

THE CANADIAN PRISONERS OF WAR RELATIVES ASSOCIATION

NEWS

SHEET



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CHRISTMAS CHOCOLATE FUND

Last Christmas our Association sent three tons of chocolate to prisoner of war camps in Germany. This special privilege was granted to the C.P.O.W.R.A. by the Canadian Government and we are to be allowed the same privilege this year.

The enthusiasm with which the chocolate was received by Canadian prisoners of war and by their comrades with whom they shared the parcels, was such that we feel no improvement can be made in a choice of a Christmas parcel. In view of the increased number of prisoners it will be necessary to send 5 or 6 tons of chocolate this year to provide every prisoner with 2 lbs each, which can only be done if sufficient money is contributed by friends and relatives of prisoners.

The present time is possibly the most anxious period for prisoners' families. No one can predict how long it will be after hostilities have ceased before our prisoners can return home. And hostilities have not yet ceased.

Prompt and generous contributions to the Christmas Fund will not only insure our men of receiving a supply of chocolate, but will show them that they are not being forgotten at Christmas. It is a responsibility to be shared by every prisoner's family and his friends. We can be very sure that whatever hardships they may have to face before their liberation, our prisoners will show the same courageous spirit that has filled us all with deep admiration during their long years of captivity. We must continue to help them in every way that we are able and increase, rather than slacken, our efforts on their behalf.

In the event of the liberation of our prisoners before Christmas, the chocolate will be forwarded to the International Red Cross in Geneva for distribution amongst European children or for some other worthy cause. Instruction to this effect is printed on the label of each parcel.

EDITORIAL NOTES

All Correspondence to the Association should be addressed to the Secretary, Mrs. E. I. Barott, C.P.O.W. R.A., 150-A Sun Life Building. Requests for educational books and copies of prisoners letters should be written on a separate sheet of paper. Relatives are invited to submit their problems and difficulties which will receive prompt and sympathetic attention.

WHAT TO SEND TO PRISONERS OF WAR

The Department of External Affairs has advised us that after discussing the question of sports, games and music parcels with the last groups of repatriated Canadian prisoners from Germany, the following conclusions were reached:

The general view was that Canadian sports equipment was probably the best in use in the camps. The prisoners nevertheless stressed the need for equipment of the best quality, since only a limited quantity can be sent. Some of them felt that generally speaking the tennis and badminton rackets which had been sent were not of sufficiently good quality. There was also a shortage of tennis balls, a sample having at one time sold in a particular camp for \$125.

Handicraft material — embroidery for example — is in demand at hospitals. Playing cards are evidently always in fairly short supply. The men definitely do not, however, appreciate simple games of the Snakes and Ladders type; they were virtually unanimous in saying that no more of these should be sent.

Sheet music — as we knew previously — is always in demand. This information will provide a welcome guidance for next-of-kin and others who send parcels to prisoners.

"JOKES" IN P.O.W. PARCELS RESENTED

In view of recent complaints from P.O.W. camps in Germany regarding the inclusion of infantile games in sports parcels, an export permit firm informs us that one shipment of such parcels was sent through them, the contents having been chosen as "jokes" and the firm was not responsible for the regrettable incident. This form of humour was not appreciated by the prisoners who received the parcels and whose disappointment in finding useless childish toys instead of games which would help pass the tedious hours, can readily be understood. The importance of parcels to prisoners of war cannot be too strongly stressed. It is a serious business and one in which "jokes" are out of place. In this instance the attempt at being funny was bitterly resented.

AIRMAIL FOR P.O.W.

Airmail forms for prisoners of war and civilian internees in Europe and the Far East now require a 5c stamp only instead of 10c as heretofore in spite of the fact that 10c is still printed on the forms.

"CANADA CALLING"

A weekly news sheet entitled Canada Calling is being published at Stalag Luft VI by Sgt. Jaffray of Hamilton, Ont., and an editorial staff. Information printed in Canada Calling is taken from the prisoners letters from home and letters from official sources and organizations such as the Canadian Legion, C.P.O.W.R.A. etc. The magazine is very popular with the prisoners.

GARDEN SEEDS

The following letter was received by the Royal Horticultural Society and forwarded to us:—

Stalag XXB
Germany
May 2nd, 1944.

I wish to acknowledge receipt of 44 cartons of flowers and vegetable seeds which have arrived between January and April of this year.

These have been distributed amongst the Main Camp, the P.O.W. Hospital and some 180 working parties, large and small.

On behalf of the Prisoners of War of this Stalag, I should like to tender my most sincere thanks for your kindly thought. I am glad to say that a great many men have taken a keen interest in gardening; in fact, this hobby provides just the right amount of relaxation and pleasure necessary to them. Last summer I had the pleasure of seeing some really fine vegetable gardens: in fact, some were so good that competitions were encouraged. I hope to send you a report later on this year's efforts.

May our thanks and appreciation please be conveyed also to the Canadian Prisoners of War Association.

J. Fulton
C.S.M. 14830
British Man of Confidence.

CANADIAN CLUB AT STALAG IV B

Stalag IVB,
Germany,
17th June 1944.

Once again we are taking this chance of writing to you and your worthy club to let you know of the boys at Stalag IVB, Germany. Our numbers are well over 250 and I can safely say that all is well here.

Since we last wrote you our conditions have become much better, we have received large consignments of sports equipment from the Canadian Red Cross, and at the present all this is being used all day.

Our mail and parcels are received here quite regular, in fact, we have received a letter from Canada as late as 24th May 1944. The latest parcel received is in the middle of March, both the above dates are those of the date when sent.

We are in touch with the Club in Stalag Luft VI, and receive correspondence from them regularly. We hold our meetings monthly, and at present are preparing for big celebrations on the 1st of July.

Some of the boys are now receiving the Educational courses that we asked for from the Canadian Legion, and are studying quite hard.

We are well organised in all the sports in the camp, and hope to show the English lads some American Rugby on the 1st of July. Some of the other sport that we play are baseball, volleyball, basketball and of course take part in all the track meets.

I hope that I have not taken too much of your time with my ramblings, but that you will let the folks at home know what is taking place at Stalag IVB.

Once again on behalf of all the Canadians in the Camp, I wish to thank you and your fellow workers for all the help and interest that you take in us. We are still looking forward to the day when we will be able to return to our homes and take up our lives where we left off, and once again many thanks from all at Stalag IVB.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) JACK MEYERS, R59567, P.O.W. 122,
President, Canadian Club.
STALAG IVB

CANADIAN MAIL FOR P.O.W. IN GERMANY

The "Gripsholm", which sailed recently for Sweden to exchange German and Allied prisoners of war, also carried 1,500 bags of parcels for Canadian prisoners of war in Germany.

These are the bare facts, but there is a story behind them.

When the Post Office learned that there would be space for Canadian mail to prisoners of war, it immediately began to make arrangements for 1,100 bags of parcel post, on hand in New York, to be included. Normally parcels for German prison camps are sent through Basle, in Switzerland, by way of the port of Marseilles. Since Marseilles became a battle zone, that service had to be suspended, and parcel post waiting to be shipped had accumulated. In addition, all these bags were addressed to Basle, whereas to send them by Swedish steamer it meant that they would have to be addressed to "Postamt, Deutsches Reichspost, Babelsberg, Berlin". This meant changing the labels on all the bags — a formidable job for men in a hurry.

New labels for Babelsberg were printed in Ottawa and despatched to New York by plane the next day where, through the courtesy and co-operation of the United States postal officials, the original labels were quickly removed and the new labels put on.

The same day, a shipment of 165 bags, all labelled for Basle, was awaiting despatch to New York. The labels of all these bags were changed, and relative documents, parcel bills, etc., put in order, and the shipment went forward to New York that evening as originally intended.

Other parcels cleared by Postal Censorship up to Monday, August 21 — more than 200 of them — were also labelled and despatched to New York in time to be loaded on the "Gripsholm". This means that all next-of-kin parcels to prisoners of war which had accumulated from early in July to August 21st, have now been cleared.

Thus does the Canadian postal service keep its collective eye peeled for ways and means of keeping up delivery of parcels to Canadian war prisoners.

Letter mails are flown to Lisbon, where they are picked up by the German airline "Lufthansa" and carried to Germany. So far there has been no difficulty with this arrangement, but recently a notice appeared in the press to the effect that the Lufthansa had discontinued its service between Germany and Portugal. However, with the Allies moving forward in the south of France it is hoped in the near future to be able to carry these mails at least as far as Switzerland by Allied air transport.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND

We are indebted to the B.P.O.W.R.A. and the Scottish Branch B.R.C.S. for the following information :

SUPPLIES FOR FAR EAST

Mr. Eden has said that on May 8th a proposal for the despatch of Red Cross relief supplies to the Far East by a western route was communicated to the Japanese Government by the Swiss Minister at Tokyo on behalf of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Government of India. The Japanese Government were asked to permit one freight steamer, manned by a neutral crew and operating under the auspices of the International Red Cross, to carry from an agreed port, to a port or ports on the perimeter of Japanese-controlled territory, foodstuffs and medicines for British, United States and Netherlands prisoners of war and civilian internees. It was suggested that on the return journey the ship should carry special supplies to interned Japanese nationals in Allied hands. The Japanese Government were asked to specify the port in the Far East to which this ship should proceed and the routes to be followed. A second ship would be placed at the disposal of the relief supplies delivered by the first ship, to those areas where prisoners of war and civilian internees were held.

No reply, Mr. Eden said, had yet been received to this proposal.

RADIO MESSAGES TO FAR EAST

Sir James Grigg has said that the broadcasting of messages to prisoners of war and civilian internees in Japanese hands from All India Radio Station, Simla, is being curtailed and may be discontinued altogether on security grounds.

CAMP LOCATIONS

We are indebted to the Red Cross for the following information about the location of camps :

Stalag 357 is at Thorn;

Stalag Luft IV is at Sagan;

Oflag VIII F is at Waggum, near Brunswick;

Oflag IV B is at Koenigstein;

Dulagluft has been moved from Frankfurt to Wetzlar, 30 miles north-west of Frankfurt.

CHRISTMAS PARCELS - 1944

Some 210,000 Christmas food parcels were packed in June by the Red Cross, ready to be dispatched to British prisoner of war camps in Europe in time for Christmas. The contents of the parcels were planned in January, and the Christmas packing programme will be completed by the end of July to ensure that the parcels arrive in time.

FOOD SHIP'S 75,000 MILES

The Ambriz, a Portuguese ship of less than 1,000 tons, has sailed on her 50th voyage from Lisbon to Marseilles carrying Red Cross supplies to prisoners of war. The Ambriz has covered at least 75,000 miles and carried safely 3,120,000 Red Cross food parcels.

INDIAN RED CROSS

The Indian Red Cross Society has, with effect from January 1st this year, taken over from the Indian Comforts Fund the financial responsibility for all next-of-kin clothing parcels for Indian prisoners of war in Europe. These half-yearly parcels were previously provided and paid for by the Indian Comforts Fund which will continue to pack and dispatch them from London, thus acting in this respect as agents for the Indian Red Cross. The present output is 24,000 parcels per annum.

SEEDS ARE APPRECIATED AT
OFLAG IX A/H

April 23rd, 1944.

We have received 2 parcels of Seeds from the R.H.S. (Royal Horticultural Society) — one Vegetables and one mostly Flower Seeds. These have been invaluable and mean a lot to us. I understand you have been one of the donors. From us all here I should like to say how grateful we are. Our Moat is now gay with daffodils and we shall be able to keep it in colour the rest of the Summer. Thanks to you the Vegetables will also be a welcome addition to our diet.

Yours truly,

(sgd) Victor M. Fortune,
Major General.

AMERICAN RED CROSS NEWS

We are indebted to the American Red Cross Prisoners of War Bulletin for the following information.

CAMP REPORT

STALAG IX C

There were 135 American prisoners of war at Stalag IX C at the end of May, according to cable advices from Geneva. Stalag IX C is at Bad Sulza in Central Germany, near Res. Lazaret Obermassfeld. Stalag IX C was visited last March by a Delegate of the International Committee, and his report stated that the camp contained, besides the American prisoners, about 2,400 British privates and noncoms. The men on work detachments were employed mostly in salt mining, but there is no record that American prisoners have been assigned to this work. The Delegate reported that the men in the base camp slept in tripledecker wooden bunks, and that tables and chairs were lacking. The report further stated that the kitchens were clean, that there were sufficient wash basins, toilets, and showers, and a good infirmary containing 32 beds with straw mattresses. Anglican and Catholic chaplains held services regularly, but outdoor athletics were impossible because of lack of space. The camp was equipped with air raid shelters. The men received German "regulation rations." There was a three week's supply of Canadian and American Red Cross food packages on hand, and the authorities had consented to a three month's reserve being accumulated.

