

THE Prisoner of War



THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE PRISONERS OF WAR DEPARTMENT OF THE
RED CROSS AND ST. JOHN WAR ORGANISATION, ST. JAMES' PALACE, LONDON, S.W.1



Vol. 3 No. 35

Free to Next of Kin

MARCH, 1945

The Editor Writes —

MANY inquiries are, naturally, reaching the Prisoners of War Department from anxious relatives for news of the camps in Poland and Western and Eastern Germany, which have either been overrun by the victorious advances of the Russian Army or else lie in the direct path of the Allied Armies both in the east and west. The progress of the Allied attacks, accompanied as they have been by terrific air bombardment, have necessarily resulted in the mass movement by the Germans of camps and prisoners towards the centre of Germany under difficult conditions, and in almost complete disorganisation of the German transport system. The resulting effects on the condition of our prisoners is discussed in the statement made by Sir James Grigg, the Secre-

tary of State for War, on February 28th, which is printed in full on page 3, and by the Chairman of Red Cross and St. John Prisoners of War Department on p. 2.

Liberated Prisoners

It is now possible from the various official statements that have been made to gain a fairly clear picture of what is happening as regards prisoners of war who have been overtaken and liberated by the Russian advance. Information has been received from the Soviet authorities that 2,661 British Commonwealth prisoners of war (of whom 70 are officers) recovered from German camps were on their way by rail to Odessa

and that they were to be assembled in a transit camp which was under construction. Since that news arrived, Sir James Grigg has stated in the House of Commons that the Soviet authorities are giving facilities for officers in our military mission to visit the camp in Lublin where prisoners are awaiting transfer to Odessa. Officers from the mission are also on their way to Odessa and their first task on arrival will be to collect and make lists of names and then telegraph them home at the earliest possible moment. The Service Departments will inform next of kin of any news of individual prisoners immediately it is received. A list of the camps involved and information of German plans for their transfer will be found on page 26.

I must call readers' attention to the

important announcement on page 26 concerning parcels and letters to these camps and emphasising that no new parcels should be sent.

Red Cross Depot at Odessa

In accordance with the agreement recently concluded in the Crimea, the Soviet authorities are providing food, clothes and any necessary medical attention for our men. These basic supplies which the Russians are providing will be supplemented by the food, medical parcels, cigarettes, tobacco, chocolate and soap to the value of £77,000, which was sent to Russia last year by Red Cross and St. John. Red Cross and St. John are preparing to co-operate wholeheartedly with the Soviet Government in caring for our ex-prisoners of war until they can be repatriated. They are desirous of setting up a depot at Odessa, with stocks of Red Cross comforts and a team of women Welfare Officers.

Already over 400 cases of Red Cross comforts have been shipped to Odessa and further shipments will take place in the future.

A Word of Warning

I would advise next of kin to watch the papers for statements made in the House of Commons or issued as official announcements, but to be sceptical of any unofficial reports about prison camps or prisoners of war until they have been officially confirmed. The newspapers indicate the sources of reports which reach them from time to time through neutral countries, and it is easy to distinguish these reports from the official statements.



A group of prisoners at Stralag IID which was situated at Berlin-Spandau and to which the Postmaster-General has said that no more parcels should now be sent.

Prisoners Exchange

Mr. Eden has announced in the House of Commons that a fresh proposal regarding the exchange of able-bodied long-term prisoners of war has been handed to the Swiss Government for communication to the German Government providing for the direct repatriation through Switzerland of a number of British prisoners of war from the Navy, Army, Air Force and Merchant Service captured before July 194, 1940, in exchange for an equal number of German prisoners.

Priority for Discharge

In answer to a question in the House of Commons of February 6th as to whether prisoners of war repatriated to this country are required to undergo training, with a view to their services being used again in other theatres of war, and whether any long period of imprisonment by the enemy will entitle released prisoners to immediate or early discharge from the Army either now or at the conclusion of hostilities in Europe, Sir James Grigg said: "Returned prisoners will be given no formal priority for release, but as a large number of them joined the Services in the early years of the war their priority will be high."

Medical Attention

Those people who have any fears that the medical attention supplied to prisoners of war upon their return to this country is not fully adequate may be reassured by the recent statement of the Minister of Health, Mr. Henry Willink. "Returning prisoners of war," he said, "have the benefit of all the resources of the Emergency Hospital Scheme, when the Service Department concerned requests that they be treated under that scheme." As for those suffering from tuberculosis whose condition calls for

sanatorium treatment, special measures are taken to secure their admission to a sanatorium and they need treatment, but it is not always possible to avoid a short waiting period at home, during which the patient is under the expert care of the tuberculosis officer.

The Best Yet

"The best since I've been a prisoner of war" was the verdict on Christmas pronounced in a letter from Stalag IVC. "We had from Saturday mid-day to Tuesday night holiday. We spent the time with concerts, dancing, and singing. We cleared one of the barrack rooms out which we used for the shows and dancing. The sixteen beds in our room clubbed together and had a high tea on Christmas Day." The Entertainment Committee in Stalag XIVA have kindly sent a special report of their Christmas festivities. I am sorry that it arrived too late for it to be printed in full. They say: "To all our loved ones at home it will be very pleasant to know that this Christmas and New Year was certainly the best we have ever had during our captivity."

Studied by Margarine Light

A vivid impression of the difficulties under which students in camps have to work is given in a letter received from a warrant officer in Stalag 357. He writes: "These students who can afford sufficient margarine for their ration or who have enough cigarettes to purchase one of these lamps work in the dim, uncertain light of a 'Fat Lamp' for periods of four to five hours." In spite of the handicaps (which include overcrowding and "paralyzing cold"), all the students "display a keenness that is surprisingly alive." Another typical instance of difficulties conquered comes from Stalag IVB, where the lack of chalk precipitated a minor crisis until one

prisoner, after experimenting privately with plaster of paris and tooth-powder baked in the oven, produced a successful substitute.

Spectacles from England

In 1942 the Joint War Emergency Committee of the Optical Profession offered to provide spectacles with Army standard-type frames, free of charge, for prisoners of war. Up to the end of December the Invalid Corps Section of the Red Cross Prisoners of War Department received no fewer than 3,420 pairs of spectacles from the committee. These represent an extremely valuable gift to our prisoners of war, and a deep debt of gratitude is owed to all the members of the committee for their kindness. When spectacles cannot be obtained at the camps the senior medical officers send lists of optical prescriptions to the Invalid Corps Section. These are then sent to the committee and distributed amongst its members for dispensing.

Reception in Cyprus

On November 16th last 300 repatriated prisoners of war arrived in Famagusta, Cyprus. These men were escorted to Switzerland, where they had been for a year, and they were full of praise for the kindness shown them. All the workers of the Prisoners of War Bureau in Cyprus assisted in the reception that was given to them by the local Cross and at which the Governor, the Officer Commanding the Area, and the Deputy Commissioner, British Red Cross, were present. From all accounts the ex-prisoners of war were in very good heart and health and most appreciated the special Cyprus food and drink given to them. The men, I am told, have since been to the Prisoners of War Bureau, and were most grateful to the Red Cross for the parcels which kept them alive in Italy. There are still 1,500 Cypriot prisoners of war in Germany.

TRANSPORT OF FOOD PARCELS

By Sir Richard Howard-Vyse.

R.C.M.G. D.S.O.

IN the February number of this journal I told our readers that the flow of parcels via the Mediterranean and the Baltic had improved sufficiently to allow the resumption of the full issue of a parcel a week as soon as sufficient stocks were available in camps. I said that it was entirely a question of rail transport through Germany, as to which we had reason at the moment to feel hopeful, but I added that in view of the Russian advance it was dangerous to prophesy.

These words were written in the first half of January, since when it has become clear that the successes of the Russians, coupled with bombing attacks from this side, have thoroughly disorganised the German railway system. Matters have been complicated, of course, by the fact that the men from many of the camps overrun by the Russians were moved away beforehand by the Germans. De-

tails of these moves, so far as they are known, have been published in the Press, and I understand that supplementary information will be issued from time to time; reports of statements by the Secretary of State for war appear elsewhere in this journal.

