

### Expediting Mail

The War Department announced on December 18 that transmission of letter mail to and from American prisoners of war in Germany and Japan will be expedited as a result of the cooperative assistance rendered by the American government in this regard by the governments of Sweden, Switzerland, and the Soviet Union.

In the case of American prisoners of war in Germany, arrangements have been completed with the Swedish and Swiss governments whereby prisoner of war mail destined for American soldiers in German prison camps will be dispatched by air on alternate routes via Sweden and Switzerland. This two-way shuttle service over these two alternate routes will considerably reduce the transit time for these mails, which will be dispatched from the United States to Europe direct by air on a daily schedule.

A portion of the prisoner of war mail addressed to American prisoners in Japan will, effective at once, be carried on Soviet ships leaving west coast ports, as a result of instructions issued to Soviet ship captains by the Soviet government advising them to accept prisoner of war mail from American postal authorities for dispatch to American prisoners of war held by Japan. This mail will be transported across the Pacific to Soviet ports, and thereafter transferred to the Japanese for delivery to prisoner of war camps. This service supplements that already in effect whereby prisoner of war mail to Japan is transported by air to Iran, and transhipped from that country to Japan.

No postage is necessary on the foregoing mail.

### Record Shipment Leaves Philadelphia

The M/S *Saiwo*, the latest Swedish vessel to enter the service of the International Red Cross, left Philadelphia on December 2 with a record cargo of food, clothing, athletic equipment, and other supplies from the American and Canadian Red Cross societies for prisoners in Germany. The supplies shipped amounted to nearly 6,000 tons, and included over 650,000 American Red Cross standard food packages, and a large consignment of clothing for French prisoners.

This was the *Saiwo's* second trip across the Atlantic. On her maiden voyage in October she brought Christmas gifts from the German Red Cross for German prisoners of war in Canada and the United States.

The outgoing cargo from Philadelphia was discharged at Goteborg, Sweden, whence arrangements were made to transship it to Lubeck, the north German port. International Red Cross Delegates take charge of the relief supplies at Lubeck and handle their distribution to the camps in Germany.

### TWENTY-MILLIONTH PACKAGE

On December 7, the anniversary of Pearl Harbor, the twenty-millionth prisoner of war package came off the assembly line at one of the Red Cross Packaging Centers in Philadelphia, New York City, St. Louis, or Brooklyn, N. Y. Packaging Center operations began early in 1943. All four assembly lines are operated by women volunteers.

### ADDRESSING NEWLY CAPTURED PRISONERS

The November 1944 issue of the BULLETIN reported that mail for newly reported prisoners of war in Germany could be addressed in care of the International Red Cross Directory Service at Geneva, Switzerland, pending receipt of the prisoner's permanent camp address.

At the time of the announcement, it was decided that the prisoner's serial number should not be made part of the address. In the meantime, however, the International Red Cross has advised that the inclusion of the serial number would aid identification and not cause confusion with the POW number when the latter is reported to Geneva by the German authorities. The serial number may therefore be included after the prisoner's name and rank, but it should be clearly indicated as the serial number, and its use discontinued as soon as the POW number becomes available.

*rapidly changing military picture of summer and fall brought numerous new prisoners. To coordinate the work at various points, our director, Mr. Pate, left here in mid-October. During 60 days he travelled 14,000 miles by plane and car. He visited London, was twice in Paris, three times in our southern entry ports of Marseilles and Toulon, twice (for a total of three times) in Switzerland. Then, on the return trip, he stopped in Barcelona and Lisbon, up to now have been two of our inter-continental ports.—Editor.*

This is an informal report on my trip to Europe to each of the 100 families of American prisoners of war, and an expression of certain aims which the American Red Cross is endeavoring to fulfill.

The August 1944 wave of optimism was not shared by the American Red Cross. At that time we in the United States decided to prepare for at least another year of operations in Europe. If the same earlier, we could only be thankful. With a substantial capital from Red Cross funds, a new packaging center was opened in Brooklyn early in September 1944. The plant has already turned out over one million standard food packages for prisoners of war. In addition, 100,000 American repatriated on the *Gripsholm* last September were fully interviewed by Red Cross representatives in order to find out means of better serving American prisoners in Europe during 1945.

### Cooperation Between Governments

The Allied invasion of France brought great changes in our war relief operation. At any time delivery of a single parcel to a prisoner in Europe is not as easy as it may seem to the parents and other relatives on this side. The country requires the active and helpful cooperation of many governments of our own government.



# PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN

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

NO. 2

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FEBRUARY 1945

## A Report to Relatives of Prisoners

By Maurice Pate

All kinds of arrangements, with the support of our government, have to be worked out involving London, Geneva, Berlin, Stockholm, and even Moscow, because sailings of neutral ships now entering the Baltic Sea on their relief missions must be notified to all Powers concerned with that area in order that these ships may proceed without interference.

### The Northern Route

Few Americans perhaps realize that the main life line for food to their prisoner kin in Germany is now through Sweden. Back of this is a sequence of events.

A year ago the American Red Cross, backed by the United States government and military authorities, sent large reserves of supplies via Marseille to Switzerland. That is why, though Switzerland was cut off from France for five months last summer and fall, we were able to serve the camps in Germany out of reserves accumulated in Switzerland during the previous winter and spring.

But two roads of relief are always better than one. Therefore, with the aid of both Swiss and Swedes, we started planning as far back as June 1944 the new path via Goteborg, Sweden, and north German ports to the camps in Germany. This has borne results. So far we have shipped 40,000 tons of war prisoner relief supplies to Goteborg. Up to February 1945, nearly 3,000,000 standard food packages shipped on from Goteborg have reached American and Allied camps in Germany.

