

Chapter 15 – ACT 3 – Stalag Luft III [v8]

The Second World War witnessed the most massive aerial warfare in the European theatre that the world had ever seen. Thousands of operations were flown by the Allied Forces over Europe and aircraft were shot down progressively at greater and greater frequency as the war progressed and the raids increased. The majority of aircrew survivors who were taken prisoner in the earlier part of the war shared camps with the Army and the Navy prisoners, but as losses increased the German authorities decided to isolate the Air Force prisoners in a separate camp guarded by men of the Luftwaffe.

Germany was a signatory of the Geneva Convention of 1929, which prescribed humane treatment for prisoners of war (POWs). However, there were many failures to abide by the convention's provisions and marked differences in treatment of POWs and in living conditions at German World War II camps. Officers in at least one camp controlled by German air force personnel at times found camaraderie existed among flyers of the warring nations. They received reasonably humane treatment, including distribution of recreational equipment, some medical and dental care, and delivery of mail and Red Cross food parcels. But conditions in some other officer camps fell below this level. Enlisted AAF POWs often faced the harshest conditions, such as shortages of food and water, no medical care, no mail or clothing distribution, and brutal treatment by guards. By late 1944, as the war progressed and conditions in Germany deteriorated, the plight of all POWs had worsened, sometimes almost to starvation. Fortunately at war's end, most of these AAF POWs returned home, often bitter, but safe at last.

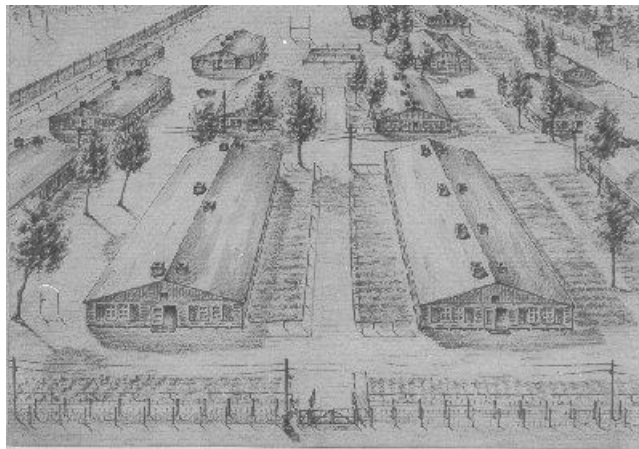
In 1941, at the direction of Herman Goering, an even bigger camp for Allied Officer airmen was built adjacent to Stalag VIII C to the east. This was Stalag Luft III. It was not long before it was filled with young men with a zest for life, and escape activities soon reached a scale which was hardly ever equaled by any other camp in Germany. Eventually this camp held several thousand RAF officers and aircrew, and increasingly as time went on, many American Air Force personnel were brought here too. Literally hundreds of tunnels were built from the first camp in the East Compound, most of which were discovered long before they were brought to fruition. Almost every individual in the whole camp was involved, and this stage of affairs continued right to the end of the war, or certainly until mid-1944 when the Germans decided no longer to honor the terms of the Geneva Convention and instead adopted a ruthless and illegal policy of shooting almost without exception all re-captured POWs. At this point escaping was essentially brought to an end.

When the "forty and 8" doors slid open, the POWs found themselves in German territory now known as Sagan, Poland.

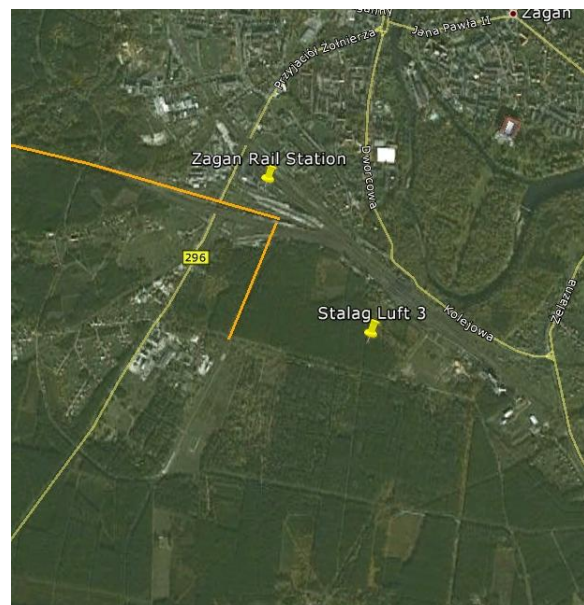
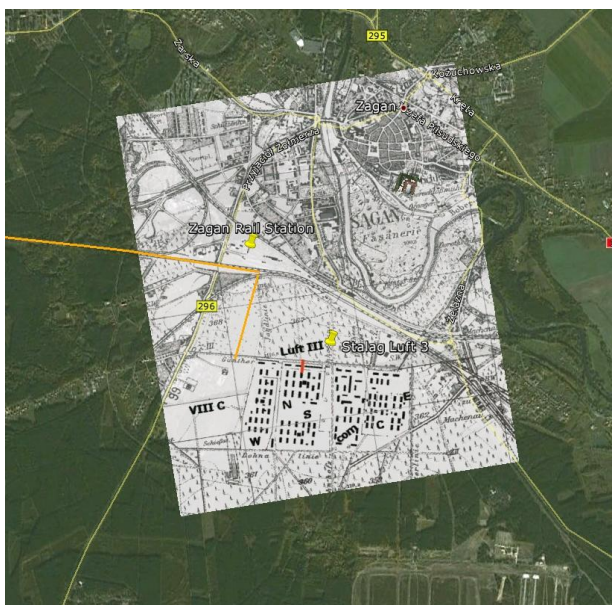
STALAG LUFT III

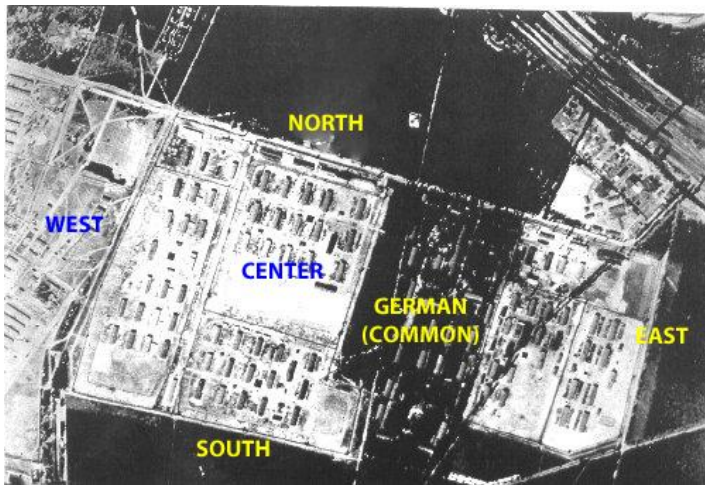
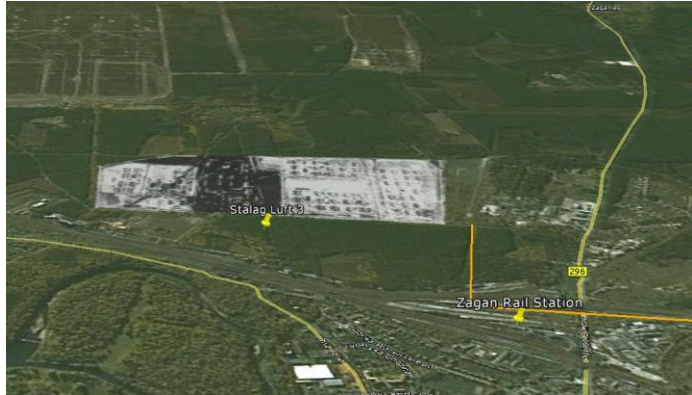
With excerpts from Rob Davis' *The Great Escape*

Stalag Luft III was located 100 miles southeast of Berlin in what is now Poland. The POW camp was one of six operated by the Luftwaffe for downed British and American airmen. Compared to other prisoner of war camps throughout the Axis world, it was a model of civilized internment. While the Geneva Convention of 1929 on the treatment of prisoners of war was complied with as much as possible, it was still war, still prison, and still grim. With a madman on top, there was the ever-present threat that authority above the Luftwaffe could change things on a whim. Kriegies always knew that they were living on the razor's edge.



The camp was located $\frac{1}{2}$ mile south of the Sagan railway station and the POWs were most likely marched there under armed guard. The remains of the camp are still very visible today from space as shown in these 1943 overlay maps and reconnaissance photos.



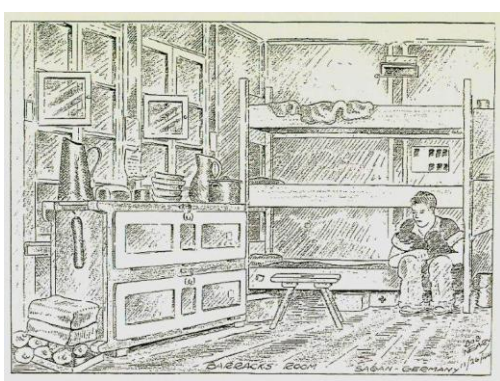
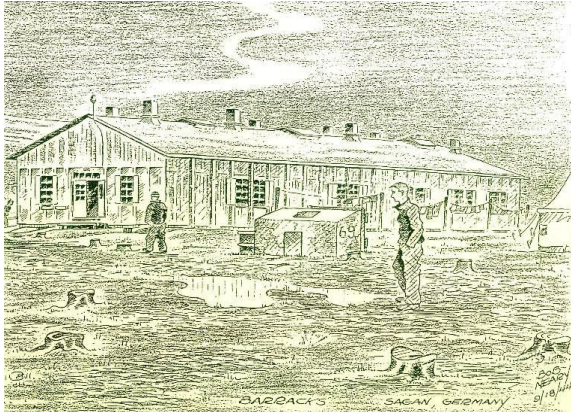
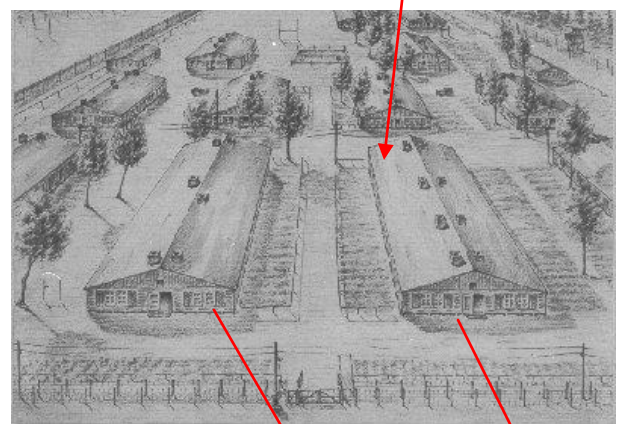
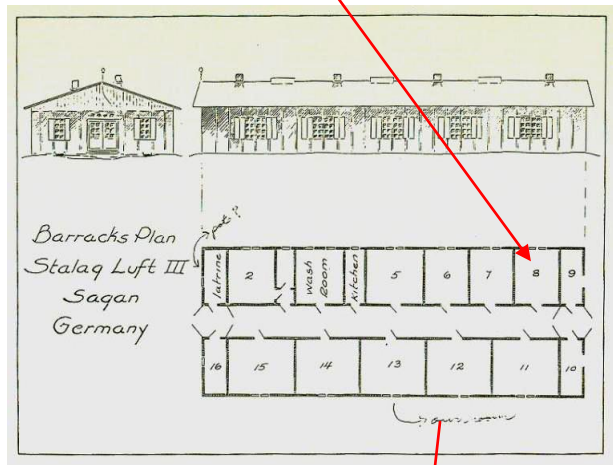
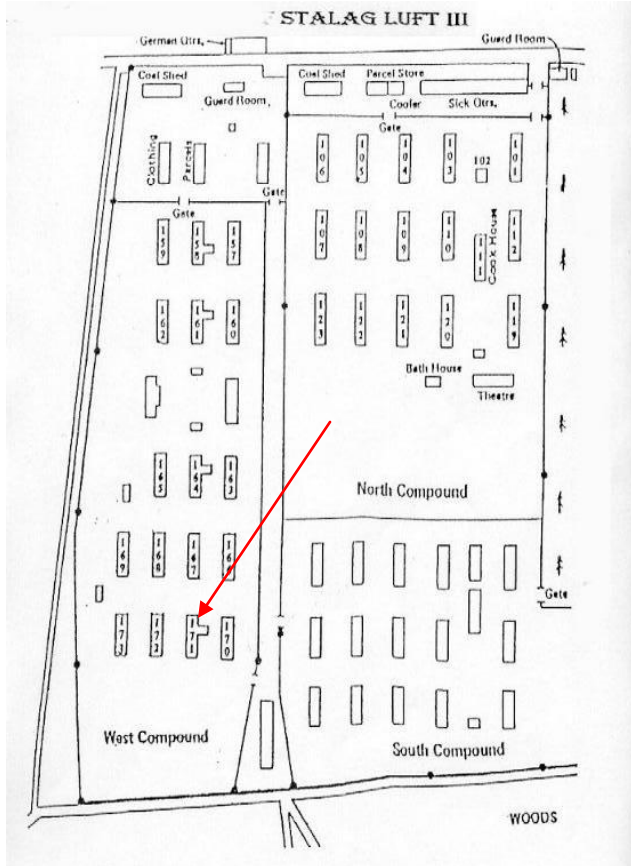


