

BRITISH PRISONERS OF WAR

RELATIVES' ASSOCIATION

16 ST. JAMES'S STREET,
LONDON, S.W.1

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South Africa's Ordeal

In this war suffering is well-nigh universal. At times the suffering seems to be localised. It is Rotterdam or Belgrade. It is Coventry or Stalingrad. It is Leningrad which defies the enemy for more than a year. It is London, taking her blows with an almost untruffled composure. It is Portsmouth or Plymouth or Bristol. It is the Baedeker towns—Bath or Canterbury, York or Norwich. And well we know that there is suffering on the other side—in Berlin, Hanover, Hamburg, Bremen and Cologne.

None Untouched.

There is, perhaps, no village in Great Britain or Northern Ireland which is untouched by the present war. Go where you will among the seacoast towns of these islands, and you hear of merchant seamen taken prisoner or lost at sea. Go where you will among the Yorkshire dales, the Cotswolds, the Vale of Evesham, the Fens, the Lincolnshire Wolds, the moors of the West Country and you hear of some sturdy farming lad who is now eating out his heart in a German *stalag*. Go among the families which proudly send their sons to the East, and you find everywhere a deep-set anxiety. For when will the last word be written about the men who stayed behind in Singapore and faced the swiftly approaching Japanese? What of the men and women of Hongkong who wait patiently and put their trust in an Allied victory, though their days in the Stanley Internment Camp are long and uneventful?

From the suffering of war there is absolutely no escape. It is opportune, however, at this particular phase of the war, to spare an extra special thought for the South African prisoners of war and for their relatives. A large part of the young manhood of that valiant Union is virtually in bondage. Let us recall a few salient facts.

Facts of History.

Some of our Army commanders of the last war were leading British regiments against the Afrikaners at the turn of the century. Statesmanship came to the rescue when the South African War was ended. Together British and Afrikaner residents of South Africa shaped their Union and made it a formidable British Dominion. General Smuts gave his country a fine lead in 1914, and the people of South Africa played a vital part in securing our victory over the Central Powers in 1918. There is among the Afrikaners a definite tendency towards separation and complete independence. This tendency is fully recognised. Without political diversity there can be no progress. The late General Hertzog, for instance, refused to give his support to the present war. It was, therefore, a perfectly reasonable decision that no South African soldier should be required to fight outside the African theatre of war except as a volunteer.

Magnificent Record.

The record of South African fighters in this war has been, and is, magnificent. They helped to deliver the people of Ethiopia from their Italian conquerors. They helped to give Lord Wavell his impressive triumphs in East Africa. They showed that man for man Rommel could never hope to match them. But in the disastrous loss of Tobruk fifteen thousand South Africans were taken prisoner. As prisoners they were brought to Italy. In this unhappy condition the greater number of them were seeing the far-famed Continent of Europe for the first time.

In the German Net.

Last summer, when Italy made her surrender, the Allies stipulated that all

prisoners of war should be returned. But many Fascist Italian officials were still Fascists at heart, if not openly. In more than one camp, the Italian commander refused to obey the orders of the Badoglio Government. In consequence, the men in their charge were still behind the barbed wire when the German overlords arrived. Many of the prisoners did, in fact, make good their escape. But many more were caught in the German net.

We know now that from five to seven thousand South Africans of European stock are prisoners of war in Germany. Meanwhile two thousand "coloured" South Africans have been sent as prisoners of war to France. Their arrival is a curious commentary upon Vichy France. For the France which we knew in the days of the Third Republic was alone among the civilised countries consistently refusing to discriminate between coloured and uncoloured citizens. Their avowed aim was citizenship for the man born under the French flag in North Africa as for the man born within earshot of the Seine or the Rhone. Much more had been done to implement that aim than anywhere else in the world.

A Sense of Loss.

There is no need to emphasise the sense of loss in Capetown, Pretoria and Johannesburg or in the lonely farmsteads of the Veldt. Together with the mandated territory of South-West Africa the Union has an area roughly equivalent to the combined areas of Germany, France, Spain, Portugal and Sweden. Geographically, it is a vast country. In population, however, it ranks among the smaller countries. Its European population does not exceed two millions. For South Africa to have seven thousand men needlessly imprisoned in Germany is as severe a blow as the need-

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PRISONER OF WAR POST
 SERVICE DES PRISONNIERS DE GUERRE
 BY AIR MAIL
 PAR AVION

TO: _____
 Name No. & Rank _____
 Name _____
 BRITISH PRISONER OF WAR
 Camp _____
 (Including No. if any) _____
 Country _____

Prisoners and Parliament

"Hansard" for Interned?

Sir James Grigg has been asked whether he will consider sending copies of "Hansard" to prisoners of war who have escaped into Switzerland.

Mr. Gallagher: "Letting them know how lucky they are?"

The Vatican and the Far East.

Mr. Law stated in the House of Commons on March 16th that, "according to a report received from the Holy See, agreement in principle has been reached for the distribution, through the Vatican, of relief to British civilian interests in Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines and of a corresponding amount to interests in the British Empire. Funds have been remitted to the Apostolic Delegate in Tokyo for this purpose. One of the conditions imposed by the Japanese authorities is that this money shall be paid direct to the Japanese Government in these territories. So far the Apostolic Delegate in Tokyo has been able to visit a certain number of civilian internment camps in Japan proper. The Japanese Government have hitherto withheld permission for any neutral inspection of the camps in the southern area, and no Vatican representatives have accordingly been able to visit those camps."

Following Through.

On the subject of prisoners of war in the Far East, on March 10th, Mr. Granville said: "There is an impression that the Foreign Office do not follow through very well. Can the Foreign Secretary get in touch with the Russians in regard to this matter?"

Mr. Eden: "I do work in the least except the suggestion. I have myself seen representatives of relatives of the prisoners. We have been at immense pains to try to do

something for the unhappy people, and it will only cause uneasiness where it is not justified for suggestions of that kind to be made. It is not within the power of the Foreign Office or of anybody else in this country, to make a barbarous Japanese human."

Mr. Shinwell: "With the right hon. Gentleman recall suggestions which I ventured to make to him when he made his original statement on that matter, that he should try to use the good offices of the Russian Government?"

Mr. Eden: "I have recalled it, but I would rather not make a public statement about it."

Mr. Godfrey Nicholson: "While discussing myself from any criticism of the Foreign Office, may I ask my right hon. Friend whether he has considered that some comfort might be brought to these relatives if reference were made to camps where conditions are known to be good?"

Mr. Eden: "Yes, sir, and I did draw a distinction in my statement between the Southern area and the Northern area in that respect. If I can get any more information on the matter I shall be only too glad to give it to the House."

Mr. Stoenon: "When is the right hon. Gentleman likely to receive some report from the Vatican regarding their activities?"

Mr. Eden: "We are in constant touch with the Vatican. If the hon. Gentleman wants any information, I shall be very glad to let him have it."

Remittances Home.

Sir James Grigg stated on March 21st that a circular had been sent to all camp leaders in Germany advising them that they may now remit to banks in London balances of their pay to be converted from Reichmarks to sterling for investment.

Air Mail to the Far East

Where British Services are Available

We understand that since March 27th a special air mail post for writing to prisoners of war and civilian interests in Japan and Japanese occupied territories has been on sale at the British Post Offices, price 3d. We reproduce a specimen on this page.