The Baltic Sea between Goteborg and Lübeck, Germany, is now with anchored mines. So, when goods are sent over this route, both we and the Swedish shipowners who provide the

vessels are running constant risks. Twenty voyages by Swedish ships have so far been safely made between Goteborg and Lübeck, though any day we know a ship may strike a mine. German minesweepers cleared a path for our Swedish relief ships to Germany, and, at Lübeck, German freight cars steadily move the food packages to the camps.

### The French Ports

It is difficult to visualize the degree of destruction I found both in Marseille and Toulon, the main French ports on the Mediterranean. What Allied aviators had not done in destroying the ports while the Germans were still there, the Germans did at the time of their withdrawal. Then the Americans and French performed a miracle in quickly getting these ports into usable condition.

As there was at the time (in November) a great military movement through Marseille, it was decided to make use of Toulon, about 40 miles away, as the main port of entry for Red Cross prisoner of war supplies on the southern route. Allied military authorities have given us unstinted cooperation in handling shipments through Toulon, and the heavy-duty trucks which were shipped by the American and Canadian Red Cross societies last summer have proved invaluable in getting the goods from shipside to the nearest railhead. With the help of army engineers, it was a matter of only a few hours to lift the trucks ashore and get them rolling. French workers unload supplies from Red Cross ships at Toulon.

For several months, therefore, prisoner of war shipments (British as well as American) have been moving simultaneously from Toulon and

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Marseille to Geneva. On one day (November 30) over 1,000 tons of goods left the two ports for Switzerland, but the average has run about 400 tons a day. The combined operation of the northern and southern routes makes it possible to move—assuming the necessary rolling stock is available—approximately 20,000 tons of relief supplies per month. As a matter of fact, the combined British, Canadian, and American Red Cross programs normally call for the movement of about 15,000 tons a month, but for the present winter the schedule was raised to 20,000 tons because exceptionally large amounts of clothing needed to be moved.

**How U. S. Army Helps**

The greatest single factor which gives us strength in getting relief and maintaining regular communication with your prisoner kin is the scrupulous attitude of the American Army in fulfilling the Treaty of Geneva toward enemy prisoners. Some have lightly called this policy of our Army "mollycoddling." The truth is that the Army has maintained the highest discipline in handling enemy prisoners. It treats these men strictly but fairly, and has obtained from them millions of valuable man-work hours. In France, I saw tens of thousands of German prisoners—fed, yes, but always working intensively.

The U. S. Army has in its custody in the United States over 300,000 German prisoners. The control of these men is a tremendous job. To those who have been disturbed over an occasional sensational report of an escape, or minor abuse, it may be interesting to know that while I was in Switzerland I was reminded by Swiss inspectors of the International Red Cross fresh out of Germany that:

(1) *The control of thousands of American prisoners in German camps is no easy matter either. Some Americans have escaped from their camps, and afterwards been retaken, as many as eight and nine times.*

(2) *The American prisoners receiving regular Red Cross food packages eat better, and have more tobacco, than the Germans guarding them. Thus far, too, the American prisoner with his Red Cross and private parcels eats as well as, or better than, the average German civilian.*

So there are public relations problems regarding the American prisoner in Germany which are just as great as the problems with which our Army

has struggled here. We should back up our Army in its correct fulfillment of the Geneva Treaty. This is a vital and exemplary part in the chain of helping your own husband or son in an enemy camp.

**Question of Camp Reserves**

In August 1944, we had peak stocks in all American prison camps in Germany, sufficient, for their strength at that time, for anywhere from two to four months.

In this same month of August, while optimism ran high on this side, Germany underwent a period of nervous tension. One result was that the German authorities feared trouble from their many Allied war prisoners, and thought our camp reserves might facilitate escape. So a German order was given that supplies must be promptly consumed by prisoners, or reserve stocks moved to depots outside the camps. Also, Geneva was told by the German authorities to cease or reduce shipments until reserves were consumed.

During my first visit to Switzerland in early November, I talked with International Red Cross inspectors going into and out of Germany. IRCC officials in Geneva talked daily by telephone with their Swiss delegate in Berlin to straighten out the reserve problem. Shipments on a more normal scale were then gradually revived.

The plan worked out, and as it now operates, permits reserves of one to two months—when railroad cars are available, and when the goods can be gotten safely through—but the Germans have prescribed that reserves must be stored in depots adjacent to the camps. These depots are under double locks—one controlled by the German Commander, the other by the American camp spokesman. Stocks are then brought periodically into the camps and the goods distributed by the American spokesman to his fellow Americans.

**An Intricate Business**

If an American prisoner in a German prison camp writes home that stocks are getting low, or that they are temporarily exhausted, you may be sure that we, and our office in Geneva, already know this, and that we are bending every effort to maintain a continuous flow of supplies.

This is an intricate operation, and actually only the first step in it is directly under our control. The chain of organization, which begins with the American Red Cross, runs

through the International Red Cross, the German Red Cross, the German railroads, the German administration, the American camp spokesman, and ends only when supplies reach the individual American prisoner.

The American Red Cross is 100 percent responsible for the first link in the chain. From the start we have not failed to anticipate the growing needs, and we have moved the relief goods well ahead of requirements. Through the neutral Swiss delegate of the International Red Cross, we can talk with the Germans, we exert every influence constantly to activate all the further links in the chain. And we consider our job is never done until the relief goods are in the prisoners' hands.

Here are some of the problems in supply:

(1) *Due to changes in the front a camp may be suddenly moved to the inland in Germany. As a result of military strategy, the German authorities may sometimes notify of such movement only a certain delay. Thus a temporary shortage of supplies may result.*

(2) *When sudden movements of those of last December occur at front, large numbers of new American prisoners may unexpectedly rise in certain camps, increasing a more normal scale were then gradually revived.*

(3) *There is a continuous struggle for sufficient railroad cars, while by arrangements between the Swiss and Germans, are furnished by the German railroads.*

(4) *Up to now, the Germans have given first priority after their constant military shipments to war relief goods. However, these shipments are sometimes delayed by military movements and Allied bombing of railroads.*

In spite of the above factors, relief goods in general have been getting through, and we—with the operation of the Swiss and the other links in the chain—will do our best to keep them moving. It is pertinent to recall here that every pound of supplies received by an American camp spokesman is listed and accepted. IRCC inspectors to camps personally verify this accounting with the spokesmen. For the year 1943, it has been established

that 85 percent of the goods shipped from Switzerland to our American prisoners was safely received and delivered to our men.