FAR EAST MESSAGES

Forty-six cabled messages from the Philippines were received in the United States on June 12. The messages, all short, were sent by Americans interned mostly in the Santo Tomas and Los Banos camps. The filing dates of the messages were not given, but one of them was apparently sent on the man's birthday in the middle of March. Many of the messages reported receipt of personal packages and letters undoubtedly dispatched from this country on the diplomatic exchange ship Gripsholm last fall. A few also mentioned the

receipt of cables. About the same time some Red Cross postal message forms were received by mail, including two messages originating in the Philippines at the end of 1943. The messages all bore the stamp of the Japanese Red Cross date March 15, 1944, which indicates at least one instance of fairly rapid movement of mail from the Far East. These were the first Red Cross postal message forms to be received from the Philippines since the war began. The first personal cable messages received from American prisoners of war held by Japan arrived in April. These cables came, through Geneva, from eight prisoners of war at the Zentsuji camp to their families in the United States. In June, a personal cable message was received from an American prisoner in Thailand. Also in June, 24 postal cards from prisoners of war at Camp Hoten, Manchuria, arrived on the Red Cross ship Caritas II from Europe.

RUSSIAN COOPERATION

The Department of State announced in June that the Soviet government had expressed its willingness to cooperate in the distribution of relief supplies to American and Allied prisoners of war in the Far East. Russia has named a convenient Soviet Pacific port adjacent to Vladivostok where the relief supplies already on Soviet territory may be picked up by a Japanese ship. The Soviet government has also named an equally accessible port where such mail and relief supplies as may be shipped in the future for distribution to Allied nationals in Japanese custody may be picked up by Japanese ships. The State Department has informed the Japanese government of the foregoing, and it is hoped that in the near future these supplies will go forward and be distributed.

CARTONS

The American Red Cross is making arrangements to supply chapters throughout the country with carton containers of the right size and strength for next-of-kin parcels.

FAR EAST NEWS

REPORTS ON THE FAR EAST
from

THE WARTIME INFORMATION BOARD

A typhoon which destroyed some barracks of a camp for Japanese-held prisoners of war late last December was described in a radio broadcast from Japan, early in January. This was the first news Canada had had of the presence of Canadian prisoners at Niigata a town on the northwest coast of Japan.

Inquiries were immediately started through the various diplomatic channels used for communication between belligerents. The Japanese admitted there was a camp at Niigata, and that Canadians were stationed there. Eight Canadians lost their lives in the typhoon, and 21 were injured. (next of kin have been notified).

An official visit by a neutral representative to the camp in May revealed that there were 13 Canadian N.C.O's at the camp, and 112 privates, along with 215 Americans, 14 Dutch and 2 British prisoners. The first contingent arrived from Hong-kong, September, 2 1943, and the second from the Philippines on October 8, 1943. The camp is outside the danger zone, in a healthy district, and accommodation, in wooden huts, was considered satisfactory.

Prisoners have only been allowed to write once since arrival, although theoretically, they may send one letter and one postcard every four months. Three consignments of Red Cross parcels have been delivered, and the man of confidence reported that clothing was adequate and the food much improved. There is a medical officer and a dentist but no chaplain. A number of prisoners was suffering from beri-beri, digestive troubles, dysentery and respiratory diseases, although the medical officer said there had been considerable improvement in health since moving to the Niigata camp.

Only well prisoners work, some of them in machine industries, others in factories and at the docks. Warrant officers are paid 25 sen a day N.C.O's 15, and privates 10.

JAPANESE PRISONER OF WAR CAMP
RECEIVES PARCELS

Word has just been received that last April a relief shipment from the American Red Cross was distributed to the prisoners at Sub-Camp No. 11, Osaka, Japan, where 46 Canadians are held along with 345 prisoners of other nationalities.

The parcels consisted of one food parcel per capita, toilet articles, shoes, and medicines like multiple vitamins, ascorbic acid, nicotinic acid, riboflavin, etc.

The camp was opened last December and has a capacity of 600. It is in an isolated, airy, hilltop location in a healthy, fertile, farm region. The accommodation consists of new one-storied, wooden barracks, and light, ventilation, water supply and washing facilities are reported to be adequate.

The diet consists mainly of rice, bread, barley, soy beans, sorghum, meat and fish, vegetables, potatoes, and small amounts of fruit, tea, sweets and sugar. The prisoners receive no eggs, milk, margarine, butter, cheese, coffee, or canned food.

Most of the prisoners of war work at a factory for which they are paid. On rest-days they are allowed to go on hikes outside the camp. Some of them go in for vegetable gardening, others for rabbit raising. There is a camp orchestra, and a library of books contributed mainly by the Y.M.C.A.

Officers and warrant officers may write a 750-word letter or a 300-word postcard five times a year, NCO's four, and privates three.

I.R.C. DELEGATE

According to The Hong Kong Fellowship News Letter, the International Red Cross delegate, M. Zindel, has at last been recognised officially by the Japanese Government. He has worked unremittingly to improve the lot of the prisoners, and it is to him that the British Government have sent the monthly grant of £15,000 (increased in January from £10,000) to enable him to buy locally whatever medicines, food, games, etc., are obtainable, and to make small financial allowances to prisoners of war and internees.

LETTERS FROM CANADIAN P.O.W.
IN THE FAR EAST

The recent arrival of letters from Canadian prisoners of war in the Far East has brought great comfort to many families. Unfortunately the letters are still undated but all sound cheerful and some mention having heard from home.

Not all of our prisoners have been heard from in this latest batch of mail and there will be disappointment and anxiety felt by those families who did not receive news. To them we would point out that the lack of mail is not necessarily cause for worry. The method by which Japanese authorities distribute and despatch mail is inexplicable and appears to follow no system, it is therefore a matter of luck what letters get through. Some of the recent letters will be found on page 19 of this issue of the News Sheet.

ADDRESSING CANADIAN P.O.W.
IN JAPAN OR HONG KONG

Amended instructions have been received relative to the method to be used in addressing correspondence to Canadian Prisoners of War in Japan or Hong Kong and specimen addresses in the new form are show below:

"A" (if the prisoner of war is in Japan)
Prisoner of War Post (Postage free)
Service des prisonniers de guerre
Write full name and rank here
Service number and Unit
Canadian Prisoner of War
Location (if known)
C/O Huryojohokyoku, Japan.

"B" (if the prisoner of war is in Hong Kong)
Prisoner of war Post (Postage free)
Service des prisonniers de guerre
Write full name and rank
Service number and Unit
Canadian Prisoner of War
Hong Kong
C/O Huryojohokyoku, Japan.

The main change, it will be noted, is the addition of the Japanese word "Huryojohokyoku" which translated reads "Prisoner of War Information Bureau". Other important features to be considered are:

- All writing both on the envelope or in the letter itself must either be typewritten or written in BLOCK CAPITALS.
- The Japanese have advised that P.O.W. numbers and camp numbers should not be included when writing to Canadian prisoners of war.
- The name and address of the sender must be clearly shown on the back of the envelope.
- The letter itself should bear at the top the full name and address of the prisoner. One side only of a sheet of notepaper is to be used.
- Japanese regulations set a limit of 25 words for each letter. This restriction is believed to refer only to the text of the letter and not to the date, address, greeting, complimentary close or signature. The regulations further state that letters should be limited to one a month, but this is not intended to prevent other relatives than next of kin, or intimate friends, from writing one letter a month also.
- As Japanese censorship is very strict, letters must contain purely personal matters only. The Japanese authorities have stated that letters which do not conform to the regulations will not be delivered.

P.O.W. IN GERMANY CORRESPONDS
WITH A P.O.W. IN THE FAR EAST

According to the Scottish Prisoner of War News, a prisoner of war in Germany has been allowed to write regularly to a friend in a Japanese prison camp. It is not stated whether the letters reached their destination.

LETTERS FROM A P.O.W. ESCAPED FROM GERMANY, NOW INTERNED IN HUNGARY.

November 5th, 1943.

At last we have done the hat-trick. My friend and I escaped from Germany on October 7th, and after thirteen days walking we were picked up here and are now Hungarian P.O.W. Our circumstances are vastly altered. We are now allowed a certain amount of freedom both of mind and of body and treated with respect by a very gentlemanly and friendly people. We are to be held here until the finish of hostilities, which I hope will not be long. Please address all letters for me to this country and also if you could investigate the possibilities of sending parcels. We, of course, were forced to leave all our things behind us. I will write again as soon as possible and try to give further details. Please broadcast the news to the family.

November 18th, 1943.

Possibly by now you will have received the card which I wrote you last week. If so, you will understand, in part at least, what I have been doing. However, I will repeat and I have hopes that the censorship in this country is not as strict as Germany. Please let me know whether or not you receive this, as I shall only once write as fully. Also please let the rest of the family know about me, including my wife. I think you are all aware of my escape on Crete on June 21, 1941. A friend, New Zealander, and myself broke from the prison camp after being half starved and living under filthy conditions for twenty-one days. At the time I was ill with dysentery and had hopes of assistances which would help me to regain my health. This I received and by the end of a month I was cured. Unfortunately after the second month of our

temporary freedom my friend fell ill with jaundice and after two or three weeks was hardly strong enough to walk. At this time the German troops combed the hills in the district we were and, as we were unable to move, and our hide-out was not sufficiently covered we were re-captured. That fatal day was on September 16, 1941. During our period of freedom we had many interesting experiences as you can well imagine. However, we were taken to a local prison for a few days and then returned to our original camp. My friend was put in Hospital and almost immediately removed to Germany. I was put with the "strong and healthy" and was not sent to Germany until January 5, 1942. We were officially the last British prisoners to be removed from Crete. About 250 in all. We were taken from Crete to Athens, held there for about two weeks and then taken to Salonika. It was then that the worst period began which lasted for about six weeks before our eventual embarkation for Germany. Incidentally the Red Cross was very good to us during our short stay in Athens, but unfortunately eight men escaped so we were all locked up and the Red Cross barred. In Salonika we lived on a diet equal to about two ordinary slices of bread, six beans, nine lentils, one spoonful of olive oil and perhaps one cigarette a day. The only redeeming feature about that camp was the fact that we had plenty of water even if cold. And so eventually to Germany in March 1942. There was not enough room for everyone to lie down at once and it was freezing cold. We arrived in Lamsdorf Stalag VIII-B only to find that Red Cross parcels had run out some five weeks previously and the German issue was to say the least, lean. In spite of this we found our

conditions vastly improved. I went to work in an effort to try and rebuild my strength. The farm job E-407. We found the food insufficient and before long I was battling with a bout of malaria which absolutely drained about every ounce of spirit and energy I had left. However, shortly after I received Red Cross food and before long regained my strength and began to get into trouble. I have never since had a relapse of malaria. It was during the time of that illness when I met my present pal and we have stuck like glue to each other ever since. Early in January 1943 we were sent to a stone quarry, E-3U2. My friend escaped in April and was recaptured in Vienna and returned to Lamsdorf pending court-martial. However, proceedings fell through due to lack of evidence and we were together again. In September we left Lamsdorf for -159 stone quarry, and October 7th we both escaped. After thirteen days walking we were captured by Hungarian police, spent a few days each in various prisons and eventually came to Sigetvar, where we are at present under the care of a wealthy count. There are sixteen others besides ourselves. We are almost as free men and enjoy many privileges. Incidentally Hungary is not part of Germany as everyone seems to think. There are very few real Germans to be seen here. We work on the estate here but, of course, we don't work hard. Hungary is really an education in itself. I wouldn't have believed that such a peaceful country could exist in the Europe of today.

November 30th, 1943.