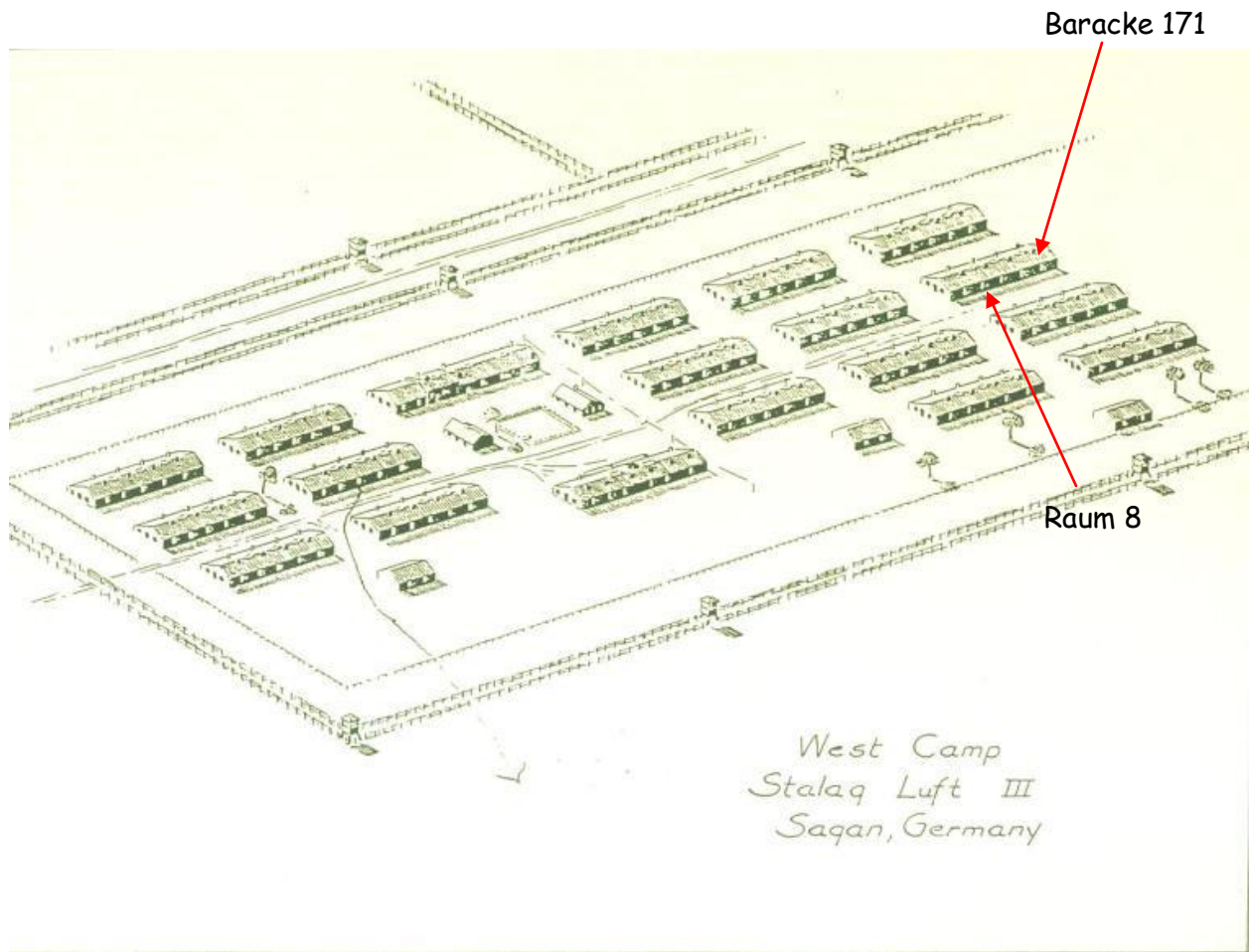
The camp had six compounds, one of which was for German military personnel ("com" on the next map). The East Compound (British) was first occupied March 21, 1942. The Center Compound on April 11, 1942. First with British sergeants and later in 1942 with Americans. The North Compound (British) was opened on March 29, 1943. The South Compound (Americans) in September 1943 and finally the West Compound (Americans) in July 1944.


George was photographed, fingerprinted, given prisoner number 4968. When he arrived in late May or early June he would have been assigned to the American South Compound since the West Compound had not yet been occupied. POW personal records and I.D. cards were carefully kept up-to-date by the Germans. In addition to name, rank, serial number, home address, age, religion, and date and place of capture, they included camps in which the POW was confined, illnesses, escape attempts, and a complete physical description.

From the "Baracke" (hut) number on this ID card which was to be carried at all times, it appears George was moved to the West Compound along with the other American officers to hut 171 room 8. There were eight 10X12 foot rooms in each hut. The rooms had small wood or coal burning heaters and triple bunks sleeping 12 to 15 men.





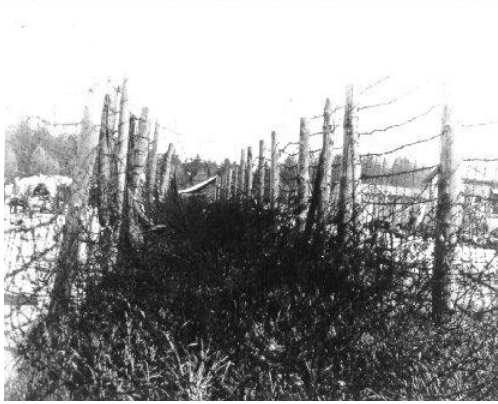


	Name:	Hofmann
	Vorname:	George A.
	Dienstgrad:	2. Lt.
	Erk.-Marke:	4968 Of1. L. 3
	Serv.-Nr.:	0 - 741 310
Nationalität:	U.S.A.	
Baracke:	171	PT
Raum:	8	113

M. Sagan



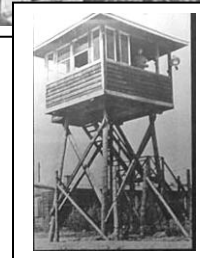
As he walked to his new home for the next eight months his surroundings became vividly clear.



Double barbed-wire fences, similar to this one photographed before and after the war, separated the five grim, gray compounds of Stalag Luft III. They were patrolled by foot soldiers and guards on motorcycles.



The only bunk room heat fed by a few lumps of coal per day.



Room 3, Block 133 in South Compound. A typical room setup with four triple-deck bunks.

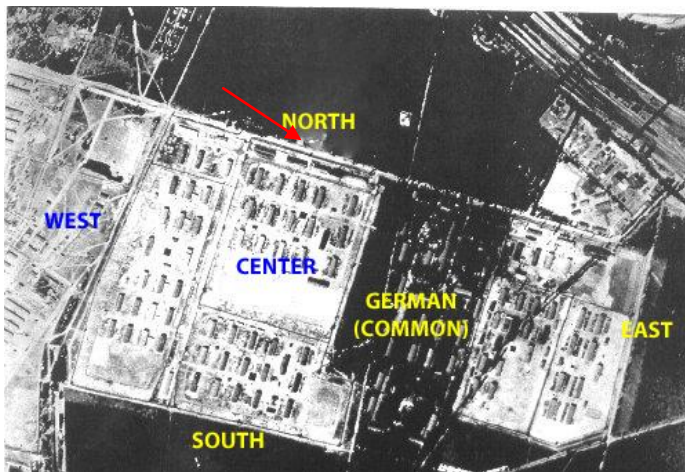


Photo of Stalag Luft III taken by U.S. P-51 reconnaissance plane. Compounds from right to left are: East, Center, German garrison, North and South separated by open space, both flanked by West. Photograph taken after the Great Escape in March 1944. The tunnel exit for the escape is visible as a light spot across the road north of the North Compound (indicated by the arrow).





Kriegies take exercise walking the circuit, a path beaten around the perimeter of the compound, just inside the warning rail placed ten yards inside the barbed-wire fence.



When the coal ran out the Germans loaned the prisoners an unwieldy stump puller that took ten men to operate. At times, this was their only source of fuel.



Eventually the camp grew to approximately 60 acres (24 ha) in size and eventually housed about 2,500 Royal Air Force officers, about 7,500 U.S. Army Air Forces, and about 900 officers from other Allied air forces, for a total of 10,949 inmates, including some support officers.

From the Book, Masters of the Air -

Time was the enemy of every kriegie. "Each day was born to be killed, a slow, agonizing process," wrote a POW. In a diary he kept throughout his two-year confinement at Barth, Fortress pilot Francis "Budd" Gerald endowed "the wire" [there he penned him in with human characteristics], "a silent, stern tyrant. [It] is barbed - there are eerily 8,369 barbs in his stark perimeter in front of our barracks, I have counted them. We all count them, often. There used to be 8,370 barbs, but recently one has rusted and fallen off. This was quite an event."

"You can cheat "the wire"—but not for long.... You Can turn your back to him and escape him by building a picture frame out of a tin can, or doing your weekly wash, or scribbling out a poem, but when you look up again, he is there ... blocking every dream, every plan, every vain soaring of enthusiasm"

A persistent reminder of the prisoners helplessness, "the wire" drove a number of men over the brink - "barbed wire disease," as the kriegies called it. Its most conspicuous symptom was a "demoralizing melancholia." a. feeling of being hopelessly trapped- In its more pernicious form it devolved into a "captivity psychosis" that left a victim unable to concentrate or even remember his name. Afflicted men became apathetic and inattentive and would spend entire days in their bunks vacantly staring at the walls. Others fell from listlessness into a paralyzing depression, unable to talk or even, communicate with their hands.

The inherent uncertainty of POW confinement aggravated the condition. Unlike most criminals in a civilian prison, kriegies never knew when they would be freed, if at all. This led some grievously sick men to prefer death to continued confinement. On a rare summer night when the prisoners' windows were left open, John Vielor and a friend saw a bombardier crawl out of his barracks and make a suicidal rush for the wire. "A few seconds later we heard a shot and the subdued snarling of a dog.... In a minute a blinding glare of searchlight swept the area,... Ten feet away was the prostrate body of a wounded prisoner. Standing over him was a growling Alsatian and a stocky guard still holding his pistol."

At night, in the fetid combines, it was impossible to distinguish the anguished cries of men with barbed wire disease from those of men haunted by night dreams: visions of exploding planes, flaming parachutes, and baked bodies. "One night I heard a man call out, 'Waist gunner to pilot.,, Joe's been hit hard. Dear God, he's been shot in half,'" wrote Richard Hoffman in his searing prison memoir, "There was silence, then muffled sobs."

The following Declassified Intelligence Reports on the POW camps in Germany that were released many years after the war are very descriptive of the day to day life as told by former prisoners.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WAR DEPARTMENT 15 July 1944

CAMP CONDITIONS - GENERAL

Germany holds 28,867* American prisoners of war in these categories:

	OFFICERS	ENLISTED MEN	TOTAL
AIR FORCE	8447	8146	16593
GROUND FORCE	704	11570	12274

While American are held in 57 scattered permanent camps, transit camps and hospitals, the great majority are confined in 8 main camps. Of these, 4 hold airmen and are operated by the Luftwaffe; 3 hold Ground Forces and are run by the Wehrmacht and the 8th, holding airforce NCO's, is operated jointly by Luftwaffe and Wehrmacht. This separate custody reportedly reflects the desire of Goering to provide favored treatment for Allied airmen in order to obtain preferential treatment for Luftwaffe personnel captured by the Allies. Whether Luftwaffe or Wehrmacht, all permanent camps for Americans (and British) are situated in Eastern Germany, apparently as a deterrent to escapes through France.

TREATMENT: An arbitrary answer to the question "How does Germany treat American Prisoners of war?" is difficult. Compared with Japan's treatment, Germany's is excellent. Compared with U.S. treatment of German Ps/W, Germany's treatment of U.S. Ps/W is poor. Measured against the precise terms of the Geneva convention, Germany's behavior could most accurately be described as fair. Germany's adherence to the spirit of the convention has been generally correct. Her compliance with the letter of the convention has been limited by some factors which, it must be admitted, are not altogether within her control. These would include food and clothing rations, segregation of prisoners according to nationalities and removal of prisoners from danger zones. Food and clothing are severely rationed in Germany. Proper segregation of Germany's 6 million Ps/W becomes increasingly difficult with the deterioration of her transportation facilities. Establishment of prison camps in areas immune to Allied bombing becomes difficult with intensification of the air war. Nevertheless, after making full allowance for those provisions of the convention that Germany, however willing, is unable to observe, there remain numerous wilful violations ranging in degree from technical circumventions to full-scale atrocities. (See individual camp reports, for details on treatment and welfare.)

FOOD: Germany has not supplied Ps/W with rations equivalent either in quantity or quality to those issued garrison troops. After examining an official camp menu submitted through the Swiss, a U.S. Quartermaster dietitian stated the food was insufficient to maintain life in a normally active person. Heretofore, Ps/W have been living on the Red Cross food parcels granted them weekly. Erratic receipt of these parcels, however, has complicated a situation that may grow critical before the end of July. On 5 May Stalag 17B exhausted its stock of Red Cross food. The German Commandant who had halved German-issue rations in January, "as a consequence of the rich supply of Red Cross food," stated that he would again start issuing "normal" rations on 5 June. Thus, for 1 month the sole food available to Americans may have been $\frac{1}{2}$ the meager German "normal" ration. Stalag Luft 6 also had used up its supply of Red Cross food by 10 May. At Stalag 3B, where the stocks have been so plentiful that Americans smuggled quantities of food to Russians, Germans have confiscated "surplus" food held by individual Ps/W and cut the German ration. Lack of food parcels has given rise to a camp rumor that armed German civilians looted Red Cross freight cars en route to camp and made off with the food. Many men complain of hunger. At Stalag Luft 3, Ps/W have collectively been denied Red Cross food for reasons of German discipline.

*Figure is based on official PMG lists, State Dept. & International Red Cross figures & secret reports. It includes an estimated 1,500 airmen captured in June but not yet reported & an estimated 3,000 ground force prisoners taken in Normandy.

The shortage at 17B may have been alleviated by this time with the arrival of 42,264 parcels dispatched in May from Geneva. Whether other camps may have been similarly relieved is not known, for Geneva has failed to furnish the American Red Cross with food distribution lists more recent than March. In any event the picture of the future is forbidding since the shipment of Red Cross food parcels to Marseilles for trans-shipment by rail to Geneva has been ended by the Wehrmacht with no explanation. Presumably railroad conditions in Southern France are responsible. The International Red Cross is studying alternatives which include use of the Swiss free port of Genoa and shipment direct to a Baltic port in Germany. Meanwhile, shipments to Lisbon and Barcelona are being continued with a view toward establishing reserves for quick shipment when traffic is re-opened.

HEALTH Health of Ps/W has been generally good. Except for minor outbreaks of skin infections occasioned by infrequent bathing & unbalanced diet, sickness has been rare.

German medical treatment of wounded Ps/W is prompt and efficient at capture. In transit, however, many are neglected. They have been arriving in permanent camps with dressings & bandages 2 weeks old. Once in the camps, Ps/W receive the best treatment available from either German or American doctors. Serious cases are transferred to well-equipped German hospitals. Less serious cases are treated by American doctors in the camp infirmaries, which are uniformly over-crowded and under-equipped. Most camps also lack American dental officers and dental equipment.

Americans in all major permanent camps have been x-rayed for tuberculosis, with which an astonishingly large percentage of long-time British Ps/W have become afflicted, but few Americans have incurred the disease.

CLOTHING Germany has equipped American Ps/W with almost no clothing. In isolated cases where Ps/W lacked any uniforms of their own, they were provided with "booty" uniforms of English, French or Italian origin, or with German fatigue suits. In transit camps such as Dulag Luft and Stalag 7A, Ps/W draw from Red Cross clothing stocks, and after their arrival at permanent camps it is the Red Cross alone which furnishes them with all garments from underwear, shoes & uniforms to overcoats.

MORALE Morale is high but it has frequently dipped as a result of 2 major causes. Failure to receive mail & news of strikes in the United States. The news of strikes in this country reached the Ps/W in German newspapers & radio broadcasts where, of course, it was featured. Prisoners were enraged by such news and many were doubtful that the spirit of the American people was high enough to win.

In Oflag 64, Ps/W have complained bitterly over delays in New York Censorship, and Col. Thomas Drake, SAO, has written a letter on this score to the U.S. State Dept. Men in other camps complain of the slowness of German censorship.

Although Ps/W are extremely grateful to the Red Cross for supplying them with food and clothing, they resent brochures which depict their life as one of ease & indolence instead of monotony and hardship.

Annoyed by an approved visit of a German camera unit which filmed American Ps/W in Oflag 64, Col. Drake wrote Norman Davis, Pres. of the American Red Cross, suggesting that in the future the Red Cross send clothing instead of cameramen.