These cards will be conveyed by air as far as British air services are available and will be forwarded thence by the normal route for surface correspondence. The air mail service will be quicker than the ordinary service but the total time of transmission will still be lengthy.

The postcard, as printed, is in the form for writing to a prisoner of war whose camp address is known. It may, however, be used for writing to all prisoners in the Far East who are entitled to receive correspondence by the prisoner of war post, see section 1 of leaflet P.232/B. But the printed words in the address "To" panel should be amended to conform with the instructions for addressing correspondence given in Sections 3 and 4 of leaflet P.232/B. In particular, in the case of camps intended for civilians, the words "British Prisoner of War" should be amended to "British Civilian Internee" when the camp address is known, and "British Civilian" when the camp address is not known.

The Japanese characters on the card mean *Prisoners of War Post*.

The prisoner of war air letter-card may be written to prisoners of war and interned civilians in Europe must not be used for writing to prisoners of war and interned civilians in the Far East. Communications written on private stationery will not be forwarded by air mail.

Activities in the Provinces

(Continued from page 6, col. 3.)

care of the association as compared with 71 last year. The Puckling Centre had dealt with 240 requests for parcels, an increase of 144 on last year. Cigarette parcels had also been sent to a cost of £110. £11, £220 had been donated to the Red Cross for food parcels and £70 had been set aside for Workmen's Welfare Home Funds. Mr. Crabtree, honorary treasurer, read a letter during the year to £200 8s. and a balance in hand of £25 8s.

Worthing.

It was announced at the February meeting of Worthing P.O.W.R.A., with Mrs. Francis Withers in the chair, that £5 given by relatives had been spent on books for prisoners of war.

Activities in the Provinces

A number of reports of annual meetings are included in the news received from affiliated bodies during recent weeks. They reveal two interesting trends which deserve to be emphasised.

First, elections to committees are significant for they show a growing realisation that co-operation of effort is the way to solid achievement. Perhaps it is that through the years of war, working often side by side, representatives of different organisations have come to know each other well and so to realise that they have an aim in common. But whatever the reason, reports show with more and more frequency that the British Red Cross Society, the Order of St. John, the S.S.A.F.A., the S.S.A.H.S., the British Legion, the Citizens' Advice Bureau, the I.H., the W.V.S. and others are represented on P.O.W.R.A. committees.

With the approaching end of the war and the growing realisation that prisoners of war, when they return, will need a warm welcome to forge again the tie which binds them to us and which has been broken by long separation, there seems, too, to be a growing feeling that the money must be there ready to give immediate material help if there should be the slightest need for it or the slightest danger that the lack of it may impede the forging of the tie.

Burnley.

Presenting her annual report at the committee meeting of the Burnley Prisoners of War Relatives' Association on Wednesday night, Mrs. A. Heap, M.B.E., secretary, stated that during 1944 the number of prisoners' names on the register increased from 318 to 316, and news of other missing men was still awaited.

During the year 51 relatives' meetings, with an average attendance of 61, were held. Three thousand, three hundred and fifty-one parcels, each containing 200 cigarettes, were sent to camps, and 830 parcels were sent by relatives through back-collections, making a total of 348,200 parcels and 41 lbs. of tobacco. Some 76 parcels of books were ordered and sent.

Mrs. Heap expressed the committee's thanks to all who had helped to entertain the relatives at the weekly meetings, and referred to the generosity of Col. H. Paschion, O.B.E., Massey's Burnley Brewery, Ltd., the "Burnley Express," and a number of friends, which had enabled the Association to carry on its good work.

Mr. R. Hart (hon. treasurer) said that £1,875 18s. 11½d. had been received in donations, and £250 had been received from the executors of the late Pamela Parsons. The sum of £420 had been sent to the Red Cross and £130 to the Red Cross Far East Section.

Each appreciated prisoner had received a gift of 200 cigarettes, and 2000 cigs from the Association. The sum of £700 had been spent on cigarettes for prisoners, and £243 had been issued in vouchers to relatives towards the cost of next-of-kin parcels which are sent from the depot at 33 Church Street, which is under the supervision of Mrs. Lancaster.

Chadderton.

The Thursday nighters, a company of men who meet regularly in Chadderton, are the generous supporters of a number of local organisations. At their meeting they presented a cheque for £40 to Council J. P. Bentley, Chairman of Chadderton Council and president of Chadderton P.O.W.R.A.

in aid of local prisoners of war. This brings the total of the work which the Thursday Nighters have given for prisoners of war to one hundred guineas. Chadderton P.O.W.R.A. thinks that the work of societies like the Thursday Nighters will help materially in the rehabilitation of prisoners of war.

Croydon.

Trooper Halliday, recently escaped from an Italian camp, answered numerous questions from relatives at the February meeting of Croydon P.O.W.R.A. He said that over 2,000 men had escaped from P.G. 51. Many had been repatriated.

Mr. H. W. Taylor, whose son is a prisoner in Thailand, gave his impressions of the statement recently made in the House of Commons regarding the treatment of prisoners by the Japanese. Relatives from this statement commending and encouraging.

Dartmouth.

Dartmouth P.O.W.R.A. have started a Welcome Home Fund for which £19 14s. 7½d. was raised by a dance held at the Guildhall.

Eccles.

Trooper David Collinson, 8 Walker Road, Eccles, addressed the February meeting of the Eccles P.O.W.R.A. He was a prisoner of war in P.G. 33 and escaped and joined the Allied Lines on Christmas Eve.

Hastings.

A concert held in Hastings raised £30 for the Hastings P.O.W.R.A. and at their £20 should be sent to the Red Cross Far Easters Section. An election was passed protesting against conditions in Japan.

Kidderminster.

Kidderminster P.O.W.R.A., at their March meeting, heard extracts from the full report of the extraordinary general



A Captain in the R.A.M.C. placed wreaths on the British graves in the hospital cemetery at Slings IV A the day before Christmas.

meeting of P.O.W.R.A. held recently in Caxton Hall. Private discussions on the report were held afterwards over cups of tea.

Leeds.

Leeds is a big city and Mrs. Todd, honorary organising secretary of the Y.E. News (P.O.W.) Club, has always gone on the wing principle, at her large meetings in Leeds, of having camp captains. Each camp captain represents a group of relatives with prisoners of war in the same camp. Lately, many new camps in Germany have been reported. Mrs. Todd has therefore been busy organising new groups of relatives, each with its elected camp captain.

Leeds is also sending parcels of gramophone records to the camps. These are addressed to the Man of Confidence and are a present from the Y.E. News (P.O.W.) Club.

Members of the Club have also made demonstrations by the Ministry of Food. These give all sorts of suggestions which will be of great help when the prisoner of war returns and needs dairy and appetising food to make him feel that the monotony of his recent life is well and truly in the past.

Now does Leeds lack ideas of how to do for the Hastings P.O.W.R.A. and at their monthly meeting it was agreed that another £104 11s. for the Club.

Lincoln.

A short talk on the Beveridge Report was given by Mr. H. Warner, honorary treasurer, at the February meeting of Lincoln P.O.W.R.A. Mrs. K. C. Warner, president, stated that the association had a balance in hand of £94 6s. 6d.

Activities in the Provinces —continued—

Middleton.

The substantial balance of £1,657 0s. 11d. is shown by Middleton P.O.W.R.A. in their financial statement for the year 1943. 42% of this has been raised by bazaars held during the year and £282 2s. 8d. by donations and subscriptions. Expenditure has included £250 14s. 0d. for Red Cross food parcels and cigarettes; £25 for medical supplies for prisoners of war in the Far East; £11s. gifts to repatriated men; 45 children's outings.

