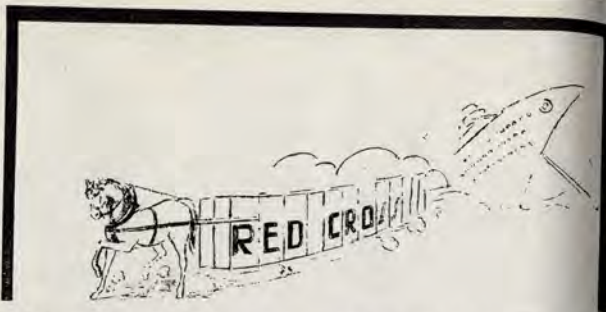
The purpose of *Barbs and Gripes* is not only to keep the men informed and entertained, but also to serve as a link between the base camp and the eight Kommandos scattered over a large area. It is unquestionably a valuable morale builder.

The May issue shows that, despite all the hardships of Stalag and Kommando life, the approximately 5,000 American prisoners at II B still have a keen sense of humor and a healthy disposition to make the best of this unpleasant interlude in their lives.

The May issue contains articles on a wide range of subjects. Sergeant Galler leads with "The Confidence Man Speaks to You," in which instructions are given to the confidence man (spokesman) of each Kommando about the monthly reports to be made to the camp spokesman, the ordering and distribution of Red Cross and YMCA supplies, the way to get medical supplies, the reporting of sick prisoners, the registering of complaints, and the necessity for maintaining good sanitary conditions in all Kommando areas. The following list of Kommando spokesmen was given:

Kommando	Spokesman	Rank	POW No.
Lautenburg	J. Kunz	Sgt.	111659
Stölp	J. Schick	S/Sgt.	30897
Köslin	W. Mason	Sgt.	30365
Rummelsburg	P. Sapsara	Pvt.	111965
Jastrow	J. Trivisonna	Sgt.	111627
Dt. Krone	L. Feharty	1st Sgt.	20521
Falkenburg	K. Castor	Cpl.	20718
Neu Stettin	F. DeLucca	Sgt.	83897

Thomas A. McGovern, the Catholic representative of American prisoners who was transferred from Stalag III B to II B, and the French



Red Cross shipments to Stalag II B are featured in the masthead of the camp newspaper, "Barbs and Gripes."

Catholic chaplain of II B contribute a page of spiritual help and guidance—about 50 percent of the Americans at II B being Roman Catholics. The Rev. Bruce Meads, a Methodist, has been recognized by the German authorities as military chaplain. He is permitted to serve prisoners in the base camp, the sick bay, the guardhouse, and the Kommandos.

Pfc. Wintjen covers recreational activities for *Barbs and Gripes* and tells the men what the YMCA is doing to meet Stalag and Kommando needs of recreational equipment, musical instruments, and so forth. He reported in May that:

The YMCA has shipped us a movie projector and some film. We hope to be able to take this projector to the Kommandos shortly, and give you fellows out there some good old American movies.

A page of society news follows, and from this we learn that:

Paratrooper Fred Gerber has been dropping into the kitchen daily. His only weapon is a paring knife.

Roy McHatti was arrested by officer Joseph Vinciguerra for violation of the laws of the SPCA. Roy pleaded guilty to the charge of horsebeating, but claimed it was merely an effort to improve the soup.

Timothy Dyas and "9½" Bruen are setting the style in evening dress. Both sleep formally attired in striped pajamas.

On April 27 and 28 the "Hammerstein Hams" presented a two-act melodrama, complete with costumes, spills, and music, entitled "D-Bar Days." The cast consisted of Robert Turner, Mort Bernhardt, Ed Sullivan, Tommy Langan, Wilbur Wind-

land, Jack Chazen, Morty Morris, and Steve Keizer. Windland's version of "Empty Parcels in the Old Stalag," a parody on "Empty Saddles," left the boys rocking with laughter.

One page, headed "II B or not II B," deals with "the most common of all Stalag pests—the Rag Bag." The conclusion is reached that:

You guys on Kommando are lucky in one respect. Once you are deloused, you are pretty well rid of your pests, but here in the Stalag the Rag Bag goes on forever.

Pages contributed by Kommandos are entitled "Down on the Farm" and "Out in the Fields"—the Kommandos being, for the most part, agricultural work detachments. One item tells us that "The boys are now beginning to regard the farms as their own."

Other pages include "School and Library," with John Dixon in charge of educational matters; classified ads, dealing mainly with trading items; and how to interpret "Letters from Home"—with particular reference to "letters from brides, prospective brides, steady girl friends, and others (if any) who fall into the same category." This article states that "most of us are now receiving mail from home and other sources quite regularly."

According to *Barbs and Gripes*, each Kommando had a large food package reserve and was also kept supplied from the base with footwear, clothing, and repair materials. Red Cross capture parcels, containing sweaters, pajamas, socks, slippers, brushes, towels, handkerchiefs, smoking materials, and many other items, were also reaching the men in Kommandos.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Why are so many letters and cards from prisoners in the Far East undated?