The guilt psychosis which has afflicted other Ps/W has also manifested itself among Americans. They are concerned about the attitude toward Ps/W in the United States. Some have written bitterly that they could not avoid capture. A few have raged over rumored receipt of white feathers in camp, and many have ranted against Dorothy Thompson's reported implication that Ps/W are cowards.

Reports of infidelity among wives & sweethearts also lowers morale. However, while Ps/W have suffered from occasional depression they have never approached despair. In all camps, American discipline and organization has been excellent. Repatriates believe news of the invasion, long awaited by all Ps/W, will keep morale on a high level for many months to come.

WORK Camp commandants have adhered to the Geneva Convention provision which specifies that only privates can be compelled to work. Officers & NCO's are allowed to work in supervisory capacity if they desire.

Working detachments, or "kommandos", vary in size. The largest employs 568 men in

construction of a power plant. Usually, however, a kommando consists of 30 Ps/W doing farm labor. Life on such a kommando is well described by Pvt. Charles W/ Ronald, recently repatriated. He was in a group of 29 Americans taken under guard to a huge farm 6kms from Stolp, where 12 French Ps/W were already working without guards. Americans were billeted in a section of a large brick-floored barn. Adjoining sections were occupied by pigs, cows, & grain. Ps/W slept on double-decker bunks under 2 blankets. The French had a small building of their own. Guards lived in a small room opening onto Ps/W quarters.

Each weekday the men rose at 0600 and breakfasted on Red Cross food and on milk-soup, bread & hot water (for coffee) which they drew from the farm kitchen. At 0630 they washed their spoons & enamelled bowls and cleaned their "barracks". They shaved & washed themselves in 3 large washpans filled from a single spigot which gave only cold water. The outdoor latrine was a three-seater.

At 0700, they rode out to the potato fields in horse-drawn wagons driven by coldly hostile German farmhands, who would welcome the opportunity to shoot a "kriegie". Under the eyes of a watchful, armed guard they dug potatoes until 1130, when they rode back to the farm for the noon meal. This consisted of Red Cross food supplemented by German vegetable soup. Boarding the wagons at 1300, Ps/W worked until 1630. The evening meal at 1700 consisted of Red Cross food and the farmer's issue of milk-soup, potatoes, & gravy. After this meal they could sit outdoors in their fenced-in pen (30'x8') until 1830. Then the guard locked them in their section for the night.

On Sundays the guard permitted Ps/W to lounge or walk back and forth in the "yard" all day, but they spent a good deal of their time scrubbing their "barracks" and washing their clothing. Sunday dinner from the farmer usually included a meat pudding & cheese.

Once a month each P/W received a large Red Cross food box containing 4 regulation Red Cross parcels. These were transmitted to distant kommandos by rail and to nearby units by army trucks. Parcels were stored in the guards' room until issued. Source says no kommando was more than 100kms away from its base camp. Average tour of duty on a farm kommando lasts indefinitely. On other work detachments, it lasts until the specific project has been completed.

PAY Working Ps/W receive 70 pfennigs a day in "lagergeld" - a paper money which is next to useless since camp canteens are so poorly stocked there is almost nothing to buy. Until recently, non-working enlisted men received no pay whatsoever, and to alleviate their plight, officers collected purses which were sent to MOC's for disbursement. Recent reports indicate that Germany has instituted a policy of crediting enlisted men with 7.50 marks monthly. Ps/W repatriated in May received no actual sum while in camp, but upon their departure got "receipts" for 22.50 reichmarks (3 months' pay) to be collected from Germany by the USA after the war.

Officers are paid on a sliding scale according to rank, with Lts at Oflag 64 starting at 60 marks a month. From this 22 marks are deducted for food and 10 marks for orderly fees. An officer drawing 80 marks monthly at Stalag Luft 3 has to pay 40 marks for similar "living expenses."

Chief complaint of Ps/W is that upon capture no receipts were issued for money taken from them. A few men have since obtained receipts, but in most instances verification of details is so difficult that receipts will never be provided nor money restored.

MAIL Generally, German authorities have been "correct" in the issue of writing forms. As a rule, officers have been allowed to send 3 letters and 4 cards monthly; enlisted men, 3 letters & 4 cards; medical personnel & camp seniors double this number. The allotment varies slightly in individual camps.

In Feb., March and April issue of forms was irregular, resulting in a total lack in some camps & a shortage in others. Camp authorities attributed the shortage to Allied bombing of government printing presses.

All mail to airmen, regardless of what camp they are in, is censored at Stalag Luft 3 and therefore takes somewhat longer in transit than does mail to ground force camps, which have their own censor staffs. Surface mail takes 2 to 3 months to reach the USA. Airmail takes from 1 month to 3. Airmail from the USA reaches camp in 5 weeks; surface mail, in 3 months. Parcels from next-of-kin arrive in camp 3 months after mailing. An increasing number are being pilfered.

INTERROGATION German interrogation of American Ps/W follows a consistent pattern: All airmen, wherever captured, are taken to Dulag Luft near Frankfurt-on-Main; all Ground Force officers are questioned in Luckenwalde, an interrogation center 50 kilometers Southwest of Berlin; and Ground Force enlisted men, except for an occasional tactical interrogation immediately after capture, are not questioned. Treatment during interrogation has frequently been incorrect and is steadily becoming harsher. (See Dulag Luft and Luckenwalde--descriptions for details.)

If not seriously wounded, officers Ps/W usually leave these interrogation-transit camps within 2 weeks for their permanent camps. Except for those captured in France whose movements are not yet known, Ground Force enlisted men move through a succession of transit camps in Italy & Southern Germany to their permanent camps. Here the German assignment of Ps/W to permanent camps is consistent and the system well defined: Ground Force officers go to Oflag 64, Ground Force enlisted men to Stalags 2B or 3B, Air Force officers to Stalag Lufts 1 or 3 and Air Force enlisted men to Stalag Lufts 4 and 6 or Stalag 17B. It is not yet known whether Stalag Luft 7, recently opened, holds Air Force officers or enlisted men.

REPATRIATION One hundred and fourteen prisoners of war have returned to this country in 3 exchanges of sick and wounded with Germany. Sites, dates and numbers were: Goteburg, 20 Oct. 1943, 14; Lisbon, 15 Feb. 1944, 35; Barcelona, 17 May 1944, 65.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY

Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT, 1 November 1945

INTRODUCTION Conditions in German prisoners of war camps holding Americans varied to such an extent that only by examination of individual camps can a clear picture be drawn. This report contains summaries of 12 typical German installations, ranging from Stalag Luft 3, a well organized camp for Air Force officers, through 2B, an average Ground Force enlisted men's camp, to chaotic Stalag 9B, established for enlisted men captured during the Von Rundstedt offensive of Dec. 1944.

Germany held a total of 92,965 (1 Nov. 45 Records) American prisoners of war in these categories: Air Force - 32,730; Ground Forces - 60,235.

In contrast to the number of Ground Force officers who formed only some 10% of the Ground Force prisoners of war, almost 50% of the Air Force personnel falling into hands were officers. Figures for both branches soared during the 10 months after 6 June 1944 when totals were: Air Force - 15,093; Ground Forces - 9,274; Total - 24,367.

For army prisoners of war, Germany had 3 principal types of camp. OFLAG, a contraction of Offizier Lager (officers' camp), as its title denotes held officers. Stalag, a contraction of Stamm Lager (main camp) held enlisted men. DULAG, a contraction of Durchgangs Lager (entrance camp) was a transit camp but in the minds of airmen became synonymous with interrogation center. LUFT (air) appended to a name indicated that the camp held flying personnel. Generally, camps housing airmen were under the jurisdiction of the Luftwaffe, and camps housing ground troops under the jurisdiction of the Wehrmacht.

Prisoners of war (PW) formed camps within camps and had their own organizations. In officers' camps they were headed by the Senior American Officer (SAO) who was just what his name implied. In enlisted men's stalags, the Man of Confidence (MOC) was usually an NCO elected by his fellow PW, but sometimes he was appointed by the Germans.

Source material for this report consisted of interrogations of former prisoners of war made by CPM Branch, Military Intelligence Service, and reports of the Protecting Power and International Red Cross received by the State Department (Special War Problems Division).

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT 15 July 1944

STALAG LUFT III

STRENGTH 3,363 AAF Officers.

LOCATION Pin point: 51°35' North latitude. 15°19'30" East longitude.

Camp is situated in pine-woods area at Sagan, 168 kilometers Southeast of Berlin.

DESCRIPTION

Three of the camp's 6 compounds are occupied by Americans, 3 by RAF officers. Each compound is divided into 15 buildings or blocks housing 80 to 110 men. The 12 rooms in a block each house 2 to 10 men. Barracks are one-story, wooden hutments resembling old CCC barracks in this country. Beds are all double-deckers.

TREATMENT

An American P/W in this camp was fatally shot and another wounded under circumstances appearing to be in violation of the Geneva Convention. Fifty British Ps/W were murdered in March. Prior to these recent incidents, treatment had been excellent.

FOOD

Food is adequate only because of regular arrival of Red Cross food parcels, although for a time during March, 1944 Ps/W received only German rations insufficient for subsistence. Vegetables from individual garden plots lend variety to diet. Food parcels are pooled and men in each room take turns at cooking. One stove is available for each 100 officers. A food exchange is maintained by Ps/W. Cigaretts serve as the medium of exchange.

CLOTHING

Clothing is furnished by the Red Cross. Germans issue only booty and very little of that. Men need summer issue underwear.

HEALTH

Health of Ps/W is good. Calisthenics are compulsory by order of the Senior American Officers. Adequate medical care is provided by British & French doctors. Dental care is not satisfactory, and difficulty is experienced in obtaining glasses. Washing & toilet facilities are adequate although hot water is scarce.

RELIGION

Complete religious freedom is observed. Services are held in specially constructed chapels by 9 chaplains, 7 of them Protestant, 2 Catholic. One chaplain is Lt. Eugene L. Daniel, an American; the others are British.

PERSONNEL

South Compound - American Sr. Officer: Col. Charles G. Goodrich.
Center Compound - American Sr. Officer: Col. Delmar Spivey.
West Compound - American Sr. Officer: Col. Darr H. Alkire.
German Commandant: Oberst von Lindeiner.

MAIL

Airmail from camp averages 1½ months in transit, surface mail 3 months. Next-of-kin & tobacco parcels average 2½ months travel time. Sometimes they are pilfered.

RECREATION

This camp has the best organized recreational program of the American camps in Germany. Each compound has an athletic field and volleyball courts. The men participate in basketball, softball, boxing, touch football, volleyball, table tennis, fencing. Leagues have been formed in most of these sports. A fire pool 20'x22'x5' is occasionally used for swimming. Parole walks are sometimes permitted. In each of the compound theaters built by the Ps/W, plays & musical comedies are frequently presented. Top-flight swing bands & orchestras perform regularly, and several choral groups take part in religious services & camp entertainments. Other recreational activities include bridge tournaments, building of model planes, visits to occasional movies, listening to phonograph recordings. Competent instructors teach a wide range of cultural & technical subjects, & lectures & discussions are numerous. A newspaper posted 4 times weekly is edited by the Ps/W. Each of the compounds has a well-stocked library.

WORK

Officers are not required to work. However, a small tin-shop is staffed by Ps/W who voluntarily make plates and cooking pans from biscuit and other tins, while a broomshop produces brooms largely from Red Cross wrapping cord.

PAY

Men are paid on a sliding scale according to rank. Lts. receive 81 marks monthly in lagergeld of which 40 are deducted for food & orderly services. The remainder may be used at the canteen which has weak beer 4 times a year and a meager supply of harmonicas, pottery, and gadgets.

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY

Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WAR DEPARTMENT 1 November 1945

STALAG LUFT 3
(Air Force Officers)

LOCATION

Until 27 Jan. 1945, Stalag Luft 3 was situated in the Province of Silesia, 90 miles southeast of Berlin, in a stand of fir trees south of Sagan (51°35'N latitude - 15°19'30" East longitude).

In the Jan. exodus, the South Compound & Center Compound moved to Stalag 7A, Moosburg (48°27' North latitude - 11°57' East longitude). The West Compound & North Compound moved to Stalag 13D, Nurnerg-Langwasser (49°27' North latitude - 11°50' East longitude) and then proceeded to Moosburg, arriving 20 April 1945.

STRENGTH

On 14 April 1942 Lt. (j.g.) John E. Dunn, O-6545, U.S. Navy, was shot down by the Germans and subsequently became the 1st American flyer to be confined in Stalag Luft 3, then solely a prison camp for officers PW of the Royal Air Force. By 15 June 1944, U.S. Air Force officers in camp numbered 3,242, and at the time of the evacuation in Jan. 1945, the International Red Cross listed the American strength as 6,844. This was the largest American officers' camp in Germany.

DESCRIPTION

When the first Americans arrived in 1942, the camp consisted of 2 compounds or enclosures, one for RAF officers and one for RAF NCOs. The rapid increase in strength forced the Germans to build 4 more compounds, with USAAF personnel taking over the Center, South, West and sharing the North Compound with the British. Adjoining each compound the Germans constructed other enclosures called "vorlagers" in which most of the camp business was transacted and which held such offices as supply, administration and laundry.

Each compound enclosed 15 one-story, wooden barracks or "blocks". These, in turn, were divided into 15 rooms ranging in size from 24' by 15' to 14' by 6'. Occupants slept in double-decker bunks and for every 3 or 4 men the Germans provided simple wooden tables, benches & stools. One room, equipped with a cooking range, served as a kitchen. Another, with 6 porcelain basins, was the washroom. A 3rd, with 1 urinal & 2 commodes, was the latrine.

A "Block" could house 82 men comfortable, but with the growth in numbers of PW, rooms assigned for 8 men began holding 10 and then 12, and the middle of Sept. 1944 saw new PW moving into tents outside the barracks.

Two barbed wire fences 10' high and 5' apart surrounded each compound. In between them lay tangled barbed wire concertinas. Paralleling the barbed wire and 25' inside the fence ran a "warning wire" strung on 30-inch wooden posts. The zone between the warning wire & the fence was forbidden territory, entrance to which was punishable by sudden death.

At the corners of the compound and at 50-yard intervals around its perimeter rose 40' wooden guard towers holding Germans armed with rifles or machine guns.

U.S. PERSONNEL

Lt. Col. Albert P. Clark, Jr., captured on 26 July 1942, became the first Senior American Officer, a position he held until the arrival of Col. Charles G. Goodrich some 2 months later. The enforced seclusion of individual compounds necessitated the organization of each as an independent PW camp. At the time of the move from Sagan, camp leaders were as follows:

Senior Allied Officer - Brigadier General Arthur W. Vanaman
 SAO South Compound - Col. Charles G. Goodrich
 SAO Center Compound - Col. Delmar T. Spivey
 SAO West Compound - Col. Darr H. Alkire
 SAO North Compound - Lt. Col. Edwin A. Bland

The staff of a compound was organized into two categories:

Main Staff Depts.	Secondary Staff Depts.
a. Adjutant	a. Mail
b. German property	b. Medical
c. German rations	c. Coal
d. Red Cross food	d. Finance
e. Red Cross clothing	e. Canteen
f. Education & Recreation	f. Orderlies, etc.