Newbury.

A joint standing committee of six members has been set up in Newbury representing in the Red Cross and P.O.W.R.A. in order to co-ordinate activities and avoid overlapping of effort. The results, it is reported, are very successful.

The Neats-of-Kin Packing Centre, opened in October, has packed and despatched 40 parcels. Parcels of 200 cigarettes are being sent monthly to every Newbury prisoner of war in Germany. In September, cheques amounting to £278 have been sent in the Duke of Gloucester's Fund. Of this £100 was earmarked for the Far East—Special relief and the rest for food parcels.

Newmarket.

Miss Golden, president of March P.O.W.R.A., gave a description of the organisation of her association to a meeting of the Newmarket and District P.O.W.R.A. held under the chairmanship of Mrs. Gerard Tharp.

Reading.

Reading P.O.W.R.A.'s annual report for the year ended January 31st shows that they have continued their efforts to build up a substantial Welcome Home Fund. Special efforts made during the year included £856 2s. 5d. collection boxes brought in £244 16s. 11d. and donations of £4, 6s. 6d. Expenditure included £25 donated to the Red Cross for food parcels, £42 16s. 6d. spent on parcels for prisoners of war with no next-of-kin, and £108 5s. on tobacco and £5 18s. spent on taking the children of prisoners of war to the pantomime and £1 12s. on photographs of children of prisoners of war.

Expenditure for the year amounted in all to £229 2s. 0d. and receipts to £1,510 9s. 12d. This brings Reading's balance in hand to £2,710 14s. 5d. Reading aims at raising £200 by the time prisoners of war in German hands return home. The money will be spent on them and then Reading will aim at another £1,000 to aid prisoners of war who are in Japanese hands.

Salisbury.

Salisbury P.O.W.R.A. has held the second of their experimental meetings for relatives in business who cannot attend the general meetings.

The association's committee for the present year includes representatives of the

town's other organisations who are concerned with the welfare of Salisbury prisoners of war and their relatives. It consists of Mrs. Batty (Order of St. John), Mrs. Brook, Mrs. Colvin (Parcels Packing Centre), Mrs. Ellison (Soldiers', Sailors' and Airman's Families Association), Lady Lindwell, Mrs. Miller, Miss Sanctuary (Citizens' Advice Bureau), Mrs. Straight, Mrs. Tarleton (British Red Cross Society), and Mrs. Wilson. A proposal that two additions be made to the committee has been adopted. Mr. B. W. Bourne is to represent the Soldiers', Sailors' and Airman's Help Society, and there is also to be a representative of the British Legion on the committee.

Scunthorpe.

Scunthorpe P.O.W.R.A. has completed its second year of existence and now has 150 members. At the annual meeting, Mrs. S. J. Hammers, honorary treasurer, announced a balance in hand of £204 16s. 2d. of which £20 is in the After-the-War Fund. Special tribute was paid, at the meeting, to the work of Mrs. Bewnase, chairman, and Mrs. Cullis, honorary secretary.

Meetings, with some entertainment took place each month, it was reported. A gift of £56 was sent in the Red Cross for comforts for local men. Members of Scunthorpe P.O.W.R.A. have assisted local Red Cross by becoming helpers in the Gift Shop.

The association helps relatives to buy things for their quarterly parcels. Regular parcels are also sent to 20 adopted prisoners of war and cigarettes are sent to Scunthorpe prisoners of war through a local agent.

NEW AFFILIATED BODIES

Great Harwood.

Honorary Secretary: Miss Foulds, 15 Birch Street, Great Harwood.

West Bridgford.

Honorary Secretary: Mrs. H. A. Charlesworth, 125 Elna Road, West Bridgford.

Totton's Prisoner of War Parade.

Spent Valley.

The Spen Valley Missing and Prisoners of War Club, at their March meeting, heard an account by Mrs. C. M. Gold, secretary of the V.E. News (P.O.W.) Club, of her visit to the extraordinary general meeting of B.P.O.W.R.A. held at Caxton Hall in January. Mrs. Gold was thanked by Mr. A. Helwell, chairman.

Workington.

Workington P.O.W.R.A. presented a cheque for £10 to each of their three repatriated prisoners of war and through the good offices of the Mayor of Workington and the Ministry of Labour, two of the three returned prisoners were found work.

At Workington P.O.W.R.A.'s February meeting, presided over by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs. Cain, the balance sheet for the year 1943 was presented by Mrs. J. Hodgson, honorary treasurer. To the £242 brought forward from 1942, donations and efforts during 1943 added a further £1,200. Expenditure during the year amounted to £267, leaving a balance in the bank of £1,076. £1,500 had been set aside in an After-Care Fund.

The Mayor, Councillor W. A. Walker, was welcomed on his election to the presidency of Workington P.O.W.R.A.

Workop.

The second annual meeting of Workop P.O.W.R.A. took place in February, with Mrs. O'Grady in the chair. Mrs. A. E. Crabtree, honorary secretary, reported that there were 101 prisoners of war under the

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How You Will Find Him

By a Prisoner of War

How relatives may find the returned prisoner of war and how they should trace him are described in the following article by a prisoner of war. At his uncle's special request, he sent the article home in the form of this letter.

I cannot include every single thing or cater for every prisoner of war. The points that I have set out here are general and I think cover all the main things and will be of great general guide to all concerned, to understand as for the first few words, and till we have realised ourselves to normal life.

First and foremost, we realise that we are not returning to the same England as we left. How different it will be we have no idea. We expect changes, but how many or how drastic we don't know, and we shall be very sceptical to these changes. You will find us very cynical in every respect.

Expect Rudeness.

You must be prepared to find us rude. Being enclosed in a camp with the same people—all men—will make us not careful in what one says, and this also leads to frankness and not thinking about one is saying, you don't like my opinion or someone annoys you, you tell him so in no uncertain manner, a habit which will take some getting over. Through this you also get swearing, and in a great number of cases this is included in normal conversation. This also is a large number of cases will be hard to break. We also have a language of our own, which would be rather double Dutch to an outsider, and you will find to doubt this will keep coming in our conversations.

You will find that we are very moody, very easily elated and very easily depressed. Also, don't be surprised if we just sit and think for an hour, or read a book without turning a page for an hour, or be able to sit or read completely oblivious of what is going on around us, no matter how much noise there may be.

Lack of Small Talk.

We will lack small talk of home life, etc., when we return. After being here so long you will find we will want to sit for hours and read old papers and magazines.

Another peculiarity we will have is asking a question and changing the subject before it has been answered. This may be as good as another here, hence the tendency to let things slide, though most of us try to keep this very much in check.



Strabing 244 is in beautiful and healthy country.

We will not eat as much as we need to do, but this is due to the natural shrinking of our stomachs. I think that many of us will want delicacies more than anything else, and as little out of this as possible. We shall want to go to dances, parties, etc., and in a great many cases you will find that we shall not be able to stand them for long and, of course, we shall not be able to hold our drink as well as before our captivity. This will adjust itself in a short time. One thing we would love on our return is a good strong whisky!

In many cases we shall be rather shy of the opposite sex, not having been in contact with it for so long. This will soon right itself, but at first we may appear awkward through the fact of trying to remember our manners.