By now you will have received the card I wrote to you from Siklosvar telling you of my arrival in this country. I am not yet sure whether or not the censorship in this country is the same as in Germany, so, in order to be sure you will receive this letter and know I am well I will write nothing censorable. I am enclosing a photo which I had

taken a few days ago which I think will be conclusive evidence of the fact that I am in AI condition. At present I am under the care of the Count Andreassy Mihaly and in the company of eighteen other British soldiers all of whom arrived in this country in much the same manner as myself. We are very well cared for, have plenty to eat and are allowed to wear civilian clothes and have almost the same privileges as the people of the country. You can see from this that I have greatly improved my circumstances by coming to Hungary. We are given a little work to do in order to pay for our upkeep and later I expect we will be given proper jobs. At present the weather is very unsettled and everything is a bit topsy-turvy but later I hope everything will straighten out and we can settle down to a pleasant winter. The estate on which we are living at present is very near the southern border of the country and is quite historic. People are friendly toward us. At present winter is on the eve of setting in. Almost every day brings rain and at night heavy frost. There is no snow on the ground yet but we are expecting it daily. I have hopes that perhaps later on I shall have the opportunity of going skating. There is one Canuck amongst us, he is 25 years old and has recently fallen heir to a horse ranch in Alberta. I am not at all sure of how much I am allowed to write but if this letter is received I will have a pretty fair idea. All my letters and parcels which have been sent to Germany and which I had not received before my departure I am afraid must be counted as lost. I am very, very sorry about this but I could not let such a consideration stand in the way of what I think was my duty as a soldier. If it is possible could you please have sent to me such things as coffee and chocolate, razor, soap, towel, blades, civilian shirts, pullover, shoes size 9, 2 sets summer underwear and Sweet Caporal cigarettes, and the usual pipe tobacco. In future don't send anything

unless I ask for it specially as it may only be wasted. Send plenty of coffee in small packets of about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. or $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. as small packets are more practical. I don't know how possible it is to send things, but I think it is O.K. as one chap here has received one parcel from Canada. Naturally as I left Germany on the 7th October, I have not had news from anyone for some time. I am anxious to get in touch again. Occasionally we get news of troop movements, etc., and whenever I hear that more Canadians have been landed in England I wonder of J. is amongst them. I sincerely hope he remains at home as he is more valuable there. I suppose I can hardly blame him if he gets in the mix-up however, as it does hold a certain fascination. The experience is really worth nothing, excepting for a few nightmares. I have unlimited space in which to write but I am afraid I shall have to close as I have nothing of importance or interest to say. What is not understood on the envelope take for granted and ask no questions when writing.

January 11th, 1944.

I have written on two or three previous occasions since my arrival in Hungary, but I have no way of knowing whether or not the letters have been destroyed by censors. However, I will take precautions with this that it may be passed untouched. The Red Cross have informed me that P. has received knowledge of my changed address, so I hope that long before now you all know and understand. Of late I have been very busy. There are many things to do here. To begin, I am working all day in the Graf's factory, and at night I am busy with many social engagements amongst the locals, with whom I have become very friendly. I never seem to have a spare moment. When I am not working or visiting, there seems to be a million things for me to do around our home. We are now twenty-seven strong and seem to be increasing

daily, and I take a keen interest in the organization and general running of the camp. The winter to date has been extremely mild. We have not had any snow, and only for the past week have we experienced any frost. To-night is a beautifully mild night, the ground is completely thawed and quite like an early September night in Winnipeg. It is as well, really, as to date I have no overcoat and no decent change of clothing. Clothing is, of course, extremely expensive to buy here, and the little money we are able to earn is soon gone on the necessities of life and a few of the luxuries that have been impossible in the last three years. I am now trying very hard to grasp a knowledge of the Hungarian language. It is an extremely difficult language, totally different from English or any of the tongues I know of, and I harbor an obscure hope that possibly after the war it may be of use to me. There are very few British people who can speak it with fluence and also very few who have in inclination to learn it as it is not used much outside the country. As I like the country and the people, etc., I am taking a far greater interest in their language than I ever did in German, which I can now speak brokenly. On the whole, in spite of the effects of the war, I have found the European continent far more interesting than our own countries. I have met people from almost every country including Russia. Please, however, don't get the idea from this statement that I am in any way being weaned from my British principles or lacking in patriotism, as to assist our cause is forever foremost in my mind. I am in excellent health. I have honestly never felt better. The work I am doing is voluntary and in the outdoors and keeps me in the pink of condition. I would never have believed in my civilian days that I could have gone through what I have in the past and still be in such excellent order. I am thin as a rake and as hard as a brick and bubbling with energy. Well I must close now. There is so little I am able to say.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: My prisoner has asked for a pipe. In what type of parcel may this be included?

Answer: Pipes may only be sent in next-of-kin parcels.

Question: Who informs the next-of-kin of a merchant seaman who is reported to be missing or interned by the enemy?

Answer: The interests of Canadian Merchant Seamen are looked after by the ship owner and the Department of Transport. The ship owner advises the next-of-kin when a merchant seaman is reported missing. If later he is officially reported to be a prisoner the Department informs the next-of-kin.

Question: What kinds of parcels may be sent to Merchant Seamen in enemy hands?

Answer: The same types of parcels as are permitted to all P.O.W. i.e. Capture parcels, Red Cross Food parcels, Quarterly next-of-kin parcels, medical comforts parcels and gift parcels (cigarettes and tobacco, books, games, gramophone records, etc., sent through licensed firms.)

Question: What is the rate of exchange between the Reich mark and Pound Sterling?

Answer: An agreement between the belligerents has prescribed the rate of exchange as 15RM to the £.

Question: Has there been any further information regarding Belaria and Stalag Luft IV?

Answer: Yes. It has been established that Belaria is one compound of Stalag Luft III and is situated 5 kilometers from the main camp. Regarding Stalag Luft IV we have been informed that this is situated at or near a place known as "Tychow" and is in Military District No. 2. This Military District extends practically from Hamburg to Danzig but with the maps available we have not been able to locate Tychow. The number of Canadians in this camp is unknown.

Question: In view of the trend the war has recently taken do you consider it worth while sending a Christmas parcel to a P.O.W. in Germany, if so when should I send it? I am not next of kin, merely a friend.

Answer: This is the time for sending Christmas parcels to prisoners of war in Europe. We urge all relatives and friends of prisoners not to delay sending their Christmas parcels this year because of the good news that comes in daily from all war fronts. Some optimistic opinions as to an early end to the war have been voiced in high official quarters but the war is not over yet and no chances must be taken of our prisoners forfeiting their parcels should they not be liberated as soon as we hope. Exaggerated optimism can be a dangerous point of view, while our prisoners of war are still in enemy hands we must continue to plan ahead so that they will not go without the parcels that they look for so eagerly. We must not fail them now.

Parcels of books, games, sports equipment, cigarettes and tobacco, gramophone records and sheet music may be sent by anyone to prisoners of war through licensed firms. The C.P.O.W. R.A. will gladly give advice and assistance regarding the contents and shipping of these parcels.

Question: My medical parcel, containing vitamins, medicated ointment and aspirin has been returned to me from Ottawa. What IS permitted in medical parcels?

Answer: At present only personal medical appliances, vitamins and special prescriptions are allowed in medical parcels. The C.P.O.W.R.A. has made representation to the Committee for Protection and Welfare of P.O.W. to permit a wider assortment of medicaments which will include aspirin, ointments etc. This suggestion is now under consideration and when new regulations are announced they will be published in the News Sheet.

BOOK REVIEWS

The following books have been chosen as being suitable to send to Prisoners of War. They may be sent through firms holding postal permit licenses, a list of which will be found in the Directory of the News Sheet.

"DYNASTY OF DEATH" by Taylor Caldwell.
Sun Library \$1.49.

"Dynasty of Death" is the story of the son of an English servant, who came to the American Colony with his family and through a sinister determination achieved his sole purpose in life, that of holding wealth and power.

Ernest Barbour, Munitions Magnate, often dishonest, always cruel and hard when it served his purpose, nevertheless commands some admiration for his tenacious fixity of purpose. The brilliant portrayal of the leading character does not overshadow the many others, each of which is a study in itself.

This is a long novel, covering three generations and is the type of book that will be enjoyed by prisoners of war, for it promotes discussion among its readers. Published several years ago "Dynasty of Death" was widely read in this country where it became very popular.

"CLUES TO CHRISTABEL" by Mary Fitt.
Michael Joseph Ltd., \$2.75.

Here is a current novel in which there is no reference to current events and consequently it is one of the few new books that can be sent to prisoners of war in Germany.

Although "Clues to Christabel" is concerned with a questionable death and a straight murder, it does not belong in the category of detective stories of the "who-done-it" variety. It is rather a series of character studies of the friends and family of the dead novelist Christabel Strange.

For those who like their literature light this is a novel with an interesting plot which is well worked out and keeps the reader guessing. Even the

characters who in retrospect seem overdrawn are quite convincing while the book is being read. "Clues to Christabel" may not bring immortality to its author but it will certainly bring several hours relaxation and diversion to its readers.

"RIDE WITH ME" by Thomas B. Costain
McLelland and Stewart \$3.00

Historical novels are always in demand in P.O. W. camps and here is one that deals with romance and adventure in the days of Napoleon. The plot is concerned with a publisher, Francis Ellery whose ambition was to publish in his newspaper the mistakes and stupidities of the government. Such open criticism was, in those days of controlled newspapers, looked upon as traitorous and Ellery suffered all manner of set backs including a jail sentence in his efforts to establish a Free Press. In spite of heavy odds however, Ellery succeeds in his campaign as he does also in his love affair with a french refugee. Slightly lacking in humour "Ride with Me" will hold its own with other novels of this variety.

"WIND IN THE SAHARA" by R.V.C. Bodley.
Coward McCann. \$4.00.

At the end of the last war, R.V.C. Bodley a young British Army Officer and military attaché at the Peace Conference chanced to meet T. E. Lawrence. "Go and live with the Arabs" said Lawrence and this advice to a man disillusioned and disgusted by the trend of world affairs was acted on immediately. So Bodley turned his back on the life that he had been brought up to and sought and found peace of mind and contentment amongst the nomads of the desert. For several years he lived the life of an Arab and in this book he describes the strange customs, the simple dignity and honesty of these men who became his close friends and companions.

Mr. Bodley's ability as a writer together with his unusual experiences have produced a book that is both fascinating and interesting. His descriptions are vivid and his story entertaining. "Wind in the Sahara" is written in a light, easy style and will appeal to every type of reader.

BRANCH REPORTS

We regret that owing to lack of space the Provincial Headquarters are not listed this month.

OWEN SOUND BRANCH

A new Branch has been opened at Owen Sound with the following committee elected:

President: Miss Mary Miller
1584 — 7 th Avenue East
Owen Sound.

Vice-president: Mrs. Charles McCabe
950 — 2nd Avenue East
Owen Sound

Secretary: Miss Mae Thomson
1762 — 6th Avenue East
Owen Sound.

Treasurer: Mrs. D. B. Patterson
730 — 7th Avenue East
Owen Sound.

Our best wishes to this new Branch.

VANCOUVER BRANCH

One hundred and fourteen members attended the July meeting of the Vancouver Branch.

\$200.00 was voted for the Emergency Kit Fund, \$100.00 having already been sent.

Mr. William White, a repatriated P.O.W. from Stalag VIII B gave an interesting address touching on many phases of life in a prisoner of war camp.

At the August meeting of this Branch 60 members were present. The visiting committee reported having contacted five new next of kin.

Mr. Evan S. Jones of the New Westminster Rotary Club was guest of the evening and told the meeting that his Club had voted to donate three quarters of the annual Fraser River barrel sweep to the C.P.O.W.R.A. A hearty vote of thanks was passed to the New Westminster Rotary Club.

MANITOBA BRANCH

At a meeting of the Manitoba Branch on July 11th, at which 80 members were present, the Contact Committee reported that 16 new next-of-kin had been approached.

Capt. G. A. MacKidd of the Cameron Highlanders who was captured at Dieppe told of his experience in a German hospital and at Oflag 7B, and answered many questions regarding P.O.W. life in general.

OTTAWA BRANCH

A meeting of the Ottawa Branch was held on August 8th, with 57 members and friends present. In the absence of the President, Mrs. C. G. Power, Mr. T. Campbell-Roger presided. An interesting talk was given by Leslie Thatcher, paratrooper and an escapee.