The basic unit for organization was the barrack building or block. Block staffs were organized to include the same functions as the Compound Staff, and the blocks themselves were sub-divided into squads of 10 men each.

Each compound had a highly organized Security Committee.

GERMAN PERSONNEL

The original commandant of Stalag Luft 3 was Oberst von Lindeiner, an old-school aristocrat with some 40 years of army service. Courteous and considerate at first sight, he was inclined to fits of uncontrolled rage. Upon one occasion he personally threatened a PW with a pistol. He was, however, more receptive to PW requests than any other commandant.

After the British mass escape of March 1944, Oberst von Lindeiner was replaced by Oberstleutnant Cordes, who had been a PW in World War I. A short while later Cordes was succeeded by Oberst Braune, direct & business-like. Stricter than his predecessors, he displayed less sympathy toward PW requests. Nevertheless, he was able to stop misunderstandings such as the one resulting in guards shooting into the compounds. In general, commandants tended to temporize when dealing with PW, or else to avoid granting their requests entirely.

Most disliked by PW were the Abwehr or Security officers - Hauptmann Breuli and his successor Major Kircher.

The Luftwaffe guards were 4th rate troops either peasants too old for combat duty or young men convalescing after long tours of duty or wounds received at the front. They had almost no contact with PW. In addition to uniformed sentries, soldiers in fatigues were employed by the Germans to scout the interiors of the compounds. These "ferrets" hid under barracks, listened to conversations, looked for tunnels and made themselves generally obnoxious to the PW. The German complement totaled 800.

Occasionally, as after the March 1944 mass escape, Gestapo groups descended upon the camp for a long, thorough search.

TREATMENT

Because of their status as officers and the fact that their guards were Luftwaffe personnel, the men at Stalag Luft 3 were accorded treatment better than that granted other PW in Germany. Generally, their captors were correct in their adherence to many of the tenets of the Geneva Convention. Friction between captor & captive was constant and inevitable, nevertheless, and the strife is well illustrated by the following example.

On 27 March 1944 the Germans instituted an extra appel (roll call) to occur any time between the regular morning & evening formations. Annoyed by an indignity which they considered unnecessary, PW fought the measure with a passive resistance. They milled about, smoked, failed to stand at attention and made it impossible for the lager officer to take a count. Soon they were dismissed. Later in the day another appel was called. This time the area was lined with German soldiers holding rifles & machine guns in readiness to fire. Discreetly, PW allowed the appel to proceed in an orderly fashion. A few days later, nevertheless, probably as a result of this deliberate protest against German policy, the unwanted extra appel was discontinued.

Since the murder of 50 RAF flyers has been attributed to the Gestapo, acts of atrocious

mistreatment involving the regular Stalag Luft 3 guard complement may be narrowed down to two.

About 2200 hours, 29 Dec. 1943, a guard fired a number of shots into one barrack without excuse or apparent purpose. One bullet passed through the window and seriously wounded the left leg of Lt. Col. John D. Stevenson. Although Col. Stevenson spent the next 6 months in hospitals, the wound has left him somewhat crippled.

About 1230 hours, 9 April 1944, during an air raid by American bombers, Cpl. Cline C. Miles was standing in the cookhouse doorway. He was facing the interior. Without warning a guard fired at "a man" standing in the doorway. The bullet entered the right shoulder of Cpl. Miles and came out through his mouth killing him instantly.

FOOD

German rations, instead of being the equivalent of those furnished depot troops, compared with those received by non-working civilians - the lowest in Germany. While insufficient, these foods provided the bulk of staples, mainly through bread & potatoes. A PWs average daily issue of foods, with caloric content included, follows:

TYPE OF FOOD	GRAMS	CALORIES
Potatoes	390	331
Bread	350	910
Meat	11	20
Barley, Oats, Etc	21	78
Kohlrabi	247	87
Dried vegetable	14	38
Margarine	31	268
Cheese	10	27
Jam	25	69
Sugar	25	100
TOTALS	1124	1928

A conservative estimate of the caloric requirement of a person sleeping 9 hours a day and taking very little exercise is 2,150 calories. German rations, therefore, fell below the minimum requirement for healthy nutrition.

Food came from 4 other sources: Red Cross parcels, private parcels, occasional canteen purchases and gardens. Of the Red Cross parcels, after the spring of 1943, 40% were American, 25% British, 25% Canadian and 10% miscellaneous such as New Zealand parcels, Christmas parcels and bulk issue from the British colony in Argentina. These were apportioned at the rate of 1 per man per week during periods of normal supply. If the International Red Cross at Geneva felt that transportation difficulties would prevent the usual delivery, it would notify the camp parcel officer to limit the issue to $\frac{1}{2}$ parcel per man per week. Such a situation arose in Sept. 1944 when all Stalag Luft 3 went on $\frac{1}{2}$ parcels. Average contents of American & British parcels were as follows:

AMERICAN		BRITISH	
Food	Weight (OZ)	Food	Weight (OZ)
Spam	12	Meal Roll	10
Corned Beef	12	Stew	12
Salmon	8	Cheese	4
Cheese	8	Dried fruit	6
Dried Fruit	16	Biscuit	10
Biscuits	7	Condensed milk	14
Klim	16	Margarine	8
Margarine	16	Tea	2
Soluble	4	Cocoa	6
Orange Powder	4	Jam	10
Liver Paste	6	Powdered eggs	2
Chocolate	4	Chocolate	4
		Vegetables	8

Since the kitchen equipment of 10 boilers & 2 ovens per compound was obviously inadequate, almost all food was prepared by the various room messes in the blocks. These messes obtained from the kitchen only hot water and, 4 times a week, hot soup. Cooking within the block was performed on a range whose heating surface was 3 square feet. During winter months, PW were able to use the heating stoves in their rooms as well. With few exceptions, each room messed by itself. All food was pooled, and room cooks were responsible for serving it in digestible & appetizing, if possible, form. Since the stove schedule provided for cooking periods from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., some rooms ate their main meal in mid-afternoon, while others dined fashionably late. Below is a typical day's menu:

Breakfast - 9 a.m. Two slices of German bread with spread, coffee (soluble) or tea.
 Lunch - noon Soup (on alternate days), slice of German bread, coffee or tea.
 Supper - 5:30 p.m. Potatoes, one-third can of meat, vegetables (twice a week), slice German bread, coffee or tea.
 Evening snack - 10 p.m. Dessert (pie, cake, etc) coffee or cocoa.

A unique PW establishment was Foodacco whose chief function was to provide PW with a means of exchange and a stable barter market where, for example, cocoa could be swapped for cigars. Profits arising from a 2% commission charged on all transactions was credited to a communal camp fund.

HEALTH

Despite confinement, crowding, lack of medical supplies & poor sanitary facilities, health of PW was astonishingly good.

For trivial ailments, the compounds maintained a first aid room. More serious cases were sent to 1 of the 2 sick quarters within the camp. Sick quarters for the South Compound originally consisted of a small building with 24 beds, a staff of 3 PW doctors and some PW orderlies. This also served the North & West Compounds. The Center Compound had its own dispensary and 2 PW doctors. On 1 June 1944, the three-compound sick quarters was replaced by a new building with 60 beds.

The Germans furnished very few medical supplies. As a result, PW depended almost wholly on the Red Cross. Large shipments of supplies, including much-needed sulfa drugs, began to arrive in the autumn of 1944. PW were also glad to receive a small fluoroscope and thermometers.

Most common of the minor illnesses were colds, sore throats, influenza, food poisoning and skin diseases. When a PW needed an x-ray or the attentions of a specialist, he was examined by a German doctor. It usually took months to obtain these special attentions. Cases requiring surgery were sent to one of the English hospitals, as a rule Lamsdorf or Obermassfeld. Emergency cases went to a French hospital at Stalag 8C, one mile distant.

Dental care for the North, West & South Compounds was provided by a British dentist and an American dental student. In 14 months, they gave 1,400 treatments to 308 PW from the South Compound alone.

Sanitation was poor. Although PW received a quick delousing upon entry into the camp, they were plagued by bedbugs and other parasites. Since there was no plumbing, both indoor and outdoor latrines added to the sanitation problem in summer. PW successfully fought flies by scrubbing aborts daily, constructing fly traps and screening latrines with ersatz burlap in lieu of wire mesh.

Bathing facilities were extremely limited. In theory the German shower houses could provide each man with a three-minute hot shower weekly. In fact, however, conditions varied from compound to compound and if a PW missed the opportunity to take a hot shower he resorted to a sponge bath with water he had heated himself - the only other hot water available the year around.

CLOTHING

In 1943, Germany still issued booty clothing of French, Belgian or English derivation to PW. This practice soon ceased, making both Britons & Americans completely dependent on clothing received from the Red Cross. An exception to the rule was made in the winter of 1943 when the camp authorities obtained 400 old French overcoats from Anglo-American PW.

Gradually, Americans were able to replace their RAF type uniforms with GI enlisted men's uniforms, which proved extremely serviceable. When stock of clothing permitted, each PW was maintained with the following wardrobe:

1 Overcoat	1 Blouse	2 Shirts, Wool or cotton
1 Pr. Wool trousers	2 Pr. Winter underwear	2 Pr. Socks
1 Pr. Gloves	1 Sweater	1 Pr. High Shoes
1 Belt or Suspenders	1 cap	4 Handkerchiefs
1 Blanket (added to 2 German blankets)		

WORK

Officers were never required to work. To ease the situation in camp, however, they assumed many housekeeping chores such as shoe repairing, distributing food, scrubbing their own rooms and performing general repair work on barracks.

Other chores were carried out by a group of 100 American orderlies whose work was cut to a minimum and whose existence officers tried to make as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

PAY

The monthly pay scale of officers in Germany was as follows:

F/O & 2d Lt.	72 Reichsmarks	1st Lt.	81 Reichsmarks
Capt.	96 Reichsmarks	Major	108 Reichsmarks
Lt. Col.	120 Reichsmarks	Col.	150 Reichsmarks

Americans adhered closely to the financial policy originated by the British in 1940-42. No money was handled by individual officers but was placed by the accounts officer into individual accounts of each after a sufficient deduction had been made to meet the financial needs of the camp. These deductions, not to exceed 50% of any officer's pay, took care of laundry, letter forms, airmail postage, entertainment, escape damages and funds transmitted monthly to the NCO camps, which received no pay until July 1944.

Officers at Stalag Luft 1 contributed 33% of their pay to the communal fund, and the entire policy was approved by the War Department on 14 Oct. 1943. Since the British Government unlike the U.S.A. deducted PW pay from army pay, Americans volunteered to carry out all canteen purchases with their own funds, but to maintain joint British-American distribution just as before.

Because of the sudden evacuation from Sagan, Allied PW had no time to meet with German finance authorities and reconcile outstanding Reichsmark balances. The amount due to the U.S.A. alone from the German Government totals 2,984,932.75 Reichsmarks.

MAIL

Mail from home or sweetheart was the life-blood of PW. Incoming mail was normally received 6 days a week, without limit as to number of letters or number of sheets per letter. (German objected only to V-mail forms.) Incoming letters could travel postage free, but those clipper-posted made record time. Correspondence could be carried on with private persons in any country outside of Germany; Allied, neutral or enemy. Within Germany correspondence with next-of-kin only was permitted. A PW could write one letter per month to next-of-kin in another PW camp or internees' camp.

Month	Letters	SOUTH COMPOUND INCOMING MAIL	
		Per Capita	Age
Sep 43	3,190	3	11 weeks
Oct 43	5,392	5	10 "
Nov 43	9,125	9	10 "
Dec 43	24,076	24	8 "
Jan 44	7,680	7	12 "
Feb 44	10,765	9	12 "
Mar 44	11,693	10	12 "
Apr 44	16,355	15	12 "
May 44	15,162	13	13 "
Jun 44	13,558	11	14 "
Jul 44	26,440	20	14 "
Aug 44	14,264	11	15 "
Sep 44	10,277	8	16 "

The travel time reverted to 11-12 weeks in the autumn of 1944, with airmail letters sometimes reaching camp in 4 to 6 weeks. All mail to Luftwaffe-held PW was censored in

Sagan by a staff of German civilian men and women.

Outgoing mail was limited, except for special correspondence, to 3 letter forms and 4 cards per PW per month. Officers above the rank of major drew 6 letters & 4 cards while enlisted men received 2 letter forms & 4 cards. Protected personnel received double allotments. PW paid for these correspondence forms & for airmail postage as well.

SOUTH COMPOUND OUTGOING MAIL

Month	Letters	Postage in RMs
Sep 43	3,852	924.60
Oct 43	6,711	2494.60
Nov 43	7,781	2866.66
Dec 43	7,868	2968.00
Jan 44	7,811	2915.30
Feb 44	7,968	2907.10
Mar 44	7,916	3095.80
Apr 44	8,460	3154.90
May 44	8,327	3050.20
Jun 44	10,189	3789.60
Aug 44	8,780	3366.50
Sep 44	8,777	3288.30

Each 60 days, a PW's next-of-kin could mail him a private parcel containing clothing, food and other items not forbidden by German or U.S. Government regulations. These parcels too, were thoroughly examined by German censors.

MORALE

Morale was exceptionally high. PW never allowed themselves to doubt an eventual Allied victory and their spirits soared at news of the European invasion. Cases of demoralization were individual, caused for the most part by reports of infidelities among wives or sweethearts, or lack of mail, or letters in which people failed completely to comprehend PW's predicament. Compound officers succeeded in keeping their charges busy either physically or mentally and in maintaining discipline. The continual arrival of new PW with news of home and the air force also helped to cheer older inmates.

WELFARE

The value of the Protecting Power in enforcing the provisions of the Geneva Convention lay principally in the pressure they were able to bring to bear. Although they might have agreed with the PW point of view, they had no means of enforcing their demands upon the Germans, who followed the Geneva Convention only insofar as its provisions coincided with their policies. But the mere existence of a Protecting Power, a third party, had its beneficial effect on German policy.

Direct interview was the only satisfactory traffic with the Protecting Power. Letters usually required 6 months for answer - if any answer was received. The sequence of events at a routine visit of Protecting Power representatives was as follows: Granting by the Germans of a few concessions just prior to the visit; excuses given by the Germans to the representatives; conference of representatives with compound seniors; conference of representative with Germans. Practical benefits usually amounted to minor concessions from the Germans.

PW of Stalag Luft 3 feel a deep debt of gratitude toward the Red Cross for supplying them with food and clothing, which they considered the 2 most important things in their PW camp life. Their only complaint is against the Red Cross PW Bulletin for its description of Stalag Luft 3 in terms more appropriately used in depicting life on a college campus than a prison camp.

PW also praised the YMCA for providing them generously with athletic equipment, libraries, public address systems and theatrical materials. With YMCA headquarters established in Sagan, the representative paid many visits to camp.