Cadging for Lights.

We shall have the habit of giving our opinions and arguing on any subject under the sun whether we know anything about the subject or not. Another habit that will be hard to break is cadging lights from cigarettes and not using matches. Some will have the habit of collecting old junk, saying it will come in handy some time.

In a great many cases it will appear to act as if we were the same as when we were captured. Though time passes, being with the same companions all the while, one does not seem to grow up, but stays about as a baby. I am, this will, I am sure, be more accentuated among men of 35 or over, who will act as if they were very much younger. The effect of being with much younger people. This applies to men in a Camp like this, not to the Senior Officers' Camps.

Used to Routine.

We are used to a routine life of our own and will, no doubt, try to carry this on and will get annoyed if this is put out in

any way. Again, little things of no importance may annoy us very much and we ask you to forgive this. Lastly, one very good thing that this life has brought out is that very few of us will ever take anything for granted in future and we will appreciate the many little things our families do us each day.

One more warning—we returning will be like convalescents from an illness. As we get better, so all convalescents do, we will pass through a very irritable stage. You must forgive us our faults in this stage and try to help us through it as much as you can.

Wishes are Important.

Now as for our wishes, and these are important. Do not try and do too much for us or fuss over us too much, such as arrange too many parties, dances, etc., to elaborate a welcome home. Most of us want to be able to slip home quietly without a great deal of fuss. A great number of us I know would rather their families did not meet them at the station or off the boat, but wait at home. Such reunions will be of too great an emotional strain to be levied out in public. If we do not want to do a thing, do not try and press us to do it.

To be by Ourselves.

Again, a large number of us, after being home for about a fortnight or so, will want to go away by ourselves, right away from everyone. Do not try to stop us and keep us at home. It will do us a great deal of good to go on this sort of holiday. Very few will have anything mentally wrong. I am quite sure that after a few months we will readjust ourselves, but those first months will be a trial to our families. All we ask is that they will understand the confusion of our minds and outlook and will bear with us with patience until we function normally once again.

Letters from Prisoners of War

Extracts of letters from prisoners of war in Germany and Italy, and from civilian internees, are cordially selected from relatives, for reproduction in these pages. They should be as brief as possible, written on one side of the paper only, and should bear at the head, the date when written and the camp number and address of the prisoner. As letters cannot in future be returned, copies only should be sent, and these should, if possible, deal with descriptions of camp life, diet and conditions generally, and special requests. The Editor reserves the right to print only such portions of any letter as are considered helpful and interesting to readers and relatives.



STALAG LUFT III.

A Crossword a Day.

20/12/43.

Christmas is passed, and I am another year older. Now there is the inevitable flat period, which follows always, a long period of monotony.

We are warm, and well fed, and quite comfortable, and I suppose that many cannot say that it is great.

We had an amusing show called "Tony Draws a Horse," before Christmas, and an English film "Bringing Up Baby," which was exceedingly funny.

I got a book of *Times* crossword puzzles a few days ago. We do one each day, which is known for a large portion of the day. We usually manage to finish them, but we had a bad day today, two clues we could not do, and one was wrong.



STALAG IV B.

Food and Warmth.

2/12/43.

It is cold and damp with puddles and mud found about. It makes us spend most of our time in our beds. Thank God we have some heating inside which keeps the place warm so it's not too bad. The Red Cross are sending us food and clothing and boots. What a blessed Society the Red Cross is. They are doing a marvellous work.

Fed Russians.

20/12/43.

The boys here made the best of their Christmas. Christmas Eve was celebrated by singing, playing and brass bands, marching round the camp until one in the morning with Father Christmas and fellows

dressed as niggers with spears and loin cloth. About 3,000 watched Scotland beat England 3-2 on Christmas morning. All of us were favours and there were bagpipes.

We had a big banquet with steak pudding, two vegetables and Christmas pudding. We fed the Russians and Serbs with the extras we had.

Expects Another.

18/12/43.

I have had two letters this week so I am very lucky as I am the second chap to get mail from home since we have been here. Please do not send the woollen waistcoat but keep it for me when I come home as I have all I want in the way of clothing. I and I know how things are regarding clothing. Yes, it's the fourth Christmas away from home and I am feeling particularly glad to-day as I have discovered how I could have been with you for this Christmas, and quite honestly I expect another away.

I am hoping to get your Jane parcel sometime as they are being forwarded from Geneva, we hear. I hope you are getting some mail. It is very delicate now, I know.

Not Like Italy.

26/12/43.

At the moment there is an international football match outside our room on the pitch, Holland v. England and Scotland, and we have just scored by the sound of the cheer. The bagpipes and band are in attendance.

Inside here the chaps have been decorating their Christmas cakes and they are all set for judging. Christmas trees and paper decorations made from Red Cross wrappers complete the effect. The Russians gave us a couple of Christmas cards this morning. We each had a Christmas parcel from England and a Canadian one to go with it. Believe me, words cannot express our appreciation to the British Red Cross who have made it possible for us to have a wonderful Christmas. I knew nothing like this in Italy—at least I did not.

INFORMATION SOUGHT

We appeal to readers, as opportunity offers, to assist us to obtain information about the following men:

ALDERSON, Jack, 1456412, R.O.M.S., Royal Artillery, reported missing July, 1943. Write Mrs. Alderson (mother), 38 Acrington Road, Burnley, Lancs.

HOLDWAY, William Thomas, P.R. 62936, Chief Petty Officer, H.M.S. Belmarsh, reported missing January, 1941. Write Mrs. Holdway (mother), The Old Parsonage, Dugersfield, Basingstoke, Hants.

Skating.

2/11/44.

It is the last day of 1943 and it is going to be a late night all right, and I guess I will be in the fun. I spent my Christmas Day in bed with a bad cold and had two biscuits all the day. However, I have "been to town" since and made up for it. I am quite fit and well and go out around the camp every day and walk two or three miles after breakfast and I do not need any overcoat although it is pretty cold. I wish I had my ice-skates here as the swimming pool is frozen and some chaps have their skates sent out to them. If you think I will need them next year please send them if you can find them.

Firewatching.

13/11/44.

I have had two more letters—early December ones and pleased to hear a parcel is on the way. However, it will be difficult for you to obtain a lot of chocolate for me now. Please do not worry about sending me a large amount. Sorry to hear everybody appears to be having the flu. Do you still do your turns at night (firewatching). It will surprise you to hear I have got one to do shortly.

I am quite well and we have 105,000 parcels here of British Red Cross food. I had a Scottish one yesterday.

He Bled Out.

Undated.

I shall try and devote this first letter to telling you about myself so that you will have no cause for any more worry. First of all I want to apologise for giving you any worry at all. I know that Olga will have had no doubt about me, but knowing how Dad worries about me I have been very sorry for giving him such a shock. I had plenty of time to hale out but must have passed out through lack of oxygen, for the next thing I remember was standing up in a great field. I must have fallen like a drunken man because I hadn't even got a scratch. I am entirely unharmed, am



feeling cheerful and very pleased to be alive.

I am at a Red Cross camp where we have been given an overcoat, spare boots, towel, soap and cigarettes, in fact all we can wish for. The biggest surprise I have had in my life is the Red Cross—absolutely marvellous. Have just had corned beef, mashed potatoes, cauliflower and bread and butter and tea for dinner. We are having salmon for tea. Am with a whole crowd of English and American pals. You can't write to me here as we move on to

a proper camp soon. Ask the Red Cross people at home for particulars of what you can send. Have already pulled up with a grand crowd and we are having a laugh over our experiences. There is a grand spirit amongst us too.