**The Far East**

The Far Eastern situation is quite different from the European. With 1,000 Americans, and in all nearly 10,000 Americans, British, and other nationalities, held by American and Allied prisoners in Japan at least 2,000 tons of relief every month. Despite all our efforts, we have not yet achieved 10 percent of this figure.

From the evidence of repatriated and escaped prisoners, however, we have been able to establish that the hands which we have put into Japan have thus far actually delivered to our prisoners. But average amounts per person are too little for their needs. From the Department of State, and from the U. S. Army and Navy, the Red Cross has every possible support, in money, goods, and any other facility.

There is a small group in the Japanese Red Cross and in the Japanese Foreign Office who look forward to the future. This group realizes that the life of a prisoner needlessly will cause more bitterness for future than one hundred American men lost in combat. Whether more intelligent Japanese, who prevail in a small minority, will prevail over the provincial-minded staff of the Japanese Army, who have had little previous contact with the rest of the world, remains to be seen. Our efforts, and the efforts of the Swiss from Geneva and Berne to achieve a satisfactory solution, will never cease.

Meanwhile, the people of the United States and the British Commonwealth should know that, while constant endeavors are being made to work out a larger program of relief, these governments are turning over to the Swiss hundreds of thousands of dollars monthly. While these funds serve to buy little because of low exchange rates and shortage of goods to be bought, they do bring some measure of relief, and the only effective solution, however, is a constant flow of actual relief goods, and to this end the American Red Cross and the American government are steadfastly working.

**War Prisoner Mail**

If relatives of prisoners held in Germany have been disturbed by mail delays in recent months, there are three main reasons:



*Discharging prisoner of war supplies from IRCC ships to Red Cross trucks at Toulon, France, in November 1944.*

(1) *The Allied occupation of France has practically cut off German planes that used to fly daily between Germany and Lisbon carrying air mail.*

(2) *Surface mail, and next-of-kin parcels, which Red Cross ships formerly carried to Marseille, were stalled from June to October. Several months of warfare along the Marseille-Switzerland line made it almost impossible to move mail into or out of Switzerland.*

(3) *German censorship has been swamped by letters from the hundreds of thousands of new German prisoners and their families, whose correspondence feeds through the same channels as your letters to and from American prisoners. And American prisoners have tripled in number since last June.*

From now on, and until further changes, mail should go better because:

(1) *Last August the American Red Cross, cooperating with the U. S. Post Office, moved all accumulated parcels and land mail to Sweden. Two solid freight trains carried this American mail by land and ferry from Sweden to Germany in September.*

(2) *The U. S. Army Post Office, since September, has steadily been moving next-of-kin parcels to Marseille by Army transport. From there*

*they now go regularly, via Switzerland, to Germany.*

(3) *All letter mail is now flown to Switzerland or Sweden, whence it goes directly on to Germany.*

The situation inside Germany is spotty. Some German camp commanders facilitate the flow of mail, others are slower. But on the American side everything is done to keep your mail moving at high speed.

The Office of Censorship in New York, with a staff of 1,600 in its prisoner of war department, works long hours to speed the mail for you in both directions.

**The International Red Cross**

Should the war in Europe last through 1945, over \$100,000,000 in relief goods during the year will move from this country through the IRCC to our prisoners. Another \$100,000,000 worth will flow from England, Canada, France, and from other countries all over the world. These goods will bring supplementary aid to 1,500,000 Allied prisoners.

The International Committee has become a vast organization, embracing several thousand full time workers in Switzerland and throughout the world. At the age of 70, and after many years of devoted service, Mr. Max Huber, the President, passed on the leadership of the organiza-

tion to Mr. Carl J. Burckhardt on January 1, 1945. While in Geneva, accompanied by our American Red Cross delegate there, I had long and intimate visits with both Mr. Huber and Mr. Burckhardt to lay plans for our future work.

The Swiss people themselves contribute generously both in money and services to this work. The IRCC personnel in Germany, including a valiant worker and his wife living in a temporary wooden barracks at the key port of Lübeck, take bombing and the discomforts of a fuelless winter without a word of complaint.

#### Switzerland's Part in Relief

Switzerland is a country of 4,200,000 people. Over 500,000 of its men are trained in military service; about half that number have been constantly on a military footing, with the other half on instant call, to defend any invasion of their soil.

This small country is sheltering over 100,000 refugees, military internees, and military escapees, who have poured into Switzerland from all over Europe. What this burden in food and shelter means can best be understood if we visualize the relative pressure of 3,000,000 people from other lands suddenly pouring into our own country.

The people of Switzerland feel very keenly the misery of the victims of war in all the countries so close to them. In goods from their own country, and in services, they have spent hundreds of millions of francs in relief to their less fortunate European neighbors. Last month, the Swiss government voted a further 100,000,000 francs (\$25,000,000) for relief work in Europe.

#### The Future

I had many talks in Switzerland with IRCC delegates who had come to Geneva from Germany and Hungary. The morale of our American prisoners, they reported, was generally good in spite of their long separation in many cases from the outside world. Most of the men do their best to improve the long hours by study, hobbies, and sports. Last fall, the hope of liberation in 1944 was strong, but by November our men were philosophically reconciled to sticking it out for another winter.

