

GOING ON LEAVE



ISSUED BY AIR MINISTRY (DAFW)
FOR
EX-PRISONERS-OF-WAR

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I. SO THIS IS BRITAIN

At last the great day has arrived. The day that brings the complete end of Kriegsgedem. How often in the top or bottom bunk of some miserable Kriegie's camp have you lived this day in your imagination! How often have you discussed it with your fellow Kriegies! Each one of you has his own particular picture, and the object of this pamphlet is to give you the necessary gen.

Is Britain the same old country?—London the same old city? No—you won't find it the same.

A great many changes have taken place in these years of war. You and your people at home are older than when you last saw them, they too have had a good deal to tackle—remember this, it will help you to find your bearings. And life generally isn't going to be quite what you have pictured. So tell yourself there have been many changes in home life and in the nation's life. You will need to realise and remember that.

People stand in queues waiting for their turn to be served with rations of meat or groceries. The trains are usually packed, because many have been taken off owing to war traffic. It all needs good humour—so get it ready and don't let your own war weariness get you or your friends down.

You have done your share in the first fighting stage of the world crisis; nevertheless, there is still the colossal task of defeating the Japanese, for which many will be needed. Others will be released to civilian life to take their part in clearing up the chaos and destruction of war in this country. But, whichever you are called upon to do, you must now fit yourself physically and spiritually to play your full part.

II. RECEPTION CENTRE

Don't panic if you are detained at the Reception Centre for three or four days. Remember that those annoying and often frustrating regulations are necessary to help get you home quickly.

You will be granted at least 28 days' leave as soon as you have said "How do?" to the M.O. and something not nearly so polite to the numerous forms you will have to fill in. Incidentally, there will be any number of efficient types wanting to help—don't hesitate to make use of them. They're there for that. There will also be a number of Welfare Officers ready to help with your difficulties and worries. Don't be shy about asking for assistance. They will try and get you the answers and will deal with your problems sympathetically and in strict confidence.

On Reporting, What Happens?

The procedure is almost the same for all ranks.

You will have to fill up the usual forms. The efficient types will tell you where to go, see that you get the right forms and, if you are in doubt, tell you how to fill them in correctly.

No doubt your first anxiety after arrival at the Reception Centre will be to know something about your future. But nothing can be decided until the completion of your registration leave, when you will return to the Reception Centre for a Medical Board, which will determine your medical category.

Food

III. RATIONS

You will be given an emergency ration card to enable you to purchase rations at double the civilian scale to cover the period of your initial leave if not more than 42 days.

Don't lose it. If you go home without it you won't be popular. If you go to a hotel or a club, they will let you have your meals there for four days without asking for your ration card. But if you stay for five or more consecutive nights you must surrender the food coupons for a minimum of a week's rations whether you stay the seven days or not.

Ration cards are not required for casual meals in hotels and restaurants, and the cost of any meal is limited to 5/- excluding coffee. But remember that in many of the more expensive places there may be a house charge, a cover charge, a band charge or a cloakroom charge, and you would do well to check up on this before you sit down at your table.

If you go to Eire on leave you will not be issued with ration cards; instead you should go to the nearest Garda (Police) station in Eire, where you will be given a temporary Eire Government ration card to cover your leave period.

Sweets and tobacco

Chocolate and sweets are rationed through NAAFI to Service personnel, so you can't buy at a confectioner's. You have to buy chocolate and sweets through the Officers' Mess, Sergeants' Mess or Service Institute—the NAAFI receives an allocation from the Ministry of Food sufficient to ensure that you get not less than the weekly amount of the civilian ration (3 oz.).

You will obtain your weekly allowance of privilege price cigarettes in the same way. This is at present about 40 cigarettes per man per week, or tobacco on the scale of 1 oz. equalling 30 cigarettes. About half of the allowance of cigarettes will consist of the cheaper varieties. The privilege prices are 1/8 for 20 Players, Gold Flake, and

others of similar standard, and 1/1 for 20 Woodbines and other cheap varieties. The normal prices of these cigarettes are 3/4 and 1/8, respectively. You will find the quality a little inferior to that of those you received in Red Cross parcels. As you probably know, most Red Cross issues were pre-war quality and duty-free.