Mrs. Sheridan of the Canadian Red Cross also spoke to the meeting about Red Cross Food and Capture Parcels, demonstrating the difference between the latter and our Emergency Kits. At the July meeting of the Ottawa Branch the secretary reported that \$170.00 had been sent to Headquarters for the Emergency Kit Fund. At this meeting Mr. G. G. McGeer M.P., addressed the members on the subject of prisoners of war.

VICTORIA BRANCH

The Victoria Branch reports that five next of kin parcels were packed during the month of June and three parcels sent to out of town members. \$5.00 worth of books were purchased for a local boy. It was decided to send \$25.00 to Headquarters for the Cigarette Fund and \$25.00 for the Emergency Kit Fund.

CALGARY BRANCH

The Calgary Branch reports that 23 parcels were packed in June and that July was also a heavy month. Money is being raised by this Branch to help the cause. The meetings are well attended and the work accomplished encouraging.

PRISONER IN GERMANY

by CAPTAIN ROBIN CAMPBELL, D.S.O.

Reprinted from the Atlantic Monthly with the kind permission of the Editor.

CAPTAIN ROBIN CAMPBELL, D.S.O., was severely wounded in the Commando raid on Rommel's headquarters in 1941. Taken prisoner by the Germans, he spent some months in the military hospitals in Greece while his "damaged leg" was healing. Thence he was transported to the prison camps in Germany where he felt, rather than saw, the turning tide of war. His account was written in England this spring after he had been exchanged.

1

One of the odd things about being taken prisoner of war is that nobody to whom it happens ever seems to have imagined the possibility. When I was wounded in a raid behind the enemy lines in Cyrenaica in November, 1941, it suddenly became obvious to me that I should have to be left behind when the others withdrew and that I must fall into the hands of the Germans. My first thought was, "But this can't be happening to me." After this first wild recoil I was able to examine my situation more calmly. I had quite expected to be killed and I was only wounded in the leg. I was flooded by a sense of relief. There was nothing more I could do and I began to feel almost serene (perhaps the morphia I had taken helped) and only slightly apprehensive about what the Germans would do to me.

After three months of illness and the amputation of my damaged leg, the relief at being alive was reinforced by the joy of convalescence, and even now, after two years, I still feel it sometimes.

I spent a year in various hospitals and then was sent to a prison camp for British officers in Thuringia, Central Germany. Looking back, I discover that I soon adopted a double perspective for living in captivity: looking at my life from a vantage point in the future outside prison, and dealing with every actual problem of avoiding discomfort in prison only as and when it arose. For a prisoner wounded in such a way that he knows he cannot escape, this way of living from day to day and hour to hour avoids fret and worry about the immediate future. He knows — or rather trusts — that one day he will emerge again into freedom, but there is nothing he can do to bring that day any nearer. He need have no anxieties except about such questions as the amount of straw in his mattress and how to make one tin of condensed milk last a week.

Once he is inside the barbed-wire perimeter of a prison camp, the prisoner finds that he has left most of the anxieties and responsibilities of ordinary life on the outside. For one thing there is no money.

The Germans issue special paper currency for prisoners of war; but since there is nothing to buy, it represents nothing. Some prisoners used it to bet with, but I could never find any satisfaction in winning a sheaf of paper. But with some people acquisitiveness must be something more than a habit, for there are prisoners of war who never lose it. They exercise their miserly propensities by hoarding such rarities as razor blades, lavatory paper, and matches. Numerous cardboard boxes full of more or less useful possessions accrete round these people. Every now and again they do produce with the air of a conjurer the very thing that is needed. The improvident avoid the strain of packing and unpacking numerous cardboard boxes (the usual form of prisoners' luggage) when moving camp. And since your baggage is searched for contraband both on departure and arrival, you usually have to pack three times for one journey.

Another great simplification of existence is that food and clothes are free. No amount of effort will secure a man more than his share of either — at least no ordinary effort, and success is not admired. Supplies of both food and clothes are supplemented by rare parcels from home, but the Red Cross rules that no prisoner may have more than a certain number. The food supplied in the Red Cross parcels is wholesome though monotonous, and so not particularly appetizing; not that this matters, because the quantity is such that the appetite never needs simulating. It is seldom that you finish a meal without the sensation that you could easily begin all over again. This, I have always been told, is the sign of a healthy diet and I certainly found it so. Sometimes after a breakfast at nine o'clock of two slices of German black bread with margarine and jam and a large mug of English tea with sugar and condensed milk, I became so hungry by one o'clock that I found it difficult to concentrate on whatever I was doing, but usually there would be a hunk of bread to gnaw.

Prisoners from the campaign in France told me that in the first months before the Red Cross food began to arrive, they were so weak from hunger that it cost them a real effort and several rests to climb two flights of stairs. I am unusually greedy and before being captured I had been in the habit of giving a great deal of attention to food, but after four months I could eat almost anything and I became much more interested in quantity than quality. I was only occasionally tortured by daydreams of oysters and lobster Newburg.

As to clothes, most of us, whatever our previous habits, came to regard them as only necessary coverings. There were a few persistent dandies who regularly appeared in uniforms with glittering buttons and lustrous shoes and who wore hats. They were regarded as harmless eccentrics. Not that

the rest of us were very squalid, for there was an unexpressed feeling that it would be a very bad show not to shave punctually every day in spite of the fact that razor blades were extremely scarce (one blade had to do for six weeks or two months) and we had hot water only once a fortnight. Most prisoners just continued to wear a suit of battledress until it wore out, and then applied to the English camp store for a new one, which they were given after a sort of means test.

By far the most unpleasant discomfort of a prison camp is the total lack of privacy. I shared a bedsitting room about twenty feet square with fifteen other prisoners. We slept in double-decker beds which were ranged round the walls to leave space for two tables and some twelve kitchen chairs. I never grew accustomed to the gravelly hardness of those beds, which had loose wooden boards where springs should have been and on top a palimpsest meagerly stuffed with straw. The longest period I was ever alone in this room was eighteen minutes. There was a small room used as a library where I used to go and read in the mornings; if you did not get there early enough there was no room to sit down. Even here the silence was broken by people coming to change their books at midday. To become adapted to this lack of solitude it was necessary to develop a kind of reptilian insensitiveness — like crocodiles in their tank at the Zoo, which walk over each other without either appearing to notice the other.

When sixteen people live in the same room together for a year or more the evasions and other polite subterfuges of ordinary life naturally become impossible. Every word you speak to one of the fifteen is probably in the hearing of the other fourteen or some of them, so that you cannot assume different personalities with different people. Nor can you hope to dissemble with success your opinion on any subject. The only hope for comfortable relationships in these circumstances is candor softened by imaginative understanding. Although every person in the room more or less knows the opinion of every other person on any subject, there is plenty of discussion, which rather easily becomes abusive argument. Prisoners are thrown together more by the random play of chance than by any stringently selective principle, and so their views are extremely diverse. (I was surprised that so many of them were agreed that politics were a dirty racket and all politicians hypocrites on the make.) Apart from occasional acrimony, good temper in argument is usual.

2

Living permanently surrounded by so many people with whom they are on terms of schoolboy

superficial intimacy, I imagine that all prisoners at times feel intensely lonely and sick for home. Even the most insensitive have their days of black depression. It is the result, perhaps, of the sterility of an existence entirely deprived of the company of women and children (though I once heard an unashamed lecher declare that he missed dogs more than women). An exclusively male community seems to me to lack emotional drive and spontaneity. Many prisoners do become very firm friends, more usually because of shared experience than common tastes, but this kind of relationship seems more comforting than stimulating. It is accurately described by the phrase, "It is no nice to be with someone you don't have to talk to unless you feel like it."

In a tightly confined society which is compacted by the common aim of presenting a united front to the Germans, the derelictions of the individual are all on the social plane. Prisoners have found that the best, indeed only, way to treat the Germans is by an uncompromising insistence upon their rights under the Geneva Convention and by instant and persistent complaint to the Protecting Power (the Swiss who periodically visit the camp) if these rights are infringed. In my experience most Germans are constantly trying to put the relationship on another footing. The attitude and conduct of one type implies: "You are the prisoners of the *Herrenvolk* and we shall treat you as we think proper without any of this nonsense about international agreements. We are knightly and magnanimous, not Bolsheviks, so we will not shoot you unless you do something to annoy us." Another type is constantly trying to insinuate a transaction into the relationship. He will say, in effect: "Look here, you and I are sensible fellows and we neither of us want trouble and unpleasantness. I will let you do or have whatever it may be if you will just give me your word as an officer that you will not try to escape." The concessions offered are commonly far short of the prisoners' right laid down in the Geneva Convention. Every form of insidious tactic is used in the attempt to supplant the Convention as the basis of the relationship between prisoners and German camp authorities.

The commandant of a hospital where I was for a time one day declared that one Red Cross parcel of food a fortnight per prisoner was quite enough and that he did not propose to adhere to the rule of one parcel a week per prisoner laid down by the International Red Cross. He refused to allow the food store to be opened. The senior English doctor pointed out that the German commandant could not decide such things. His reply was: "On the contrary; I command this hospital and I intend to see that English prisoners are not better fed than German civilians." After a good deal of argument

he proposed a compromise. The English doctor remained inflexible and filed a complaint.

After about a month, during which the prisoners were on short rations, he must have received orders from the German War Office, at the instances of the Swiss, to adhere to the agreed rate, for he announced with a great show of magnanimity that he had decided to issue one parcel a week to every prisoner. This arrogance has its useful side, commandants cannot abide the thought of their subordinates stooping to swindle the English. Two German quartermasters caught stealing rations meant for British prisoners received the dreaded punishment of being sent to the eastern front.

It is easy to see that compromise with the German authorities is fatal and inflexibility essential. The lowest thing a prisoner can do in the opinion of his fellows is to betray the united front of inflexibility for his own comfort and advantage. All forms of selfishness are instantly detected and loudly denounced. Prisoners develop a hawk eye for "rackets," but appeasement is the deadliest crime.

The British have one enormous advantage over prisoners of other nationalities. They expect to be well treated. In spite of wartime propaganda about devilish Huns, they are genuinely astonished and indignant if they are not cared for as honored guests. This applies particularly to privates. Their standards of food, sanitation, and comfort are so high, and their astonishment and disgust when expected to put up with lower standards so unfeigned and unrancorous, that the Germans, unwilling to admit that their own standards are lower, are shamed into making improvements. It is quite impossible for the Germans to put across any *Herrenvolk* stuff in the face of the innocent arrogance of British soldiers, who are impenetrable to the idea of German superiority and simply think it uproariously funny. This baffles the Germans.

In spite of persistent efforts to propagandize British troops through the medium of a weekly newspaper called *The Camp*, I do not believe they have made any impression at all. *The Camp* has the usual three main lines of attack. First, the Germans are winning the war (the weekly summary of the war news is so flagrantly absurd that it defeats its end); the British should get together with the Germans, because, if the Allied powers win, Russia will be supreme in Europe and the United States will appropriate the Empire (variations on this theme are plugged weekly in an article, "The German Point of View," which is very "sane and moderate" in tone); the honest English workingman is being exploited by capitalist Jews. These views are sandwiched between articles on such subjects as German motorcycle engines and German football, English football and racing re-

sults, and chronicles of camp sports and concerts and other contributions written by the prisoners themselves. I suspect that hardly anybody who reads the paper reads "The German Point of View." If propaganda exerts its influence on the subconscious level of the mind, I suppose *The Camp* must have some influence, though I have never seen the slightest sign that it has.

3

I believe almost every prisoner would agree that the attitude of the Germans towards the war and towards us has altered considerably since 1940. I am told by those who were captured in that year that after the fall of France the Germans were boasting that the war would be decided in their favor in a few months and that they treated English prisoners atrociously. When I was captured in November 1941, they were still full of confidence. Indeed they had grounds for confidence then. During the time I was in hospital in Athens we failed to destroy Rommel's forces in North Africa; we lost Singapore and the Russians were retreating.

I had an exasperating conversation with a Stuka pilot who had broken his arm. He was full of bounce and rather condescending. He thought it foolish of us to have made war on Germany, and it was a pity they were going to have to hurt us. My argument about violated agreements failed to convince him because he would have it that the occupation of Prague had preceded the Munich Agreement.