We now know that in December and early in January supplies arrived at some camps, for instance, Oflag VA, Oflag VIIIB, and Stalags IVD, XIA, XXII and Stalag III (since moved) and 357; they may have reached others, and geographically it seems likely that they may have done so; but we have no information one way or another.

The position to-day—and I am writing on February 28th—is that hardly any despatches are being made from Switzerland, but that, after a short respite of several days, there is, for the moment at any rate, a flow through the Baltic port

of Lübeck, though nothing like sufficient.

The supplies, as all know, are there. As regards food parcels the steps which are being taken to produce the transport so vitally necessary, I have little to add to the statement made by Sir James Grigg to-day. It will be seen from that statement that all available resources have been called, including the active cooperation of S.H.A.E.F., and, of course, the good offices of the International Red Cross Committee. The War Organisation has authorised that Committee to incur, on our behalf, any expenditure which may be necessary to procure and operate additional transport, and we are in the closest possible contact with all concerned.

One thought I would offer which may be comforting. The prisoners know, as well as we do, that this is the dawn of victory and of release.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

For the Camps

Statement by Sir James Grigg, Secretary of State for War, in the House of Commons on February 28th

THE House is already aware that the progress of the Allied attacks on Germany by land and from the air has resulted in mass movements of prisoners and civilians from the perimeter toward the central districts, particularly from the eastern side of Germany. The conditions under which such movements must take place have largely been created by the military success of the Allies. But inevitably these conditions involve for large numbers of our prisoners in Germany movement on foot, under difficult conditions, with inadequate provision on the road for accommodation at night and for food, and eventually overcrowding in the camps to which they are moved back.

The representatives of the Protecting Power in Germany are doing all they can to secure improvements from the Germans; and their efforts have not been without some results. For example, they have been assured that in future sick or weak prisoners will be moved by train or lorry, and we know for certain that this has been done in some recent cases. Between February 29 and 24 their inspectors were due to pay special visits to certain camps to which British prisoners of war have been transferred, and I will give the substance of their reports to the House as soon as they arrive.

FOOD RESERVE.

The Government and the British Red Cross War Organisation had foreseen that as the weight of attack on Germany was pressed home this situation might arise. Efforts had therefore been made to establish substantial reserves in the camps of Red Cross food parcels, medical supplies and comforts, clothing and boots; and we hope that in the event the shortages in supplies to Geneva consequent on operations in the south of France last summer, the position in the matter of clothing will not become serious.

In the case of food parcels, however, the Germans last autumn insisted on those reserve stocks being reduced to a weekly basis. To the best of our knowledge this order was enforced in most of the camps, and the excess stocks were consumed accordingly. Recently the International Red Cross Committee, as a result of long negotiation, had secured agreement from the German authorities to the establishment of limited reserve supplies of food parcels outside the camps, but this agreement came too late for it to become effective before the disorganisation in Germany had reached a point where transport facilities for Red Cross supplies from Switzerland had been seriously reduced. Not only are few railway wagons reaching Switzerland

from Germany, but such trains as are dispatched from Geneva cannot, we understand, get very far into Germany. While everyone will welcome the results of this disorganisation so far as the war effort is concerned, it has created increasing anxiety for the welfare of the British Commonwealth prisoners.

Naturally this situation has for a long time been present in the minds of His Majesty's Government and of the British Red Cross Society, and various possibilities have been examined in order to meet it. The supply of food to prisoners from the air is one of these possibilities. The Government have satisfied themselves that this is not at present practicable, but if circumstances change and it becomes feasible use will certainly be made of this means of supply.

LORRY CONVOYS.

Negotiations are in train for the purchase of lorries in Sweden which could enter Germany and be used to transport supplies for Lübeck to prisoner-of-war camps in northern Germany. These lorries burn wood. As Sweden is so abundantly supplied this is a great advantage, but we have undertaken to replace any tyres or oil which are used for this project, and also any petrol in the event of ordinary lorries being used as well as the wood-burning ones.

Similar projects have been examined for introducing supplies from Switzerland. The railways in south Germany are apparently so disorganised and clogged with traffic that the supply of wagons in Switzerland is not likely to help. It has been possible to proceed further with the supply of lorries. The Supreme Allied Command, who are, as it were, on the spot, are obviously in the best position to do whatever is possible. The British Government in the United Kingdom, as well as the Commonwealth and the United States Governments, in agreement with the respective national Red Cross organisations, have asked the Supreme Allied Command in France to carry on on their behalf all negotiations with the International Red Cross in these matters. Members will realise that nothing is likely to be achieved except through the good offices of the International Red Cross Committee.

One hundred lorries which were being

used in France by the International Red Cross have been assembled in Switzerland, and they are now ready to enter Germany with food parcels. It is, however, impossible to proceed further without the agreement of the German authorities, and I do not yet know to what extent the steps which the International Red Cross are endeavouring to take will in fact be acceptable to the Germans. I understand that a representative of theirs left Switzerland yesterday for Berlin in order to obtain the agreement which is necessary.

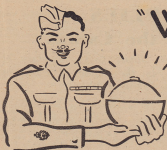
UNPARALLELLED EFFORT.

But I would like to assure the House that there will be no difficulty on the score of provision of lorries by the Supreme Allied Command. Indeed, too many lorries are ready to go into Switzerland at once if those which are there now are allowed into Germany, and arrangements have been made to supply petrol, oil, tyres and spare parts to Switzerland when they are needed. I should add that the British Red Cross War Organisation have authorised the International Red Cross Committee to incur on their behalf any expenditure which they consider necessary in connection with the care of our prisoners now in German hands.

I hope I have shown that the Government in this country, the Supreme Allied Command, and the British Red Cross Society are doing all in their power to see that any request from the International Red Cross for vehicles, fuel, or maintenance stores which can be effectively used to supply our prisoners is met subject only to the condition that such assistance will not weaken the attack on Germany and so delay the conclusion of hostilities. I will give the House any further information I can at the earliest possible opportunity.

HAVE YOU MOVED?

If so, do not forget to notify the Army, Navy or R.A.F. authorities as well as the Red Cross of your change of address.



"We know how to cook"

BY NORMAN W. GOULD
ILLUSTRATIONS BY FLETCHER

YOU may not know it, but we prisoners of war are pretty good cooks. So would you be if you had been without the Gentle Ministering Hand for four years. Of course we are not the only ones. There are our traditional comrades on the home front—husbands of Service wives and other halcyon citizens, who make aeroplanes by day and cook their own supper at night. Men who couldn't be trusted to boil an egg, men who didn't know a saucepan from a frying pan now boil the egg in the saucepan with perfect confidence. (When they can get the egg.)

We prisoners are proud to be in the vanguard of this movement. We have learned to keep our chins up in our prison kitchens; we shall be able to carry our heads so less high in our own homes. We have broken the tyranny of the Women's Kitchen Front: WE KNOW HOW TO COOK!! For us it has been a bloodless victory; no woman has yet dared to invade our kitchens. (We have even jettisoned this offensive word, the scenes of our culinary triumphs are known as cook-houses.) For the hairy aeroplane merchants we have great respect. Time after time they have successfully repelled the invasions of wives on leave. But what of the enemy within our ranks? The man who still has a woman in his kitchen. To these scab, overfit crathurs—martyrs to the feminine Fresh Wholesome Food cult, we address this message: "Be master in your own kitchen, free yourself from woman's age-old tyranny: cook your own food!"

Take the Gestapo, the Ku Klux Klan, and a pinch of the British Secret Service. Roll them into one—a deep, dark and sinister combination, yet a

mere crew of amateurs compared with the secret Sisterhood of British Housewives. For centuries we British makes have been in the stranglehold of this organisation, weak tools in the hands of our unscrupulous women.