RELIGION

On 1 Dec. 1942, the Germans captured Capt. M.E. McDonald with a British Airborne Division in Africa. Because he was "out of the cloth" they did not officially recognize him as a clergyman, nevertheless, he was the accredited chaplain for the camp and con-

ducted services for a large Protestant congregation. He received a quantity of religious literature from the YMCA and friends in Scotland.

In April 1942, Father Philip Goudrea, Order of Mary Immaculate, Quebec, Canada, became the Catholic Chaplain to a group which eventually numbered more than 1,000 PW. Prayer books were received from Geneva and rosary beads from France.

On 12 Sept. 1943, a Christian Science Group was brought together in the South compound under the direction of 2d Lt. Rudolph K. Grumm, O-749387. His reading material was forwarded by the Church's War Relief Committee, Geneva, as was that of 1st Lt. Robert R. Brunn active in the Center Compound.

Thirteen members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, sometimes known as the Mormon Church, held their first meeting in the South Compound on 7 Nov. 1943. 1st Lt. William E. McKell was nominated as presiding Elder and officiated at subsequent weekly meetings. Material was supplied by the European Student Relief Fund, the Red Cross, the YMCA and the Swiss Mission of the Church.

RECREATION

Reading was the greatest single activity of PW. The fiction lending library of each compound was enlarged by books received from the YMCA and next-of-kin until it totaled more than 2,000 volumes. Similarly, the compounds' reference libraries grew to include over 500 works of a technical nature. These books came from the European Student Relief Fund of the YMCA and from PW who had received them from home.

Athletics were second only to reading as the most popular diversion. Camp areas were cleared and made fit playing fields at first for cricket and rugby and later for softball, touch football, badminton, deck tennis and volleyball. In addition, PW took advantage of opportunities for pingpong, wrestling, weight lifting, horizontal & parallel bar work, hockey and swimming in the fire pool. The bulk of athletic equipment was supplied by the YMCA.

The "Luftbandsters", playing on YMCA instruments, could hold its own with any name band in the U.S.A. according to those who heard them give various performances. PW formed junior bands of less experienced players and also a glee club.

Through the services of the YMCA, PW were shown 7 films, 5 somewhat dated Hollywood features and 2 German musical comedies.

Other activities included card playing, broadcasting music and news over a camp amplifier called "Station KRGY", reading the "Circuit" and "Kriegie Times" journals issued by PW news room, attending the Education Department's classes which ranged from Aeronautics to Law, painting, sketching and the inevitable stroll around the compound perimeter track.

Kriegies playing hockey near camp buildings.



The now legendary Fourth of July celebration of 1944 must have been a pleasant surprise to the newly arrived "Krieges". Is it possible that a cleaned up George Hofmann was in this photo?



AMERICAN PERSONALITIES

The officer airmen who were POWs in the German camps at Stalag Luft III arrived there through an accident of war. They varied widely in age, military rank, education, and family background, but had several common experiences:

They all volunteered to go to war as airmen.

They all managed successfully to complete flying training.

They all entered into combat flying in airplanes.

They all were survivors of a traumatic catastrophe in the air.

This unique selection process seemed to give these men some common characteristics.

They had an uncommon love of country and a loyalty to each other. They were very resourceful and applied great skill to improve their living conditions and to conduct escape and other clandestine activities. They indeed became a band of brothers.

In retrospect, most later acknowledged that their experience as prisoners was not simply an unpleasant waste of time but that they came out of it with, among other things, a clearer sense of values, a strengthened love of country, improved leadership skills, and an improved ability to live in harmony with others under difficult circumstances.

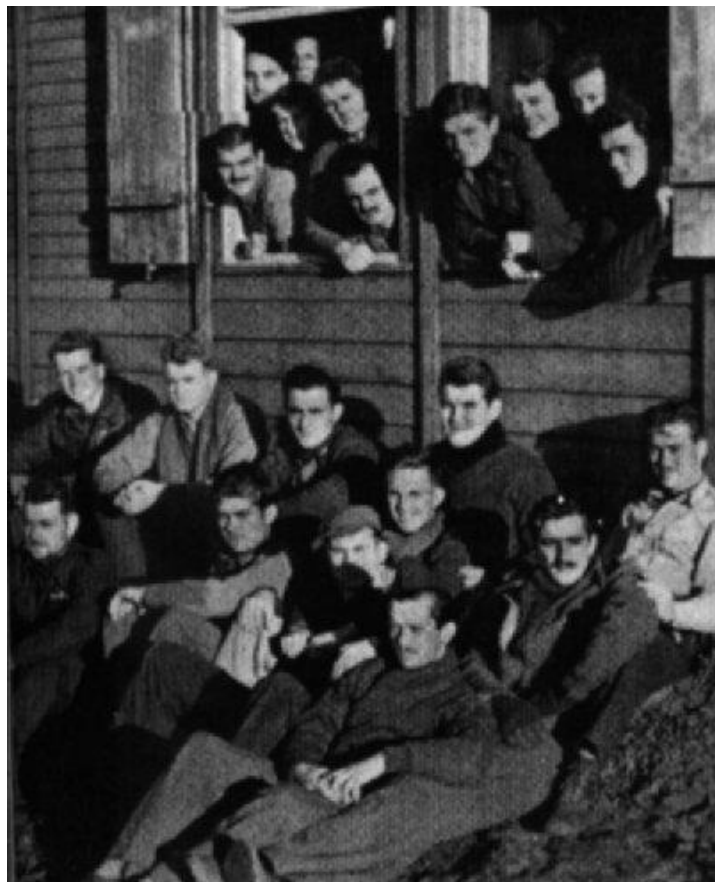
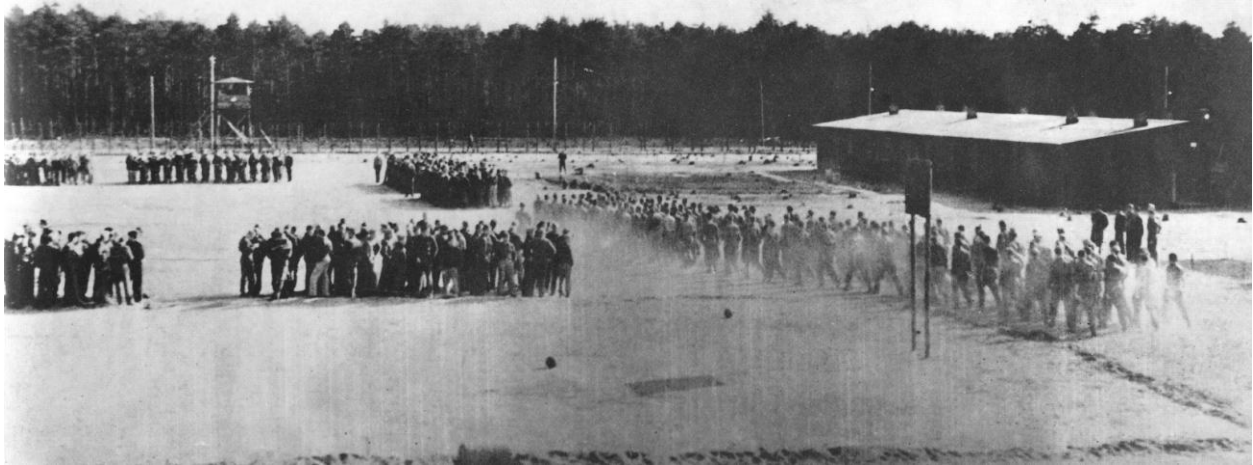


This formal photo of the entire Kriegie staff of South Camp taken by the Germans during the summer of 1944 shows all in fresh summer tan uniforms furnished by the Red Cross.

One of the lighter moments took place in the camp almost every day - "appel, or roll call."



Keeping track of 10,000 prisoners twice a day -- more often after an escape -- was a daunting task for the Germans. They constantly struggled to match their count with the roster. Being counted twice, or not at all, was a skill some Kriegies developed to an art to confound, confuse, or just annoy the counters.



Captured American fliers pose for a snapshot in a prison camp somewhere in Germany. Second Lieut. A. L. Graham Jr. of the Air Forces, who was shot down over Europe on Nov. 9, 1942, sent this picture to his mother, Mrs. Pearl Graham of Floyd, Va., stitched to the inside of a letter. Graham sits third from left with his back against building. His letter, dated Jan. 19, follows: "Dear Mother, Just a few lines to let you know I am well and getting along fine. Attached to this letter is a picture of a group of us Americans taken outside of our barracks. I am learning to ice skate on an ice-skating rink we have fixed up inside our compound. Ice skating, attending a few lectures and sleeping, just about dominates our time here in camp . Mama, is my allotment still coming in every month? If so, how much do I have in the bank now? You can send a food parcel every three weeks; send such things as oatmeal, cocoa, chocolate bars, tinned meat and stuff to make puddings.

In clothing parcel send me a pair of pants, shirt , socks, undershirts and shorts, toothpaste and brush. Contact the post office and they will give you information on sending parcels. Love. A.L. Graham Jr., 2nd Lt. U.S.A.A.F." As officer-prisoners, Lieut. Graham and companions could not be required to work under the terms of the Geneva Conventions to which the U.S. and Germany were signators.



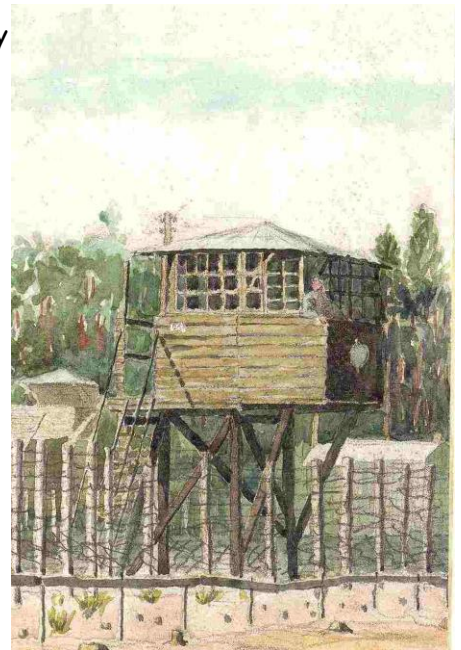
POWs line up for their weekly cold shower and cleanup in the morning at the communal sinks in the wash house.



GOON BOX (watercolour by Geoffrey Willatt and reproduced from his book **BOMBS AND BARBED WIRE**)



The German garrison of Stalag Luft III was composed of non-flying Luftwaffe officers and enlisted personnel who were generally not qualified for frontline duty. Many of the guards were old and uneducated. Some had been wounded in combat and wore the patches of famous battles on the Eastern Front against Russia. For the enlisted men, guarding prisoners was probably regarded as better than duty in the East, but for the officers it must have been one of the least desired assignments. Some officers and men of the camp's garrison were genuinely hated by the prisoners. Most of the others tried to be decent to the POWs, often under difficult circumstances and the threat of severe punishment if they were caught doing anything that could be considered contrary to Germany's war effort. This general feeling of mutual respect continued after the war when former captor and POWs met at various social events.



Germans were universally known as "Goon", a nickname which puzzled them. (When asked, a captured officer said that it stood for "German officer or Non-Com".) The tall sentry watch platforms which mounted searchlights and machine-guns were therefore "Goon Boxes", and annoying the guards was "Goon Baiting". Whilst the guards were not the cream of the Luftwaffe, they unhesitatingly shot first and asked questions afterwards if any prisoner was rash enough to stray over the knee-high warning wire, and then fail to surrender if challenged. Some were undoubtedly trigger-happy and records hold correspondence to the Kommandant reporting cases of unnecessary use of firearms.

It *must* be made clear that the German Luftwaffe, who were responsible for Air Force prisoners of war, maintained a degree of professional respect for fellow flyers, and the general attitude of the camp security officers and guards should **not** be confused with the SS or Gestapo. The Luftwaffe treated the POWs well, despite an erratic and inconsistent supply of food.



Prisoners were handled quite fairly within the Geneva Convention, and the Kommandant, **Oberst (Colonel) Friedrich-Wilhelm von Lindeiner-Wildau** (left), was a professional and honourable soldier who won the respect of the senior prisoners.

He was 61 when the camp opened in May 1942, a capable, educated man who spoke good English. Having joined the army in 1908, and after being wounded three times in WW1, winning two Iron Cross awards, he left in 1919 and worked in several civilian posts, meanwhile marrying a Dutch baroness, whilst trying to steer clear of Nazi politics. Eventually he joined the Luftwaffe (the least Nazified of the three German forces) in 1937 as one of Goering's personal staff. Refused retirement, he found himself posted as Sagan Kommandant, with **Major Gustav Simoleit** as deputy. The first Kommandant, **Colonel Stephani**, had been quickly replaced when found to be unsuited to the task.

Security was strict, but life was not intolerable, except for those for whom was a restless itch... this was reckoned to be just 25 percent of the camp population, and only 5% of those were considered to be dedicated escapers. The others would, however, work in support of any escape attempts.

After several major expansions, Luft III eventually grew to hold 10,000 PoWs; it had a size of 59 acres, with 5 miles of perimeter fencing.



Colonel Friedrich Wilhelm Von Lindeiner, Commandant, Stalag Luft III from its opening in April 1942 until he was relieved of command after the *Great Escape* in March 1944. Colonel Arthur Durand (author of **Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story**) found Von Lindeiner's memoirs in the German archives at Freiburg, Germany, and The Friends of the Air Force Academy Library received permission to translate them into English for limited use. Their 300 pages tell a priceless story of Von Lindeiner's views as commander of a POW camp and about his unhappy confinement by the British for two years after the war.



Major Gustav Simoleit (the center figure) was the Deputy Commandant and had been a professor of history in civilian life. He was a decent man and quite proper in his dealings with prisoners. He was the Deputy Commandant for the full 33 months of Stalag Luft III's existence and later served as the Commandant at Stalag VIIA, Moosburg. He surrendered the camp to American forces on April 29, 1945.



This clandestine photograph shows the German officer in charge of South Camp, Hauptmann Galodovich, rendering the Nazi salute. This salute was required on Hitler's orders for all military personnel after the July 1944 assassination attempt on his life.



Gottlob Berger (16 July 1896 – 5 January 1975) was a German Nazi who held the rank of *Obergruppenführer* during World War II and was later convicted of war crimes. In 1939, he was *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler's main recruiting officer. From 1940, he was Chief of Staff for the *Waffen-SS* and head of *SS-Hauptamt* (English: SS main office).

He was born at Gerstetten, Württemberg. Berger volunteered for Army service at the beginning of World War I and rose to the rank of first lieutenant in the infantry by the time of his discharge in 1919. He received several wounds and decorations of the iron cross first and second class. After joining the Nazi Party in 1922, he became a member of the SA and entered SS service in 1936. He achieved the rank of major in the reserve by 1938, but his initial rank upon entering the SS was colonel, based upon his SA service through 1933.