I was exasperated, too, by the German women who visited the wards and brought cigarettes and picture papers to the German troops in the Athens hospital. They fussed about mournfully in their shabby, ill-fitting black clothes. After sympathizing over my amputated leg, one of these crows gloomily said to me one day: "I am sure you did not want this war any more than we did, but what can people like you and me do? It's the governments that decide these things, isn't it?" No amount of talk could have shown her her mistake. It is sad to reflect that so many good, kind, middle-aged and old women will have to suffer for their cow-like submission to German men. But I have no doubt that they would have thought Hitler perfectly splendid if he had won the war, and that they would have been the first to applaud in foolish wonder — even though in Athens, where these women were living, some five hundred Greeks were at that time dying of starvation daily.

The ebbing of German confidence in the result of the war was quite obvious after Stalingrad (for which they had a day of national mourning) and Tunisia, and was often reflected in their attitude

towards prisoners. Guards became more accommodating and some even frankly conciliatory. I heard one guard say to a prisoner: "You won't forget how good I've always been to you English?" If they had an unpopular task to perform, such as making all prisoners get up in the middle of the night for a search, they would often excuse themselves by saying: "We are sorry, but we are only doing our duty by carrying out orders." Since obliteration bombing began, the civilians whom prisoners meet traveling in trains from one prison camp to another are perhaps a shade less ready to start conversations.

It was while traveling that I had the unforgettable experience of seeing a man literally foaming at the mouth with rage. He was a railway guard who had to hold up a train for a party of prisoners and their luggage. He shouted, he bellowed, and flecks of froth flew from his lips; he was pale and shaking. He must have been boiling up against his life for a long time. When he began to shout, the blank incomprehension and mild concern on the faces of the prisoners infuriated him still more. I do not believe I have ever seen a man so angry. To pretend not to understand is the most effective answer to shouting Germans unless they are in a shooting mood.

Prisoners of other nationalities (except Americans) probably have a harder time than the British. For one thing they get far less food. The Russians, for example, are underfed and many are worked to death. They are generally treated as a commodity much less valuable than cattle. I saw many who were doing hard manual labor up till a fortnight before their death from tuberculosis of the lungs. Wherever it is possible, British prisoners give them extra food and cigarettes. Most of those I saw seemed bewildered and childlike; at the first sign of friendliness they broke into happy smiles. In 1942, most of the French prisoners I saw seemed depressed, sloppy, and surly, and they displayed numerous photographs of Pétain in their sleeping quarters. But in the last year their spirits have risen and now they usually wave and shout friendly greetings to passing British prisoners. I met a French major, aged fifty-three and the father of twelve children, who had broken his arm trying to escape from his guards by jumping out of a train traveling twenty-five miles an hour.

4

German women do not always take advantage of the legal protection afforded by the Reich (which, by the way, is often referred to by British soldiers as "the Third and Last") against the amorous advances of working prisoners. Notices are promi-

nently displayed in working camps warning prisoners that they are liable to ten years' imprisonment for speaking to a German woman without special permission. I met a Frenchman who had faked an illness to get into hospital to escape the attentions of a mother and her daughter at the farm where he worked. He explained that he had an instant success with the daughter, but her mother had discovered the affair and, anxious to supplant her daughter, was blackmailing him by threatening to denounce him to the police. An English soldier told me that he had seen a woman being led through the main street of her village with a placard round her neck announcing: "I have been the whore of a prisoner while my husband was fighting at the eastern front."

Conditions in an officers' prison camp form the perfect background for reading and writing. Being deprived of many outlets for action, and freed from the mental and sensual distractions of normal life, the mind seems to need some load to grapple with if it is not to race like an engine with slipping clutch. Particular books are hard to get, and I found I could easily read and enjoy such formidably unreasonable works as the life of Herbert Spencer in two volumes with a score of appendices. I found my mind worked more clearly and connectedly than ever before.

For people whose only form of expression is action, the narrow confinement and monotony are torment. We calculated that one unquiet spirit had walked at least 10,000 miles and worn six pairs of boots since his capture, simply by pacing round and round the compound — a gravel space some fifty yards square. Many prisoners learned to play some musical instrument; one man constructed a model galleon out of toothbrush handles; a number played bridge or poker every evening of their lives; theatricals occupied a good bit of the time of others; many learned languages and worked for examinations.

5

On the whole I should say that captivity had a beneficial effect upon all but the most unteachable. Nobody has a job which occupies his whole energy; nobody can say: "I've finished my work and now I will go to the cinema, pay 2s. 4d. and be entertained, or I will put on my slippers and read a detective story or turn on the radio." Prison life is not divided into thought-tight compartments of work and play. If prisoners want entertainment they must work for it themselves. Most of them therefore find some activity which is neither completely one thing nor the other, but both at once. Their mental energy thus becomes spread over their

whole waking life and it is virtually impossible in prison surroundings not to be led by this shift of perspective to some consideration of the bases on which your life and the lives of others rest. They learn to question these bases and to overhaul and sometimes to revise the values by which they have lived their lives. Those who do this seem to become more aware and more understanding.

The trouble is that imprisonment goes on too long. I fancy that many people would benefit by a year of enforced inactivity and freedom from small anxieties and distractions to examine the presuppositions and aims of their conduct and that of others. But unless these people are practiced mystics, the lack of novelty in time breeds a dreadful staleness. There are some unfortunate men who were captured in the first weeks of the war, and many who have been in prison camps since the summer of 1940, who are still there.

Returning to England is an overwhelming experience for one who has been a prisoner of war. It is a distinct shock to find that the world outside is no longer hostile, but eager to be kind and helpful. Solitude and the freedom to go and come and see whom you will are intoxicating. It is a form of convalescence in which all impressions are more vivid and the exercise of every faculty and appetite more deeply enjoyable. Returned prisoners are not

the best people to ask about the changes in life at home, for they are concerned to recognize and greet all that has remained unchanged and familiar. The great contrast for prisoners is between England and Germany, for in Germany every civilian looks gloomy and haggard. Even before the war they looked a bit like this, but I believe they have now lost confidence in the future and, though all that I was able to see of Germany convinced me that they are far from collapse, their morale is noticeably lower than at the end of 1941 when I was captured.

Many prisoners are passionately curious about post-war planning, and a copy of the Beveridge Report was a favorite in the camp. The best sorts of books to send to a prisoner are books on his special subject, books of permanent serious interest, and a sprinkling of contemporary novels. But I think that perhaps the best possible way to help prisoners of war for their relatives to write to them regularly. It is most depressing to feel that your absence makes no difference. It is encouraging to be told occasionally that you are being missed. To receive a letter always lessens the feeling of being a forgotten, useless exile; it strengthens the ties with the life you would like to be sharing. I found that it was not so much the big events that I was glad to hear about as details about personalities.



Group taken at Stalag 11 D. Kindly lent by Mrs. B. Sarrazin. Pte. A. Sarrazin, extreme left, front row.

LETTERS RECEIVED

Letters from prisoners of war published in the News Sheet are of great interest to our readers. We appeal to prisoners relatives to share news of general interest that they receive from prison camps, by allowing us to print their letters or excerpts from letters. Photographs are also very much appreciated. The editor will handle carefully all material received and return letters and photographs when requested.

FAR EAST — JAPAN

October 3rd, 1943.

My fifth card. Telegram received but no letters as yet. Am optimistic and in good health. Anxious to receive photographs of family and news of friends. Love to all.

December 6th, 1943.

Since November 1941 I have not received a letter from you. However, I hope British and Dutch will have received mail via the British exchange ship, Gripsholm. Letters and some personal parcels are now filtering into the camp for the Americans. Except for three cold months after Christmas, the climate on this island is exceptionally good and even now oranges and persimmons are being harvested on the hillsides. Here we will be able to think more of home this Christmas. I believe we are getting together a concert party and putting on Ali-Baba and the Forty Thieves and singing carols. We have a number of books here and I find my days pass quite quickly with reading, fooling about in French Classes and attending lectures from the varied assortments of blokes in camp. Lost everything in Sumatra, except my watch, but after stops in Java and Singapore I now have a sort of Kit together again. It is not at all urgent, but if possible would like warm socks. Photographs, I would most certainly welcome. Am thinner but I am definitely in good health and looking forward to be with you both soon again.

January 25th, 1944.

Delighted with letters of June 23, Aug. 13, Sept. 6 and September 1st. Spent a cheerie Christmas. All in fine spirits despite being separated from you. Please send photographs, socks and sweater if possible. News of F's marriage.

ZENTSUJI CAMP

December 1943.

Rec. August 8th, 1944

Hope this letter finds you all well. Several fellows here are getting letters that came on the last exchange ship. If I have one it probably went to

our old camp and will be forwarded later. We were allowed to broadcast to the States in November. If you did not receive word, inquire through the Red Cross. Some of the fellows here gave me a party on my birthday. Sure made me feel good that they remembered me. The cake was made of sweetened rice, but it tasted like angel food. Remember when I used to kid you about having to eat fish and rice when the war started — we look forward to the day when we get fish. Had a hard time of it when I first arrived from the Philippines. Got down to 110 pounds (normal weight was 190) but am happy to say that am well now and gaining weight every day. We put on a show every Sunday night. Our life here is not very exciting, same thing every day. I am writing a show to be put on in January. Just enacting some old jokes. We sure could use a good new gag book. Our room is having a Christmas program. We are looking forward to Christmas as they say they feed good on that day. I sure would like to get some letters from all the family and all my friends. If you have a chance to send a package, have each of family try to send one. If it is nearing winter, add some wool underwear and sox. Try to send concentrated food and sweets, candy, nuts, raisins, peanut butter, but mostly sweet chocolate. Will have to close. Kiss all the kids and give all my friends regards.

(Letters to prisoners should be typewritten to facilitate delivery through censors. Note added by Japanese censor.)

TOKYO

No date.

Just a few lines to let you know that I am alive and in good health, hoping you are all the same. I am working every day, and I like it fine. I received a letter from you and one from sister A. and I was certainly glad to learn you are all in good health also. I haven't much to say. I hope to get a letter from you soon. Give my best regards to all the folks. May God bless you all.

No date.

Received July 31st, 1944

Just a few words in answer to your letter received on Monday and to let you know that I am in the best of health. I was very pleased to know that I have a new niece. I hope everything at home is fine. The first letter received was from aunt R. two days ago and yours yesterday. I have written twice; I hope you got them. I would like you to thank aunt R. for that nice picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary that she sent me. If it is possible would you please write in English. I am holding my chin up. I must draw to a close. Wishing the best of luck to all the family, friends and kissing you with all my might.

CAMP "A" HONG KONG

July 11th, 1942.

I am quite well. My hand will respond in time. I never told you before, but I was wounded in the right forearm and it killed the nerves running to the fourth and small fingers. They are not paralysed but just feel frozen all the time. I am constantly burning them without feeling it. We still feel very grateful it was not worse. By the way, I hope you had a good Christmas. I saved money to send you a telegram, but couldn't get it off. Now I must quit. With all my love.

(Apparently, November 15th, 1943)

It is our third wedding anniversary. I am very well and weigh 130 lbs.

No date.

I have written to Billie but just to reassure you all, I am perfectly well and settled here as a prisoner of war. Don't worry, just remember that some day all this will be ended and I will be home again. All my love to yourself and the gang.

CAMP "S" HONG KONG

No date.

Just another letter to tell you I am doing alright. I am glad M. got married and settled down. How is my mother. I will be really glad to get that parcel. We are all curious as to what it contains. With all my love.

No date.

I was really happy to get your letters of April 22nd and May 5th 1942. Thank O. for the thought of me although I have not received it yet it is nice to be remembered. I'm very well; I weigh 147 pounds — that's a gain of 19 pounds. So you need not worry about me. I'll soon be able to write my own letters. I'm learning to write again. Tell all the gang I'm doing very well indeed. I'm glad you don't crab at my choice. I really could not have done otherwise. All the rest is going to work out even. We both will wait and pray for that time. Meanwhile we have the thought that we have had happy years and will have many more when peace comes on earth.

No date.

I am feeling very well these days, so don't worry about me at all. I wish time would pass a little faster and that we would find ourselves home again, however let us hope that that time is not too far distant. I am looking forward very much to seeing you all again, and especially to seeing J.

for what really amounts to the first time. I hope that you are all well at home and that everything is running smoothly. Would you give my love to both families and all friends. Best love to yourself and J.

