The Editor Writes

In the first place, it has always been evident that as the war reached its concluding stages the route for parcels into Germany via Lisbon, Marseilles and Geneva might be subject to interruptions, and, as we informed our readers last month, traffic by the normal route has been suspended. In conjunction with the International Red Cross Committee and with the American and Canadian Red Cross organisations, however, close consideration has been given to the possibility of finding alternative routes into Germany. As a result, two Swedish ships, the "Mangalore" and the "Travancore," which crossed the Atlantic with food and comforts for prisoners, have been diverted by the American Red Cross from Marseilles to Gothenburg in South Sweden.

Reserves of Food

We know that there are reserve stocks in the prison camps and that supplies have been getting through from the reserves built up in Geneva. All the Red Cross organisations concerned are doing their utmost to restore the regular traffic of parcels and it may well be that the course of the war will bring about a rapid improvement in the transport position. A statement will be found on page 2.

Moved from Poland

Relatives of men in camps in Eastern Europe are anxious, as we well know, for news of what is happening to them as the Russian advance continues. It is likely that the Germans will have taken all possible precautions for the safe internment of these men; but rumours about movements of prisoners, as one might expect, are difficult to confirm. All that we know definitely is that prisoners at Stalag XXIAD at Posen, Poland, and Stalag Luft VI at Heydekruge have been moved to other camps. Letters have come from them from Stalags 344, VIII, Stalag 357 (Thorn), and Stalag Luft IV (Tychow).

Air Mail Reminder

In reminding us that letters from this country to prisoners of war and internees in Germany can again be sent by air mail, the Post Office authorities who were obliged for military reasons to suspend the service shortly before the invasion—point out that the air postage rates are also once again "as usual"—namely, 5d for the first ounce and 3d for each additional ounce (postcards 2½d). Special stamped air letter cards can be obtained for 3d each from all principal post offices.

Our Camp Helpers

I mentioned a month or two ago the remarkable way in which prisoners at Stalag IVAD not to be outdone by the efforts of their families at home, are managing to put aside their hard earned earnings in aid of the Fund. News of this practice at other camps has since reached me—and wonderful news it is. At Stalag XVIIIA, writes one man, they have set themselves the astonishing target of £10,000, about £160 of which has already been raised among the twenty-four members of an outstanding work-party. Two work-camps of Stalag IVD have also fine achievements to report. One of them, sixty-seven strong, has produced £18 in two days, while at the other—so a prisoner tells his wife in Edward's Lane Estate, Arnold—he and his one hundred and fifty-nine companions have between them collected in Reichsmarks the equivalent of £1.000, "for the Red Cross, God bless them."

P.O.W. Airmen's Promotion

A welcome reassurance on the promotion prospects for R.A.F. ground personnel now in captivity was given recently by Sir Archibald Sinclair, Secretary of State for Air. Replying in the House of Commons to a Member who was under the impression that Regular airmen of this category were being treated unfairly in comparison with non-regulars, he pointed out that there were two separate systems of promotion—one for air crew and the other
The Prisoner of War

Sept. 1944

TO GERMANY

—VIA SWEDEN

New Route to the Camps

Reports from Stockholm appearing in the Press have stated that British Red Cross parcels for prisoners of war in Germany and occupied countries are in future to pass through Sweden.

The use of this new route has resulted from efforts initiated by Red Cross and other authorities to open up an alternative channel to reduce the rate of supplies in view of the possibility that the course of the war would be likely to interrupt the Lisbon—Marseilles—Switzerland traffic for considerable number of Canadian food parcels for British Commonwealth prisoners.

The service via Sweden will be developed further as circumstances necessitate and conditions permit.

FOOD PARCELS RATIONED

THE War Organisation of the British Red Cross and Order of St. John announce a precautionary measure, and after consultation with H.M. Government, they have requested the I.R.C.C. to instruct camp leaders in Germany to reduce the rate of issue of food parcels to one for each man every two weeks. This decision has been taken in view of the interruptions in transport to Geneva and in order to ensure that the best use is made of supplies already in the camps and at Geneva. There is no immediate danger of any serious shortage of food in the camps, and every effort is being made to re-establish effective communication by one route or another.