Nazi organizational efforts - He was a co-author of Heinrich Himmler's pamphlet *Der Untermensch*, and also promoted the pamphlet *Mit Schwert und Wiege* (*With Sword and Cradle*) for the recruitment of non-Germans. He was the father-in-law of *SS-Sturmbannführer* Karl Leib, the head of the Norwegian recruitment office at Drammensveien, Oslo. In SS ranks, he was known as one of Himmler's "Twelve Apostles" and was nicknamed "*der Allmächtige Gottlob*"—"the Almighty Gottlob" (a play on "The almighty God", as "Gott" is the German word for "God"). His organizational abilities contributed to the amazing expansion of the *Waffen-SS* in World War II, but he also became ensnared in typical in-fighting among the SS hierarchy.



He ran the main SS office in Berlin from 1940 and was involved in liaising with the so called 'Eastern Territories'. In August 1944, he was sent to deal with an uprising in Slovakia and immediately after this was put in control of all prisoner of war camps. Upon the establishment of the Volkssturm in 1944 Berger was appointed one of two Chiefs of Staff along with Helmuth Friedrichs.

SS General Gottlob Berger was in charge of all POWs in Germany during the last two years of the war. There were over seven million of them and most were Russians. His boss was the dreaded Heinrich Himmler. Records show that Berger did little to prevent the death by neglect of several million Russian prisoners, but he worked hard to shield the Western Allies' prisoners from the excesses of his own Waffen SS Organization. He was involved in the operation that plucked Brig. Gen. Arthur Vanaman and then Colonel Delmar Spivey out of the column of POWs evacuating Stalag Luft III at the end of January 1945 and took them to Berlin. Spivey and Vanaman got Berger to allow trucks bearing food for the POWs to enter Germany from Switzerland during the last few months of the war. This food probably saved many POWs from starvation. In return, Spivey later wrote a letter to the Nuremberg trial authorities on Berger's behalf that probably saved him from the gallows.



Defendants of the Ministries Trial sit in the dock at Nuremberg. Gottlob Berger is sitting on the second row, second from left.

After the war, he was arrested and put on trial in the Ministries Trial in 1947. In 1949, there was an attempt to assign blame for the POW death marches against Berger and the indictment read:

that between September 1944 and May 1945, hundreds of thousands of American and Allied prisoners of war were compelled to undertake forced marches in severe weather without adequate rest, shelter, food, clothing and medical supplies; and that such forced marches, conducted under the authority of the defendant Berger, chief of Prisoner-of-War Affairs, resulted in great privation and deaths to many thousands of prisoners.

Berger claimed that it was in fact the Germans' duty under the Geneva Convention to remove POWs from a potential combat zone, as long as it did not put their lives in even greater danger. He also claimed that the rapid advance of the Red Army had surprised the Germans, who had planned to transport the POWs by train. He claimed that he had protested about the decision, made by Hitler, according to him, but he was "without power or authority to countermand or avoid the order". The case failed due to these claims and the lack of eyewitness evidence—most ex-POWs were completely unaware of the trial taking place.

He was however convicted in 1949 for his role in the genocide of European Jews and sentenced to 25 years in prison. The sentence was reduced to 10 years in 1951 because of his refusal to kill The *Prominente* in Oflag IV-C at Colditz Castle, despite direct orders from Adolf Hitler. He had helped these prisoners escape by moving them to Bavaria and then onto Austria where he met up with them twice before they were returned to American forces. He claimed that he had saved the *Prominente* as Ernst Kaltenbrunner (head of the RSHA) had sent a group of extremists to try to kill them.

After the war, he claimed that Hitler had wanted more shootings of prisoners and more punishments, but that he had resisted this. In 1948, Berger gave details to an American judge in Nuremberg of Hitler's plans to hold 35,000 Allied prisoners hostage in a "last redoubt" in the Bavarian mountains. If a peace deal was not forthcoming, Hitler had ordered that the hostages were to be executed. Berger claimed that on 22 April 1945, Hitler had signed orders to this effect and these were passed to him by Eva Braun but he decided to stall and not carry out the order.

After World War II, Berger also claimed that there was a plan, proposed by the *Luftwaffe* and approved by Hitler, to set up special POW camps for British and American airmen in the center of large German cities to act as human shields against Allied bombing raids. Berger realized that this would contravene the Geneva Convention and argued that there was not enough barbed wire—as a result this plan was not implemented.

After his release from prison in 1951, he worked on the staff of the right-wing journal *Nation Europa* based in Coburg, and died on 5 January 1975 in his city of birth.



Two months before *George* arrived at Stalag Luft III, 'The Great Escape' of March 1944 triggered a tragically severe reaction from the *Germans*. The diversion from *Germany's* desperate war effort necessary to recapture the 76 men who got away through the escape tunnel reached Hitler's personal attention and he ordered 50 of the recaptured men to be shot. After this event, escape became more dangerous but attempts continued. In the confusion in *Germany* as the end of the war approached, especially after the Stalag Luft III *Kriegies* reached Moosburg, escape became easier and less dangerous. When it became obvious that the end was near, even the most ardent advocates of escaping decided to wait it out.

Newcomers to the camp had to be personally vouched for by two existing POWs who knew them by sight. As the numbers of airmen increased, this became essential as it was not unknown for the *Germans* to introduce infiltrators in an attempt to spy on camp operations and escape attempts. Such infiltrators were known as "*stool pigeons*". Any newcomer who could not summon two men who knew him had to suffer the indignity of a heavy interrogation by senior officer POWs. Also, he was assigned a rota of men who had to escort him at all times, until he was deemed to be genuine. Any stool pigeons were quickly discovered and there is no evidence to suggest that infiltrators operated successfully at Luft III.

One newcomer was given the standard advice to "completely ignore anything you see which is out of the ordinary" and having been vouched for, left the hut where the interview had

been held, jumped down the steps outside and promptly collapsed up to his waist in a tunnel.

Letters were censored both at the sending and receiving ends. POWs were not restricted in how many they could receive, but were only allowed to send three letters and four postcards every month. Letters averaged three weeks to arrive from Canada, four from the UK and five from the USA.

Several POWs established means of exchanging coded messages with their relatives, via the Red Cross mail system. Such letters, which were heavily censored by the Germans, were invariably weeks in transit, but provided valuable information to the War Office. This coding was usually a pre-arranged method agreed between an airman and his wife, girlfriend or relative, such as taking every 9th word, or similar method.

Food Parcels for United Nations Prisoners of War	
PARCELS FOR PRISONERS OF WAR	
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	269 DELAWARE AVENUE BUFFALO, N. Y.
Chairman: MISS HELEN WADE JACKSON MRS. STUART C. WELSH	RULES OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR PRISONER OF WAR PARCELS January 10, 1943
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A new procedure for sending packages to United Nations Prisoners of War has been agreed upon by the Navy, State, Post Office Departments' Office of Censorship, International Red Cross and Board of Economic Warfare.	
Personal parcels to individual war prisoners may be sent ONLY by using permits issued to the next of kin by their own governments. The American permits are given every 60 days. The British permits are issued every 90 days. These permits are TRANSFERABLE, and may be sent to this organization.	
United Nations prisoners of war other than British or American must have printed form from the <u>German</u> authorities for any parcels sent to Germany.	
Large gift shipments may be sent by charitable organizations to UNDESIGNATED prisoners of war by special license from the Board of Economic Warfare.	
This committee is composed of volunteers and was formed to send food parcels to United Nations Prisoners of War. In cases where the next of kin are prevented by rationing or finances from sending these food parcels the committee will try to supply them from the General Fund contributed for this purpose. If relatives wish to have parcels furnished and packed by this group, they may send the cost of the parcel, next of kin permit with complete address of the prisoner, also any small items of clothing may be sent to be included in personal parcels. Parcels may not exceed 11 pounds. Boxes 8"X8"X8".	
IN ALL SHIPMENTS OF SPECIAL ORDERS WE MUST HAVE THE NEXT-OF-KIN PERMIT SENT IN DUPLICATE FOR EACH PARCEL!!!	
All purchases are made at lowest cost prices. The running expenses are fully paid by the "Opportunity Shop" which is operated solely for the benefit of this project. Every penny contributed is used only for food parcels.	
General contributions will be used to send as many food parcels as possible to hundreds of American and British prisoners of war in Italy and Germany. All parcels will be directed to the International Red Cross in Geneva, Switzerland and distributed by them to the camps in which the men are in great need.	

The "Secret" Game of Monopoly

Starting in 1941, an increasing number of British Airmen found themselves as the involuntary guests of the Third Reich, and the Crown was casting about for ways and means to facilitate their escape.



Now obviously, one of the most helpful aids to that end is a useful and accurate map, one showing not only where stuff was, but also showing the locations of 'safe houses' where a ROW on-the-lam could go for food and shelter.

Paper maps had some real drawbacks — they make a lot of noise when you open and fold them, they wear out rapidly, and if they get wet, they turn into mush.

Someone in MI-5 (similar to America's OSS) got the idea of printing escape maps on silk. It's durable, can be scrunched-up into tiny wads, and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise whatsoever.

At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, and that was John Waddington, Ltd. When approached by the government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort.

By pure coincidence, Waddington was also the U.K. Licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly. As it happened, 'games and pastimes' was a category of item qualified for insertion into 'CARE packages', dispatched by the International Red Cross to prisoners of war.

Under the strictest of secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-to-secrecy employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany or Italy where Allied ROW camps were regional system). When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny dots that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:

1. A playing token, containing a small magnetic compass
2. A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together

3. Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian, and French currency, hidden within the piles of Monopoly money.

British and American air crews were advised, before taking off on their first mission, how to identify a 'rigged' Monopoly set — by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch, located in the corner of the Free Parking square.

Of the estimated 35,000 Allied ROWS who successfully escaped, an estimated one-third were aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy indefinitely, since the British Government might want to use this highly successful ruse in still another, future war. The story wasn't declassified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honored in a public ceremony.

It's always nice when you can play that 'Get Out of Jail' Free' card!

(For the complete story see Appendix D - Get Out of Jail Free: Monopoly's Hidden Maps by Ki Mae Heussner).

Other clever schemes also concealed maps and aids to escape as seen in the deck of cards.





Assorted Luftwaffe insignia made by prisoners. The belt buckle was worn by enlisted men when under arms. It was often copied in the POW camps using lead solder from tin cans.



A Kreige manufactured compass

The game of cat and mouse is clear from the transcript of announcements made the ranking POW and the camp Commandant:

Escape Policy

[Loudspeaker] "Notice from Lt Col A. P. Clark to all POWs, Sagan, Germany, South Compound, concerning escape policy, January, 1944."

[Gen Clark] "The aims of our escape policies are to assist the war effort by getting the prisoners of war home, by forcing Germans to maintain large local garrisons, and by involving German personnel communications and transportation facilities in the recapture of escaped prisoners of war."

[Commandant von Lindeiner-Wildau] "An escape of more than four men was considered a mass escape and resulted in a countrywide alarm of all police stations and other units involved in camp security. At least 42 telegrams aside from the telephone notifications had to be sent to all departments involved in security within Germany and corresponding units involved in border-guarding."

The German guards specialising in escape detection were known as 'Ferrets' and could enter the compound at any time and search any hut without warning. Equipped with metal probes, they searched for the



bright yellow sand indicating that a tunnel was in progress, or an English-speaking ferret would lie concealed under a hut listening for careless talk.



Their most active, unpredictable and generally dangerous member, *Gefreiter* (Corporal) **Greise**, was known as 'Rubberneck'.

From documents held at the Public Records Office, Kew, London, there is evidence to suggest that when a tunnel was detected by the guards or ferrets, it was allowed to continue without intervention until it appeared to be near completion. Then, the ferrets would pounce, driving heavy trucks around the compound to collapse the tunnels and galleries.

The "ferret story" is one I still vividly remember my father telling as he always laughed when he told it. Apparently one of the ferrets jobs was to crawl under the barracks looking for tunnels or escape hatches. On one occasion while the German soldier was under the barracks the POWs went back inside and began jumping up and down on the floor boards as hard as they could. The noise must have been deafening but the site of the soldier covered in the dust and filth that fell out from under the floor boards because of the pounding was an hysterical moment for the POWs. It probably was also the last time a ferret crawled under an occupied barracks.

After the war the Commandant of Stalag Luft III would write in his memoirs -

[Col von Lindeiner-Wildau] *"We soon discovered that to house the intrepid young airmen of the Allied powers at Sagan, a more unsuitable location could not have been found. The camp was located about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile south of the Sagan train station; we saw hundreds of trains daily going to all directions of the compass. The camp was bordered on the east, south, and southwest by extensive forests. The*

ground was excellently suited for underground tunneling. In the course of time the POWs reached a mastery of tunneling which was unexcelled. The flyers were all between 21 and 30 years old; only a few staff members were a little bit older. As flyers they had been trained well, physically as well as mentally. "



Sergeant-Major Hermann Glemnitz was the senior noncommissioned officer on the security staff and was responsible for preventing escape. He was an older man, had been a pilot in World War I, and would have been a fine senior NCO in anyone's air force. Although he was universally respected, he was no one to trifle with. He found many escape tunnels being dug out of the six compounds. In fact, he only missed three including the Great Escape tunnel.

The "cooler" where many POWs and returned escapees were placed in solitary confinement.



FOOD

Food was always very close to a prisoner's heart. Germany, involved in a total war, had difficulties enough feeding its own people. Feeding POWs was well down on the list of priorities. The German POW rations were insufficient to sustain health and failed to meet the requirements of the Geneva Convention. The recommended intake for a normal healthy active man is 3,000 calories; German rations allowed between 1,500 and 1,900. Had the International Red Cross not shipped food parcels to all Allied POW camps except to the Russians, serious malnutrition would have been common. The Red Cross offer to feed the Russian POWs was spurned by Stalin.

Issued with little more than starvation rations, food parcels sent by relatives, despite being regularly stolen by the many hands through which they passed, were essential. It should be borne in mind that the guards themselves were not much better off than the prisoners, in terms of food. On average, one parcel per week per man was provided.

The receipt of the Red Cross food parcels suffered from the uncertainties of the wartime rail service in Germany and the caprice of the Germans who would withhold delivery of the food as group punishment.

The rule in most of the camps was that both "individual" (for a named person, sent and paid for by relatives and containing a mixture of goods) and "bulk" parcels (for general distribution, sent and paid for by the International Red Cross, and containing a supply of a single item) were pooled. Thus, replacement clothing, shaving and washing kit, coffee, tea, tinned meat, jam, sugar and essentials were distributed equally.

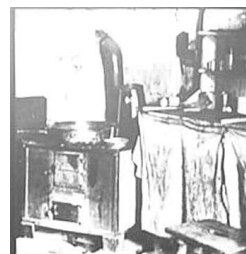
Kriegies stashed food for special occasions. A few spoons of British cocoa here or a few lumps of sugar there all went into a special reserve for what the Kriegies called a bash. Loosely speaking a bash was the Kriegies' way of celebrating a special event, perhaps the Fourth of July, Christmas, or even a birthday. Its ingredients had been saved laboriously for months. It was a feast.