Please have a nice Christmas and look on the best side of things, as I am—that I have seen the war out without harm—am with good pals and having excellent treatment. Shall write soon with proper address. Am banking on you not worrying. Please. Chaps up.

The four photographs on these two pages are of a Sports Meeting at Oflag VII B.





The Sherry Team at Stalag IX C.

STALAG IV C.

Feeding a Cold.

Christmas Day has come and gone and we are now approaching the final stages of our two-and-a-half days' holiday, so here is the dope for our Commandant's Christmas Eve.

To start the day well snow was falling, giving everything the right atmosphere. Then came what all of us had been expecting—letters from home. There were not a lot but luck was with me as I received yours of November 22nd. The Christmas tree was duly decorated, which helped to brighten the place up a bit.

We spent a quiet morning as most of us are suffering from slight colds, not that this dampened our spirits. All of us ate an excellent dinner thanks to the B.R.C.S. (after all, they say food is cold finishing up) with the usual Christmas pudding. After such a hearty meal most chaps had a few hours' sleep. Then came the big event of the day—the cake. This also consisted of three goods and each table had a good cake made the previous week. All eyes were turned on the cake when cutting for the best and our thumbs are due to Reg for his excellent cooking, not forgetting the bloke thaticed it. It weighed a good 10 lbs (for six men) and was very frisky without being heavy.

It would certainly open our parents' eyes to see what good stuff we can turn out of our parcels. They wouldn't worry any more.

Ten over, we had the gramophone on, having borrowed some German records with English tunes and passed the evening away dancing and singing (including "Knees up, Mavour Green"). An enjoyable time was had by one and all, but nevertheless all our thoughts were turned homewards trying to picture the family scene.

P.S.—The toast at 5 p.m. was to all at home and hoping to be with you all next Christmas.

From One Camp to Another

Prisoner Complains

8/1/44

I leave hospital in four days time so shall be working again by the time you receive this. Hope so, any way.

STALAG IV D.

Down the Mine.

30/12/43. Kds. HR.88.E
Since my last letter we have been moved and had to work in a copper mine. I had hoped, being over 30, I should have worked on top. I find it gives me no doubt you will laugh, but several tasted it and gave their verdict. Perhaps you will let me try again when I am home for my next birthday.

[This letter has been referred to the appropriate departments.—Ed.]

STALAG IV F.

Pilgrim's Progress.

20/11/43.
At last I'm able to write. You'll see by the address I've been moved again, much to my sorrow. We had to clear out of the last camp at short notice and since then we have travelled miles and miles and been in various camps, each one worse than the last, till finally we've finished up in the worst camp I've ever been in. As for the treatment we received at different times, well, the least said is soonest mended. I can only say I don't understand why after being in the best possible camp and getting really decent treatment, I should be sent through that lot and finish up here. It is very cold but, I goodness knows what it will be like later on. I'm anticipating the woolsies now, I can tell you. I don't know when I received your last letter but it was dated September 27th. In it you mention leaving the old house. By all means do so if you want to. I'll be satisfied anywhere after this lot.

Transport Locking.

12/12/43.
Am able to write you once more this week. I should have written last week but we were put off with the excuse that we couldn't write the necessary letter cards. Have just been reading some of your old letters and I see you keep asking if I've received any parcels lately. I can tell you, I can only say no to that and shall be very surprised if I get these letters you'll see. If you get my last letter you'll see I was at various camps after leaving III D and at one of these there was a parcel of some sort for me but they would not give it to me, so I expect it has gone to join all the others in I have received. I told you we had got some Red Cross parcels. I wrote last week we had a relapse this week and we've none in for the next week, so we are almost back to the days when we were first captured. The worst of it is we've been told there are

"Like Jail Birds"

—But Not Downhearted

stacks of parcels in Italy if we can get the transport. I expect you'll think this letter is a long moon, but don't be sorry, I'm O.K. and I know it can't last for ever.

STALAG IV G.

Paid for Letters.

12/12/44. Kds. 20/380.

Here I am again, after a long time without writing to you, but it is not my fault, it is the Germans, as we have been in four camps since we left Berlin. That is fifteen weeks ago now, and when we got a letter we had to pay for it, so we don't get paid we won't get a letter. We are all hoping to see the Red Cross visit our camp as we are like jail birds, not P.O.W.s. So if this gets through, show it to the Red Cross then they may treat German P.O.W.s like we are treated, but no matter how they treat us it won't get the lads down. I am in good health and still going strong. Have you received my Field Card yet. Don't worry, Mum, it won't be long now.

Shift Work.

18/1/44.
This is my second letter from Germany, the first from this working camp. The work is not too hard. We are working at the Post, loading and unloading railway trucks of parcels and mail sacks. Incidentally, we get quite fit in cigarette and next-to-cloth parcels going through. We work three shifts, one week 6 a.m. to 1 p.m., one week 8 p.m. to 6 a.m., one week 1 p.m. to 8 p.m., so we do night shifts every five days, but we work with our pals and we are on the same shift, 1-8 p.m. week. So far I have had five days a week, but perhaps later on we shall have Sundays off. Our billet is quite comfortable, central heating, hot water, etc. It is the hall of one of the beer-gardens, with balcony, single tables, chairs and all. We have had three issues of parcels, yesterday's being a Christmas one. I would like some underclothes (winter) and summer pants, pinnacols and pullover, just in case!

[These letters have been referred to the appropriate departments and we are informed that representations have been made regarding conditions in Wehrkreis II Camp.—Ed.]

OFLAG VII B.

Gym. Shoes Wanted.

10/1/44.
A good mail this week. The new photos of the Pups arrived O.K. and I think they are fine. I've written to you through standard pat to be a Messal Festival.

I am keeping extremely well and have had only one cold (in the autumn). So glad to get your news in reasonable time.

OFLAG VIII F.

Christmas Cabaret.

11/1/44.
We had a Christmas Cabaret to-night, with the band and all the theatre people; we all went in Pince Dore and were

come by these days, but they are rather a necessity for playing games in the summer.

Cindered Paths.

19/1/44.
My October clothing parcel arrived the day before yesterday—it was fine, slipper-shirt, etc., and the chcolate, just what was wanted. Funny enough, Wag got his at the same time, so we have a fine bit of chcolate among us. Only one letter from you this time.

A wonderfully assorted box of cigarettes and tobacco slips has come in for me. "Killed the Camp" has its first night tonight. The lighting is pretty awkward but quite fun.

We don't seem to be going to have a winter here this year. It is still wet and muddy, but that isn't such a nuisance living here as opposed to where we were last year, although most of the paths are cindered now.

A Mild Winter.

31/1/44.
Last week I was given a "useless" fountain pen, but I repaired it and since have been doing maths, exercises with it for the pleasure of writing with a fountain pen again!

I was not allowed to have your corduroy trousers, but we have not felt the cold this mild winter. Lovely today. I have been sitting in the sun watching Rugger and Soccer.

We have our fifth visit to the local cinema this week. Last week the Repertory Players (with their usual high standard pat to be a Messal Festival).

I am keeping extremely well and have had only one cold (in the autumn).

So glad to get your news in reasonable time.