NEW MAP OF GERMAN CAMPS

THE Prisoners of War Department has published a new map, printed in colours, showing the principal camps for British and Dominions prisoners of war in Germany.

A limited number of copies are now obtainable on application to the Prisoners of War Department, Accounts Section, St. James’s Palace, London, S.W.1. The price is: small size, 2d. (by post 3d.); large size, 3d. (by post 3½d.). Remittances should be sent with the order.

There have been unavoidable delays in production and the map itself is correct according to information available up to June 30th, 1944. Any additional information known at the time of posting will, however, be supplied with the map.

Better News from Moosburg

An indication that things may have improved at Stalag VIIIA since the official visit paid it in April (reported in the journal last month) is provided by a cheerful letter from the Officers’ Section at Moosburg, which has recently come to my notice. The prisoners’ removal in July to a larger compound, says the writer, “has doubled the living accommodation we had before, so we are now quite comfortably off. We are starting a certain number of classes on different subjects, including art.” He adds, too, that Oflag VIIIB, whose members had heard of their needs from men arriving from Moosburg, had sent them a most generous gift of tobacco and 50,000 cigarettes.

Exam. for South Africans

South Africans in captivity have distinguished themselves in a number of ways. To their talent for winning games and dancing Zulu dances must now be added another distinction. For in Stalag VIIIC recently seventeen of them underwent a self-imposed examination on book-keeping equivalent in standard to the National Junior Certificate as set in South Africa. Describing it, the camp education officer states that conditions were as those observed in any official examination; there were at least two invigilators in the room during the 1½ hour session, and the candidates’ papers were marked by qualified ‘strangers’ to avoid the risk of favouritism.

An Indian Looks Back

From Cairo comes eloquent praise of the Red Cross services by an Indian protagonist, Jemadar Moti Singh, who during his sixteen months as a prisoner in Italy, “saw everything that the Red Cross did to help.” “Many Indian soldiers know nothing of all this specialised assistance,” he says, and goes on to confirm the good opinion of the Indian food parcel containing dhal (lentils) and atta (wholemeal flour), from which the men can prepare their native dishes.

Whenever Germans or Italians saw the things, he adds, “they were astonished and began to praise them; although they were enemies, they held the works of the Red Cross in high esteem.”

Tribute from New Zealand

I want to thank the lady in Taunton, New Zealand, who wrote to tell me how much she looks forward to getting this journal. She and her husband find in it “so much of what we want to know—not only of our son’s welfare, but of the colossal work the Red Cross has to do.” It’s the personal, informal touch, she says, that makes such a difference.

“I am always feel happier when I have read the paper, and I know many others here who do the same.”

Clothes Conscious

The issue of a new outfit of battledress, shorts and boots to his work camp with the expectation of underclothes to follow has led a Stalag IVG prisoner to warn his wife in Bognor Regis not to bother about sending him clothes from home. These new additions to the wardrobes have evidently given him and his companion a great fillip to their morale, and they set out for the local cinema dressed up to the “collars and ties we made ourselves.”

Broadening Out

A comforting example of what captivity, despite all its disadvantages, can do for a man is provided from Stalag IVB. A prisoner of long standing, his wife in Diss tells me he now turns the scale at 12 st, 2 lb, as against the 10 st, 7 lb, he weighed before his captivity; and it’s not only the weight, but a long day’s work at a cement factory in addition to outdoor exercise at the weekend.

Northern Ireland Service

A Special Service of Intercession for Prisoners of War, Saturday, to be held in St. Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast, on Sunday, September 24, at 3.30 p.m. Two reservation tickets for the service will be sent to each of the first six hundred next of kin who apply, giving their Red Cross Reference Numbers, to: The Ulster Gift Fund, 2, Bedford Street, Belfast.
To the families of all wounded prisoners of war in Germany, as well as of those taken captive in earlier days, it will have been encouraging to learn that the Invalid Comforts Section has been able to start sending supplies of penicillin to German prison camps. The first consignment, despatched by air in July, went to the hospitals attached to Stalags IX-C, 344 and VII-A, to which wounded prisoners from the Normandy fronts were being sent.