Napoleon knew all about it. He taught his soldiers to march on their stomachs. They got so stomach conscious that they took to cooking their own food when they got home again. To-day the finest cooks in the world are Frenchmen. No Frenchman cares two hoots if his wife does walk out of house and kitchen, he can cook his

own food. The poor, envious Englishman can't even light the gas. Or rather, couldn't.

Any foreigner who has been around will tell you that English cooking is the worst in the world. Plain and stodgy. But we liked it, because from birth we were stuffed with the S.B.H. propaganda about Fresh Wholesome Food. We were taught that tinned food is slow poison, we were lulled to sleep as children with tales of bachelors who lived on tinned salmon. Day after day it was drilled into us that no man was to be trusted with the preparation of food. In the end we believed it.

In four short years, we prisoners (together with our traditional comrades, the hairy aeroplane supper cooks) have achieved complete liberation. We started under a tremendous hand-





cap and we have had to overcome great obstacles.

Some idea of the magnitude of our task can be gained when we reveal that of the hundreds of thousands of letters that have poured into our camps, not one instance is recorded of a recipe being given.*

*This article was written before the issue of the Red Cross recipe book.

In the first dark year (1940) when we were groping for knowledge, a hardy pioneer made a cake from a packet of pancake mixture (and not much else) and put it on display. In one day, in a spirit of true brotherhood, he answered 249 questions about cake-making and cooking generally. To-day any prisoner will don his boiler suit and mix a cake without thinking twice about it.

Symbolic of the revolution are the communal prison cook-houses. Eight, ten or twelve men stand shoulder to shoulder stirring their porridge or stewing their grutes. Friendly advice is passed from one to the other; a haze of tobacco smoke hangs in the air. From time to time an empty tin is aimed with deadly accuracy at the bin.

These are the men who are furthering the cause of culinary science. Already before the end of 1941 they had discovered six new ways of cooking potatoes; they are responsible for the introduction of crushed biscuits as a substitute for flour; by untiring research they have overcome the pink salmon problem, with no less than 22 different methods of disposing of this pest. Camp medical officers have been furnished with invaluable data on the treatment of boils.

No less successful have been our comrades on the home front. Business men have applied business efficiency methods to the kitchen. It has been found that by using the whole range of crockery, including the Sunday tea service, washing-up need only be done once every ten days, in place of the old method of washing up small units three or four times a day. The total saving of time and energy is of undoubted significance.

We prisoners are busy planning for the future. A committee of camp leaders has already adopted the Master Plan. Post-war reconstruction will leave us no time for the trivialities of the kitchen. Our Plan, the New London and the "Homes For Farmworkers To Live In" schemes will engage our full attention. Our women will return to the kitchen.

Complacently we shall sit in the back seat—and tell them how to drive.





A TYPICAL account of the way in which prisoners spent Christmas Day is given by a flight lieutenant in Stalag Luft 3, who writes: "I started the day by taking Holy Communion, and the rest of the day was spent eating excellent food and plenty of it supplied by the good old Red Cross." The menu was:

Turkey
Roast and Mashed Potatoes
Peas — Carrots
Christmas Pudding and Cream.
Chocolate Tarts
Apple Tart
Christmas Cake
Dates, Sweets and Nuts
Coffee

"We had a film called 'Male Animal' featuring Henry Fonda and Olivia de Havilland, and the Christmas show put on by the boys was excellent."

True to Army Tradition

In Oflag VA the "other ranks" had their Christmas on Boxing Day, and, as one prisoner puts it, "true to the British Army tradition, we were waited on completely—tea brought to our barracks in the morning and all carry fatigues done by officers." The officers cleaned out the barracks, washed all table, and provided a full day's entertainment. The weather was ideal: "to degrees below in the morning and warm enough to sun-bathe at midday."

Padre-Kept Busy

A padre at Stalag Luft 3 states that he has beaten all his previous records

The Brighter Side

So many letters have been received in which the chief topic was Christmas festivities that this month's "Brighter Side" is devoted to their cheerful accounts of how Christmas was spent in the camps.



for services—and for parties. He took eight services in two days and attended nine parties. "The card service was very good. The midnight service was crowded to the doors of the theatre. I had a large Communion service in the theatre at 8 a.m. Christmas Day. I was so pleased all were well attended and appreciated." There follows a staggering list of the food that was consumed at all the parties, and the padre did justice to a bumper dinner on Boxing Day... the most delightful meal for 45 years."

Christmas Fare

Writing on Christmas Eve from Stalag 357, where food parcels had been arriving infrequently and were shared one between four men during the festive season, a prisoner says: "I am afraid the stocking is nearly empty this year, but we are going to make the best of things." That they did is borne out by another prisoner's letter, which insists: "All our savings was definitely worth it, although I am afraid we rather over-did things. Our stomachs could not quite cope with the Christmas pudding, but after a rather illious afternoon I was tucking away merrily at tea-time and right through the evening." Eight waggoners of Canadian parcels arrived from Sweden just before Christmas, and the special British Christmas parcels arrived soon afterwards.

Our Wonderful Duff

In Stalag 383 food was not so plentiful either, and their Christmas menu was, according to one letter, "Breakfast: two slices of bread and perhaps fried egg flakes and tea. Dinner: stew and our wonderful duff. Tea: two slices of bread and jam and our cake. Supper: the same

stuff." The decorations in one room at this camp were carried out with holly, evergreen and coloured paper.

Stalag IVB decorated their mess with greetings in all languages a week before Christmas, and IVG's mess were decorated with streamers, lanterns and fans. IVF received decorations from Geneva, and IVB made hangings from

Two scenes from the lavish production of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was produced at Stalag IXC.

tree and pine sprays and rowan berries, trimmed with coloured shavings.

Better Than Expected

Christmas in Oflag VIIIB turned out even better than expected, because they were ordered by the German War Office to eat all the food Cross food stocks by the middle of January. The entertainments are reported to have been good and very crowded. They included a "Fan Fair" and a "Toy Fair," from which most of the actual toys went to civilian internecine camps, musical evenings and card playing.

At Oflag IVF they also had a card service. In a panto, "The Middle Snow-White," written for the occasion, Snow-White was a black young lady, and the Fairy Queen arrived on the stage once by parachute and once by tank.

Cakes—a Speciality

In nearly every camp over Christmas they made cakes, and the account of the one made in Stalag XIA is pretty typical. "The little combine of three with whom I share had decided I must make a cake! I did—ground-up Macaluta, currants, jam, egg powder, prunes, powdered milk, marmalade and salt all went into it—a solid lump, believe me! We then decorated it, and although it was slightly heavy it went

(Continued on page 12)

Most of the paragraphs on this page refer to activities in the big base camps and it should not be assumed that they are typical of conditions in all camps or in occupying working detachments where facilities for sport and amusement are much fewer.

P. W. Craftsman

Oflag VIIb, 30.12.44.

I DO wish you could see some of the absolutely staggering things which are being made in the camp. Some of the work is as fine as I have ever seen in my life. It is fantastic what is being done with the material available. For instance, in our mess we have a complete little kitchen range, made out of tin-plate, and lovely linoleum shoes are being made out of Army boots. The wood-workers have got busy making looms which turn out scarves, ties, etc., in all kinds of patterns. The knitting, too. I have never seen anything like it—sweaters, hats, rugs. Then there is the embroidery work which I would not have believed possible.

The theatrical world is doing great stuff. French Without Tears was excellent. But I do not know what we should do without our go-piece of chestnuts, who are responsible for peep concerts. A change of programme every week—Saturday and Sunday. Just as well, for months now we have not been allowed out for an outing. I badly want a holiday.

Protection from Mud
Stalag 313, 12.12.44.

WE have at last conquered that accursed mud! The place was inches deep in it after all the snow we had. It's about an inch deep now.

Home-made mud-patents laboriously carved out of wood raised about 2 in. from the ground with an. shovels of tin iron and all have done the trick. You just buckle them on when you go out and your boots remain clean, polished, and above all dry. These things are a real crase here: you can hear them being made all over the place at all times of the day.