GERMANY
ILAG BIBERACH RISS
Civilian Internment Camp

June 24th, 1944.

In our last letter from home Gran said that she had had a Red Cross Message from you. They were all quite well, but we are no longer able to write or hear from home. After a spell of very wet and cold weather we now have lovely sunshine. Please tell . . . that I find her book very useful and the children are very interested in the stories. We have had some needlework from the Y.M.C.A. consisting of aprons, slippers, bags and other embroidery. There was one apron allotted to our B . . . for which we had to draw. I was the lucky one. Last Thursday was G . . . 's birthday. She was 22. Two of her friends came to tea and in the evening we all went to weekly show, which was a play "Nothing but the Truth".

May 21st, 1944. Received July 21st, 1944.

On Friday I received the lovely book you sent. It is really very kind of you to send it, and I thank you very much. The children will certainly be very thrilled with the stories, and there are also some nice poems which I can teach them. It has been raining hard all the morning, so when I have finished this card, I am going to lie on my bed and read. We go to school in a long wooden hut consisting of three large rooms and one small one. There are 2 classes (25 children) in each of the large rooms. The morning is taken up with Arithmetic, Writing, and Reading, and the afternoon singing and handwork. Last week we had a photograph taken of the Junior and Senior Schools. The Junior group consisted of about 85 children and 8 teachers.

April 26th, 1944.

I was very thrilled on Monday to receive your lovely parcel, for which I must thank you very much. The toothbrush and powder were specially welcome and we all enjoy the chocolate. Today we had a letter from home. The weather here is very changeable one day it is warm and sunny and the next it is cold and wet, like today. I am still busy knitting. I have finished a yellow jumper and am now making a green cardigan. When I have finished this I am going to make a striped jumper with the odd balls of wool I have.

Extracts from a letter from a German Hospital written by a Canadian Lieut. who was missing for three months, and is still officially unreported.

June 10th, 1944 Received August 15th, 1944

I know you will want to know what they feed us, so I will give you the day's menu.

Breakfast is bread and jam, or honey, and sometimes a very thin porridge which is mostly milk, and coffee. At about 10.30 we get a cup of soup.

Lunch is the best meal — usually a stew of some kind, with meat and vegetables, and custard or stewed fruit. About 3.30 we get bread and jam, or honey and sometimes cocoa, which is excellent. Supper is bread and jam, or meat. So we do very well considering. There is an issue of six cigarettes every day, and sometimes candy. Various organizations seem to contribute bags of food and cigarettes periodically. So I am pretty well off. I get exactly the same as the other patients; there is no discrimination made at all. None of the patients in my room can speak English. They found a couple of English books, one by Naomi Jacobs. I am being very well treated by both staff and patients. I really mean this.



Oflag 79. Lieut. R. L. McGibbon, centre.
Kindly lent by Mrs. R. H. McGibbon, Montreal.

TRANSIT CAMP

May 1st, 1944.

I am still here in transit but we hope to move to a permanent camp soon. Apart from crowded quarters it is not too bad. Red Cross parcels so far have been regular and sports are well organized. Nearly every nationality is represented in the camp and we have had some very good International soccer matches. There are quite a few Canadians and Americans here now and we hope to have baseball organized in the near future.

OFLAG VII B

May 23rd, 1944.

Have received your March 28th letter and the January parcel which was excellent. Old times, having nuts and raisins. Dish mop already in action. Our room soldier-servant is very willing and clean. Chocolate, as usual, fills the sweet tooth, which all P.O.W. develop to an enormous degree. Any kind of drink food would help as we cut it pretty fine at the moment, as regards tea and cocoa. You ask what I would like, very little just now, except chocolate, fruit, etc. Can you still buy those rubber soles that stick on? They would save the brown shoes and keep down the noise on wooden floors. And two prs. (i.e. eight in all) of red — base officer's pips small size, would save changing my one and only from coat to coat. All went to local circus last week and enjoyed the performances enormously, ponies, clowns, trapeze men and the rest. Any snap shots at all would give me great pleasure, as I have the album to thumb over in bed before "Last Post". I work in the library now and have scented out all sorts of fascinating books. Put a short story in the Magazine in April. More Cigs. from I.O.D.E. Overseas League, and P.O. W.R.A. (Montreal). Here is something I need, macassar oil (or olive oil if unobtainable) about ½ litre, and some packets of shampoo, preferably Silvrikin, it qualifies as a medical comforts parcel and can be sent by Air. The camp hospital could not provide any. Did you get my letter asking for gym shoes? (not boots) as we play tennis and badminton. We also play volley ball and hockey from time to time to keep fit, and three of us have law lectures for one hour a day except Sunday. Hope all are well. There is no cause for worry. Shall write again soon.

OFLAG IX A/Z

June 26th, 1944.

The optimism expressed in your letter of April 18th is shared wholeheartedly by us here who are deprived of our most cherished of worldly possessions. The conditions under which our men live are unknown to us, am therefore unable to

help by suggestions as to their immediate needs. Cigarettes, books, Sports' gear, particularly hard wearing sports' boots are always received with heart-felt thanks. Please convey to all members of your organization our deepest gratitude for the magnificent work carried out under your inspired leadership.

STALAG II D

June 10th, 1944.

I am writing you two letters today, this is the first. There are only two of us left in here from Stettlergang. I'll be here for duration because of a job as teacher on the school staff (Agriculture and Electrical Engineering). Have at long last learned to study, concentrate, digest and reason to logical conclusions. No longer a wishful thinker. Just cold hard facts, result of prison life driving us to rock bottom — good thing. Take care of yourself at all costs — money is of no value when life is gone. Forget about pictures — I am a soldier even though others are not. I look exactly the same only more sober, hair a little grayer, a bit fatter perhaps, but in darn good health. Know all about typhus, lice and bedbugs as well as dysentery — keep all clothes washed — have cold water bucket bath every night and am as black as a nigger with tan. Shall explain all my actions when I return. Don't judge me too harshly and don't worry about not hearing from me. All's well.

June 10th, 1944.

I see by my letters from you that I haven't had one for months. Your last one was January 30th. However one day soon I hope to get home. We have received our medals today. A ribbon for Voluntary Service, a metal silver leaf for having seen action. The ribbon also represents long term soldier. However enough of that. B. and I have been studying Architecture and interior furnishing and decorating, for about a year now, a very interesting thing one which I never appreciated before. Also been studying mining and surveying, drafting and many other necessary things. Am in A-1 health and have a lovely tan but am getting to be fat as a pig. One day a week I go walking into the forest under escort, to gather wood and stumps for firewood; a privilege I have been having for about two months. Take care of yourself. I'll soon be home.

May 25th, 1944.

Many thanks to you for the very nice parcel which I received three days ago. It is the first food parcel I have received, since I have been a P.O.W. so you will know how it is appreciated. While I am writing to you I might add that the "Relatives Association" have really given us all a great deal

of help and enjoyment; in the form of smokes, cooking utensils and gramophone records etc. All your efforts on our behalf are greatly appreciated by everyone of us. The weather is very unsettled at present but football is in full swing and we are getting ready for fine weather and baseball again in the near future. Our main ambition tho' is to get back to Canada and then we'll really be happy. Thank you again for your kindness.

April 26th, 1944.

Your letter of February 19th arrived yesterday. Address was censored. Sit back and relax, they call us Churchill's millionaires and not without cause. To date I have received five parcels from you, several books and games, parcels from various sources, as well as plenty of cigarettes. We are well supplied with sport's equipment and almost without fail we receive the regular R.C. food parcels each week. We are not doing badly but roll on the boat.

February 13th, 1944.

Many Canadians have been moved to this new camp. Please write to me here (2D). The lads are going out to work on farms. I do not expect to go (medical reasons). Am well, so don't worry. Right at present am barrack commander here. Elected to job by men. Plenty of work to do. (Organization, etc.) American mail is not getting thru; Canadian is. Packages are. Received the Bull Durham, etc. from Washington. The weather has been cold, but have warm clothes, so am not in need. Thanks for shoes. Very welcome here. The Canadian people and Red Cross are doing wonders for us. Hope this is the last year. Will write as often as I can. Hope you are now well. Don't overdo things.

STALAG IX A

March 15th, 1944.

Am O.K. Had three plain letters from you last week, Feb. ones. Sure was ever so glad to get your lovely cheery letters. Yes, you can send snaps and the personal parcel, I think, is wonderful, but don't send any more, only fags, as I sure can use them. Your air mail comes through very fast. Five of us went into a pub and had 2 glasses of beer last Saturday night. P.S. am still wearing the tunic you used to put buttons on for me. Send some snaps of you and baby as soon as you can.

STALAG IV B

April 4th, 1944 Received June 29th, 1944

Well, here I am again and the mail is still rolling in. I could use this whole form listing each individual letter but I'll sum it all up by saying my total is now 75 letters. My latest from you is Feb.

14th, received March 22nd. The parcel end of it is excellent too — I have received yours, and another P.P. from C.R.C.S. London. The other lads have received theirs, too. On Friday last in rolled 300 Sweet Caps — thanks a million, not being a smoker I was able to buy jam, biscuits and chocolate with them. You have all asked me about Camp life here so I'll try to give you a rough idea. We have about (censored) Allied P.O.W.'s here, made up of all nations. There are organized camp soccer, rugby, volley-ball, softball and bridge leagues. These leagues are inter-hut competition and beside these, each hut has its own sports. We have two check parades a day - 6.30 a.m. and 8 p.m. There is a regular school run here and a chap can take practically any course he wishes. We have our own theatre with a seating capacity of 550. At present "Outward Bound" and a Band Concert are playing there. They also have inter-hut shows that go round and put shows on nightly in each hut. I'm just fine and dandy and keeping busy with the hut volley-ball and softball teams. I'm attending French classes and taking Accountancy and playing a lot of Bridge and Cribbage. I do hope it isn't long now until we are all together again.

STALAG VII A

April 10th, 1944

Received June 1944

Everything is fine, I am putting on weight so that is O.K. This was a special day if you had

come in our "Home in Bavière" you would have seen some thing that had been missing for several days. The room was blue with tobacco smoke, a pleasant odor of Virginia tobacco filled ones nostrils, some of the men were on their beds, their eyes half closed watching the smoke from their cigarettes curl lazily upwards. The others greedily sucking the stems of their pipes, like a hungry baby sucking his milk bottle, and blowing puffs of smoke like an asthmatic locomotive. The parcel of Mrs. H... and yours had come in the nick of time. We were all short of smokes. Many, many thanks to Mrs. H.... and to you, from all of us. We are so grateful and happy that to say thank you does not seem enough, from the 30 men of Kommando 30

STALAG VII B

June 9th, 1944.

To the people of Canada for their thoughtfulness and kindness, and to the Canadian Red Cross Society for the hard work on our behalf, we prisoners of war owe a great debt. Mere words cannot express our thanks to you all. To the packers of the products in the Canadian food parcels we also owe our thanks, Last night in this Stalag, as a tribute to all in anyway concerned with those food parcels, a concert was given. The theme was "A Canadian Parcel". The program was "sponsored" by such firms as Canada Packers, Cow & Gate, Atlas Fruit Corp. The whole show



Group taken at Stalag Luft III. Hack row — left to right: Ball, Heggtveit, Mackay, Haw, Large, Hunter, Drummond-Hay, Smith, Boacher.
Front row — left to right: Banks, Avery, Mahoney, Thurston, Ellingstad.

went over in a big way. But for the fact that our network has a very limited scope those firms would have had a big advertising boost. However a big increase in sales after the war should follow as a result of our "sales campaign". I am not a Canadian, although I have spent many happy hours in Montreal and have very dear friends there. So to you Madam, to my friends, to all in Canada, Thank You.

STALAG VIII A

March 12th, 1944

A few lines to let you know I am still "jogging merrily along", so to speak. I don't know whether I have already told you, but I have received another letter with three photo's in it. You certainly look very smart in your Red Cross Uniform. By the way we are still living on the parcels you pack, and they certainly are the best. Received another parcel of cigs from the Association over there this week. They are coming through much faster than I can smoke them these days. Did you ever receive the letter I sent asking if it is possible for you to send some of the latest dance music? It is not I that can play it but we have a couple of bandsmen here who could sort it out a little for us. I am using a sheet of music called "Constantly" to rest this letter on as I write, but it is about the one decent sheet we have.