Penicillin is most needed for treating new wounds, and the British medical officers in these hospitals, who were warned by cable from the International Red Cross to expect its delivery, have thus been able to administer this remarkable new treatment to the most serious cases at the earliest possible moment.

Small Quantities of Penicillin

At present, however, only “small quantities of penicillin are being sent... for the treatment of specified prisoners,” as Sir James Grigg, the Minister of War, has told the House of Commons. “Ten standard ‘packs’ of it have, in fact, gone, each containing one carton of the preparation in tablet form, and twelve bottles of distilled water. It is difficult to assess the average number of men that can be treated by one pack, for it depends, of course, on the severity of the cases.”

Thus a new item has been added to the list of urgent medical supplies which now that communications are uncertain, take precedence of everything else being sent to European prison camps by the War Organisation. The list is a comprehensive one, and in spite of present difficulties the Invalid Comforts Section manages to continue its dispensing and despatching by air mail of a wide variety of “wants.”

Still passing through the hands of the Section’s packers are the vital anti-typus strums on their way direct to prison camp hospitals, with the anaesthetics and the supplies of blood plasma, and there are reserves at Geneva which have been prepared by the Section for emergency use.

Airmen shot down in enemy territory who may be suffering from severe burns on hands and face stand a good chance of escape from permanent disfigurement, for there are prison hospitals at which British surgeons are equipped to perform the necessary skin-grafting operations according to the latest method.

The work of Invalid Comforts Section has made this possible. In collaboration with Mr. Archibald MacIndoe, head of the R.A.F. plastic surgery centre in Sussex, sets were compiled of the highly specialised equipment and dressings, and these have been sent with detailed instructions direct to the hospitals concerned. Not only is the patient’s future recovery thus cared for; everything possible is being done to relieve their present pain. Special silk-lined gloves, for instance, are supplied by the Section for the men’s burnt hands, which are acutely sensitive until the new skin grows. Even cigarette-holders find their place in the hospital stores.

Helping the Blind

Among the casualties in the present intensive fighting there must, inevitably, be cases of men blinded. When first captured these men are sometimes placed by the Germans, for the moment, in some hospital for general wounded where it is difficult for Invalid Comforts Services to do much for them beyond helping them to start learning Braille and beginning rehabilitation and occupational therapy.

As soon, however, as they reach the

The education and amusement of blind P.O.W.s are helped by these devices.

Stalag IX-B hospital they are in the company of their fellow-afflicted under expert and systematic care. Here at Bad Soden the Blind Centre was established earlier this year under the eye specialist, Major Charteris, and to it have come all the resources that Red Cross and St. John can muster in the closest possible collaboration with St. Dunstan’s.

Every member of the Centre becomes automatically a provisional member of St. Dunstan’s and benefits accordingly from the well-tried methods and apparatus evolved by that world-famous organisation. He finds at the Centre rowing machines to exercise his body and talking books to amuse his mind. Gradually he learns Braille writing, typing and reading, and can take his choice in the well-stocked library; he may start training for a regular occupation, such as telephone operator, mas- seur, cobbler, or carpenter, to help to fit him for a self-respecting trade or profession on his return to civil life. He finds, in other words, the power to overcome his blindness.

(Continued at foot of next page.)
Greetings at Lisbon

WELFARE OFFICER TELLS OF THE WELCOME TO REPATRIATES

The repatriation of 900 British civilian prisoners of war from Germany was arranged in exchange for an equal number of Germans from South Africa. The arrangements were made by the Foreign Office, which asked the Red Cross to provide two Welfare Officers. I was fortunate enough to be one of those chosen, and we were flown to Lisbon.

The repatriates came in two parties, the first train arriving on July 23rd, and were warmly welcomed by the British Community, headed by His Excellency Sir Ronald and Lady Campbell. Many people went along the carriages distributing cigarettes, and there was excitement when some Merchant Navy men appeared carrying bottles of beer on their heads which they had bought with their own money.