I've been feeling rather a fraud at meal times lately whenever I batter the bread for the first of us, as I dip into a shocking great 2 lb. tin of the stuff, part of the fortnightly issue from the Argentine. Poor starving foreigners! We are having a loaf baked up at the cook-house to-day, 2.30, and did it have a hammering!—Should be good and certainly will be a nice change.

After Amberg

Stalag IXC, 5.12.44.

I HAVE now got settled into work on our adventures in Holland. We were captured after a stiff battle at Amberg. From there we went to

another town in Holland and looked after our patients for about three weeks before being moved into Germany. We arrived after a long journey and had a wonderful reception, being met with cigarettes and a good meal. We rested for a day, and then I was sent with another M.O. to another hospital, where I was pleasantly surprised to find two friends.

I am in the best of health and am kept busy looking after quite a number of patients. We have a comfortable mess (there are nine of us) and good food from Red Cross parcels. I share a room with three other M.O.s and we get along very happily together.

Putting on Weight

Stalag XVIIIa, Undated.

THINGS are about the same here—plenty of work in the woods, but still find time for our bit of sport. There

current and one post-war subject. I am so busy that the time is slipping by.

Keeping Shop

Stalag IVb, 25.11.44.

THINGS here are not too bad except that we are short of cigarettes and parcels. However, there are six of us in the office and four have received parcels, so we share cigarettes. Had a bulk issue this week, and I feel just like a shop-keeper behind the counter of a well-filled store dishing out goodies and cutting up cheese. I eat the cheese so well there are no makeweights!

Veined Activity

Oflag VIIb, 10.11.44.

WE have had snow for the past two days and are all preparing to hibernate for the winter! Cold is very short—much less than last year, which was less than the previous year.

We are still on half rations of Red Cross parcels, but a number of private parcels have come in recently.

The new conductor of the orchestra now holds weekly promenade "concerts, and I very much enjoyed the first one last week-end, as I also did a show given by our orchestra and a choral and ecclesiastical concert.

We have just had another number of our camp magazine *Touche-Stone*, in which there is an admirable article on land nationalisation.

No, I have not had any more parade walks at cinema visits. These were stopped by a higher authority in the autumn and for the main body of the camp have not been restarted.

The Feminine Touch

Stalag VIIb, 17.12.44.

I THINK I will dare the Censor and I give you an interesting letter. The subject—the village and the people in it amongst whom I have now lived for three and a half years. Commencing with the women... they are only: those engaged on the land begin to age at thirty! While working they dress in old clothes no English Miss would be seen dead in; but on Sundays they are very neatly dressed and, indeed, do really know how to wear clothes. The elder women wear rather long skirts, a cute little silk waist that hangs loose behind, and is tucked into the skirt in front, and a shawl over head and shoulders.



The dance band plays in the courtyard at Oflag IXA, H.

was a grand game of football last Sunday—England v. Scotland—and, lo and behold, Scotland was 6-2.

Do you know when I joined the Army my weight was 140 lb. I've never gone below that, and now I'm 170 lb. Yes, God bless the Red Cross.

A Postcard Artist

Oflag 79, 29.9.44.

I AM busily engaged on internal publicity—mainly concerned with entertainment. I have also just finished eleven small and three large posters for a Red Cross Appeal Week scheme. I have also started a series of "interest" wall sheets—"Stop, Look, Listen," topics, and others, each dealing with one



Thawing of an Icicle

Ofag IV. 20.11.44.

I AM now at the central heating, I would have nearly become an icicle. The weather was very cold, with quite a bit of snow, and everyone went about wrapped up in overcoats and blankets.

One or two officers managed to produce fire, and adorned themselves with faces and minks draped around their necks. I borrowed a beautiful-looking shawl, which I wrapped round my face. Very fetching. I also wore a mid—an old sock with no foot in it.

Then in the midst of our shivering came the news that the central heating was coming on, and I flew to the nearest radiator. Sure enough it was warm, and as it became hotter so I discarded my apparel. Off came my skunk, my overcoat, my leather jacket, my battle-dress jacket, and my cardigan, and I was left with my woollen vest and two shirts.

It was a pleasure to thaw, and now I never wander very far from the radiator, which has also become my kitchen, heating up meats and puddings nicely and warming me inwardly.

Keeping Warm

Ofag IV. 17.11.44.

I AM now an "underette" for our theatre as well as being "second in command" for cinema, a very humble job, but something to keep one out of mischief.

They seem to be bringing quite a lot of fresh prisoners here, and you would laugh if you could see us all on parade. We wear anything to keep warm, and look like ladies from Lapland.

Tough Guy

Stalag IV. 10.9.44.

THREE of us attend the weight-lifting class. We were all measured this morning; I have put on 15 lb. on my chest and sin, on both biceps, also there has been a vast improvement in my weight, forearms and legs. The heaviest weight I can lift above my head is 155

Health and Strength Club and we have all been made members, so that we can continue physical training when we reach England. Am told this is the only weight-lifting class in the P.O.W. camps in Germany.

Shifting Diet

Stalag XIII. 19.11.44.

I MOVED here with about 150 others three weeks ago to-day on the first British working Commandos in this area. Apparently it is a fairly safe area from the point of view of the R.A.F. The nearest bomb was reported as five kilometres away. I can hardly believe it was as close as that, or the building where we live would have fallen down! I understand now where the term "Jerry-built" comes from, although this place was known P.O.W. built.

The job we are on is general labour on the construction of what appears to be a canal running parallel with a river; but I cannot imagine what the canal is for, and I hope I may be here long enough to find out. Shifting diet from one place to another does not appeal to me as a pastime.

I had hoped at one time to be there in person to wish you a "Merry Christmas," but I'm afraid that this will have to do. Save me a pudding, though, and a jar of mince-tart—it won't have time to go bad.

Keeping Fit

Stalag IV. 29.10.44.

ALL in all, things are pretty good everywhere—even here on our half parcels. We had some parcels from

A view of the garden at the Merchant Navy Section at Marlag and Misag Nord. The seeds were sent out through the Red Cross by the Royal Horticultural Society.

1 lb., which is good going, considering we have only been training for one month.

The instructor here has written to us and very precious.

Enthusiasm for educational work and theatrical entertainment keeps us high as ever. A record number of exams are being taken by our men here, and we are in the midst of them at present. Many of the chaps have done extremely well, and in two years our honour list is very gratifying. It is strange to raise

pebble in an Alma Mater in a P.O.W. camp, but nevertheless we do get the "old school tie" feeling even for our Stalag school.

Stalag yesterday, enough until the middle of December. We notice the difference, of course, but we are still doing pretty well.

Football every week-end keeps us pretty fit, and the news keeps us cheerful. The German civilians here can't make out why prisoners of war are always laughing and singing. They think the English are mad. So they are, I think!

From a Man of Confidence

Stalag IV. 12.12.44.

HERE we are settling down once more for the winter. Things are not so good as they were with us, but nevertheless we have small reason to complain. We are still on half rations of Red Cross food, but that amount is a godsend to us and very precious.

Enthusiasm for educational work and theatrical entertainment keeps us high as ever. A record number of exams are being taken by our men here, and we are in the midst of them at present. Many of the chaps have done extremely well, and in two years our honour list is very gratifying. It is strange to raise pebble in an Alma Mater in a P.O.W. camp, but nevertheless we do get the "old school tie" feeling even for our Stalag school.



A cosy game of cards at Stalag XVIIIa.

A Lengthy Move

Stalag VIIa. 10.9.44.

THE reason why I have been so long in writing is that we took three and a half weeks to go to our camp and correspondence was impossible. On our way we passed Munich and saw some nice towns and surroundings. Finally, we arrived at Augsburg, where our camp is situated.

I have plenty of mates as our whole company was captured in Italy. We are in a cracking camp (treatment so far is good) and we go out every day to different jobs and we are not too hard-worked.