The camps generally still remain under the administration of more mature German professional military commanders. Conditions in the camps did not appreciably alter during the year, except that there was

more crowding as the number of prisoners increased. There was the flurry over relief reserves, which caused anxiety to the men, but which as already mentioned, we have reason to believe has been ironed out. There was shortage of fuel in the camps, as there was for German civilians. However, health in general among American prisoners was good.

This shortage of fuel is common to all Europe. Our Red Cross staffs in Paris, Toulon, and Marseille live and work in totally unheated quarters. In fact, Germany is possibly better off than France in this respect.

What 1945 holds, no one can foresee. I consulted in France with officers at Supreme Allied Headquarters in Washington is now permanently attached. Our Army has drawn up the most detailed plans for the postwar care, and earliest possible postwar repatriation, of our prisoners. Until that time, the American Red Cross, with the help of the IRCC, will continue to do its utmost to maintain the flow of supplies through Switzerland and Sweden to the camps in Germany.

#### USE OF LETTER FORMS

Recent communications from American prisoners of war in Germany have stressed the importance of using the special letter forms (Form No. 111), which are obtainable at post offices and Red Cross chapters throughout the United States, and which are now dispatched regularly, postage free, by air to Europe. Letter forms are used almost exclusively by the relatives of British prisoners of war, who have learned from experience that letter forms go through much faster than long letters mailed in envelopes.

The German authorities, moreover, in an official communication have again pointed out that the sending "of 10, 16, and even 24 page letters," from the United States results in "such letters, during heavy work, being placed aside by censors for later examination." German regulations do not forbid the sending of letters of any length in envelopes, nor is restriction placed on the number of letters that may be sent to individual prisoners. The authorities, as well as the prisoners themselves, merely urge the use of letter forms because they are easier than long letters for the censors to handle.

#### RELEASE PARCELS

In January the American Red Cross packed release kits to be given to American prisoners when they are released by Germany, and whenever they are liberated in the Far East. A shipment has already gone to the Philippines.

The release kit is being packed by women volunteers at the New York Packaging Center. The number is sufficient for each prisoner to receive one, and every effort will be made to get them to the men promptly upon their liberation.

Each kit contains a razor, razor blades, shaving cream, a toothbrush, toothpaste, a pencil, a comb, socks, cigarettes, handkerchiefs, playing cards, stationery, a book, hard candy, chewing gum, a face cloth, and a cigarette case with the American Red Cross emblem imprinted on it. The kit bag was made by Red Cross Production Corps volunteers, and is of olive drab cloth similar to the kits, also made by the Production Corps, given to the men going overseas.

#### LUFT III PICTURE

Numerous inquiries have been received by the BULLETIN for the names of the American airmen at Stalag Luft III, whose group picture (from Lt. Rayford Deal) was published on page 7 of the October 1944 issue. The men have now been identified, by First Lt. Donald A. Stine, as follows (left to right): Miller, Thomas, Copeland, Deal, Wigger, Lazzaro, Morgan, Beacham, Coffey, Reichart, Lamberson, Adamina, Shaljian, Smith, Stine, Fergon, McCormick, McGinniss, and Effros. One man in the group still remains unidentified.

#### HANDICRAFTS EXHIBITION

The International Red Cross Committee has organized a Prisoners of War Handicrafts Exhibition which will be opened at Geneva in April, and later make a tour of Swiss cities.

Prisoners of war of all nationalities have sent camp-made articles to the exhibition. The articles will remain the property of the men who made them.

A first shipment of ten cases of articles, comprising 145 different items, made by German prisoners of war in the United States, went forward to Geneva in December. Other shipments, all made on Red Cross vessels, have left since December.

## American Prisoners of War at Oflag 64

(Taken in July 1944 by a Delegate of the International Committee of the Red Cross.)



Playing ball.



On the sports ground, with barracks in background and greenhouse on right.



Above: (left to right) Colonel Drake, Senior Officer; Mr. Eric Mayer, International Committee Delegate; Lt. Col. Schaefer, Second Officer; Lt. Col. Waters; Maj. Merle A. Meacham. Colonel Drake was repatriated in September 1944. (Right) On the sports ground.



Colonel Drake in conversation with Capt. Francis M. Smith, Lt. William E. Fabian, and Lt. Joseph R. Green.



Pitching horseshoes outside barracks.



### RED CROSS DIRECTORY SERVICE

The International Red Cross Committee at Geneva recently established a Directory Service whereby letters could be addressed to newly captured prisoners of war as soon as they were officially reported to be prisoners of war and without waiting for the "permanent" camp address. Information about the Directory Service was given in the November 1944, and January 1945 issues of Prisoners of War Bulletin.

Since the announcement was first made, a large number of individual inquiries from the United States about soldiers missing in action and others who are not officially known to be prisoners of war, have been addressed to the Directory Service. So many, in fact, have been received, according to a cable from Geneva, that the service has been overwhelmed.

The work it was set up to perform has therefore been greatly hampered, and the International Committee insists that letters should be sent in care of the Directory Service only when a soldier has been officially reported to be a prisoner of war and whose camp address has not yet been received.

### FAR EASTERN CABLES

On January 29, the first batch of collect cablegrams from American prisoners of war in the Far East reached Washington, D. C. There were 41 messages, and all came from prisoners in the Tokyo group of camps. Information about the arrangements made for sending these collect cables was given in PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN last October.

### NEW CAMPS

Since the material was collected for the map of German camps and hospitals published in this issue, it has become known that the following camps also contain American prisoners of war, and should therefore be added:

Stalag V C at Offenburg southeast of Strasbourg, Province of Bavaria (A 3).

Stalag VI C at Osnabrück, in the province of Hannover (A 2).

Stalag XIII B at Weiden, northeast of Nürnberg, in the province of Franconia (B 3).



This work detachment from Stalag III B has its own theater. The stage was made from Red Cross boxes, the props from cardboard. Picture sent by S/Sgt. Charles B. Vandermark, second row, extreme right. No other names given.