Stretchers cases were the first to be removed from the train, and special permission was given to the Red Cross by the International Police to take sick persons direct to the ship. The other people were then allowed out of the train and taken to the Customs House, where they were allocated their cabins on the Swedish ship, “Drottningholm”, given forms to send free telegrams to England, food, drink, and a roll of newspapers and magazines each. Everyone had to wait until 3.30 while the Germans were transferred from ship to train.

Dispensing by Air Mail (contd.)

For the immediate necessities, then, of the burned, the blinded and the injured prisoners of all kinds, Invalid Comforts are thoroughly prepared; but the great bulk of the Section’s work is devoted to patients later, more at rest. Support. Special medicines that cannot be dispensed from the supplies already sent to his hospital, are provided at the request of the medical officer. Artificial arms or legs can be built to individual measurements from the components which have been sent out by the Section.

Second Party Welcomed

The second party did not arrive for ten days, so that arrangements were made to occupy the first party while they waited. Bathing parties, innumerable cinema shows, shopping parties were organised. The weather was lovely and there were no rules and regulations! Everyone was free to do as he or she liked. 58 a day was paid to each person — not riches, but useful while sightseeing. Clothing was provided for everyone in urgent need; letters, free of postage, could be sent, and a library and soft drink bar were opened.

As there were several ill persons, a sick bay was opened in the charge of English nurses, and it was wonderful how the patients improved with careful nursing.

The second party arrived on Tuesday, August 1st, and were given an equally good welcome. Amongst this party were 136 Benghazi Jews, who were left in Lisbon to be repatriated direct to North Africa.

We then thought we should be sailing for England at once. The Germans, however, demanded that fourteen named persons should be left behind as hostages for fourteen Germans who were being repatriated through Turkey and who had not arrived in Istanbul. As three of the named persons were ill, negotiations were opened with the Germans, who agreed that if three other people volunteered to stay behind, the sick could sail. Volunteers were easily found, and it was a dramatic moment to see the fourteen people leaving the ship at 3 a.m. Directly they had gone the ship sailed for England.

The first day was rough, and many passengers were seasick, but after that the weather was kind, and everyone enjoyed dancing, games, and the good food which was provided at all meals.

I gave a talk on conditions in England since 1939, which proved of such great interest to the passengers that it was repeated.

Home Again

On arriving in England special trains were provided, and those who had nowhere to go were accommodated in hostels until they could make plans of their own. Everyone on the ship was most appreciative of the work which was done for them, while in camp, by the Red Cross, and particularly stressed that without the Red Cross Food Parcels it would have been impossible to exist.

It was a great pleasure to have this wonderful opportunity of bringing back to England such a large party of her citizens. It was most encouraging to see, even in the short time we spent with them, the enormous change in the repatriates, both physically and mentally, due to being free again, and the thought that they would once more be able to help their country.

Occupational Therapy

Many bedridden prisoners, too, had had cause to be grateful to the occupational therapy service for saving them from boredom, and helping them on the road to recovery. Most of the raw material for this work comes from such generous bodies as the Women’s Institutes, and finds its way back to Britain astonishingly transformed into rugs, patchwork, and elaborate embroidery by fingers that may previously have held a needle.

Help in maintaining the handicrafts side has lately been given by the Ministry of Aircraft Production, who are able to supply large quantities of three-layer wood as well as perspex, the glass-like plastic used in pilots’ cockpits and an attractive medium for modelling.

Some 32,000 pieces of occupational therapy work went to the camps last year, and we can be reasonably certain that there are still ample reserves for the convalescents.
The Letters They Write Home

Varied costumes were worn in a revue produced recently at Stalag XVIII A.

"We Shall Return ..."

Stalag IVF. 10.5.44.

We have heard the news for which we have waited four long years. When in the dark days of 1940 we stood with our backs to the wall, with only a small badly equipped Army and Air Force, things certainly looked black, then Churchill said, "We shall return." And he's done it.

It must be a great day for Mr. Churchill, and we might well say "Heil Churchill!" now. What a day for the British Army, too; it has now proved it can do it when properly equipped. How we all wish we could have been in it. What a treat to advance instead of fighting hopeless rear-guard actions.

Well, it really can't be long now, and I may get home before this letter. Who knows? Nothing can get us down now.

Model Yacht

Stalag 70. 17.5.44.