In Full Dress

Stalg 79.

27.10.44.

WHAT a day! Have received my first parcel, dated June. Am now sitting in my new slippers, socks, shirt and a tie given me by a room friend who also got a parcel. It is the first time I have had a tie on for just over a year, and it feels wonderful! To-night I shall sleep in pyjamas instead of vest and pants.

The parcel was absolutely marvellous, and could not have been packed better. I shared the chocolate with twenty of my friends who have given me some in the past. They all said how good it was.

All That Glitters

Stalg 118.

26.9.44.

I HAVE been reading quite a lot since I got here, having access to plenty of books.

This camp is situated well into the country so its not very—I'm not getting into the R.A.F.'s way at all. We are able to follow the progress of the war, although a little behind with the news.

The scene here resembles a tinmith's shop. The improvised tables are glittering with plates and mugs—you would be astounded at the extent of our improvisation. Anything and everything is made from tin—even clocks.

From a Theatre Enthusiast

Stalg 144.

12.11.44.

IT is a glorious misadventure season here in the forests, although the lovely red ones with white spots on that one imagines the pieces and gnomes to use as night are very poisonous.

We are going to have a very quiet Christmas here this time. Our loved ones at home will figure very largely in our thoughts and songs. We hope sincerely the hoodlums will not interfere with your own Christmas and that the New Year will bring the continued success of the companies, theatre and otherwise. (Referring to the OM Pic, and Sadler's Wells.)



In a fighting mood at Stalg XXXB.

Cheerful groups of men pose for a picture at Stalg XVIIA (right) and Stalg IVD (below).



All Kinds of Work

Stalg IYF.

24.12.44.

I AM miles away from any town of importance. There is only a small village three miles from us, and that is miles from any town. We never see any air raids, so never worry in that respect.

I am doing all kinds of work—wood repairing, joinery, blacksmith and painting on all quarry property of camp.

Music in Camp

Stalg XVIIA.

23.11.44.

WE held a short Remembrance Service on Saturday, and at Sunday morning service the choir sang "Oh, Valiant Hearts."

We formerly had two C. of E. pastors, viz., Rev. Price-Rees and Rev. J. Collins. The latter, a former Cambridge Blue, left about five days ago. He must have been well over six and a half feet tall, and he was very well liked here.

I received another of your most welcome letters. I think home letters are the "Bovril" in our camp life, which prevents "that sinking feeling."

Parcels have run out, so things are more or less unexciting at the moment.

Our last concert went well but I have still lots of ground to cover before I regain my former confidence in playing the piano before public gatherings. Still,



after four years' stagnation, I suppose this is not surprising. I have arranged the finale chorus of *The Mikado* for the next show, as the boys here seem to enjoy this open most of all.

Food Problems

Stalg 137.

20.11.44.

SPORT is defunct at present. Reading and cards are the main items over and above the varied interests we all take up to try and keep the rust from the grooves. I have taken up maths, insurance and German grammar. Nothing much shows past, though.

"Concoctions" is the over-powering topic now to spin out half-rations of food and tobacco. We are all fit and cheery.

SEND US YOUR PICTURES AND LETTERS

TEN SHILLINGS will be awarded each month to the winners of the first three letters from prisoners of war to be printed. Copies instead of the originals are requested, and whenever possible these should be set out on a separate sheet of paper, showing the DATES on which they were written. The Editor welcomes for other pages of the journal any recent NEWS relating to prisoners of war.

Ten Shillings will also be awarded for photographs reproduced across two columns, and five shillings for those under two. Photographs should be distinct, and any information as to when they were taken is helpful.

Address: Editor, "The Prisoner of War," St. James's Palace, London, S.W.1. The cost of these prizes and fees is distributed by a generous friend of the Red Cross and St. John War Organisation.

Official reports from



The courtyard at Oflag IVC where there have been no changes in the general layout of the camp since it was last visited in July, 1944.

OFLAG IVC, COLDITZ

Total strength of camp at time of visit was 230 officers and 51 other ranks, the total number of British prisoners of war being 200. There were no changes with regard to the general layout and interior arrangements of the camp since the last visit in July, 1944. The privileges provided by the camp commandant for further recreational facilities had not materialized. It has now been said that the chapel may be reopened.

There is a decided increase in the number of sick personnel, the most common symptoms being nervousness, insomnia and dyspepsia. There is a lack of medical and surgical equipment. British stocks are almost exhausted and the German supplies are inadequate.

(Visited October, 1944.)

STALAG IIA, NEUBRANDENBURG

This is a new camp and was visited for the first time. There are 253 American prisoners who were recently captured on the Western Front and 200 British N.C.O.s captured at Arnheim. It is situated in the vicinity of Neubrandenburg, about 70 miles north of Berlin. There are three barracks, of which two are at present partially occupied, and one serves as a reserve for expected new arrivals. There are slit trenches for protection from air raids.

Each barrack contains two sections. The sections are divided into 10 partitions, each partition holding 24 to 30 double-tier bunks, with hessian mat-

trasses filled with wood shavings and two blankets for each man. There are tables and benches, and in each section one oven and one stove; between the sections there is a wash-room and a boiler for heating purposes. Hot showers are available once a week. Electric lighting is inadequate.

The cooking is done by French cooks in the camp's central kitchen. The German notions are considered inadequate both in quantity and quality. The commandant agreed to detail American cooks to the kitchen. Red Cross supplies were exhausted at the time of visit.

The camp hospital was excellently equipped; the surgical section is under the care of a Polish doctor.

No Red Cross clothing supplies have arrived so far and many prisoners are badly in need of articles such as socks, shoes, underwear and greatcoats. Prisoners do their own laundry, but it will later be done by the camp laundry when that has been repaired.

There is no American or British chaplain. Prisoners of the Roman Catholic faith may attend Mass in the camp chapel, where a French priest officiates.

Although there is adequate recreational space there is a complete lack of sports equipment and so far the only physical exercise available has been walks. No incoming mail had been received at the time of visit. The visiting delegate was satisfactorily impressed with this camp; the German authorities appeared reasonable.

(Visited November, 1944.)

STALAG VIIA, MOOSBURG

The total strength of the camp at the time of visit was 11,688 prisoners of war, of whom 97 were British officers, 408 British N.C.O.s, and 3,720 British other ranks.

Officers' Section.—Two new barracks have been opened since the last visit and constitute a substantial improvement in the living arrangements. Officers are not allowed to meet other ranks in sport or entertainment activities. The prisoners have double-tier wooden bunks with straw mattresses. There is one recreation room with tables and benches. Heating arrangements are inadequate, and although there are stoves for the cooking of Red Cross food, the fuel supply is not sufficient. Each officer has one hot shower a week.

General state of health is good. Medical attention is given by a British medical officer when necessary.

There is a general shortage of clothing such as greatcoats, battledress and underwear. Officers have to wash their own socks and handkerchiefs as these

articles are not accepted by the laundry.

Mail is still erratic. Complaint was made of a shortage of sewing equipment. Only one bond and one spoon has been issued to each officer.

This camp, it must be realized, is merely a transit camp for officers, and the inhabitants are all recent captives who are awaiting admission to a permanent camp.

Other Ranks.—There have been no material changes in this section of the camp since the last visit in April, 1944. More vessels have been dug, thus improving the water supply. There were no complaints regarding shortage of water during the summer. British cooks are now employed in part of the canteen. There were no complaints about the food.

The new arrivals are all recent captives from the Italian and Western Fronts and are without winter clothing.

Religious and recreational facilities are well organized and there were no complaints. There is good liaison with the German welfare officers. Concerts and shows are frequent.

The general state of health in the camp is satisfactory.

(Visited October, 1944.)

LABOUR DETACHMENTS DEPENDENT ON STALAG VIIA

After the heavy bombardment of Munich a work detachment of about 1,400 men was formed for demolition work. The men have to travel for about three or four hours each day. They receive two meals in Munich and their full regular ration at Stalag. In the event of air attacks shelters are provided.