## Extracts from Letters

### Far Eastern

"Quite strong and healthy now considering weight—175," wrote a marine corporal at Osaka to his family in Crete, Illinois. His letter, dated September 14, went on to say, "We certainly appreciate our rest days. We read books, sew, wash clothes, and rest up for the next ten days. Reveille is at 5:30, taps at 9. We eat mostly rice and soybeans. We do stevedore work and it's quite pleasant, if heavy."

A lieutenant at Zentsuji wrote to his family in York, Pa., in October, "Your letters are coming through. I am well. This is my 155th Sunday without a funny paper. Keep the home fires burning."

A letter dated September 25, 1944, from Hakodate, received in Wilkesboro, N. C., in December, said in part, "I am still in excellent health and spirits. I hope to see all of you 'ere long."

A short wave broadcast last December, from an American prisoner of war at Osaka said, "I am in good health and excellent spirits. I have received considerable mail, including up to July 1944. I also received a cablegram of last April. I have received a personal parcel you sent me, and greatly enjoy the many photographs of you and the children. Will you please inform Pitt that Arnold Prober's two brothers are here in good health (from Salt Lake City). Emmet Stoleman, of Cleveland, is also here and well. Please inform Mrs. Warren A. Mitts, of 219 West Nevada St., El Paso, Texas, that Warren Peers is with them."

### European

"We went swimming the other day," wrote an officer at Stalag Luft I to his family in

Lorain, Ohio, last July. He added, "We gave our parole that we wouldn't attempt to escape while on the swimming party, and one guard took 100 of us down to the river. The water is pretty salty from the Baltic. We refer to this place as our little summer resort at Barth on the Baltic."

From an American airman in the South Compound, Stalag Luft III, dated July 4 last: "Paul Revere rode his gunny sack horse through Nazi prison blocks for the second time early this morning, proclaiming to the world that the last and greatest American Fourth of July behind barbed wire was under way. Our Paul Revere of last year, Lt. Harold Spiers, of Los Angeles, carried the first cry again this Independence Day, mounted on a thoroughbred steed composed, front and rear, respectively, of Lt. Ellis Porter, of Providence, R. I., and Capt. Alexander Kisselburgh, of Los Angeles."

"We got an issue of Red Cross clothes last week," wrote a prisoner attached to Kdo. 3989 working out of Stalag VII A, "and they sure were great. We got a food parcel every week from the Red Cross."

In Albany, N. Y., the wife of a captain at Luft III received the following from her husband: "It is a good healthy life and there are many sports to participate in, as well as classes in languages, math., dramatics, music, and even philosophy. Our food is sufficient but not fancy." The letter was received December 4 last.

From Stalag II B, a letter received December 16 in Oroville, Calif., said in part: "You don't know how I would like to see you, and I don't think it will be too long before I can see you. I can talk for a week when I do see you."

## Repatriates from Germany

The Swedish ship *Gripsholm*, which is under charter to the American government, left New York on January 6 with a large complement of seriously sick and seriously wounded German prisoners of war eligible for repatriation. She also carried civilian internees.

On the return voyage, the *Gripsholm* is bringing back seriously sick and seriously wounded American prisoners of war from Germany, as well as civilians who had been interned. On the exchange which took place last fall, 234 American prisoners of war were returned to the United States. The number of Americans in the present exchange is somewhat larger.

Fifteen of the more seriously wounded, brought back by air from Marseille, reached the Walter Reed General Hospital in Washington, D. C., on January 23.

The *Gripsholm* is due back in New York about mid-February, and ar-

rangements were made by the American government and the American Red Cross to give all possible aid and comfort to the repatriates. Three Red Cross workers from national headquarters went on the *Gripsholm* to assist the returning Americans.

This is the fourth exchange with Germany carried out by the *Gripsholm*. The first took place in March 1944. The War Department announced last October, after the completion of the third exchange, that further repatriations were contemplated under a policy of seeking to make exchanges of seriously sick and seriously wounded prisoners of war as continuous a process as possible.

Besides clothing and other supplies sent by the Red Cross for the American repatriates, the Junior Red Cross provided toys for the children of the civilian internees now being repatriated on the *Gripsholm*.

### DELAYED MAILING

For reasons beyond the control of the American Red Cross, there was considerable delay in mailing to some extent of kin of prisoners of war the November, December, and January issues of the BULLETIN. Many relatives have written expressing anxiety about their prisoner kin because the BULLETIN was late in reaching them, or not received, or delayed receipt, is a cause for apprehension.

A new addressing system has now been put into effect, and it is hoped that, from February onward, all copies of the BULLETIN will have been mailed to regular readers by the middle of the month of issue.

### LETTERS FROM CAMPS

Because of extreme pressure on space, letters from American prisoners of war in Europe and the Far East had to be omitted entirely from this issue of the Bulletin. Through the kindness of relatives, many had been received.

It is hoped that space will be available in the March issue for a wide selection of letters, and relatives are requested to continue sending them to the editor, Prisoners of War Bulletin, American Red Cross, Washington 13, D. C., either direct or through local Red Cross chapters. When copies are sent, they should give the prisoner's name and camp address. It is also helpful to state the date a letter was received.

### SENDING PHOTOGRAPHS TO PRISONERS

The December BULLETIN, in an answer to a question, stated that photographs sent to prisoners of war could be stitched to letter form No. 111.

It has since transpired that, according to postal regulations, no enclosures may be sent in letter forms. The forms at present in use, moreover, are hardly stout enough to stand the stitching on of enclosures.

Notwithstanding regulations to the contrary, the postal authorities in many instances have allowed photographs to go forward in letter forms, but henceforth it would be preferable to send photographs in a separate envelope without a letter, but with the name, number, and camp address of the prisoner written on the back of the photograph. No postage is necessary.