If, before you go on leave, you have not been able to obtain your allowance of chocolate and sweets and privilege price cigarettes, then you will be issued with a Form 530E which is a special permit valid at any NAAFI Institute or messing store throughout the country. Full instructions as to the use of this form are printed on it.

IV. CLOTHING

Officers will be issued with clothing coupons at the Reception Centre. They will be able to buy war service dress at that unit provided they surrender coupons. You can get all the gen on this from the Equipment Section.

Airmen will be issued with all the necessary articles to kit them up to scale. As the country has to be severely rationed for clothes, airmen are not issued with coupons for civilian clothes.

The reason that officers receive coupons while airmen do not is because an officer is responsible for purchasing his own kit and all articles of personal wear, for which he is obliged to surrender coupons to any source of supply whether it be the trade or Equipment Stores. Airmen's requirements are covered by free issue, but this does not include handkerchiefs, which the airmen can buy without coupons on the certificate of his C.O. at the Reception Centre or, at a later date, from the C.O. of his unit or station.

At the Reception Centre officers will be issued with coupons, which they should treat with respect. The standard annual allowance for maintenance is 28 coupons. If in the course of a year, which begins on 1st June, an officer buys two pairs of shoes (8 coupons each), half-a-dozen shirts (8 each) with a couple of collars to match (one each), plus half-a-dozen pairs of socks (2 each), and one pair of pyjamas (8 coupons), he has spent 80 of his year's 88 yearly allotment. And one day that officer will need a new uniform (28 coupons) and odd things like ties, handkerchiefs, gloves, and underwear.

Useful hint for officers

A.M.O. A.208/44 has given officers the privilege of buying certain clothing through Equipment Stores. You don't save any coupons that way, but you do save money, and in most cases the quality of the goods is much better than you could get in the shops for the same money. Underwear especially is worth buying—also towels and shoes (warrant officer pattern). You will probably be well advised to defer using your clothing coupons until you have settled down on your new station, and have had a word with the Equipment Officer. It is possible to purchase second-hand uniforms from some tailors; this may save about 80 per cent. cash but it does not save coupons. If you are thinking about buying a new uniform ask the efficient types about the A.M.O.s which deal with the control of prices.

Kit and clothing claims

The Accountant Officer at the Reception Centre will assist in preparing any claims you have for compensation for the loss of kit, and will explain the position about any deductions for the cost of clothing which, if you are an

officer, may have been issued to you. He will also advise you how you can claim for coupons on form CRSC1a for kit lost by causes other than enemy action (i.e., loss by civil damage, theft or in transit).

Claim for expenses incurred when escaping

If you have a claim for reimbursement of expenses incurred in escaping or attempting to escape from captivity, you should write, giving details and dates and the names of persons who can substantiate your claims, to the Accountant Officer at the Reception Centre.

V. COUPONS—PETROL

Every P.O.W. is entitled to 300 miles of motoring as an active service recreational allowance whilst on leave. You may purchase petrol for this purpose if you or your wife possesses a motor car or motor cycle which is or has been licensed in either of your names.

Petrol coupons for this purpose may be obtained from any R.A.F. station, Combined Recruiting Centre, County Territorial Association Office or Territorial Association Social Welfare Officer, on production of the registration book for the vehicle and Form T80 or 385 or its equivalent endorsed "Leave following active service overseas". In the absence of this endorsement no petrol will be issued and you should therefore ensure that your papers are properly marked.

Should the applicant's car not be currently licensed, a motor vehicle leave permit for a period not exceeding 28 days may be obtained from the same place as petrol coupons (except Combined Recruiting Centres) on production of the registration book showing ownership and certificate of insurance or cover note.

These privileges are available to all ranks and all branches of the Service who are returning from a theatre of war.

After you have finished your leave and have been posted to a unit, ask your Adjutant for information about other motoring privileges you may become entitled to. Check up on A.M.O. A1067/43.

VI. PAY, ALLOWANCES AND ACCOUNTS Officers

Immediately on arrival at the Reception Centre you will be able to draw £10 advance of pay from the Senior Accountant Officer. Further advances of pay will be made only in exceptional circumstances, e.g., if you are not in receipt of Agent's Pay. You are therefore advised to get in touch with your bankers at the earliest opportunity in order that funds may be drawn from your banking account.

If you were commissioned during captivity you should ask the Accountant Officer as soon as possible for the necessary form to enable you to be issued with pay through the R.A.F. Agents.