YACHT design is a fascinating game you know. I've become quite an authority on the subject during the last two weeks. Up to the last six weeks or so it was impossible to test my ideas.

As we had a perfectly good swimming bath at the old camp we decided that we would build a model and sail it.

I got out a set of lines—applied all the theories—metacentric shell, immersed wedges, etc., balanced the sail plan according to all the rules. She was perfectly balanced on all points of sailing and went to windward like a witch. I was no end bucked.

Woodcutting Party

Stalag IXA/7Z. 21.5.44.

I SAID I would tell you about the woodcutting party. There were five potential woodcutters and two artists. Breakfast was at 7.15 a.m., and we left the camp at 8. It was a glorious sunny day, and the six kilometer walk in the early morning freshness was very enjoy-

able although it was mostly uphill.

Our first task was to collect firewood so that 'elevenes' could be got ready. We sawed up several trees and man-handled the logs to a stack. Of course, this was not accomplished without the very necessary stops for smacks, meals, coffee, etc.—very 'hunger-making' work!

We were right in the heart of the woods, miles from anywhere, and except for the occasional sound of chaffinch peace reigned throughout. What a treat it was to get away from the camp and the crowds. Lunch consisted of fried meat roll and bacon, fried bread, biscuits, cheese, bread, margarine, honey and tea.

Variety Here

Stalag IVB. 17.5.44.

We are still going strong with our wrestling classes and we hope to put on a show in the near future.

The other week we received some musical instruments from the Red Cross, and our hut got a mandoline-banjo. You can guess the row the others put up with from me.

Our first concert went down well—much better than we expected. We get some tip-top shows on in our theatre. At the moment there is a play, "Dover Road," running in the evenings, and a Dutch band in the afternoons. It takes about ten days for the whole camp to see a show, and the theatre is booked up weeks ahead.

"Civvy Street"—Almost Stalag XIA. 7.5.44.

MY ways are more or less in keeping with "civvy street." We work each day and spend the evenings either sitting around the fire yearning sometimes, usually Saturdays, there is a "sing song." Sometimes on Sunday afternoons the German sentries take us to the village football ground.

Five Men in a Room

Stalag 344. 2.6.44.

THIS camp was rather overcrowded some while back, but it is not too bad now, five of us live in a room of our own with single beds, much better than the three-tier arrangement.

I am kept busy round the camp, quite happy tinkering about—carpentering, cooking, etc. They have not persuaded me to do any gardening yet; that never was much in my line, but taking things all round I am doing pretty well as a P.O.W., so there is no need to worry about me.

I am getting quite brown as we have had some lovely sun this last week.

Walking in the Country

Stalag 344. 4.6.44.

TO-DAY was the turn of ten of us to go for a walk—not alone, of course. It was to me at least really wonderful to walk in the country again—a fresh breeze blowing, everything green, and the apple and lilac blossoms out. How much I have thought of our walks together.

Camp Cup Favourite

Stalag IVB. 17.5.44.

OUR team is favourite for the Camp Cup, which will be presented by the Observer newspaper to winners of the knock-out. We won our first match last
week and we play again to-morrow. We also have bookies.

There are 32 teams in for the cup. Some of them are 30 and 100 to 1; but our team is 6 to 4. Our team has white jerseys with a blue V on them and white shorts with a blue stripe down the sides. I wear my own shorts and they are great. When we play there are usually about two to three thousand Army and Air Force spectators.

Their Boxing Ring

Stalag IVB.

TO-DAY the lads have made a boxing ring out of odd bits of timber. You'd be surprised at the things that have been made out of this, wood and paper.

Nearly all the soccer teams have managed to make jerseys out of vests, and made them the colours of the "civvy" team they represent with the aid of dye and paint.

They run dog and horse racing, using dice, and giving the runners numbers, then they move forward on squares. Bets are in cigarettes, and everybody gets excited.

New Camp

Stalag 357.

THIS camp is quite new; they started building it last March. It is the largest one I've been to so far. There are over 3,000 men here, and I am months. It is very interesting hearing from these lads about the events that have happened in the last four years.

"Bird-Life"

Stalag IVB.