### THE THEATER AT LUFT III

The December issue of the American magazine, *Theatre Arts Monthly*, contained an interesting article by Lt. Joe Klaas, an American airman who has taken an active part in the theatrical activities at Stalag Luft III, and who is still there. The article was entitled "Barbed Wire Theatre."

### STALAG VII A AT MOOSBURG

The American strength at Stalag VII A increased during last October by about 1,300, and by nearly 2,000 in November, the number at the end of that month being over 5,500. This figure included officers, noncoms, and enlisted men captured in Italy. Sgt. B. M. Belman was the American spokesman. At the end of October, Stalag VII A also contained about 9,000 British prisoners of war, as well as prisoners of other nationalities. About one-half of the British and one-third of the American prisoners were assigned to work detachments, most of the Americans being employed on farms.

There have been frequent complaints of overcrowding and inadequate facilities in the Stalag, and it is likely that the strain on the base camp is being relieved by assigning more men to work detachments outside.

### "BABY STATISTICS"

The following communication has been received by the American Red Cross from Miss Strähler, head of the American Service at the Central Agency for Prisoners of War of the International Committee of the Red Cross at Geneva:

*Apart from notifications of capture or decease, which are regularly communicated to it, the Agency from time to time has occasion also to give more comforting news. Every day now the American Service is called upon to convey to prisoners of war messages informing them of the birth of a son or a daughter. "Baby statistics" show that, during 1944, the arrival of more than 400 youngsters was announced to prisoners through the Agency. The Service entrusted with the transmission of these messages has recently established a special register whose contents recall, even more than a Birth Registrar's file, a veritable Nursery Home.*

*Many anxious prisoners ask the Agency to telegraph to their wives to find out whether the expected baby has been born. By consulting the birth register in the American Service, it is often possible to reassure the inquirer at once, and to inform him that the announcement of the baby's birth had arrived and had been communicated to him by letter.*

*Contrary to the theory that during wartime birth statistics show a large majority of boys, it has been observed that in the U. S. A. there are more*

*(Continued on page 11)*



American prisoners of war at Zentsuji, Japan. Sent by Lt. Thomas F. Burkhart, second from left. Other names not given.

## Recent Cards from the Far East

Early in January, some 20,000 cards were received in this country from the Far East. Although many of the cards were undated, they appeared to have been written between April and August 1944. Among them were some from civilian internees in the Philippines, and from prisoners of war in the Philippines, Shanghai, Formosa, and Japan.

Most of the cards from civilian internees in the Philippines were marked Philippine Internment Camp No. 1, No. 2, or No. 3. These are Santo Tomas, Los Banos, and Baguio, respectively.

Several cards were received from civilians formerly interned at Davao

which substantiate reports that the Davao internment camp was closed, and the civilian population moved to Manila, about a year ago.

Cards from the Los Banos camp (No. 2) indicated that it had been enlarged; that more internees, including some women, had been transferred from Santo Tomas; and that shacks had been built around the grounds by the internees.

A card from Harold W. Graybeal, American Red Cross field director who is interned in Philippine Military Prison Camp No. 11, stated, "Christmas boxes this year much superior to those of last year. Butter and chocolate especially good."

### "HE DID NOT FAIL"

The following passage is quoted from a speech made recently in Washington, D. C., by a repatriated prisoner of war, before a relatives' meeting:

*I know that you wonder what caused the capture of your loved ones. The prisoners of war worry about that. They are afraid their relatives and friends will not understand why they were captured. Those men are captives because of being wounded and left on the battlefield, or having held positions while their comrades withdrew for defense positions, and those of the air corps who have been shot down. Those soldiers are entitled to, and, of course, do have the sympathy and understanding of all of their fellow countrymen. We try to put that over to the newly captured man. It is a terrible depression that strikes him. He thinks he is a failure. He not only did not fail; he carried out his mission.*

### WOUNDED FROM WESTERN FRONT

During November and December last, the number of American prisoners of war in Stalag XI B at Fallingb., near Hanover, increased from about 50 to over seven hundred. These men had been captured on the western front. Last December, Stalag XI B was being used as a transit camp.

A substantial number of wounded prisoners from the western front have been sent to Lager Lazarett XI B at Fallingb. When visited by a delegate of the International Red Cross on November 9, the Lazarett contained 610 patients, including 26 Americans. The accommodations were reported to be satisfactory, and the medical treatment excellent. Certain drugs and supplies for dressings which were lacking had been ordered from Geneva. The Lazarett, at the time of the visit, was large enough to accommodate the 610 patients, but, the report added, "the constant flow of new arrivals will soon render it inadequate."

### RED CROSS PUBLICATION REACHES JAPAN

Copies of the earlier issues of *The Red Cross News*, the monthly publication for American prisoners of war, were distributed through the Japanese official bureau to the men in about ten camps, according to a recent cable from the International Red Cross.

Publication of *The Red Cross News* began in September 1943, and up to December 1944, copies of Nos. 2, 3, 4, and 7 had reached the Japanese authorities. Sufficient copies are sent every month to the International Red Cross at Geneva, so that there is one for every thirty American prisoners held by Germany or Japan. As distribution is made from Geneva, copies reach German camps much more quickly than they reach camps in the Far East.

*The Red Cross News* contains a monthly compilation of news from home, which must, however, be carefully screened to meet censorship requirements here and abroad.

### PICTURES

Identification claims based on pictures published in PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN continue to reach the Office of the Provost Marshal General and the American Red Cross in very large numbers.

Most of these claims are untenable because the same man is so frequently identified by several different families, all identifying him as a different person.

Even in the best and clearest group pictures, a mistake in the identification of an individual member of the group is not uncommon. BULLETIN pictures, which are taken in German and Japanese prison camps usually by a local photographer indoors, or outside in cloudy weather, are generally "foggy" in the negative, and still more "foggy" when reproduced on the printed page.