Dutch P.O.W. entertains Oflag IV C.

served with sausages and chips, pudding, beer and coffee. Real Christmas tapes and decorations in the Mess. We are ten in a room and warm and comfortable.

Studying Law.

2/1/44.
Am studying for Law Society Final Exam—working very hard now—may be taking it here. Am writing Geneva for books and past exam papers. Can you send me a number of previous exam papers. Please keep taking "Law Notes" for me, and get book numbers missed, if any—very useful when I get home. Please address tobacco here.

A Comfortable Camp.

8/1/44.
We are allowed to send three letter-cards and four postcards per month to Germany. We are very comfortable here, in a big modern camp, with extensive grounds in the midst of beautiful wooded country. The whole of the main building is centrally heated, and we live in parties of ten in small, well-fitted rooms, each with a radiator, big double windows and good electric light. We sleep on double-tiered beds and have stools, tables and cupboards in each room. There is a theatre, football ground, tennis court, swimming pool, and recreation rooms and cinema in the grounds. We have hot baths every week. There are plenty of Canadian Red Cross food parcels—we have one each per week. Have started on Law Final Course. Every moment of my day is occupied.

A Thousand Officers.

9/1/44.
A proper letter at last! And at last our hosts have provided some blankets; and they say the heating is arriving. So things are looking up.

Over a thousand officers, many of whom I know in Italy. Most of us are in a big building, formerly some kind of Academy; but I and a few others are in two cottages close by. I share a little room with G., who was also at "29"—we sleep in a two-tier bunk, and have a stove which we light at lunch time; after which we are very snug.

There are twelve pairs, of whom seven are C. P., and I am senior of the latter.



An R.A.F. group at Stalag 344.

So I have a job. The most important part of it is a training course for ordinands, of which we have nine—and there may be more among recent arrivals. We have a lecture room and a chapel, run like a small theological college. So time is going to fly. If we are here long enough we hope to get the Ordination Exam papers for them to sit for in the summer.

The food is not up to much, but we have "parrels" so all is well. The worst thing is the climate, which is more changeable than anything we have at home. I wish it would freeze, and stay put till the spring instead of blowing every other day into liquid mud!

STALAG IX A/Z.

A Merry Christmas.

6/1/44.

On Christmas Eve I was at the Carol Service, which was an excellent beginning.



From Stalag XX B.

Everything— Except Freedom Awaiting "The Day"

send any more parcels as I have plenty of everything—in fact everything except freedom.

Keep smiling for the Great Day—it's on its way at last.

STALAG XI B.

Moved Around.

20/1/44.

Edo. 7603.

I do hope you received the other two letters I sent you at our first camp in this country, also the card from our previous letters, which was all we were given. I've unfortunately been moved around quite considerably since we were taken from Italy, and consequently I've had no mail of yours for some time. The very last one I had in Italy was dated August 7th.

I wonder what the kiddies look like now—I expect I shall see a very great change in them. I don't think it will be long now. I'm quite fit myself, and O.K., so please don't worry about me. I don't know when I shall have the opportunity to write again.

Nothing Coming In.

20/1/44.

Here is my second letter in six months to you. I leave it to you to judge my feelings. What a life! I haven't seen any Red Cross kit of any description for months and if something isn't done for us soon I'm afraid there are going to be some nasty consequences. I hope you are writing plenty of letters and sending some fags. There is absolutely nothing here—roll on the end.

Never mind, darling, your photo keeps me going and we all know that a couple of months will see the war over.

[This letter has been referred to the appropriate departments.—Ed.]

STALAG XVIII A.

Camp Rations.

23/12/43.

The ration list of this camp is computed by taking the average of the three different scales of work that exist here—light, heavy and extra heavy. Beet or horsebeet 25 or 31 grams respectively, margarine 38 grams, sugar 23 grams, jam 23 grams, cheese 4.2 grams, meal etc. 7.69 grams, macaroni 8.6 grams, coffee 4.5 grams, bread 600 grams, potatoes 500 grams, coal 3 lbs. for all purposes. This is per man per day.

I never touch the meat, jam, cheese or coffee for I make my Red Cross issue last the week.

In a Jam Factory

"Nice Steady Job"

STALAG XX A.

Mending Barrels.

7/11/43.

Edo. 100.

I had a letter from you this week dated September 17th, and was glad to hear you are all well. I also had a quarter-pound tin of Bisco, but there was no card with it. I am O.K., and keeping fit and have got myself a nice job for the winter. I now work in the carpenter's shop in the jam factory mending barrels which are used for jam. Some of the boys have worked there all the time we have been here and one wanted a change so we swapped jobs. It is a nice steady job and quite useful as we have to put new staves, new tops, new rings, etc., and so have to use a fair number of tools and machine driven saws, etc. It will be out of the cold as there are high stoves in there so I shall be all right if we stop here for the winter.

We had the first bit of snow of this winter last night but it soon melted. It has been fairly cold here this week, and it looks as if winter is coming in earlier this year than last.

Beer and Song.

2/1/44.

I have not had any letters from you for the last two or three weeks. We had a fairly good time at Christmas, but rather quiet. I borrowed a piano and had a bit of music with the piano two accordion, violin and home-made drums. There was singing, community and solo efforts, and general fooling about helped on by barrels of beer. We had three and a half days holiday for Christmas and were the same for the New Year. Of course we had a special Christmas parcel from the Red Cross and extra cigarettes. The weather has been very variable over Christmas—more one day, rain the next, then a sharp frost.

No Parcels.

16/1/44.

I have not received any parcels for a couple of months but I expect they will turn up. I have not seen anybody out of the Regiment since early in 1942, but I believe the mystery of camp I know are at Stalag XX B. I am still in the carpenter's shop mending barrels and am getting on all right at it. The weather is very variable, raining one day and about ten degrees below the next, and the roads have been like skating rinks.

STALAG XXI D.

Bags of Fun.

2/1/44.

Edo. 11.

We managed to have a roaring time at Christmas. I drank what seemed to be a barrel of beer and remember shouting "mass overboard" and waking next morning with the blanket round my neck and my legs frozen. The happy time I've had since a prisoner. All the boys made paper hats, some better than you could



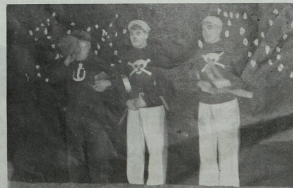
Entertainment at Stalag XX A (36).

buy. But I was without an accordion. I reckon it should be home with its owner now. Again I made toys for the kiddies, a job I really enjoyed, for a week before Christmas. New Year's Eve went just the same—bags of fun—bags of good chaps here—will make fine husbands after this.

New Year Revels.

1/1/44.

We had a good Christmas, with two days off from work and plenty to eat from the Red Cross parcels. We had revereity and to-day for the New Year. We had a fancy dress dance last night until 1 a.m., the New Year being ushered in with full ceremony. The costumes were as remarkable as they were various, being made of all sorts of oddments. We now have South Africans, Australians, New Zealanders, Scotch, Irish, Welsh and English in the camp so there were plenty of original ideas. In the course of the evening we had a Zulu war dance performed by a South African in appropriate costume. A Maori Haka was done by the New Zealanders, who also sang some Maori melodies which are beautiful. It was estimated that the



Red-nosed comedy at the same camp.

Fixing Up the Music

Saxophone Player Looks Forward

The Christmas dinner was excellently done—the kitchen officer and the gallery staff were responsible. We work here on the general messing scheme, i.e. all parcels are collected by the kitchen officer and he works the menus accordingly. A very good scheme.