Airmen

Immediately on arrival you will be able to draw £2. In addition, the following advances will be made before departure on leave—

Warrant Officers	—	—	—	£10
F/Sgts. and Sgts.	—	—	—	50
Corporals and L.A.C.s	—	—	—	47
Other airmen	—	—	—	25

Every endeavour will be made by the Accountant Officer to balance your pay account and issue to you as early as possible the credit balance in your account.

VII. IDENTITY CARD—FORM 1250R

Service identity cards, Forms 1250R, complete with photograph, will be issued at the Reception Centre.

You must take every precaution against the loss, theft, or damage of your 1250R. Any card lost may assist the enemy and, in any case, its loss will compromise and weaken the Service identification system generally. So keep your Form 1250R in a safe pocket.

Besides assisting security, your Form 1250R may be useful to you in many ways whilst on leave. You will certainly get into a spot of bother if you can't produce it in the U.K. when challenged.

If you are unlucky enough to lose your 1250R, report the loss at once to the nearest R.A.F. D.A.P.M. or R.A.F. station, and also to the Civil Police in the neighbourhood where you think it was lost. If you are travelling to Eire, you must take extra-special care of your F.1250R, but if, despite precautions you put up the major black of losing it in Eire, report the loss immediately in writing to the Air Attache, Office of the U.K. Representative to Eire, 80 Upper Mount Street, Dublin, and also in writing to The Under Secretary of State, Air Ministry (P.M.2.), Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Food VIII. ON LEAVE AT HOME

You will be astonished that after five years of war there is still such a variety of food. You will wonder what all the talk was about in Erengledom of the spartan life people were living in the old country. In administering supplies and controlling prices, the Ministry of Food has been so efficient that, so far, hardship in the real sense and as one thought of it in the early days, simply does not exist. There

are shortages, of course, chiefly those of imported food-stuffs, but you will be surprised how successfully your womenfolk have managed to overcome the difficulties.

There are one or two points you should watch. Don't help yourself to tea, sugar, butter and jam or marmalade as if you still lived in the piping days of peace. These are housewife's headaches. (Incidentally, it is extremely difficult to buy pipes now.)

In the same way, your ration card gives you the right every now and then to an egg ('shell egg' as we call it now), but the local supply position may be good enough to provide only regular customers with eggs, and you, holding an emergency ration card, may be out of luck. It will be best for you to hand the card over to the lady of the house and leave it to her, as she will know how to get the best value out of it.

Shopping

Shopping conditions vary a lot from locality to locality but, generally speaking, the housewife spends much more of her day than she likes standing in queues. The queues are mostly but not entirely caused by those in search of non-rationed goods. The ration card system itself works really well, and if you keep in touch with your suppliers you can always get your fair share of what is available. Queues for rationed and non-rationed goods are almost inevitable because many of the former shop assistants are doing war work, and clipping ration books takes time. It is a well-worn joke nowadays that the customer, not the shop, is always wrong.

Fuel

You will probably find the house a bit cold. The fuel ration has been gradually decreased since the war began,

and conditions have become worse, not better, since you were last home. Allowance for the period from March to May, 1943, for example, was only 5 owt. per month—and that is not much if the kitchen stove is antiquated and uneconomical, or the rooms are high and draughty. You can no longer expect a piping hot bath morning and evening, and everyone is asked to restrict the amount of water used to 5 inches. You will be doing less than your duty if you poke the fire when you need not, or complain about the cold.

IX. ON LEAVE IN TOWN

Whether you take your leave in London or go there only for a day, you should read the Air Ministry booklet "Going to London?" which will be available for you to consult at the Reception Centre. A knowledge of its contents may save you much expense and trouble.

London to-day is not cheap. The minimum bus fare is 1½d. A stall at a theatre costs from 12/6 to 18/-. Bed and breakfast at a good class hotel costs up to £1, and 8/6 to 10/6 is the normal charge at hotels which before the war charged 5/- and 6/- bed and breakfast.

You can still obtain a good low-priced meal at the popular chain restaurants, but you can do infinitely better at one of the many Service clubs and canteens which have been started within the last two or three years. Bed and breakfast charges at these clubs for officers range between 4/- and 8/-, and charges to airmen vary between 1/6 and 5/-.