It is therefore not to be wondered at that anxious relatives believe they recognize in such pictures faces they are looking for, even though the picture may have come from, say, Stalag III B in Germany while the soldier identified may have been reported missing in action in the Far East, or a flier missing in action in Europe, who would, if taken prisoner, ordinarily be assigned to a Luftwaffe camp for Americans (Stalag Luft 3, III, or IV, or Stalag XVII B).

The War Department has announced (Continued on page 12)



American officers at Oflag 64. Sent by First Lt. James R. Shoaf, extreme right. No other names given.

## Rations at Oflag 64

Following a delegate's visit to Oflag 64 on October 11, the International Red Cross cabled that the rations per man per week figured out to:

meat	slightly over 5 lbs.
potatoes	11½ lbs.
fat, fresh, inferior quality	about 9 oz.
vegetables, fresh and dried	largely cabbage—9½ lbs.
flour (burnt grain substitute)	less than ½ oz.
lard	about 8 oz.
sugar	about 1½ oz.
tea and sweetening	about 12 oz.

The health of the American officers at Oflag 64 at the time of the visit was reported to be good.

The American senior officer at Oflag 64 reported to Geneva that the camp's reserve of standard food packages was 4,550 on October 1. During September and October no shipments could be made to this camp because of confusion over the German regulation regarding reserves. In November it was possible to make some shipments of food packages, and in that month, 6,292 were sent to Switzerland to Oflag 64. In December, 13,032 food packages were sent to this camp. On December

### REPATRIATES' TOUR

American repatriated prisoners of war from Germany and escapees from Japanese prison camps are touring the United States in a group for the first time in order to give prisoners' relatives throughout the nation a comprehensive picture of conditions in enemy camps and hospitals where the men were held. Thirty key cities are to be visited in a two-month period beginning February 1 by a group of ten officers and enlisted men of the Army Air Forces, in cooperation with the Red Cross.

The group will travel around the country by air. The tour opened in New York City on the night of February 1, and will end in Washington, D. C. April 4. The primary purpose of the flying visits is for the men to address Red Cross relatives' meetings to be held in large auditoriums. Whenever possible, next of kin, relatives, and dependents will receive special invitations from the Red Cross to attend the meetings, which also will be open to friends and other interested persons.

The itinerary follows:

February 1, New York City; February 4, Boston, Mass.; February 7, Buffalo, N. Y.; February 9, Pittsburgh, Pa.; February 11, Columbus, Ohio; February 13, Detroit, Mich.; February 15, Chicago, Ill.; February 17, St. Paul, Minn.; February 19, Rapid City, S. D.; February 21, Salt Lake City, Utah; February 23, Spokane, Wash.; February 25, Seattle, Wash.; February 28, San Francisco, Calif.

March 4, Los Angeles, Calif.; March 6, Denver, Colo.; March 8, Omaha, Neb.; March 9, Kansas City, Mo.; March 12, Tulsa, Okla.; March 14, Dallas, Texas; March 16, San Antonio, Texas; March 18, Houston, Texas; March 20, New Orleans, La.; March 22, Memphis, Tenn.; March 23, St. Louis, Mo.; March 25, Louisville, Ky.; March 27, Atlanta, Ga.; March 29, Tampa, Fla.; April 1, Miami, Fla.; April 2, Charleston, S. C.; April 3, Charlotte, N. C.; April 4, Washington, D. C.

Personnel is headed by First Lieutenant Ragnar Barhaug, of Casper, Wyoming, chief of the Prisoners of War Section, Personal Affairs Division of the AAF, who was repatriated after eight and a half months in German camps. On each program will be a Red Cross speaker, as well as a representative of the American section of Prisoners of War Information Bureau, Provost Marshal General's Office.

### BABY STATISTICS

(Continued from page 9)

girl babies than boys. The babies reported during 1944, whose weight varied between 6 and 9 lbs., had such romantic names as Carol, Lynn, Diana, Karen, and Joan. The boys, as a rule, appear to receive the Christian name of their absent father. The pride and joy of a prisoner receiving the following message may easily be imagined: "Alexander III arrived stop weighs 8 lbs. stop adorable like you."

### Camp Movements

This issue of the BULLETIN contains a revised map showing the location of German camps and hospitals where American prisoners of war are held. The map is based on information received here to December 31, 1944, but the Russian advances in January will have brought many changes.

During December, word was received that Stalag 357, near Torun, had been moved. Stalag XX A was also probably moved from Torun. These camps contained mainly British prisoners. The men at Oflag 64, the principal camp for American ground force officers, at Szubin (Alzburgund), which was in the general vicinity of Stalag XX A and Stalag 357, were presumably moved to the interior of Germany in January, although they were still at Szubin on January 5. Hammerstein, the town nearest to Stalag II B, one of the largest camps for Americans, appeared to be in Russian hands when this was written on January 27.

It must be expected that some, if not all, of the prisoners of war at Stalag VIII B, Stalag 344, B.A.B. 20, B.A.B. 21, Stalag Luft VII, and at other camps in and around Silesia, were moved. These, also, were largely British camps, but some of them contained Americans. There were other camps and work detachments scattered throughout eastern Europe containing Allied prisoners of various nationalities. Grosstychow, in Pomerania, where Stalag Luft IV with its large complement of British and American airmen was located, was close to the combat zone in late January.

While under reasonably quiet conditions it is easy for the German authorities to move an Oflag or a Stalag Luft, where all the prisoners are behind barbed wire, the orderly transfer of scores of thousands of men from Stalags with far flung work detachments would need much advance preparation. A camp like 344 at Lamsdorf, for instance, had about 30,000 men (principally British) on work detachments over a large area. So, too, had Stalag II B. Before these men could be moved in anything like orderly fashion, they would first have to be assembled at the base camp.