The Detachment held a meeting with the Men of Confidence from the following detachments:—

- 3011 Ludwig Ferdinandstr. Strength 571 prisoners of war.
 - 3732 Hindenburgstr. 364.
 - 3789 Pasing. 604.
 - 3881 Laim. 102.
 - 3841 Schillerstr. 53.
 - 3952 Res Ludovic Bad Tölz. 46.
 - 3718 Schleiersee. 20.
 - 3914 Wollmatschhausen. 16.
- also Nos. 1, 2 and 4 and 6 Railway Companies.

Since the last visit, the city of Munich has suffered several air raids. Up to the time of the visit there had been no British casualties. There are adequate air-raid shelters. The general conditions in all these detachments was reported to be satisfactory though here and there overcrowding occurs owing to destruction of barracks by fire bombs. The chief complaint by the medical officers was that several barracks were infested with vermin, chiefly fleas, but no lice.

the Camps

The state of health in all the detachments is as good as reported as good. Further supplies of Red Cross clothing and shoes are badly needed. Dried fruit is available in all detachments.

The chaplain from the main stalag pays regular visits. Welfare work is well organized. (Visited October, 1944.)

STALAG VIII A, GORLITZ

Strength of camp at date of visit was 1,225 British prisoners of war. 1,260 prisoners of war are scattered in 47 working detachments. There have been no changes in the material layout of the camp since the last visit in July and the interior arrangements are still satisfactory. There were no complaints about washing and bathing facilities.

This camp is now entirely out of stock of Red Cross parcels, but the men realize the difficulties of transport in the despatching of supplies and it was hoped that a new supply would arrive in the near future.

The Red Cross clothing position is reported to be good, the only shortages being small-size boots and jackets. There were 24 prisoners sick at the time of visit, but none of them seriously. The camp hospital is still run very satisfactorily by British medical officers and there was an adequate drug supply.

Recreational facilities are still very satisfactory. Rugby and football are played daily and there is physical training every morning and evening. The camp band was on tour to work detachments.

English and American films are shown. The discipline barrack mentioned in the last report was said to be less overcrowded and only a very few British prisoners of war awaiting court martial are being kept there.

Conditions at this camp remained very good and all possible support is received from the German authorities.

(Visited November, 1944.)

LABOUR DETACHMENTS Dependent on STALAG VIII A

No. 12403, Felhammer.—152 British prisoners of war work in a coal mine, of whom 102 work below ground. Accommodation has improved, in so far as a new recreation barrack has been built. The Man of Confidence complained that not enough disinfectant was being used and there are far too many fleas and lice. Clothing is short, especially trousers. Heating is inadequate, but the German authorities promised to issue a third blanket for each prisoner.

Medical attention is given by a German civilian doctor, medical supplies were short.

No. 10893, Sengsdorf.—34 British prisoners of war work in a tile factory for nine hours a day. Every second Sunday is free. The only complaint was that the margin ration had been cut. The German authorities promised to look into this matter, but it was feared that this cut is current all over Germany.



A play in progress at Oflag IVC, and (below) a corner of the gymnasium at Stalag VIIA, Moosburg.



25 British prisoners of war at No. 11101, Weier, are employed in a stone quarry for nine hours daily, no work on Sundays. There were no complaints. At Detachment No. 1102, Kerzdorf, 57 prisoners of war are employed in a cement works making blocks for houses. Saturday afternoons and Sundays are free. The prisoners had no complaints.

No. 14004, Koenigsberg.—50 British prisoners of war are accommodated in a stone house in the small village of Koenigsberg. They are engaged in the repair and maintenance of railway lines. Working hours are 9½ hours daily, with Saturday afternoons and Sundays free. Work is said to be hard, but can be managed by the prisoners.

There are double-tier beds and each prisoner of war has three German blankets. There is plenty of space in the house. Good light and air, the electric lighting is sufficient. The prisoners are



A group of prisoners of war at Stalag VIII A, Gorlitz, where conditions were reported good and recreational facilities satisfactory.

able to have a hot bath daily. Food is adequate and is cooked by the prisoners themselves. The only complaint was that they have had only horse meat issued to them, but it appears that the whole population of this area is having no other kind of meat.

There is no recognized medical orderly at this detachment. He is able to treat all minor ailments. Seriously ill prisoners are taken to hospital at Trautensee, where they are very well looked after. There is an urgent need of boots and greatcoats. Laundry is done by two prisoners who have every Saturday and Monday free to do the washing for the whole camp. In winter difficulty is experienced in the drying of the washing. The Germans have promised to issue more coal for this purpose.

Football is played regularly in a nearby field. There are plenty of indoor games and medical equipment. The general impression given to the delegate was that this is an excellent detachment.

No. 14808, Two-Alstadt.—Strength of this detachment is 35 prisoners of war. They are accommodated in a large wooden barrack situated near a small village in the valley of the Riesengebirge. The men work in three different factories for 9½ hours daily. Saturday afternoons and Sundays are free with the exception of some men who have to work every third Sunday. Full compensation is given in the week.

Twelve men sleep in each room. Each man has a cupboard to himself and has been issued with two German blankets. There is a very good washroom in the barrack with running water. Each man has a hot shower each week and if desired one can be had almost daily.

There is a large well-equipped kitchen with two large stoves and a good-size stove. The cooking is done by two British prisoners. The only complaint about the German rations was the quality of the meat. There had been no issue of Red Cross parcels for two weeks.

Medical treatment is not satisfactory as the German doctor is always too busy to examine the prisoners properly and the men have to rely on the medical orderly. The clothing situation is quite satisfactory except for boots and greatcoats. There is plenty of opportunity for football and indoor sports. The large mess-room has been transferred into a theatre, which is much in use and very satisfactory. Mail is slack at present.

This working detachment which used to be on good terms with the medical orderly, has been deteriorated since the appointment of a new commandant. A further commandant is to be appointed and it is hoped that the detachment will again flourish.

(Visited November, 1944.)



Some prisoners at Stalag 317 (XVIIIc) where the total number of our men is 982. The interior arrangements here have not improved since the last visit in March, 1944.

STALAG 317 XVIIIc, MARKT PONGAU

The total number of prisoners in the stalag area is 982, of whom 713 are in the base camp and 269 in six labour detachments. The interior arrangements have not improved since the last visit in March, 1944. Many of the newcomers to the camp are without palliasses and have to sleep on the bare planks of wooden double-tier bunks. Working men are now able to get a hot bath on two extra evenings.

At the time of the visit the stock of Red Cross parcels was expected to last about two months. Stocks of Red Cross clothing are now practically all owing to the outfitting of new arrivals.

The hospital is satisfactory and the three British medical officers work amicably with the German doctor. Laundry is done by the men themselves. There is a regular issue of soap.

Prisoners in the work detachments are engaged on surface work, building, demolition, road mending, etc. Men in the stalag who work on Sunday mornings have Saturday afternoons free. There is a fair-sized recreation field for sports and exercises. Four American films have recently arrived. These have already been shown and the fourth will be shown in the near future.

Mail is again coming in quite regularly.

This camp did not give a good impression to the visiting delegate. The former air-minded commandant had been replaced by an East Prussian, who fails to exact the necessary authority from his subordinates. The visiting delegate met the British Men of Confidence from the six detachments. There were no serious complaints from any of them.

(Visited October, 1944.)

HOSPITAL MININGEN

The total number of patients in the hospital at the time of visit was 232 American and 260 British. The hospital

staff numbered 60, making a grand total of 472 British and American prisoners of war. Since the last visit the hospital is now slightly overcrowded owing to an influx of new patients from Ansbach. The increased number of patients has resulted in more beds having to be put up in the various wards, but two new barracks are to be erected, replacing two smaller ones, which should improve conditions in all wards and rectify the overcrowding. A weekly hot shower is still available, but the existing number of washrooms is insufficient. A new barracks with washrooms and toilet facilities is also to be built.