In reply to a protest made by the United States government, Japan stated that there was no objection in principle to prisoners' mail being dated, but that in practice it was a matter for the individual camp commanders to decide. Japanese camp commanders in the Philippines, apparently, do not permit the dating of mail, but letters from camps in Japan generally carry a date. Efforts are still being made to permit all letters and cards to be dated.

My son was shot down by the Germans last April and was duly reported a prisoner of war. Up to the end of August we had received no mail from him. We do not yet have his permanent camp address. Why is it not possible to write him before this is received?

Mail from newly captured American prisoners in Germany has been unduly delayed because a period of from 60 to 90 days frequently elapses between the reporting of an American as a prisoner of war and the receipt of his "permanent" camp address. The German postal authorities have refused to accept and deliver mail for American prisoners until their permanent camp is included as part of the address. The American authorities, on the other hand, permit mail for a German prisoner in the United States to be addressed in care of the Prisoner of War Information Bureau, at the Office of the Provost Marshal General in Washington, D. C., until such time as the prisoner's correspondents in Germany have received his permanent camp address. The United States government has strongly urged, through the Protecting Power, that the German authorities similarly accept mail for American prisoners.

Do German prisoners in the United States receive next-of-kin parcels and Red Cross supplies from Germany? If so, what do German mothers send?

The families of German prisoners enjoy the same privilege as the families of American prisoners in sending next-of-kin parcels. Par-

cels from Germany usually contain cakes, chocolate, and cigarettes, but such items are much more abundant in the United States than Germany, and it is understood that German prisoners try to discourage their families from sending supplies that are needed at home. The German Red Cross regularly ships books to German prisoners in the United States, but not other supplies—except on special occasions like Christmas.

Q. Do prisoners of war in Germany have their own gas masks?

A. Those prisoners who were in possession of gas masks at the time of capture presumably still have them. It was reported that the German authorities in at least one camp had taken away gas masks from American prisoners, but, after protest, the masks were returned to the men.

Q. When will another exchange ship be sent to the Far East to bring back American civilians held by Japan?

A. The United States government has not yet been able to make arrangements with the Japanese government for a further exchange of civilians. While the second exchange, which took place a year ago, was in progress, the Department of State proposed that further exchanges be effected immediately. The Japanese government at that time refused to discuss further exchanges, advancing as its reason therefor that it desired first to receive "clarification on certain points respecting the treatment of Japanese nationals in the United States." In March 1944 the Department of State reopened the question of further exchanges. A complete plan was presented under which, on a reciprocal basis, accelerated exchanges might be made. The Japanese government later stated that the proposal was under study. No matter what efforts have been put forth by the United States, and they have been many and continuous, further exchanges cannot take place until Japan is willing to cooperate. The matter is still receiving the constant attention of the United States authorities.

Q. Why are not our prisoners in Germany treated as well as German prisoners here?

A. German prisoners in the United States are treated in accordance with the requirements of the Geneva Convention. While prisoners in the United States live under much better conditions than American prisoners in Germany or Japan, this is partly a consequence of the fact that a soldier in the U. S. Army enjoys a much higher standard of living than a soldier of corresponding rank in the German or Japanese army. Representatives of the Protecting Power and Delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross who regularly visit prison camps in Europe are constantly on the lookout for infractions of the Geneva Convention, which, when found, are brought promptly to the attention of the camp authorities. Infractions are also reported to the United States government, whenever American prisoners are involved. Such reports are frequently used as a protest, through the Protecting Power, to the Detaining Power.

Q. How can we write to American soldiers interned in neutral countries?

A. The next of kin of American military personnel interned in a neutral country are sent specific instructions about mail, by the branch of the service to which the internee belonged. Such internees are not prisoners of war, and information concerning them is usually considered confidential. If further information than that already supplied is desired, next of kin should communicate directly with the branch of the service from which the notification of interment was received.

Q. According to the map in your BULLETIN dated July 1944, Camp 10-A is located in China, but according to a message recently received from my son it seems to be located in the Philippines. Could you please tell us just where this camp is located?

A. The camp marked No. 10 on the map published in July was the civilian internee camp at Weih-sien, China. The No. 10 was simply a key number, and not a camp number. Military prison Camp No. 10-A in the Philippines is a prisoner of war camp. Its exact location is not yet known.



Red Cross food package detail in the Vorlager at Stalag Luft III. Names as furnished: Capt. Fulgem, M. Amato, J. Wolff, F. Fagio, C. Perry, J. Zeppi, W. Viereck, J. Egyud, J. Smith, S. Pascuelli, H. Ellis, D. Sadinka, A. La Barbera.

Packaging Centers

The latest Red Cross packaging center, located at 255 Eighteenth Street, Brooklyn, Long Island, New York, began operations on September 11.