It will probably be some weeks yet before a full report is received on camp changes which have taken place during January, but, as authoritative information comes through, it will be promptly released to the public. Every effort is being made by the American authorities and the Red Cross to obtain this information. Arrangements were made well ahead so that the needs of any Allied prisoners falling into Russian hands during the present advance would be met.

Until next of kin are advised by the Office of the Provost Marshal General of a change of address, they should continue sending mail to the old address.

Up to late January, the German authorities had given no indication of the camps to which American prisoners captured on the western front in the second half of December had been assigned, but seriously wounded Americans who were repatriated by air in the latter part of January stated that several hundred officers had reached Oflag 64 early in the month, and that about 1,500 additional enlisted men had reached Stalag II B. Several thousand newly captured Americans also reached Stalag IV B at Mühlberg in January. Large shipments of Red Cross supplies were made last November and December to German camps and hospitals containing Americans, so that the needs of the men captured in the December action on the western front had been in large part anticipated. If some of these men now show up at camps not already serviced, the International Committee of the Red Cross at Geneva has standing instructions to forward supplies instantly word is received of new camps for Americans. There is also a pooling arrangement, which has worked admirably, between the American and British Commonwealth Red Cross societies whereby our prisoners receive British food and clothing when American supplies are not immediately available, and vice versa.

### Sports at Luft III

A report by cable received on December 18 from Mr. Hugo Cedegren of the YMCA stated that football was the main sports activity at Stalag Luft III during October and November, and that, in December, the men were waiting for frost to begin the ice hockey season. Adequate sports materials were on hand to meet the camp's requirements until next summer, if necessary.

A new American compound, in an adjoining camp known as Belaria, was expected to open shortly.

Permission had been obtained for Mr. Soederberg of War Prisoners Aid to visit Luft III on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as the guest of General Vanaman, senior American officer, and Col. Delmar T. Spodvey, at the center compound. Christmas decorations sent by the YMCA had reached the camp early in December. American morale was reported to be "good and hopeful."

### PICTURES

(Continued from page 10)

ingly ruled that it cannot accept claims of identification based on group pictures taken in enemy territory.

Whenever the individuals in group picture are identified by the prisoner who sends the picture home, the BULLETIN always publishes names as given. In the case of pictures of Americans taken by delegates of the International Committee of the Red Cross, or by representatives of War Prisoners Aid of the YMCA, every effort is now made to obtain the names of the individual prisoners.

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# PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN

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## Transportation Crisis in Germany

for American and Allied prisoners held by Germany, the American Red Cross at the end of February had \$40,000,000 in supplies in Switzerland or in various European ports. British Commonwealth Red Cross societies also had adjacent to Germany similar supplies representing a total of many millions of dollars. While these goods are available for immediate shipment to German camps, hundreds of thousands of American and Allied prisoners held in or are now being moved on foot across Germany. We are confronted with a real problem to get relief supplies to our men now caught in this unprecedented westward trek. Our ability to get relief supplies moved to prison camps, and to the hands of our prisoners, depends solely on whether the German authorities move to the camps the goods which we and the International Committee of the Red Cross have in German hands at the German frontier. An indication of the gravity of the transportation crisis is the report some days ago that the German railroads had evacuated German women and children from towns in the east in open coal cars during sub-zero weather.

they could be moved on to Lübeck in two days' time. In Switzerland and in southern European ports we have 4,000,000 packages, and this total of 7,000,000 food packages amply foresees the needs of our own prisoners, as well as those of our Allies.

The work of relief to prisoners of war in German camps is today confronted by grave transportation difficulties. Progressively through the months of December, January, and February there has been a tremendous movement of populations, of goods, and of military supplies on a railroad system that, day and night, is being bombarded. In consequence, shipments that formerly went to prison camps from Switzerland or Lübeck in a few days now require weeks.

In December 1944, 330,248 Red Cross food packages, including the special Christmas parcels, were moved to German camps and hospitals for American prisoners. But there was a serious falling off in deliveries to camps during January, and late dispatches from Geneva state that the situation was equally grave in February.

For four years the Germans maintained a rather unusual record in delivering punctiliously the relief supplies for war prisoners in Germany. Whether the particular German officials who established this record will have the strength to prevail over present less organized conditions remains to be seen.

The greater the difficulties, however, the greater will be our efforts to overcome them. The fact that over 1,000,000 food packages have been placed in German hands at Lübeck by the American Red Cross and the International Red Cross is but one instance of the steps that are being taken, even at some risk, to maintain the supply line. International Red Cross representatives in Geneva, in Berlin, and at the port of Lübeck are struggling continuously to get a sufficient number of German railroad cars in order to keep goods moving to the camps.

### Use of Trucks

In addition to moving goods on railroad cars, the American Red Cross and other Allied Red Cross societies are placing a number of trucks at the disposal of the International Red Cross for use in Germany. The American Army is furnishing gasoline in order that the trucks may constantly operate in Germany.

Both the Swiss and Swedish governments and people are giving unstinted cooperation in meeting the present transportation crisis. No possibility, including the use of planes, has been overlooked, but the great volume of supplies needed for over a million American and Allied prisoners cannot be moved otherwise than by rail and auto trucks.

### Prelude to Victory

The plain fact we must face is that the better the war goes for the Allies in Germany, the more difficult it will be to continue to serve prisoners of war with Red Cross supplies. The men themselves in the prison camps are fully aware of this. They know that the progressive disorganization and ultimate breakdown of the German state will probably precede the Allied victory, and that this disorganization will mean additional privations for them.

### Packages at Lübeck

The American Red Cross has gone to the limit in laying down relief supplies, not simply at the frontiers of Germany, but in Germany itself at the port of Lübeck. Over 1,000,000 food packages, shipped through international Red Cross channels to Sweden, are today in Lübeck, where we have constantly maintained stocks since last October. Another 2,000,000 packages are in the Swedish port of Göteborg, whence