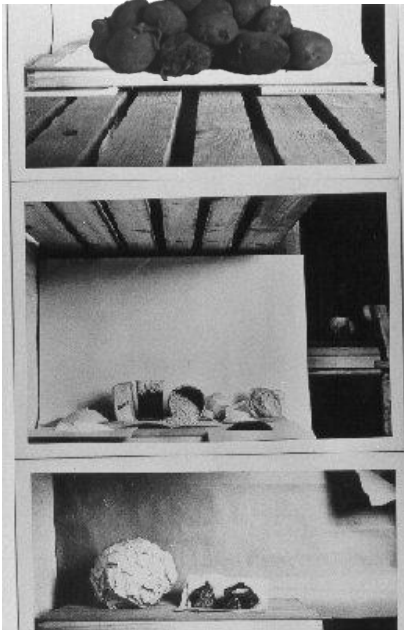
This photo of the Kriegies cooking on the small coal stove illustrates the problem facing a barracks of 150 to 200 men seeking to prepare a hot meal once a day. The stove was in use almost around the clock.



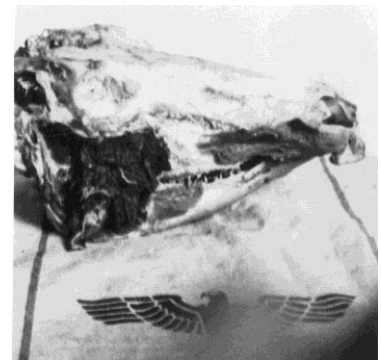
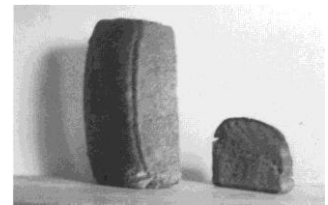
A laborer, probably French, filling a typical German pressure cooker for soup. Soup and bread were the main staples of the German rations. Both, for POWs, were poor quality.



John Wranesh: "The main diet was potatoes, dehydrated cabbage once hydrated, thin soups with slivers of some form of meat, ersatz coffee, and dark bread. The bread was something else - very heavy with a "saw dust filler" and many times there were hard pieces that would grind on your teeth. The cutting of the bread was done ceremoniously with everyone watching. Scotty Lowe was the cutter, he had a knack for sharpening knives on stones, bricks, or other hard substances and he could cut to meet the 1/8" thick tolerance per slice. There could be no waste and he always had an audience."



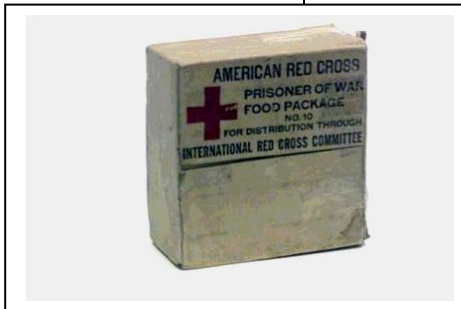
These clandestine photos show the staples in the German ration for one man, one week. Missing is the meat which sometimes went into the once-a-day soup issue. It was usually the carcass or head of an old ox or horse from which all the useful meat had been gleaned.



John Wranesh: "The American Red Cross provided parcels for POW's, but there was always the problem of "transport" claimed by the Germans with railways bombed out, troop priorities, roadways bombed out and other wartime conditions. When we received parcels it was for a fractional part ranging from 1/8 to a very rare full parcel. The cigarettes and "D" chocolate bars along with soap became the main mediums of exchange among the POW's (as well as the German guards who would provide some needed items e.g. batteries for the secret radio etc."




Red Cross food parcels came in large, water-resistant cardboard shipping boxes containing four parcels each. Each parcel, as a supplement to German rations, would safely keep a POW going for one week, 1800 calories per day.



FOOD PARCELS

ONE PER WEEK PER MAN



RED CROSS

	AMERICAN	CANADIAN
Condensed Milk 1 can	Powdered Milk-16oz. 1 can	Powdered Milk 1 can
Meat Roll 1 can	Spam 1 can	Spam 1 can
Meal & Vegetable 1 can	Corned Beef 1 can	Corned Beef 1 can
Vegetable or Bacon 1 can	Liver Paste 1 can	Salmon 1 can
Sardines 1 can	Salmon 1 can	Cheese-8 lbz. 1 can
Cheese-4 oz. 1 can	Cheese 1 can	Butter-16 oz. 1 can
Margarine or Butter 1 box	Margarine-16 oz. 1 can	Biscuits-soda 1 box
Biscuits 1 pkg.	Biscuits--K-Ration	Coffee-ground-8 oz. 1 bag
Eggs-Dry 1 can	Nescafe Coffee-1 oz. 1 can	Jam 1 can
Oatmeal 1 can	Jam or Orange Pres. 1 can	Prunes-8 oz. 1 box
Cocoa 1 can	Prunes or Raisins 1 can	Raisins-8 oz. 1 box
Tea-2 oz. 1 box	Sugar-8oz. 1 box	Sugar-8 oz. 1 bag
Dried Fruit or Padding 1 can	Chocolate-4oz. 2 bars	Chocolate-5 oz. 1 bar
Sugar-4 oz. 1 box	Soap 2 bars	Soap 1 bar
Chocolate 1 bar	Cigarettes 5 pks.	
Soap 1 bar		

REICH ISSUE

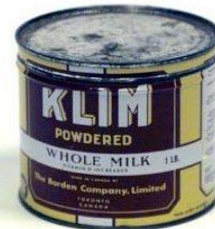
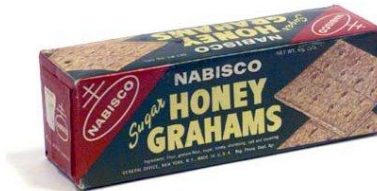
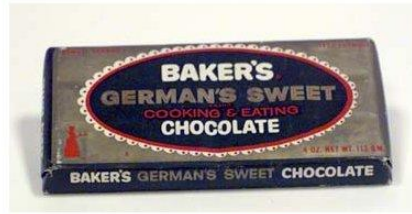
WEEKLY RATION

Army Bread-1 loaf 2100 grams	Soup-Oatmeal, Barley or Pea 3 times
Vegetables-Potatoes 900 grams	Cheese 46 grams
Other Seasonal ?	Sugar 175 grams
Jam 175 grams	Malt 215 grams
Meat	Salt
Flour---on occasion	





The famous D Bar, greatly appreciated by prisoners and useful barter currency.



Klim was 28% fat and was so rich, it could be whipped.



Spam—it kept prisoners alive during the war, but was spumed by all after the war.





In PoW camps, captured officers were paid an equivalent of their pay in "lagergeld" [prison money] or internal camp currency, and could buy items such as musical instruments and what few everyday goods which were available. Captured NCOs did not receive any such allowance, but the officers regularly pooled lagergeld from their own pay, and transferred these to the NCOs' compound. It was strictly forbidden to be in possession of real German currency, a vital escape aid. At Luft III, all lagergeld was pooled for communal purchases of what items were made available by the German administration.

An internal official method of collective bargaining and bartering called "Foodacco" was set up, allowing PoWs to market any surplus food or desirable item, for "points" which could be "spent" on other items, amongst themselves. Great trouble was taken in food preparation, with special occasions such as a birthday or Christmas requiring months of hoarding. PoWs usually banded together in groups of 8 men for cooking and messing purposes, and such groups usually became very close-knit.



The International Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, undertook to preserve the quality of life for thousands of prisoners of war on both sides in World War II. The International Red Cross provided food, clothing, and medicines, while the Y.M.C.A. provided library supplies (largely books), athletic equipment, musical instruments, and chaplains' supplies. Both were major efforts

and contributed immensely to the well-being of POWs. Volunteers from neutral countries, such as Switzerland and Sweden, with great dedication and at considerable personal risk, served Allied camps in Germany throughout the war.

Swedish lawyer Henry Söderberg, as the representative of the International Y.M.C.A., was responsible for the region of Germany in which Stalag Luft III was located. He visited the camp regularly and went to great efforts to procure and deliver items requested by the various compounds. As a result, each compound had a band and orchestra, a well-equipped library, and sports equipment to meet the different British and American national tastes. Chaplains also had the necessary religious items to enable them to hold regular services. In addition, many men were able to advance, and in a few cases, complete their formal education.



Söderberg remained in touch with many of his American friends by coming from Sweden to attend their reunions until his death in 1998. He kindly donated his rich collection of official reports, photograph albums, letters, and other materials documenting his work on behalf of the prisoners of many nations to the U.S. Air Force Academy Library. It is available to scholars, other researchers, and cadets alike.

Also, the homogenous nationality. There was a very strong feeling of true and good Americanism. There was a will to overcome the difficulties and to survive. It was always there together with the ingenuity of the men. There was also a high degree of comradeship and of friendship between the prisoners, even if crowded conditions and the monotonous life sometimes created strains in personal relationships."



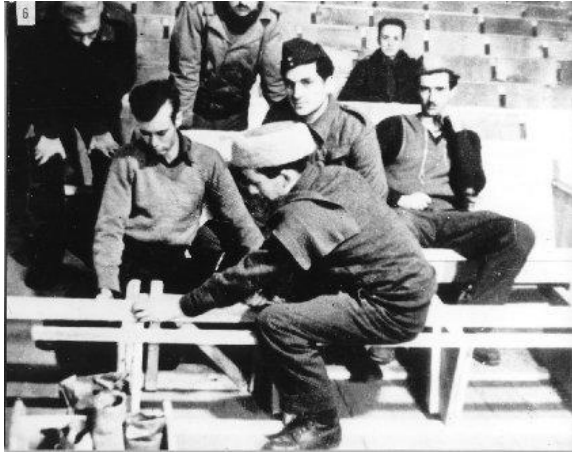
Among the records are some from Henry Soderberg, the Swedish national and neutral observer of Allied POW camps in Nazi Germany for the international YMCA. He is shown here with the senior American officer of South Camp, Col Charles Goodrich, and interrogating a prisoner. Mr Soderberg's observation of the American performance: "I saw many camps while in Germany during the war and one of the very best camps was Stalag Luft III. There was [sic] various reasons for this. I think it was in the first place, the leadership.



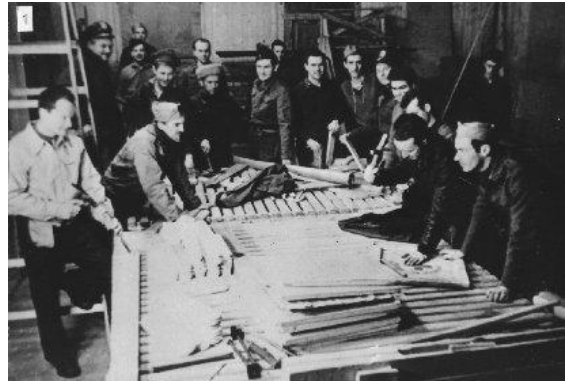
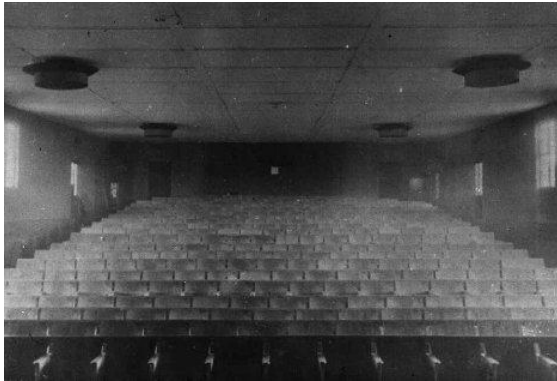
The Luft Bansters of South Camp under the gifted direction of Al Diamond and Kriegie Dusty Runner. All instruments were provided by the Y.M.C.A.



This pseudo radio station operated with a public address system, furnished by the International Y.M.C.A. Programs included talk shows, skits, news, music, and fantasies imitating typical home shows. Shows were heavily monitored by the Germans.



This series of four photos shows the development and use of the South Camp theater. This structure seating 600 Kriegies was built from the ground up and furnished by the prisoners. Top photo shows stage construction. Next photo shows finished theater. Seats (third photo) were constructed from the wooden Red Cross parcel boxes. Bottom photo shows the all male cast of a typical performance with costumes rented from Berlin by the Germans.



The YMCA took great care in keeping the families back home informed about conditions in the prisoner of war camps. In December of 1944 they publish the first of five volumes of "War Prisoner Aid News" from their offices in New York City.



Music and Dramatics Mark Prisoners' Christmas



Theatrical events staged at prisoner of war camps during the Christmas holidays will include light and gay entertainments as well as the more solemn observances. At many camps the best plays are saved for the Christmas season to help round out the programs. In the past, camp restrictions have been lessened during the Yuletide, permitting the men to have more leeway in

their activities. Current Broadway hits, Gilbert and Sullivan, and Shakespeare now vie with Hollywood movies in providing prison camp entertainment. It should be borne in mind that going to a theater behind barbed wire is not exactly the same as doing it in your home town. The band in the orchestra pit (left, above) is at Stalag XVII B, while the play is at Stalag 383.

Yule Renews Hope Of War Prisoners

(Continued from page 2)

knives and other simple objects. Everything is done with great skill and carefulness. I am sure everyone will appreciate these little gifts because each one knows the difficulties and efforts behind the results."

"Christmas in Camp" is a book of Yuletide stories, poems and suggestions for Christmas parties that is supplied the men by the Y.M.C.A. It includes such things as the Christmas story according to St. Luke, poems that are grave and gay, essays, Christmas tales, folksongs, how the holiday is observed in different lands, the traditional carols, games, puzzles, jokes and anecdotes. Sacred music typical of the Christmas season also is supplied so that the men can enjoy the spiritual beauty of song and orchestra.

All Prisoners Served

As with all materials supplied by the Y.M.C.A., they are provided not only for American and British prisoners, but for the French, German, Italian, Polish, Serbian, Russian and all others. Because it has not been possible to purchase the vast quantities of foreign language materials needed, the Y.M.C.A. has gone into the printing business, producing millions of books, pamphlets and songs.

Ever since the war began, the "Y" has been sending musical instruments into the camps, and these form the basis for many fine camp orchestras which will give concerts or provide background music for Christmas events. Music is very popular in

prison camps. Many times repeat performances have to be given in order that all prisoners may escape, so to speak, on wings of song from their drab surroundings.

Little Known About Far East

It should be remembered that much more is known about the camps in Europe than in the Far East. There the Japanese have barred neutral visitors to a very great extent, and this, together with the difficulty of communications and the sketchy letters received from the prisoners, makes it impossible to say with certainty what is happening in the Far Eastern camps. But we can probably assume with some degree of safety that even in the steaming jungles of the Philippines, Christmas will not go completely unobserved.

Highlights of Christmas in prison camps are the entertainments put on by the men. Those skilled in dramatics or music become the performers, while men who were carpenters, designers, or electricians in civilian life pitch in as stage hands, costume makers or light-effects experts. Some camps have theaters that would rival many community enterprises in this country. Others, of course, particularly in the smaller camps, are much more primitive. While the Y.M.C.A. tries to provide costumes and make-up materials, the men become adept in overcoming shortages themselves. Many elaborate costumes are made from crepe paper cut and painted by the prisoners.