I hope some of you more recent letters turn up soon. There are letters which were written from England up to the end of November, but yours of October 2nd is the latest I have had. Those of later dates are very few, considering the number of people in the camp.

Varied Occupation.

13/1/44.

Very many thanks for letters of November 5th. Mails have been very rare recently and this windfall received today was very welcome. I am keeping pretty fit an occupied on various things—a pleasant change after six weeks all day and every day on the patio—now past.

20/1/44.

Since last writing I have received your letter of November 19th. I'm very glad N. (a repatriate) wrote to you. He's a great old boy. I received one of Nanny's letters the other day dated August (from Rhodes). Also I received another of Mrs. W.'s cigarette parcels sent off in August (from America).

Music for Revue.

21/2/44.

Your letter of January 6th has arrived. It seems to be out of turn as the previous one was December 30th. I am busy at the moment trying to fix the music for a revue that the theatre people hope to put on in three weeks' time. I don't feel very happy about it as it seems a bit above my capabilities—however, one can but try.

It's rather tiresome nowadays because we are confined to our huts from six in the evening, and have to have supper at 4.30 to get out of the Mess in time.

On the whole, I shall be very glad when we leave this country. I'm looking forward to hearing all the news from home and do hope you are comfortable and undisturbed.

I'm sorry this letter is so dull, but I just haven't got a thing to say.

A Quiet Christmas.

8/1/44.

At last, after a long spell, a letter from you, Mum, has turned up—yours of October 15th.

I'm very glad to hear that the grand *duchesse* is home. One old fellow from my room was among them. Who are the "pretty" girls? They refer to us as having got home? I know of doctors, for instance, who are not employed as such and who are still here.

The Pantomime, as I told you in my last, seemed to go down very well. I felt very much at a loose end after it was over, but soon found things to occupy my time.

Yesterday I completed my fourth year. I did not celebrate! We had a very quiet Christmas and an even quieter New Year.



From Stalag 592.

amount of energy expended in the Scotch and Irish treks would, if collected, be sufficient to run a mechanical tin opener for the use of the camp. The Lankforders, the clanking minstrel, obliged with the rather strenuous "Knees up, Mother Brown."

We forgot where we were for a few hours, at any rate.

MARLAG UND MILAG NORD

Supper at 4.30.

7/1/44. Marlag O.

It is five months since I heard from you or anyone, so I don't know much what is going on. Everything is just the same as usual here, and nothing much seems to happen. The weather has been mild and wet lately, and Christmas day was very fine, but only climatically. On the three succeeding days we had our Pantomime, which was really a first class show, all written in the camp, and lots of naval uniforms made out of paper, etc. What can be done with practically nothing is amazing.

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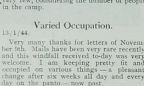
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Music for Revue.

21/2/44.

showed your letter to D. He was pleased to see it as it was much more recent than his letter.

Letter from Repatriate.

6/2/44.

Your letter of November 8th to hand. Mr. Skjopen had a letter from old John (a repatriate prisoner) the other day, which he showed me. Very interesting.

A Stage Casualty.

13/2/44.

Another parcel of 200 Players arrived yesterday, presumably from Uncle L., though there was no indication. I'm playing in the orchestra for a Concert tomorrow—saxophone R., who runs the orchestra, fell off the stage the other day and broke his wrist. He is most unfortunate. He broke his ankle last summer.

Sorry to hear that M. had the flu. The epidemic seems to have been pretty general. I almost forgot to tell you that two parcels, each containing four inhalers, arrived three days ago. Very many thanks indeed.

CAMP INTERNMENT MILITAIRE ADELBODEN, SWITZERLAND.

Ski-ing.

26/1/44.

Still waiting in vain for some news from you. It's been five months. Please don't worry about me. Having a very fine time and good food. We have good walks in the mountains. There are football matches and the pictures twice a week and best of all we do a bit of ski-ing, but I'm more often than not slipping in the snow. We do look funny. The Swiss people invite us to their homes. Wish you were with me. It would do you good.

Letter from the Far East

CIVIL ASSEMBLY CENTRE,
YANGCHOW, KIANGSU, CHINA.

Camp Conditions.

3/9/43.

The Commandant has generously given me permission to write a 300-word letter home. I was delighted to get your reply to my Red Cross letter telling me about the bombing. You must not worry about me. I'm quite well and all days go fast. The dressing-bell goes at 6.30, then tea, etc. roll-call at 7, 11th 12, supper, 6 lights out at 10. The place is up the Grand Canal a few hours, opposite Chimpking. The building was a Mission Hospital. The latrines, washhouses and canteen are in the compound. There is a recreation ground and some beautiful trees. We get lots of birds and have a slightly tame kite. The gardening section grows lettuce and tomatoes. We give lessons. I am going to take a life-class this autumn and lectures, concerts, etc. I hear occasionally from Lenamata (living in Shanghai) who also sends parcels which are very welcome, especially the jam. I sleep in a dormitory with 36 women. We have a doctor and nurses and small hospital.

[This letter was typed except for the signature. The sender suggests that her daughter may probably like to see a little old typewriter previously lent her by a friend in Shanghai.—Ed.]

LATE NEWS

AIR MAIL SUSPENDED.

For operational reasons civil air mail services to the following countries were suspended on and after 15th January, 1944: Gibraltar, Madeira, Canary Islands, Portugal, Spain, Camery Islands, Switzerland, French and Spanish Morocco, Tangier, Algeria, Tunis and Senegal. The air mail service to prisoners of war in Europe, except in Sweden (including air letter-cards) was also suspended. The civil air service to other countries are being continued but with reduced liability to delay. Except in the case of Gibraltar, mails for the Forces overseas are not affected, in the case of Gibraltar air mails for the Forces and civilians have been suspended.

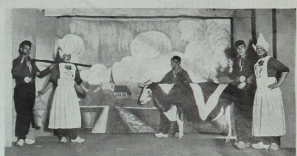
The air mail service to the prisoners of war in Europe, except in Sweden, is there suspended and intending purchasers of 3d. prisoner of war air letter-cards should note that the service is available only to prisoners of war in Sweden.

No information can be given as to the probable duration of the above-mentioned suspensions, but due notice will be given as and when the services can be resumed.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Membership of the B. P. O. W. R. A., which includes the News Sheet, is per annum. In case of limited means, reduced rates are considered.

FROM OFLAG IV C.



Note the "I" on the cap.

Officers' Representatives

The International Red Cross Committee has been consulted on the interpretation of Article 43 of the 1929 Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war. The text is not definite. It does not make clear whether, in an officers' camp, the senior ranking officer takes the place of an elected man of confidence or if, on the contrary, the object is to provide two co-ordinate representatives.

The powers respectively outlined for these two kinds of representative are analogous but not identical. In effect, the man of confidence is charged with representing prisoners with the Military Authorities and the Protecting Power, whereas the highest ranking officer is "recognised as the intermediary between the Camp Authorities and the officers."

According to the text of the Convention, there are therefore, theoretically, two ways of interpreting it: 1. Clause 1, in the special case of camps for officers, the question of the man of confidence. In camps for officers, or the like, the officer of senior rank takes the place of the man of confidence.

Hierarchical Order.