The booklet "Going to London?" gives you the whole story. You will be grateful to note the facilities for recreation and entertainment that are available—free to Service personnel who find themselves in London. For instance,

there's an Anglo-American Stage Door Canteen at 201, Piccadilly, and Lord Nuffield has opened a Nuffield recreational Centre at 15 Wardour Street, both of which are for non-commissioned ranks. The voluntary organisations are doing wonders, and the women and girls who run the clubs and hostels do all they can to help you.

Outside London

Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Nottingham, Birmingham, and other big cities and towns, though not as fully equipped as London, all have hostels, canteens and recreational centres. All you have to do in any town or even village is to get in touch with any of the following organisations, who will give information—

Citizens' Advice Bureau—situated usually in the centre of the town;

W.V.S.—Women's Voluntary Services;

Y.M.C.A.;

Salvation Army.

If you can't find any of these (which is most unlikely) ask a policeman or enquire at the Post Office. If you can't find them (which is even more unlikely) ask the R.T.O.

NAAFI have opened super-clubs for non-commissioned ranks in a number of towns including Southampton, Leeds, Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham, Darlington, Plymouth, and Stafford.

London Accommodation

Arrangements have been made to provide accommodation at several hotels for the use of officers on permanent or temporary duty or on leave in London. The scheme is restricted to those of or below squadron leader rank.

The wives (Service or civilian) of officers are eligible to use these hotels with their husbands, and the husband

(Service or civilian) of W.A.A.F. officers are similarly eligible. You will find further information on page 11 of the booklet "Going to London?" But remember that London is full of people and these and all other hotels are always booked up well in advance.

If you are in London and can't find a bed, don't wander around but go (if you're an officer) to the Wings Club or the King George's Club. If you're an airman go to an R.T.O. or Services information bureau and ask for the address of the nearest hostel. If the place you go to hasn't got a bed they will do their best to find one for you.

Dominion and Allied Services Hospitality Scheme

Under arrangements made by Lady Frances Ryder, C.B.E., and Miss Macdonald of the Isles, C.B.E., this scheme provides private hospitality and accommodation throughout the country to Dominion, Colonial, and Allied personnel. It is available to men and women of all ranks, and offers free hospitality and accommodation varying from a few hours to several days, in homes and private houses in London and in town and country districts.

Application should be made either by letter or a visit to 21B Cadogan Gardens, London, S.W.3 (Sloane 4847), open from 10.00 to 22.00 hours daily. Alternatively, Australian and New Zealand personnel may apply to Miss Browning, The Southern Cross, Arpley Street School, Arpley Street, Warrington, Lancashire; and Canadians to Mrs Richards, St. Catherine's Vicarage, Heathfield Road, Gloucester.

If this scheme applies to you and you're interested, call at any of the above addresses, if possible, and state your personal interests, preferences, and favourite pastimes, e.g., whether you wish to visit a farm, spend your time fishing, sight-seeing, etc.

Hospitality for Empire P.O.W.s

Empire prisoners of war who, having come from camps on the Continent, are in Great Britain pending return to their homes overseas, may arrange for private hospitality on application to the Office for Hospitality for Empire Prisoners of War, Charles II Street, S.W.1 (Whitehall 6422). This office co-ordinates the work of the Empire Societies.

Cheap Travel Facility

London Transport offers to all ranks who are on leave or 48-hour pass a ticket for 1/- which entitles the purchaser to travel anywhere in London on any route between 10.30 hours and the last bus or train of the day. You must be in uniform and must produce an authorised leave form or pass or, if you are an officer, a Form 1230B.

These tickets may be bought at any main line railway station, Y.M.C.A., or Services information bureau, and at most hostels and clubs in London.

Baggage and Kit Storage Facilities

If, on arrival in London (or indeed any large town), you want to dump your kit somewhere, you can leave it in the care of the R.T.O. at one of the Service cloakrooms which have been set up at most main line railway stations where there is an R.T.O. and/or canteen. Usually kits may be stored free for up to 24 hours. Most of the larger hostels also have kit storage facilities and, in London, you can make use of the Fall Mall Safe Depository, 10 St. Albans Street, Haymarket, W.1 (Whitehall 4845), where, in addition to normal baggage, bicycles and flying kit may be stored for any period at a small charge.

X. ON A STATION AGAIN. IS IT THE SAME?

You will probably find many strange differences in station life. The stations will probably be dispersed over a wide area, and you may have long walks between sleeping and dining quarters, etc.