STALAG XX B

May 30th, 1944

This is to acknowledge, with many thanks, receipt of 300 Sweet Caporal cigarettes which arrived this evening. Just to say "thank you nicely" like that does, I realize, sound rather tame; but how else can I tell you that those things have far more than their face value to us over here. I can smoke high, wide and handsome and every whiff is a breath from home. No, just "thank you" isn't the half of it! Very sincerely.

STALAG 344

March 5th, 1944.

I received your most welcome letter yesterday dated 24th of January and it made me feel quite pleased with myself because it's the first letter I've had from any one for over a month. I'm glad to hear you are all O.K. and are having a good winter over there as it seems to be trying every trick it knows to be awkward here. I don't know about our camp being the best, but it certainly is a good camp and they put on some very good shows such as Snow White, Man at Six, Desert Song, and other well known plays. There is also plenty of sports and boxing also gramophone records in plenty.

June 5th, 1944

The two books you sent me arrived and made very good reading. We had a big day here on Whit Monday. The different P.O.W. Associations in the Stalag held a fair. It was almost as good as the Farmers' Fairs such as are held at Aberfoyle. There were stalls for dart throwing, skittles, "Hit the Black Face" and Wheel of Fortune. The Palestinians made money with their cow which gave Grade A milk composed of a little Klim and much water. In the track meet, some good times were made considering the difficulties under which the athletes had to train. Please do not send any more tobacco, cigs, are much better, preferably Exports. E.'s records have given the hut many pleasant moments. I am well and enjoying the sports much more this summer.

STALAG 357

June 5th, 1944

Just a few lines to let you know that I am in the best of health and spirits. I have received 12 parcels since I last wrote to you. On May 25th I received a book parcel from the Canadian Legion addressed to Germany on Feb. 19/44. On May 30th I received 10 parcels consisting of a course on Mechanical Drafting from the Legion sent to Italy, a clothing parcel from you sent of Feb. 22/44, a sports parcel sent through Simpson's, a sports parcel from Sandwich Collegiate sent through Smiths and six cigarette parcels, two from you, two from auntie and uncle, from the Canadian P.O.W. Relatives Association and one from uncle S. The last 4 parcels were also sent to Italy. On June 1st I received another book parcel from the Legion, also sent to Italy. This shows that parcels sent to Italy are being forwarded on from Geneva. The parcels were swell, it was just like Christmas for me and I really needed them as I had lost everything when I was free in Italy. The running shoes were just what I wanted for basketball. All I need now is a pair of shorts. Everything in the parcel fits well. The two softballs I donated to the softball committee so that everyone could get the benefit of them.

STLAG LUFT I

April 21st, 1944

Received July 10th, 1944

Your eldest son has changed his address again rather unexpectedly this time, thus causing my loved ones at home many hours of anxiety for which I wish to apologize most humbly. Incidentally it is not difficult to get that humble feeling if one should ever suffer from that 'barbed wire' complex. But no need to worry, as we are healthy and happy, eating porridge and toast for breakfast, canned salmon, corned beef, spam, pâté,

with a few fresh vegetables for the other two meals. We can toast the bread and have coffee, cocoa and tea much as we please, as we do our own cooking. Red Cross food supply is very satisfactory. Toilet articles and cigarettes are slightly in demand. Imagine my surprise when I saw R... 's name on a list of the donors of some cigarettes from his camp to supplement the Canadian stock here to take care of the rapidly increasing number of newcomers. Parcels from home may take five to six months. Not likely I will see either R. or M. as they are in other camps. It is still possible however and it won't be long before the great reunion anyway. I was picked up in the sea by a German flying boat and my navigator was lost in the resulting crash. I suffered no injuries whatsoever and am actually healthier than ever with plenty of sun, sleep and exercise.

STALAG LUFT III

June 23rd, 1944 Received August 16th, 1944

Very little mail this month, but a few from you, which is the important thing, although one was a year old. Received your Dec. 13th letter with more snapshots, which is a good thing. Your attitude to my moustache made me laugh. Don't worry, I only had it for two months just after becoming a prisoner. What better place to try experiments! We had a big sports day last week, Canada doing very well by coming second in a field of five, Great Britain winning. Weather fine here now, every one getting beautifully tanned—all over! The beauty of an all male domain, even though the beauty of some of our "actresses" sometimes makes one wonder. The theatre plays are getting better and better. Hope to be in a chorus soon, a-dancing and a-singing. We had a film this week "Orchestra Wives" which I thought good, but of course I like that sort of music. Latest letter from you is March 26th. All parcels seem to have arrived, judging by your letter, except June and Sept. N.O.K.s to Italy. Even so, I am pretty well off now. Had my first swim in prison, even though in the fire pool. It was a wonderful feeling. You must have fun tracing me about on the map. I'm certainly well travelled on this continent. I hope some day to see as much of my own.

June 17th, 1944

Ever since my arrival as a P.O.W. in March 1944, I have heard the praise of not only Canadians but all P.O.W. nationalities for your wonderful work on their behalf. If I convey to you the warmth of feeling with which the Canadian P.O.W. Association and great encouragement to you. Before being taken prisoner the majority of us rarely gave a thought to that possibility and on the rare occasion that the thought passed thru our

minds, it was accepted completely as an integral part of the job we had undertaken to carry out. Then, usually very suddenly, it happened and we prepared ourselves to "live it out" as best we could. We found then to our surprise that the somewhat unenviable state of being P.O.W.'s had been ameliorated beyond all our expectations by the affectionate work of your groups. That we should be the object of so much attention has been somewhat overwhelming to us, but, nevertheless, it has been most gratefully appreciated. Canadian lads are often reticent about expressing their feelings and for them and myself, in these words, I am endeavouring to pass on to you the volumes of thanks that come sincerely from all of us. Your son goes on in the best of spirits, being his own natural popular self. I am sure you will find little change in him. Thank you sincerely for your work on behalf of our next-of-kin and ourselves. We do appreciate it deeply.

June 8th, 1944

Hello my folks, to begin with this is my first letter since the beginning of last month. No, I am not slipping, just something which I'll explain sometime - not serious. Have received seven grand letters and a clothing parcel during the said period. What a parcel, everything in order. I think the most popular thing with everybody was the Yo-Yo. The photos frame and the snaps take extra censoring - should get them this week. The Menthol cigarettes are a good idea. Received two packets of clarinet reeds - imagine they came Air Mail, thanks. I am looking forward to music Theory books. Music as a profession? I don't think so. Hobby would be better. I appear to spend a lot of time on it here because it struck me as the only thing one can work at, getting both the theoretical and the practical side of it. Re: personal belongings, it does not matter on which side of the pond they are, but I'd like to pick up the uniform in England, I am still trying to get a photo, looks hopeful.

May 30th, 1944 Received August 16th, 1944

Two letters since I last wrote in the middle of the month, and parcels a-plenty. My March N.O.K. came a few days ago, along with a "sports" parcel, gramophone records, two book parcels and lots of cigarettes. Since my inventory I gave you recently, I have had three cigarettes parcels; 600 from W.A. R.C.A.F., and 300 from the C.P. O.W.A.A. The N.O.K. was in perfect shape, and the shorts and sweatshirt of the sports parcel were just what was needed. I have sixteen Science books, and five are still on the way. Although I feel industrious, the sight of them all makes me realize that to send any more would be wasteful.

I have two or three years work here now, so I'll let you know then whether to send any more. But do send lots of tooth brushes and tooth powder, footwear, sweatshirts, underwear, emery boards, scissors, pencils and exercise books, towels, brushes. And for our stomachs, curry powder, onion salt, apples, bananas etc. But please don't run yourself short of coffee, tea, sugar because we do very well in that line through the Red Cross parcels. I know the list sounds bold, but it may help as a guide when you play "put and take" when packing the N.O.K.s. Unfortunately, due to poor packing, the gramophone records arrived in a broken and useless condition. They must be packed in a good strong box to stand the weight of other parcels. All in all though, it has been a record month in the parcel line, and all in time for my birthday. My most grateful thanks to you all for your kind generosity.

May 13th, 1944 Received July 11th, 1944.

I've had no mail from any of you since I wrote last, but expect some will be along one of these days. Your December parcel hasn't arrived yet, so it looks like it may have gone astray. I had to have an X-ray for my teeth, so went to the nearby town yesterday. Fortunately they couldn't do it then, so had to go back this afternoon, so had two nice 4-mile walks in grand weather. It was swell to get outside for a change, but not so nice to come back. A lot of trees are in bloom, and plenty of early flowers out, so the countryside and gardens are very nice. Saw some nice looking girls, too, so that was a change from just looking at ourselves. It is the only time I have been out for a walk, so really appreciated it. How is everything going with you? I am feeling fine, but need summer shorts, light sox, shirts and shoes, so hope they are on the way.

May 11th, 1944.

This week has been very warm. What a pleasure after all that cold spell last week. My garden is coming along. I should have radishes next week and the lettuce are starting. I suffered a sad reverse with my tomato plants however. I had just transplanted them and had them out in the sun on my garden path. I lit a bit of rubbish on the south side of the garden and the wind swept the flames across the tomatoes before I could rescue them. Only two out of the forty lived. However the Germans have promised to bring us in some plants on June 1st. I long to go back on the old farm. It would be beautiful now with things just beginning to grow. We had an excellent play here last week "George and Margaret". The boys did it well. It is marvellous what they can do with a minimum of materials. The softball is just starting. We have two leagues, a major and a minor. The major

league is all Canuck. I play in the major league, why I don't know. I guess Kriegy Camp is the only place I'd be allowed to play in any league at all. I'll be with you before long.

May 9th, 1944

I received recently from your Organization cigarette and stationery parcels. In the past, many gifts of a communal nature have also been welcomed. For these, I wish to thank you most heartily, and to assure you that your good work is appreciated very much.

May 3rd, 1944.

I hope this finds you all real well. I am fine and out of the hospital now and at a camp. I'm in a room with four other Canadians and five Englishmen, they are real swell chaps too. One of them is from Quebec and I know lots of people he knows. When you send the sports parcel, put in some golf balls, also running shoes and pants and all other things like that. You can send as many sports parcels as you wish but just one clothing parcel every 3 months but you can put mostly food in it and chocolate. Please send the same brand of cigarettes. We play quite a lot of sports, so send a few sports clothes too, jacket etc. Please keep buying the bonds for me. I'm still anxious to hear from you all, give everyone my address. I hope you are all fine and well and not worrying about me because I'm fine.

April 29th, 1944.

A gala day for me for I received fifteen letters and cards. Thank everyone for the letters and cigarettes they have sent me, and explain why I cannot write to each one personally as I would like to do. Tell them I am grateful to everyone.

April 29th, 1944. Received June 28th, 1944.

Had two letters from you yesterday. I had just about given up hope for this month — they are dated Jan. 17th and Feb. 26th. I had one letter from Mother with quite a bit of news in it. We have started playing softball already, but it has been raining for the last couple of days and slowed things up a bit, however, we had enough sun for me to get a sunburn and my nose is peeling nicely. Thanks for sending the sports parcel. I hope it arrives all right but a couple of sports parcels you have sent have gone astray or are just slow in getting through — they may show up yet though. I sprained my wrist about a week ago, but it is almost better now. The Theatrical Club in the camp put on Pygmalion a few days ago, it was very good. We are not putting in a garden this year as we hope to be out of here before the stuff in it would be ready. I hope we're not mistaken, we are all hoping for big doings very soon.

April 28th, 1944 Received June 28th, 1944.

In the annals of the post, yesterday was a big day for me — 31 letters, everything from May (1943) to March (1944). This includes 13 from Mother, plus her beautiful and long awaited picture. As for the cig. parcels being sent by the W.A. of the R.C.A.F., I find most of the Montrealers are in receipt of them, but they are of the belief that the receipt cards are not getting through and that they are a major block in the outgoing mail. However on behalf of my fellow prisoners, I thank you one and all for your gifts, your perseverance, your loyalty and above all, your thoughtfulness. May your work never go unrewarded. Also would you thank for me, all those people whose letters I've received, and inform them that I only wish I could personally do it, but my letters are too few to be able to do so. I informed you in my last letter of an N.O.K. blanket and sports parcels having been received, also a parcel. No sign of June or Sept. N.O.K. (to Italy), so presume them to be lost. Eight books have arrived — four fiction (Robe, etc.) and four science.