In support of this thesis it should be taken into account, in the first place, that in the camps for officers there exists a hierarchical order, based on the differences in rank, which justifies the appointment of a senior ranking officer as the representative by right. In the camps for other ranks, all are equal, and this legitimises the system of election.

In the second place, the presence of two representatives in a camp for officers may not be justified from a practical point of view and could even present certain inconveniences, inasmuch as their respective powers are not clearly defined.

But the election of a man of confidence may take place, according to Clause 1, "in any place where there are prisoners of war," and even in camps for officers where there is already a camp leader mentioned in Clause 1.

The fact that Clause 1 seems to have a general application can be invoked to support this interpretation. Also the title of Chapter 2 of Section V of the Convention, as well as Article 44, speaks of "representatives of the prisoners," implying an idea larger than that of the men of

confidence. Finally, Clause 3 enumerates certain special tasks within the scope of men of confidence without stipulating that they would also be within the mandate given to camp leaders in camps for officers.

The verbatim report of the 1929 diplomatic Conference does not provide any precise statements. But the preliminary documents which served as a basis for the work of the Conference contains the statement that the appointment of Clause 4, foreseeing a special procedure in camps for officers, did not figure in the project for the Convention worked out by the I.R.C.C. The idea was put forward by the Hungarian Government. They suggested, as well, that the application of Clauses 1 and 3 should only be applicable in the case of prisoners of other ranks. But it was judged unnecessary to insert this ruling into the final draft.

It appears, therefore, that it was not intended, in 1929, to provide for a man of confidence in camps for officers in addition to a senior ranking officer. No doubt it was judged that the senior ranking officer would assume the functions of the man of confidence.

If the practice of a number of different countries involved in the present war is examined, this is confirmed. But it is not the absolute rule.

As the reception, control and distribution of relief supplies is hard work which might be trying for one officer who, by designation, must be one of the oldest in the camp, one can suppose that the appointment of a man of confidence, as well as a camp leader, could have its use.

Obscurity of the Text.

In the light of all this and in face of the obscurity of the actual text of the Convention, it therefore seems that, in each case, the practical solution should be sought when the various needs have been taken into account by the officers in the camp decide by a majority that in the particular circumstances a man of confidence as well as a senior ranking officer would be desirable, they could, in the same interpretation, Article 43, submit the appointment of a man of confidence—or at least the name of the person appointed—to the approbation of the Military Authorities to whom the camp is responsible.

How Thailand Fell

Fatal Cabinet Decision

How Thailand fell to the Japanese has been described by Dr. Thomas C. Oakley, who was medical attaché to the British Legation in Thailand. He was repatriated to this country after nine months' imprisonment in Thailand.

The Japanese invaded Thailand in the early hours of December 8th, 1941, and they met with some resistance. But the Thai Cabinet met hurriedly at 7 a.m. and decided not to fight but to allow the enemy to occupy the country.

Business As Usual.

The British community, according to Dr. Oakley, met the same evening and were addressed by the Minister, Sir Josiah Crosby. He told them that the Foreign Minister of Siam had assured him that day that the Japanese were not intending to interfere with the civilian life of the town and country and that business would go on as usual. He advised the British to stay in their jobs, but for those who wanted to leave the country he was trying to arrange a train over the border into Burma for the next day. This train did not materialise and the only chance of getting away was across the jungle, as a few people did successfully.

Betrayal.

Most people stayed but by Tuesday morning, the 9th, it was evident that the Minister had been misinformed by the Foreign Office for all the Legations were surrounded by Japanese soldiers and the staffs were not allowed to leave.

That afternoon the Japanese began systematically to take possession of all the British interests in the town—the banks, the merchant firms, the newspaper offices and the insurance companies. Soldiers came along with fixed bayonets, cleared all the staff, European and Asiatic, out and stationed sentries at the entrances. Some of the offices they took over for their own use, such as the wharves and shipping facilities. The others they just closed. The staffs were sent home and if the Japanese wanted to use their houses, the occupants were carted off in a lorry at very short notice with a couple of suitcases. Some went to the Legation, but when that was full they were accommodated in one large room in one of the hotels where men, women and children slept on the floor together.

The next day, Wednesday, the Legation was closed and none of the permanent staff allowed to enter or leave and from that day there was no official news from the Legation.

Internment.

The Legation had asked, as soon as the Japanese occupation began, for a list in



Sports Meeting at Siam, A. I. D.

quadruplicate of all the properties people had in Siam, but few firms had time to do this. Dr. Oakley does not know if the lists were ever kept.

From the Wednesday, most people stayed in their homes, afraid to venture out, and on the following Sunday the Siamese came and locked them up in their houses, putting on a strong police guard. On December 23rd, all British, American and Dutch civilians, except the Legation staffs, were taken to a concentration camp. Dr. Oakley went to this camp, but he was later allowed to go in the exchange ship with the Legation staff.

The Fate of Property.

From the information he was able to gather in the camp, he learned that all alien property was first taken over by the Japanese and then if they did not need to use it, it was handed over to the Thai authorities. They set up a department for dealing with this called the *Committee for the Control and Management of Business and Property of a Certain Class of Alien in Time of Crisis* and it was attached to the Ministry of Economic Affairs.

Internees could apply through the Camp Commandant to this Committee for information about their business or property and they, in turn, came to the internees if they wanted information. The information given was very meagre. It was learned that some of the properties had been looted but this was mostly in private houses. All businesses were under lock and key and guard, and the Siamese were hoping to start them up again in their own interests and with their own staffs.

The Committee sold all property and goods they did not require and Dr. Oakley had the misfortune to see in the paper a sale of his own furniture.

Banking and Insurance.

There was talk of opening some of the banks again, except to alien customers, but this had not been done before Dr. Oakley left on August 4th, 1942.

The Thai Government was also talking of opening its own life assurance business. Dr. Oakley does not know whether they intended to use the premises of the Sun Life Company for this. The two European agencies of the Sun Life in Thailand were able to get away. The rest of the staff were Asiatics and were not molested. The Com-

pany's chief agent in Thailand was a Siamese prince of excellent family. He had relatives in the Thai Government. He and the other Asiatics were automatically put out of their posts when the Sun Life office was closed, but Dr. Oakley thinks it likely that they may have been invited to join the new insurance company the Government were thinking of starting.

Dr. Oakley says, "We all had the feeling that the Siamese had no great love for the Japanese but they were forced to take this step of declaring war on us and confiscating our property."

Insurance Policies

Insurance policies held by prisoners of war are sometimes in danger of lapsing because the prisoner of war did not make provision before leaving this country for payment of premiums to be continued. In the interests of prisoners of war, relatives should take all available steps to see that policies do not lapse for this reason.

In cases of prisoners in Germany there is an official channel through which a Power of Attorney can be arranged. Unfortunately, this does not apply to prisoners in the Far East.

Some policies contain a non-forfeiture condition whereby the policy remains in force and the full amount is payable subject to the debt of the unpaid premiums. And some insurance companies are proving very accommodating to service men who are inaccessible and who have left no Power of Attorney in this country.

Relatives, however, are strongly advised to deal only with the head office of the company concerned and not with one of its agents. In the event of a policy not containing a non-forfeiture condition, relatives of other ranks should approach the War Service Grants Committee and relatives of Officers should apply to the Officers' Families Fund, 3 Wilton Road, London, S.W.1.

FAR EAST MAP ON SALE.

A map of prisoner of war camps in the Far East is on sale at the Association's offices, price 2d., or 3d. if sent by post.