Manning Positions

You may be surprised at the large number of W.A.A.F. now doing work which used to be done by R.A.F. The assistant adjutant is usually a W.A.A.F. officer, and some stations have a W.A.A.F. adjutant as well. Messes are staffed almost entirely by airwomen and "serve yourself" is almost a general rule. Many aircraft are serviced by airwomen fitters and riggers, instruments are checked by airwomen in overalls or battledress. A.C.H.s are rarer than ever, and tradesmen often have to be employed on odd jobs. These days everyone has to lend a hand in Service life, just as they now have to do—only to a still greater extent—in civilian life.

Leave

Leave—unless suspended completely for operational reasons—is better organised and more regular. Except for aircrew personnel, the entitlement is seven days and one 48 hours' pass every quarter. To cut down travel you are encouraged to take your 48 at the same time as your 7 days' leave, so that you can usually have 9 days' leave every three months and, in addition, one whole day off a week. Aircrew have special entitlements of leave, but all leave is subject, of course, to that old tongue-twister, the exigencies of the Service.

Free Warrants

Four free warrants to your leave address are granted each leave year, which now runs from 13th August. Concession tickets at reduced rates are available at most times (the exception being over public holidays such as Christmas and Easter), provided you produce your Form 1250R. The number of tickets issued at concession rates for wives and families is now restricted to four for every six-monthly period, but extra tickets can be obtained in cases of illness. The orderly room will give you the details.

Travel Restrictions

So far as possible, your day off each week is designed to give you an opportunity to visit the local town, do your shopping, meet your friends, and enjoy whatever recreational facilities there are going. For that reason, you are not intended to travel long distances from the station.

Fuel and Light

It is a punishable offence to drive a Service vehicle a yard off its scheduled route. Service transport at Home is a very different thing from Service transport overseas.

Strict economy in lighting and fuel is rigidly enforced, and offices and barrack blocks are not heated until well into the autumn, unless the weather is exceptionally cold. Don't leave a room empty without turning off the light.

Station Food

You will be favourably surprised at the standard of messing. The same rations are issued to officers', sergeants', and airmen's messes, and the daily messing charge in officers' messes for extras is now usually about 6d. In consequence, officers and sergeants will find that mess

bills for food are much smaller. On the other hand, they will find that quenching their thirst is a bit more expensive.

What about Station Welfare?

In 1941 the Directorate of Air Force Welfare was formed at the Air Ministry to be responsible for welfare throughout the R.A.F. and the W.A.A.F.

A Welfare Committee should exist at all stations, its function being to assist the C.O. to look after the welfare of all personnel at that station. Its three main objects are to eliminate private worries, to improve living conditions, and to provide recreation facilities.

If you have any private worries, domestic or otherwise, a member of the Welfare Committee will be able to help you, and your problem will be treated as confidential, of course. If you don't know whom to consult ask the officer in charge of your section or flight or consult the poster "A.B.C. of Welfare" (Form 2746) which should be displayed in some conspicuous place.

Suggestions for the improvement of living conditions should be made to a member of the Welfare Committee, who will see they are impartially considered by the whole committee, even though it may not always be possible to carry them out.

Recreation is amply catered for at most stations. The problem is usually how to find the time to enjoy all the recreational activities available.

Increased educational facilities have been made available to all members of the R.A.F. If you want to study in your free time, consult your Station Education Officer who will advise you and make the necessary arrangements.

Discussion groups are organised at most stations and provide opportunities for discussing current political and social problems. Most stations, too, have now added an Information Room to their amenities. There you can consult current Service and civilian publications and regulations, read the papers, look up the local bus services or cinema programmes, study the progress of the war on wall maps, and, in fact, "find the answer".

The "Royal Air Force Journal" is issued monthly to all stations, and should be read regularly as it contains a good deal of useful and interesting information. It is bright, entertaining, in great demand, and is issued on a basis of one copy to every 25 personnel. It is written and edited entirely by Service personnel and is, in fact, the R.A.F.'s own magazine.

Legal Aid

The Free Legal Aid Scheme, which was started for the Army only, was extended to include the Royal Air Force in 1942. The scheme is operated through a number of regional legal aid sections at Home and overseas, each staffed by legally qualified personnel drawn from both Services, with the assistance of voluntary Unit Legal Advisers whom you can consult.