April 25th, 1944 Received July 26th, 1944

Well I'm settled in my regular camp O.K. and C. is still with me. I was in hospital for a while with frost bitten feet but I had good treatment by the English M. O. and I'm O.K. now. We are

fairly comfortable here and still getting enough to eat thanks to the Red Cross parcels. J. is still in the hospital, but we are hoping he comes here when he gets well. I have been boxing again and am also on one of the baseball teams. So I'm getting quite fit again. I have met some of my pals here who I used to fly with in England. Don't worry about me as I am well and as content as could be expected.

April 25th, 1944.

I received a batch of mail last Saturday. The first I had received for a month. I have received cigarettes from many sources. I am badly in need of gym shorts and sweat shirts. They are the most comfortable wear for summer and sports. These can be sent as games parcels. The weather here has been fine and warm in April with a few showers. I have my garden under way. The radishes, lettuce and flowers are up and my tomatoes and onions in boxes are going well. We have put a lot of peelings into the gardens last winter so maybe it will grow something this year. Basketball is the main sport these days. Softball starts on May 1st with a few exhibitions games by the Canucks. I plan on farming when I get back. I am getting a bit old for going back to school and believe me there are many compensations in life on an Ontario farm. I'd like those registered Holsteins if you can get hold of them.



Stalag XIII C. Pte George J. Rice, Australia. Extreme left front row.

April 23rd, 1944.

You ask to hear more about the camp. Things are kind of dull at best. We have two appels a day, one in the morning and one in the evening. We have a complete staff made from P.O.W.s including our Commanding Officer. Our mail comes in each morning except Sundays. I average about fifteen letters per month and hope to do better in the future. I was weighed Saturday, one hundred eighty two!...

April 19th, 1944.

I am almost too worn out to write this Sunday. After Church, which comes first, we opened the Baseball Season officially with an All-Star game that lasted twelve innings. The best I could rate was to manage the losing team, and we lost two to one. Just like the Big Time with the Band and of course, the Colonel threw in the first ball. My voice is nearly gone, but those games come few and far between. Our barrack's team is quite good too. On top of that, Saturday was my big mail day with January letters from you and with pictures. Pictures of people in uniform do not come through. Send another sports parcel now and then. During the summer you must send a blanket. Not much about ourselves to tell, just sleep, cook, wash clothes, worry and try to figure out the system of censoring our mail. Our boys put on a good show last week and our band has one coming up.

April 16th, 1944.

Mail has been very bad this month. I haven't received a letter this month. We have 9 in our room now. A Canadian from Toronto. He was shot down on March 15. He is a very good natured fellow and a good basketball player. We have a

room team now and have had some good games. The weather has been very warm this week. I have planted part of my garden.

April 13th, 1944 Received July 31st, 1944.

Easter has come and gone, and with it came three parcels from you — a next of kin (Rec.), a blankets parcel and a sports parcel, all of which has set me up beautifully, to say nothing of how I feel. Also, at the same time, came a clothing parcel (capture parcel). The chocolate made a good substitute for easter eggs. The clothes were sorely needed, and the sports items have seen much action even now, due to the lovely weather lately, which has enabled us to get out for more strenuous exercise. I hope to play a lot of baseball, cricket, soccer and rugger, and I am also doing a lot of work on the horizontal bar. You remember our gym show at school. I am not quite as flexible as desirable, but it helps build up the body. You will be glad to know that at no time since leaving school have I been so fit. It is a big program, quite replacing reading and studies, but it is only a passing phase. There is nothing binding in Kriegedom, hence we go the way of our wills. When we tire, we seek new pastimes, which is a bad trait for a civilian, but believe me, it is the only life for a prisoner. I have read 100 odd books since becoming a prisoner, which may not sound very much, but it is an achievement for me. They have been books of all sorts; but the knowledge of how to read has been the greatest asset. We have many Canadians with us, from all over, each learning about the assets and liabilities of the other's home. The answer to the old East-West problem may be gradually coming into view. You are going to see a more united country after the war.



Group at Stalag IV B. Jack Meyers centre front row.
Kindly lent by Mrs. J. Meyers.

April 10th, 1944.

Thanks for the latest lot of snaps. It was grand getting them! Have just received another clothing parcel, with the belt, pouch, shirt, etc. They are better packed in boxes, I think. Summer seems to be approaching at last, so we'll be able to lie out in the sun. One of the boys from our room is going home this week on repatriation. He's been a P.O.W. for four years this month, and is very glad to be going now. The mail has been very slow lately. If you get any more snaps don't forget to send them along.

March 31st, 1944. Received June 2nd, 1944.

According to the calendar, spring should be here. And we feel it is coming, but as yet it has not arrived. Life goes on as usual and I want to go home more than ever. We feel that we should be home soon. Got my first mail in three weeks today. Our camp mascot (a cat named Timoshenko) caused the best news of the week. She gave birth to five German kittens. One of the boys was the midwife and he reported in the camp newspaper that the third delivery was the roughest. He also stated that he was completely exhausted after the delivery. No cats in history have ever received such good care. My English class is coming along fine. I find it hard to find material because the books are limited, however, everything is fine so far. I'm really getting a kick out of it, because it inflates my ego. Our play, which I am helping to direct, is stalemated for awhile, but we are planning to start working hard on it soon.

STALAG LUFT IV

May 24th, 1944

It certainly was grand to receive all that mail from you. I am getting plumper and plumper and taking P.T. now, imagine that! I will tell you what to send me in my next parcel when I write next month.

May 15th, 1944

No letters to answer this week. However, after last week's batch, it would have been almost too much to expect. I've moved again, back to the old East Compound, my first camp. I'll just recount the moves in case you haven't been getting the letters. Dulag - July 1942. East Camp, Sagan, August 1942. North Camp, Sagan, March 1943. Belaria, February 1944. East Camp, Sagan, May 1944. The addresses of all these camps are the same, Stalag Luft III. The place looks much the same except for the famous "golf course" constructed between the huts and the wire. The lives of the occupants are much endangered thereby, golf balls are no respecters of persons and they can raise a nasty bump! A camp newspaper, "The Circuit"

is another innovation written and produced entirely by Kriegies, of course. I arrived just in time to see the last showing of "George and Margaret" which had been running for a week in the camp theatre. It was well up to standard and very enjoyable.

April 25th, 1944 Received July 10th.

What are you doing these days? We are sun bathing and I'm getting a good tan. I hope to bring it home with me soon. Would you please send 1000 cigarettes to the following kriegie, he's only received 200 cigarettes and he's been here over a year. It would please me very much if you would.

May 9th, 1944

The picture of the Christmas tree is extremely good and the one of you standing by the singpost is superb. Looking forward to enlargement. I'll send you a picture as soon as possible. You can send me some pencils. Still engrossed with all my mail. Your latest letter is March 1st. Not a great deal of difference between boat and airmail letters. Occasionally, however, there is a two month' delay. Mail is very erratic, but it turns up eventually. There are a lot of things you try to tell me, but I'm still in the dark. The cig. situation is O.K. I happen to be one of the fortunate ones. Pictures are grand. Next parcel you can send shoe laces, dried vegetables, cocoa, porridge and comb. My health is O.K.

April 27th, 1944

Received 200 cigs yesterday. Tonight a letter arrived from you of October 1st. Lots of news too. The picture was grand. When enclose a snap always mention the fact.

April 27th, 1944 Received July 20th, 1944

Nearly another month gone. Will soon be celebrating the one year mark as a kriegie. I received my first cigarettes this week, including 1000 from Legion, 300 from your Dad and 300 from a lady I do not recall of knowing. However, it was swell to get them. (Legion cigarettes sent in late September). I have been chief cook around here this week for my ten buddies. We all manage to keep busy but it's sort of a lazy life. I also received four records sent in December. I am looking forward to being home soon.

April 20th, 1944 Received July 1944.

Another short note. I've been awfully busy lately, sleeping and eating. They take up quite a bit of our time, especially when you are cook. This was my menu for 10 buds last week.

Breakfast - a slice of black bread, jam, cup of coffee.

Lunch - Canned meat (Bully beef, spam, etc.) potatoes, bread, coffee.

Tea - Biscuit and cup of coffee.

Supper - Same as lunch with sugared barley pudding or home baked cake by... Baking Co. made from: Canadian biscuits crushed for flour Powdered milk, Sugar, Bread crumbs, Raisins, Cocoa and butter.

Then at 10 p.m., we have a cup of coffee (we call this brew). We get plenty to eat (next line censored) I hope to be home next year but you never can tell. Things are O.K. here. I hope they are the same back home.

April 1944

Received July 1944

Last day for mail this month. I've had official notice of my F/L from England so I have an increase in pay coming up. Nice eh? I wrote the bank in London about my money but so far haven't heard from them but should soon. Let's go to the show, and have a hot dog and coke after, eh? Should be seeing you soon.

March 26th, 1944

The weather is still beastly, in fact it has never been dry underfoot since moving into this camp. Still, on the whole, I prefer it here. I was included in a party that was taken for a walk recently, my first in captivity. These walks, lasting about two hours, appear to be regular now, two per day. We strolled into the country through a wood or two and although we ran into a snowstorm it was very enjoyable.

STALAG LUFT VI

April 27th, 1944 Received August 5th, 1944

Good news this time. Your parcel of Jan. 28th arrived O.K. nothing missing, and thanks a lot. We had a swell apple pie last night made from apples sent last time, and pastry made from Canuck biscuits, baked in The Kitchen. No mail lately as there is a small stoppage somewhere. Love to both of you.

April 6th, 1944

I am in the best of health and hope you are all the same. I hope you have heard from me by now. I don't expect to hear from you folks before June. Oh, how I look forward to the first coming of my mail. Please write often and tell every one else to write. I am taking a course in booking at present. The exams will be due in a few months. When I finish that, I intend to take a course in Diesel engineering. I've been to several good plays in our camp theatre lately. The one to-night was entitled "Boy meets Girl". It was acted by Canadian players and it was very good. Our medium of exchange is cigarettes. We trade anything for ciga-

rettes. A man's wealth is valued by the number of cigarettes he owns. Well, chin up, folks. I'll say bye for this time. Write often.

MARLAG UND MILAG NORD

June 22nd, 1944 Received August 5th, 1944.

Well I guess you are surprised to hear from me this part of the world, however I have received very good treatment and am in good health, and very thankful and a little amazed at my good fortune... Would you send me three or four parcels per month, # one a week containing food and toilet articles, blades, soap, tinned meat etc., and, of course, a thousand cigarettes a month... if in doubt enquire at the Red Cross for full particulars...

Ed note: Food may only be sent in next of kin parcels every 90 days.

May 22nd, 1944 Received August 8th, 1944.

Thank you so much for your latest letter dated May 2, received to-day, also for its copy. Your original letter together with its carbon received a short while ago. Re: the Musical Script I am most grateful for the trouble you have taken on our behalf please also express my thanks to Sir Ernest MacMillan for his interest in my request. I rather fancy I have set you an enormous task perhaps I should not have narrowed your choice of scripts. My colleagues say "The Three Musketeers" a highly acceptable piece, perhaps, may we hope? At the moment our Theatre is preparing "Journeys End" a very well known success. Perhaps you saw it. I will be bringing back some interesting material which I hope will find a vast audience. too hope for freedom soon. All in good order.

May 22nd, 1940 Received 31st July 1944.

Thanks for the parcel which I received intact last week. We had apple pie last night. The weather is good, the news is good, everything in the garden is coming up to expectations. We hope and pray for further good developments with a minimum of setbacks. The Yanks played the Canadians at baseball yesterday and the latter after a bad start — 14 to 4 at the end of the 4th — staged a smashing comeback and won by 15 to 14. Thanks to the Red Cross, the teams now have a full baseball kit which gave the game a colourful aspect. We are still all together in the one mess. This constitutes a record in camp life, where messes alter daily as ill humours bubble to the surface. I hope I can retain this virtue of tolerance when I return to normal life. We are all in good health and with sunbathing and the subsequent tan, look physically browned over. That is fine, but that mentally browned-off feeling which often recurs is not so good. Thanks for all you are doing. The cigs arrive regularly.

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