Brooklyn Chapter is manning the assembly line at the new plant on three days a week, and other Long Island chapters on two days. During the 77 Wednesdays on which volunteers from the Brooklyn Chapter worked at Center No. 3, in New York City, they gave 27,793 hours of service and packed almost one million prisoner of war packages.

At the beginning of August, the St. Louis plant celebrated its first birthday by turning out its three-

millionth standard food package. One volunteer worker at this plant, the mother of two servicemen, worked more than 800 hours, on a four-day per week schedule, during the first year of operation.

Since the beginning of July, each of the three packaging centers at Philadelphia, New York City, and St. Louis has been introducing some individual variations into the standard No. 10 prisoner of war package. Ham, meat and vegetable stew, peanut butter, tea, and tuna fish are among the items which, in a certain proportion of the packages, are replacing corned beef, pork luncheon meat, liver paste, and salmon.

GOLF AT LUFT III

A six-hole golf course was laid out at Stalag Luft III (Center Compound), and practice play began there last spring, according to a report from the American senior officer. Traps, bunkers, and greens were made, all the surface being of sand. The playing equipment, at the time of the report, consisted of one set of clubs and four balls. The prisoners interested in golf were making balls from salvaged leather and rubber.

However, a recent cable stated that the German authorities had suspended all intercompound sports at Luft III. In effect, therefore, the Center, South, and West compounds had become separate camps. At the end of July each of these three compounds contained from 1,500 to 1,900 American aviators, about 50 percent of them officers and 20 percent noncoms.

ADDRESSING MAIL

The German authorities have complained that letters and parcels for American prisoners of war often arrive "incompletely addressed, thereby causing great delays or loss."

Relatives and friends are accordingly requested always to make sure that mail is addressed in accordance with the instructions sent out by the Office of the Provost Marshal General, and moreover to write (or print) the address, as well as the text of letters, clearly and legibly. Illegible writing inevitably slows up censorship, even if it does not cause the total loss of mail.

Postmaster—If addressee has removed and new address is known, notify sender on FORM 3547, postage for which is guaranteed.

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Repatriates Report on German Camps

By J. Townsend Russell

The 234 seriously sick or seriously injured American prisoners of war returned from Germany in September came from 20 different camps and hospitals. A few men were flown from England, but most of them on the diplomatic exchange ship *Gripsholm*. The camps or hospitals from which the men came were Bad Soden, Bremen Hospital, Lazarett 104 (Stalag III B), Lazarett VI C, Oflag 64, Oflag 79 (formerly Oflag VIII F), Oflag VII (Stalag III B, Lazarett III B, Stalag III C, Hospital Heilag Annaburg), Lazarett Hohenstein (Stalag IV F), Lazarett Stalag VII A, Laz. Meiningen (Stalag IX C), Lazarett Stalag III C, Stalag XVII B, Stalag 344 (formerly VIII B), Stalag Lufts I, II, III, IV, and Lazarett Lobin.

While interviewing repatriates at the Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D. C., and the Halloran General Hospital on Staten Island, N. Y., an effort was made by the Red Cross to see at least one man from each camp or hospital, not only to get an over-all picture of current conditions inside the camps, but to obtain as much detailed information as possible about living conditions, medical treatment and so forth, in each camp or hospital.

Camp and Hospital Conditions

There was, quite naturally, much difference between one man's report on conditions at one camp, and another's report on conditions at another. Even from the same camp, the repatriates' reports did not always agree. There was, however, complete agreement on the increasingly vital importance of the supplies which the Red Cross supplies play in the lives of prisoners of war. German standards, which judged by American standards were never good, are

steadily diminishing in quantity and deteriorating in quality. Discipline, too, grows increasingly stricter in all German camps, with the authorities more and more preoccupied with the prevention of escapes. (As the strain inside Germany grows, the problem of getting supplies to the camps increases, and so does the concern of the German authorities lest the prisoners hoard canned foods for use in escapes. In some camps, according to recent reports, the authorities insisted on all Red Cross supplies in camp storehouses being distributed to the men.—Ed.)

War's End Hoped For

There was a widespread hope throughout the camps that the German war machine would break down before the end of this year. When the repatriates left the camps in Au-

gust, many of the comrades they left behind were hoping to be home by Christmas. The men were kept well informed by new arrivals at the camps about the progress of the fighting. The Germans themselves published the news of the Normandy invasion on D-Day. Another reason for their optimism was that, in most camps, they saw only old soldiers on guard, and boys manning the machine guns and searchlights in the watchtowers. While the men on the whole were optimistic about an early end of the fighting in Europe, they also realized that the job of getting food and other supplies to them from outside Germany would grow still more difficult as transport and distribution inside became more chaotic. (The American Red Cross will continue to ship prisoner of war relief to Europe until hostilities



Winter at Hammerstein. Sent by Sgt. Fred Thomas (left) from Stalag II B.