The purpose of the scheme is to secure to any airman or airwoman of the rank of sergeant or below the advice and help which, if he were a civilian, he might hope to get from a poor man's lawyer or similar voluntary association.

Free legal representation can be obtained under the scheme only in the High Court (including the Divorce Court). Cases involving Service discipline and criminal law cannot be dealt with under the scheme. Legal Aid

Sections and Unit Legal Advisers may and do give advice in County Court and non-criminal Police Court matters, prepare the cases, as far as possible, and then place the applicant in touch with a solicitor who will be prepared to represent him in the Police or County Court at his own cost.

Free advice from surveyors and valuers is also provided on problems arising from War damage, leases, mortgages, etc.

XI. ARE THEY ALL RIGHT AT HOME?

At all stations a member of the Welfare Committee is appointed to deal with problems connected with the families of officers, airmen and airwomen. He is often called "The Welfare Officer", and is in close touch with the various nation-wide voluntary organisations whose object is to provide help for Service or ex-Service men and women and their families.

The best-known of these organisations are—

The R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, which helps all R.A.F. and W.A.A.F. personnel, whether regular or non-regular, and their dependants. Applications for relief covering all kinds of financial distress and hardship are considered during service or after return to civil life. No genuine case of distress is turned down by the Fund. Financial assistance is given towards the maintenance of widows and the fatherless, towards the education of children of personnel who die or are disabled in the course of their service, and to ex-Servicemen to help in re-establishing them in civil life. The Fund is administered to provide relief in the most just manner possible. It exists primarily

to meet those many cases which are outside, or need more than can be provided within, the scope of Government assistance.

SSAFA—The Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Families Association, 23 Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W.1. Its objects are—(a) To pay special attention to the welfare of the families of Service and ex-Service men and women (excluding officers) and, wherever possible, to help them to find employment; (b) To help with temporary grants those families of Servicemen who are in special distress; (c) To help applicants to obtain assistance from official sources and from other Service funds. SSAFA has numerous branches, the address of the nearest being obtainable from the local Post Office.

Incorporated Soldiers', Sailors', and Airmen's Help Society, 122 Brompton Road, London, S.W.3, whose objects are—(a) To help non-commissioned men and women of the Forces during their period of service and after discharge; (b) To arrange for free hospitality for Service women during leave; (c) To assist towards the cost of removal of homes of personnel while serving or after discharge; (d) To provide fares for visiting sick or overworked families; (e) To make settlement grants to facilitate a new start in civil life; (f) To provide, where necessary and in deserving cases, civilian clothes to Service men and women. And the Society does much other work, too.

Citizens' Advice Bureaux are operated under the auspices of the National Council of Social Service, 26 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1, in almost every town in England, Scotland and Wales. They advise citizens on

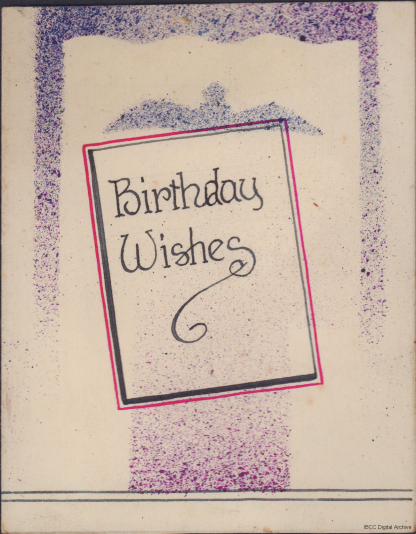
any subject about which wartime regulations have been made.

County Welfare Organisations. Help can also be obtained through County and Local Welfare Officers—there's a Local Welfare Officer in almost every town in the country, address being obtainable from the local Post Office.

If your family is in need they can obtain the names and addresses of the local representatives of the above societies from their nearest Post Office. Your best plan is to consult your C.O. and make your application through him. See A.M.O. AB11/1944. All these organisations work very closely together, by the way.

XII—CONCLUSION

Well, that's the gen. You'll probably have many other questions to ask besides. If so, tackle the Welfare Officers at the Reception Centre—they're there to advise you.



Birthday
Wishes

STALAG IV B, MÜHLBERG ON ELBE.
GERMANY. 6th JULY 1944.

Good
luck

from
Joe.
& Tony

4 luck from
the 'Canny' Combine.