While entertainments naturally reflect the season, and Nativity plays are popular, they are by no means the only type of drama offered. Everything from "The Way to Bethlehem,"

to "The Man Who Came to Dinner" will be presented in prison camps this Christmas.

But Christmas is a religious occasion, and the deep spiritual aspects of this Christian holiday are not forgotten by the men behind barbed wire. If anything, Christmas to them is a time for a renewal of hope and faith, and it can be easily understood that the quiet observance of Christmas in a prison camp means more to the men than it does to the average free American. War Prisoners Aid makes it possible for each man to worship according to his particular desire by supplying the religious articles of all faiths. The Chaplaincy Commission of the World Council of Churches cooperates with the Y.M.C.A. in providing liturgical equipment, materials for the sacraments and worship, devotional literature and sacred music and pictures.

Men Rediscover God's Gift

"Christmas love renews men's faith in God and 'peace on earth, good will to men,'" Dr. Tracy Strong, general secretary of the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A., which conducts the prisoner of war work, declares emphatically. "The prisoner in the midst of cheerless joy, sullen monotony, and dreary hopes, continues to live victoriously because of his love for his family, his love for his home, and his love for the Christ Child," Dr. Strong explains. "Men rediscover God's greatest gift to men—unsought and rejected—in the simple story of the Child in the Inn, crowded and sleeping on the straw, whose life reveals to each generation 'the way, the truth and the life.' Christmas is the time when God speaks again and again in the prison camps throughout the world."

Christmas Behind Barbed Wire:

Yule Renews Hope of War Prisoners Throughout World

By John R. Burkhart

This year more men will spend Christmas far from their homes and loved ones than at any time since the Star of Bethlehem first shone down upon the world.

Millions will be on battlefronts or the high seas, putting to use lessons being learned by other millions still in training. Countless industrial workers will spend Christmas making the machines of war with which millions of other men, too young or too old to fight, have been driven from their native lands.

But the most poignant Christmas of all will be that of the millions who make up the "barbed wire legion," the prisoners of war whose thousands of closely guarded camps scar the countryside of every continent. These unfortunate men have not even the satisfaction given soldiers and war workers of spending Christmas in the service of their country.

Prisoners Are Heroes

That most men were captured because they fought to the last, until escape was cut off or they were brought down by enemy fire, only adds to the bitterness of Christmas behind barbed wire. For many, this Christmas will be their sixth as prisoners, and to them that simple fact itself must at times become unbearable. American prisoners are luckier: most of them have been captives a comparatively short time.

Food and fun traditionally go hand in hand at Christmas time, and in prison camps this still holds true—with, of course, limitations obvious to all of us. Food may be poor, the gaiety forced, and barracks cold, but the men try to make the best of what they have. Conditions vary widely, and much depends upon a camp's commanding officer, its location, and the resources of the surrounding country. At Christmas the prisoners try their hands at making holiday cakes and cookies, put on entertainments and hold services to praise Him who was born to make all men free.

Through the Red Cross our government has been providing each American prisoner in Europe with a food package that is planned to reach him each week. These packages, plus a special Christmas food parcel, will en-



NATIVITY PLAY AT OFLAG VII A: Reflecting the prisoners' way of showing the old, old Christmas story is this scene from the Nativity Play being enacted by prisoners at Oflag VII A, a German camp for Allied officers. The elaborate costumes probably were made from crepe paper cut and colored by the men. Plays such as this probably will be presented at all camps having dramatic facilities. Those without theaters may use barracks for the occasion. Religious services will crowd chapels.

able many of the Americans to enjoy some semblance of a Yankee Christmas dinner.

Yanks Sent Lights, Decorations

To help American prisoners of war in Germany observe Christmas in at least a measure of what they did in peaceful years, War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. has sent sets of decorations for rooms and trees, lights, favors (including paper hats), good luck charms and flags. These are going to 300 working detachments as well as to all of the larger camps where there are Americans. Special Christmas sets have gone to German hospitals where there are wounded American prisoners.

Christmas decorations have gone to Americans in considerable quantity. To the 4,400 Yanks at Stalag XVII B, for example, has been sent more than \$750 worth. This should make the buildings and grounds a little less drab, and let the men know they have not been forgotten.

"There already is a Christmas feeling in the air here," a visiting Y.M.C.A. worker writes from Stalag VI A, a prison camp in Germany. "The prisoners are busy decorating the rooms and especially the chapel, and they are preparing little gifts to send home to their relatives. In many camps which I visit I have seen touching examples of the great ingenuity with which the prisoners of war make little gifts out of the most unlikely materials to send home for Christmas, especially those who have small children."

Germans Have Christmas

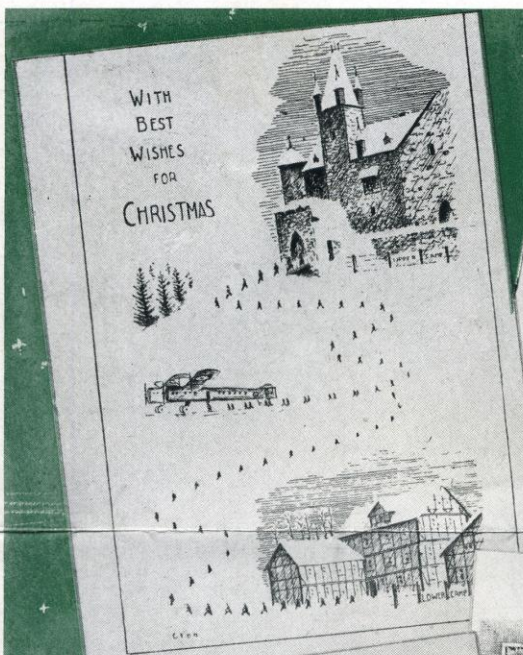
On the other side of the fence, this report comes from a camp for German prisoners in England: "The preparation for Christmas is arousing keen interest and keeping the men's minds and hands well occupied. They are making small things to give to each other: holders for matches, ash trays, folders for photographs, paper

(Continued on page 4)

Prisoners Make Christmas Cards:

As the Christmas cards reproduced on the opposite page show, life behind barbed wire does not completely stifle the prisoners' feeling for the sentimental things of the outside world. Nor is this feeling confined to Allied prisoners, for the Germans, too,

look upon Christmas with nostalgia and yearning. Though crude perhaps in comparison with commercial cards, the work of the prisoners has an appealing spiritual quality. The Y.M.C.A. prints many of the cards after they have been designed by the prisoners.



Back at the camp, the South Camp tri-weekly newspaper inspired by Olie Chiesl, Roy Deadman, and L.J. Hawley, *The Circuit*, was issued faithfully until Stalag Luft III was evacuated in late January 1945. The paper covered all the news and activities of the camp that were approved by the German censors.

Under the watchful eyes of the German censors, camp newspapers written by the Kriegies flourished in Stalag Luft III. The issues were frequently illustrated with colorful cartoons that reflected camp life. It is remarkable that a number of issues were carried on the forced march to Stalag VIIA and survived the war.

U. S. EDITION
NUMBER 1
MONDAY, APRIL 10

THE CIRCUIT

SOUTH COMPOUND

STALAG LUFT III
SAGAN, GERMANY
MONDAY, APRIL 10

GEPRUFT
41

RELIGIOUS SERVICE HELD IN THEATRE

FACTORS TEACH ETHICS, PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Religion is a vital part of Kriegie life. Both Protestant and Roman Catholic services are held each Sunday in the camp theatre.

Faith Murdoch MacDonald, a Scottish pastor captured while serving with the British paratroops in Africa, is "unofficial" chaplain for the south compound. Protestant services are under his leadership as well as a discussion group and Bible Study class. The Padre also teaches a session in psychology and philosophy.

Father Goudreau, a French Canadian priest taken from the sinking "Ramsey" in the early part of the war while enroute to missionary work in Africa, cares for the spiritual needs of the Roman Catholic officers and men. He divides his time between this and another camp. In addition Father Goudreau conducts a weekly ethics class.

Services have recently been enhanced by the addition of an altar cross and floral pieces, the contributions of Don Etine, Alameda, Calif., and J.M. Duffley, Birmingham.

OTHER CAMP PUBLICATIONS HAVE SHORT DURATIONS

The CIRCUIT had not been long in publication when the American spirit of competition prompted the appearance of two other news sheets, "The Shaft," and "The New

EDITORIAL

Through these composite publications we endeavor to bring you greetings from a community of Americans, and in the pages to set the temper of our existence.

Introspection suffers with intimacy, and it is not our wish to decry our position any further than to offer a smile for worried next-of-kin and a tolerant smirk on super sanguine bestowers of "country club" tags.

Suffice it to say that speakers, musicians, writers, artists, actors, men who were none of these but are learning to be - all are using these days to build a world of mind that embraces tolerance and ability to work together.

We hope to make the "home" editions a periodical function and thus send ourselves factually to you.

By means of this simple expedient, we say - and in the echo are unspoken hopes - "Hello," American style.

CAMP ORGAN MAKES DEBUT

OCT. 6, 1943

BULLETIN STYLE, THE CIRCUIT APPEARS THREE TIMES WEEKLY

The need of an organ to disseminate camp news and collect a somewhat meager store of "home" information was answered October 6, 1943 by the CIRCUIT, south camp, tri-weekly.

Typed in form imitative of U.S. dailies and with lettered in heads, the single issue is posted on the cobb house wall, by custom the larger bulletin board.

Motivating force behind the CIRCUIT has been and is Olie Chiesl of Chicago. Through him, as well as another Chicagoan Capt. Deadman, and L.J. Hawley, Berkeley, Calif., has the compound's only newspaper assumed the task of reporting, criticizing, reminding - in brief, aiding readers to find an optimum basis for adjustment.

Post-war reproduction of our CIRCUIT issues is planned.

Departments of theatre, sports, literary, and band are managed by Joe Klean, Seattle. R.M. Bahner, N.Y., Sam Dorrance, Brooklyn, and Sgt. Graves, Council Bluffs, Ia. Deadman covers the military situation with lucid comments reared of years service with the "Times" foreign desk.

Essential art work is in the facile hands of Ben Sotherman, Fort Worth, Frank Meyers, Cleveland, Ed Allen,

FOUR FILMS SHOWN SINCE SEPTEMBER

GERMAN "GINGER ROGERS" STARS IN TWO MUSICALS

Four motion pictures have been provided for prisoners since the opening of the south compound last September.

Merika Rokk, "Germany's Ginger Rogers" starred in two musical comedies provided by the Reich.

The American pictures were "Shall We Dance" starring Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and the Katharine Hepburn Cary Grant comedy, "Bring Up Baby."

E.F. Schrupp, Young America Minn., acts as interpreter of the German movies for a none too spellbound audience.

KRIEGIE LYRICAL NEEDS SUPPLIED IN VARIED FORMS

SING-SONGS FAVE WAY FOR CHORUS AND SWING BANDS

Music ranks high in entertainment value for all POW's. It is supplied in many and various forms.

Before the organization of the bands and chorus, sing-songs, led by Tex Newton, accompanied by a few guitars, were held in the open air, indoors during colder weather.

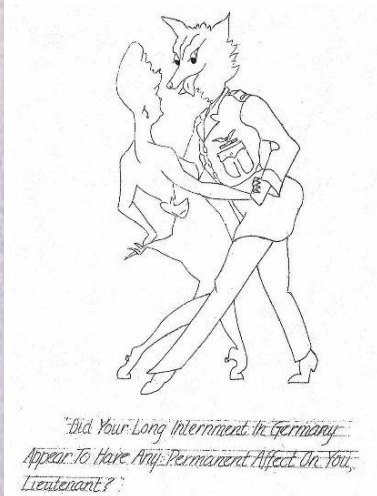
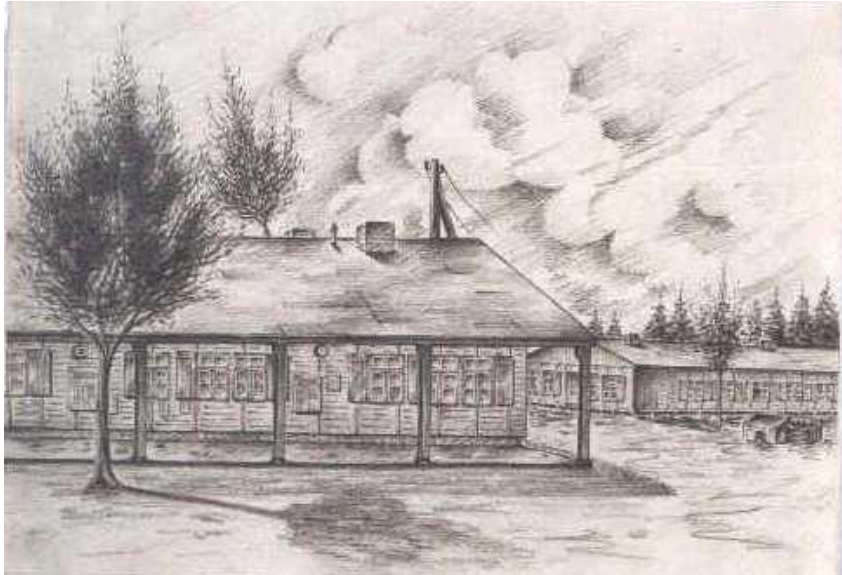
Four RCA phonographs, a set of records with such, passing from room to room, serve fourteen barracks.

A larger audience heard recordings upon delivery of an amplifying system shared with neighboring camps.

Norm Glasgow and Gran Highley organized a chorus of forty who presented a

OUT OF THE MAILBOX





"Clipped Wings" made in camp
by Kriegie Jack Jernigan.

Considering the atrocities of the holocaust and the horrendous treatment of POWs by the Japanese Army on the Pacific front, Stalag Luft III was a prison but for the most part civil. The leaders of the captured airmen and the men themselves worked hard to keep up their morale while hanging in there counting the days until the end of the war. Sadly for some, Stalag Luft III was their last stop. When they left this world their comrades did their best to bury them with dignity -

The burial of a prisoner of war has traditionally warranted full military honors. Burial services were performed by POW chaplains with a representative group of prisoners and German officers and men for the rifle salute. The casket and the deceased's national flag were supplied by the Germans. At Stalag Luft III, a small cemetery served all 6 compounds. By January 1945, it contained about a dozen plots plus an impressive stone memorial to the 50 British officers who were shot after the Great Escape in March 1944. Other than these 50, only about five others were shot by the Germans at Stalag Luft III. The cemetery is still there and is maintained nicely by the Polish people. The Russians who

were incarcerated in a nearby camp and who died in large numbers from neglect were buried without ceremony in mass graves in the woods south of the camp. After Heinrich Himmler took over the POW responsibility, and on orders from Hitler, prisoners ceased to be accorded full military honors.

Naturally, some prisoners were buried at the site of their crashed aircraft. Others died in hospitals all over Germany. After the war, the remains of most were found by burial commissions and moved to large national cemeteries that still remain in Germany, France, and Italy, or were brought home for burial at the request of next of kin.



The living carried on ... but as the Third Reich began to collapse, so did the civility in the camps.