The supply of fresh vegetables had increased greatly during the last few weeks and there were no complaints regarding food. There was six to seven weeks' supply of Red Cross parcels, including invalid diet parcels.

As pointed out in the last report on this hospital, all the patients have been transferred from Gleimsdorf for athletic exercises. Experienced sports officers are daily directing courses of physical training, and artificial limbs are being made in the special well-equipped workshop. There is an adequate supply of drugs and medicines.

There is still no stock of upper clothing. Greatcoats and blankets are greatly in demand.

7,000 razor blades were recently received from the Germans, but otherwise there was nothing on sale in the canteen.

The cigarette position is now bad for all prisoners of war, the German monthly issue having been stopped. Mail, which was bad at the time of the invasion, is now coming in again for long-term prisoners of war.

The general impression of this hospital is still good. When the new barracks have been completed the overcrowding should be considerably decreased and conditions will be very satisfactory.

(Visited November, 1944.)

BRIGHTER SIDE (contd. from page 8), down O.K." One paddling at this camp weighed 21 lb.

Story with a Moral

"Here we are again with another news and a story with a moral." Thus begins a letter from Stalag 344, which continues: "For the last two or three weeks our faces were growing longer and longer as Christmas approached and Red Cross parcels were scarce. As we did not expect—or get—anything, it was a blue outlook." Then the parcels began to start to arrive—a small issue on the Saturday morning, and a larger one in the afternoon. So the writer was able to report: "Everyone has that cheerful feeling only to be succeeded by that day to come."



Some of the first repatriates to step ashore from the *Arundel Castle* which brought 704 of them home early in February

WHEN the ship boomed slowly into sight out of the Merseyside mists her whiteness made the scene almost unreal. Gradually the large red cross and the lettering on her side became discernible. Then as the tug brought her with painful slowness to the quay-side, the rows of men on every vantage point could be seen. When the silence had become almost unbearable they broke suddenly into a full-throated cheer, the echo of which was taken up by the famous warbling call from the Australians. The military band played familiar tunes and the singing of those on the landing stage mingled with the voices from the ship.

Greetings from the shore were short and to the point. We were delighted to have the men back again. They would be conveyed to their destinations as speedily as possible. That was all they were really anxious to know. Every sentence of welcome spoken into the microphone was echoed back with an answering cheer from the ship—particularly loud when the magic word "home" was voiced.

Later, on board, the 704 repatriates ceased to be a cheering, excited mass and separated into their varying per-

sonalities, each with his own personal hopes and fears. These were the men lost to England on the fighting retreat to Dunkirk, at the Salerno landings, in the air over Germany and at Amiens. Now they had returned, some after a captivity lasting five years.

They were eager for news, eager to tell of their experiences. Sunkies were the order of the day. When you saw the expression on a man's face, his injuries suffered no longer. Often the greater his incapacity, the broader seemed his grin. This was the moment for which they had been waiting for so long. Their patience while they waited their turn to go ashore was remarkable, as they listened for the cheerful and efficient announcements over the ship's radio for "Such and Such" to report on "C" deck ready to disembark.

An R.A.F. warrant officer, who recounted proudly that he had been taking part in the famous raid on the Dortmund-Ems Canal when his aircraft was shot down, said that he had been an expert in feminine make-up for showers in Stalag Luft I, III, VI, VII. He expected people in Oldham would find him "different" after five years away, but was reassured to the contrary.

More Come Home

A young Pole with a particularly beaming smile who was bound for a hospital in Scotland to have an artificial limb fitted, said that the loss of a leg would in no way hamper him in his profession, which was law.

A lieutenant from Ofag 79 spoke enthusiastically of the small daughter who had been described to him in letters, but whom he had not yet seen. His home was in Surrey, and he asked keen questions about flying bomb damage.

Many repatriates naturally wanted news of flying bombs and rockets from the "receiving" end. These weapons had been so highly propagandized by the Germans that our humorous term "doodles" and buzz bombs, which were new to many, seemed almost flippant.

There was one big lack, however, which the Germans could not hide from our men, and that was the work of the R.A.F. Quite apart from any experience they may have had in camp of the raids, they were able to see for themselves through the carriage windows as they journeyed across Germany the mile upon mile of devastation.

Navy had brought themselves up to date with news of this country in their chats with the six British Red Cross and St. John—and one Australian Red Cross—volunteer officers, and the eight nurses of Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service who cared for these too ill to be up and about. These women with their Red Cross comforts and the cautions which had supplied 300,000 cups of tea during the voyage had been the first link with home, and this had obviously meant a very great deal. Enthusiastic signed tributes were received on behalf of the repatriates by these welfare officers and more than 2500 we gave in donations or expressions of gratitude.

B. C. S.

THE annual dance and white drive held by the warzone of "A" district, Northwood, was well supported, and a lively account of the proceedings relates that "during a break from dancing the guests allowed a mysterious 'Mr. S.' to hold one of his unique 'sales of work' when he disposed of an assortment of goods at amazing prices. This gentleman seems to work on a system that extracts money from willing bidders at 2s per minute, as in half an hour he 'took' £52 from a very generous audience, so bringing the total for the evening to £143." Wardens at Post 22, Teipene Lane, Cliffton, have helped, too, with another donation, and the Battery Platoon (Devon) of the Home Guard arranged

How They Help

In addition to those mentioned below, we wish to thank the many kind readers whose help to the funds this month we cannot find room to record here individually

whist drives and a dance from which they made £55 11s., thereby achieving £112 in all to help our prisoners of war. White drives for which Mr. J. C. Glendinning, of Beaumont, Cumberland, was responsible, have brought in the handsome amount of £219 14s., while the Swinton branch of the British Legion sent £12 2s. 6d., a further gift.

£2 7s. 6d. has come from Mrs. Peck, of Sheffield, who sold a glass bowl and stand, and £3 as a Christmas present for

her son, who has been a prisoner for three years from Mrs. Bromham, of Addiscombe, Miss Davies, of Leeds, who has two nephews who are prisoners of war, has realised an average of £1 5s. each month for the

last twelve months by means of eggs! A cheque forwarded from some thirty members of the Rowley Regis Area of the British Prisoner of War Relief Association, with the amount previously subscribed since March, 1943, adds up to £700, and money to cover the cost of 418 food parcels was raised from a New Year's Eve concert arranged by Mr. A. G. Baxter at the Odéon Theatre, Llandudno, among the artists being Olive Richardson and Tony Leary of the B.B.C.

Football in the Camps



Personal Parcels Man

A P.o.W. at Stalag 357 Describes his Work

I **B**USY myself with the affairs of the R.A.F. here, who number some 3,000 men. This means that their interests at all times must be cared for, whether it be a question of food parcels or private parcels. It signifies little on paper, but I can assure you that many problems resolved here would tax the tactfulness of Solomon himself.

We manage to get to work before the others go on roll-call as our parcel office is situated outside the compound, in what is called the *Forlager*, which adjoins but is separated from the compound. Here our office deals with all the personal parcels which arrive at the camp. The parcels are coming in very well, but we expect a hold-up shortly due to the parcel route closing in July and August. They are sorted into the various sections, listed, and the lists sent round the camp informing the lucky individuals when to collect them. The parcels are pushed on a two-wheeled cart into the compound and opened and searched by the Germans in a central room.

When They Move

Our other department deals with parcels which belong to individuals who, for some reason or other, are no longer with us. As previously reported, the whole of Stalag Luft 6 did not come here with us, and, as most of the parcels addressed to Luft 6 arrive at this camp first, this department is kept very busy.

It is also our duty to repack any parcels which have been damaged en route, and, believe me, there are quite a number. Sacks of parcels sent on by other

These five prisoners of war at Stalag IVA act as postmen.



Stalags have lists inside them telling us the number of parcels contained therein and it is our duty to ensure that everything is all right, sign the receipt and return to the Stalag concerned. If anything untoward has happened to the sack a report must be made to the P.O.

Book Censorship

Book parcels are dealt with in a different way. These are not allowed in the compound until such time as they have been censored. We therefore open the parcels, and prepare the book for censoring, and take them to the censor. This officer controls all matter (printed) which is destined for the compound. He is assisted in his work by three index and a few men, and everything that concerns parcels or books is reported to this office either by the German in charge of our department or by myself. My face is becoming known here as it was previously at the Luft camp.

How Parcels Arrive

The sacks of personal parcels arrive by two distinct means. Some come by rail to the station, and we collect them by motor. Recently, however, it has been very hard to obtain a motor so we have had to perform this task by hand-cart. The others come by post and we collect them from the local post-office on the hand-cart.

The personnel at both of these sources are beginning to know me now, and the job of collecting parcels, although quite hard, is most enjoyable. A better knowledge of customs and language is obtained, and the chance of my becoming a victim of barbed-wire fever is very remote. One of the fair sex even went to the extent of calling me a funny man, but it might even mean that I have developed a "Stalag-happy" complex. This is a current expression now in use.

December 2nd, 1944.



Knit This Practical Scarf

IN MOSS STITCH

MATERIALS.—6 oz. Double Knitting, Two No. 5 Knitting Needles.

ACTUAL MEASUREMENTS.—Width, 8 ins. Length, 54 ins.

TENSION.—4½ st. to the inch in width (not stretched) must be obtained to give a garment of the above-mentioned

size. *K*, using the needles recommended, more than 4½ st. to the inch are obtained, needles a size coarser should be tried; if less than 4½ st., then a size finer. Whatever the size of needles found suitable by the Knitter, it is absolutely essential that the fabric should measure 4½ st. to the inch.

TO MAKE.—Cast on 34 st.

Work 6 rows in plain knitting.

7th Row.—(*K*, 1, *P*, 1) three times, *K*, 1. * increase once in next st., (*P*, 1, *K*, 1) four times, repeat from * twice (there should now be 27 st. on needle).

8th Row.—*K*, 1, * *P*, 1, *K*, 1, repeat from * to the end of the row. Repeat the 8th row until the work measures 53 inches from the commencement, ending with the right side of the work facing. In next row *K*, 7, * *K*, 2 tog., *K*, 2, repeat from * to end of row. Work 3 rows in plain knitting. Cast off. With a damp cloth and hot iron press carefully.

(Photograph and instructions by courtesy of *Patron and Modiste*.)

Camp Transfers

Statement on February 13th

TWELVE camps, whose numbers are given below, have either been overrun by the Soviet Forces or are in their direct path. There were about 60,000 prisoners from the British Commonwealth in these camps.

Following are the camps:—

Stalag IIB, Stalag IID, Stalag IIIB, Stalag IIIC, Stalag III, Stalag VIIIB, Stalag VIIIC, Stalag XXA, Stalag XXB, Stalag VIII, Stalag IV, Stalag Luit VII.

Information given in the House of Commons on February 22nd

AS regards the movements of camps in Eastern Germany, the present position, according to the latest information available, is as follows:

Stalags XXA, XXB and IIB are moving through the Province of Mecklenburg. Some are being moved by rail.

From Stalag Luit III, 2,000 British and American prisoners of war have been transferred to Stalag IIIA, at Luckenwalde; 2,000 to Marlag and Milag Nord (near Hamburg); 2,000 to Stalag XIIIIC, east of Frankfurt-on-Main, and 4,000 to Stalag VIIA in Bavaria.

Prisoners of war from Stalags VIIIA

and VIIIC are moving through Saxony. A number of prisoners unfit to travel are being moved from Stalag VIIIA by rail.

Some prisoners from Stalag Luit IV are reported to have been moved, near Schweinfurt, on the Baltic.

Stalag Luit VII was reported to be near Spremberg, from where the prisoners are to be transferred to the neighbourhood of Nuremberg and Moosburg in Bavaria.

Stalag VIIIB is reported to be moving towards Aussig, south of Dresden.

The final destination of the prisoners transferred from the above camps is not yet known.

War Office Statement, February 26th

Four thousand British and American sick have left Landsberg (Stalag 344) for a destination in Germany as yet unknown. Fit prisoners from Stalag 344 are on the march between Boemisch Lippe and Cassel.

Prisoners from Stalag VIIIA are dividing: part are proceeding towards Cassel, part to Nuremberg, while prisoners from Stalag VIIIC are moving—some towards Hannover, others towards Cassel. Advance parties are already nearing their destination.

PARCELS

For P.O.W.s Formerly in Camps in Eastern Germany and Poland

THE Postmaster-General announces that PARCELS should not now be sent to British prisoners of war formerly in the camps (including associated labour detachments and hospitals) in Poland and Eastern Germany mentioned below until new addresses are received either through official notification to the next of kin or from letters from the men themselves.

LETTERS for these prisoners can continue to be posted addressed to the last-known camp address.

The camps in question are:—

Stalag IIB	Stalag VIIIA
" IID	" VIIIB
" IIIA	" VIIIC
" IIIB	" XXA
" IIIC	" XXB
" IIID	" XXID

Stalag 344

Stalag Luit III, Luit IV, Luit VIII
B.A.B. 20 B.A.B. 21
Ofag 64

The Post Office will despatch, as opportunity offers, next of kin parcels for these camps which have already been repacked and reposted by the British Red Cross, and also parcels of cigarettes, tobacco, etc., posted by holders of censorship permits. In expectation that they will be redirected by the German authorities.

In order, however, not to add to the difficulties of redirection, the British Red Cross will return to the senders any sent of kin parcels for these camps which have not been repacked, and the public should not place further orders with holders of censorship permits as parcels sent by this means cannot be returned.

In the case of other camps, next of kin or "permit" parcels as well as letters can continue to be sent for the time being. Recdes are advised to look out for further official announcements.

Labels and Coupons

In view of the G.P.O. announcement, no more labels and coupons will be issued for the time being to the next of kin of prisoners whose last address was that of one of the camps mentioned. This applies to first and later issues.

A postcard will be sent to the next of kin of men in these camps whose parcels were despatched shortly before February 26th, giving the date of despatch and explaining the position.

Next of kin already holding labels and coupons for men in these camps should keep them until a new address is known. They are advised to consult the P.O.W. Department before despatching any further parcels and to look out for further official announcements by the General Post Office.

NUMBER, PLEASE!

PLEASE be sure to mention your Red Cross reference number whenever you write to us. Otherwise delay and trouble are caused in finding previous correspondence.

Y.M.C.A. SPORTS MEDALS

THE British Men of Confidence at Stalag IVa has written to inform the mother of a lance-corporal there that the Y.M.C.A. Sports Medal has been awarded to her son "who has organised football under difficult conditions and has striven week after week to keep the 'lads' at the game." He demonstrated his sportsmanship and love of the game in a recent "England v. Scotland" match. He captained the losing team (England) and, as a token of goodwill, presented his Regimental Cap Badge to the captain of the winning side. A cap badge to a soldier in captivity is his most treasured possession. Such spirit as his puts Britain where she is in the world of sport. . . .

P.O.W. Exhibition Catalogues

Those who may wish to obtain a copy of the catalogue as a souvenir of the Prisoners of War Exhibition which was held in London last year should send 7d. to cover cost and postage as soon as possible to:—

Mr. Tomlin, Red Cross and St. John War Organisation, Publicity Department, 24, Carlton House Terrace, London, S.W.1.

Gift from Woolwich

The British Armaments Inspection Department at Woolwich is helping to provide weekly food parcels for prisoners of war. They have already sent Red Cross a cheque for £100, with their good wishes and their target is £500.

County Representatives

Please note the following changes:—
DEVONSHIRE.—Mrs. Geoffrey Tones, B.R.C.S. Office, Prudential Chambers, Exeter.

FREE TO NEXT OF KIN

THIS journal is sent free of charge to those registered with the Prisoners of War Dept. as next of kin. In view of the paper shortage no copies are for sale, and it is hoped that next of kin will share their copy with relatives and others interested.