DESPITE the heat, sport is continuing, and on May 31st the South Africans celebrated the formation of the Union of S.A. with a very fine sports day, opening with a march past. The British M.O. followed with a P.T. display and then races and high jump. In the afternoon the South Africans drew at soccer with Wales, and then beat the rest at rugby in a hard-fought game by 9 points to nil.

This match was preceded by a Zulu pageant. It was an amazing and humorous sight, most realistic, as all the performers were covered in black greasepaint and dressed as per Zulu pattern. Naturally enough, the Germans were busy with cameras.

You probably know that we have a stadium, etc., and have horses as we had a race meeting on Whit-Monday with wooden horses and dice.

We are in the midst of some glorious weather, and being in the middle of some interesting country, we have seen quite a lot of "bird-life" during the fine period.

Spit and Polish

Stalag VIII.

RECEIVED my parcel yesterday containing all I really need, also 1,900 cigarettes, all in one week. To-day has been a field day—washed and pressed my suit, spit and polished my boots, made myself quite decent again. All I need now is my hat badge.

You see they are mostly Australians and New Zealanders in this hut, so must keep up the standard of the Grenadier Guards. I have got one of each of them spitting and polishing their boots already.

...In Better Times

Stalag 398.

EVERYTHING looks beautiful here. The pale green of the beech trees and the dark of the conifers on the mountains are a picture. There are endless flowers in the woods and the meadows—buttercups, daisies, crocuses, anemones, lilies of the valley, and dozens which are new to me and others whose names I've forgotten. Wild strawberry and bilberries are in bloom everywhere, and amongst all the blue lakes, waterfalls and torrents. Yes, I must come here again in better times.

Peat Cutting

Stalag XXA (176).

I AM still on the same farm, been here since March, 1942. Do most of the repair work here—building, painting, roofs, tractor driving and maintenance, besides wagon repairs, etc.

Weather is glorious, bags of work, too.

A barrel of wine arriving at the civilian internment camp, Saint Denis.

Prisoners of war who escaped from Italy in the hospital grounds at the Military Internment Camp, Turbenthal, Switzerland.

We are at present peat cutting, but around the twentieth of next month start harvesting again. Hope it is the last.

Mail takes a little longer now there is no air service, but as long as we get a letter now and again we don't mind much.

Musical Interlude

Marlag und Milag Nord (Marling O).

THE news has cheered us up and I begin to think again of home—the focal point of all my pre-war happiness. Did I ever tell you we made home-made
wine in Italy from grapes. It was excellent. Plenty of fruit and sunshine were the only redeeming features of that half-starved existence.

These days I am starting to study harmony and music arranging, so don’t sell the piano! I’m “resting” a bit, theatrically, after the big cabaret restaurant show, which shook the camp! Now pit music for the melodrama Murder in the Red Barn, then a Shakespeare quintet for Merchant of Venice on Sunday, then a big orchestra for Pirates of Penzance.

Even a Red Indian
Stalag IVB.
12.4.44.
At night we have concerts and lectures, and I must say the lectures are good. I have heard speaking: a professional boxer, undertaker, artist, a movie-tone cameraman and men from all of our colonies—even a big-game hunter from Africa. There are twenty different nationalities in our camp. We even had a Red Indian here.

Building Work
Stalag IVB.
22.5.44.
The work we are doing here is not so bad; just at present we are helping to put a roof on a building, and we work 48 hours a week. There is a sports ground to the works and we are allowed to play football three times a week; last week we had the account of the game printed in the paper, and also had our photographs taken.

Taking it all round, we don’t have too bad a time.

Austria—Not England
Stalag 398.
11.6.44.
I have had some beautiful walks lately and I have never seen so many flowers growing wild and in such profusion. I took particular notice of them yesterday and in an area of approximately 3 square yards counted the following species: carnations, lupins, moon daisies, scabious, red campions, and heaps of smaller varieties, such as clover, buttercups, vetches, etc. If you can imagine field upon field of such beauty, with forest-clad hills in the near distance, and the huge, majestic, silent Danube flowing at your feet, then you have a very faint idea of the true natural beauty in which I am living at the moment. But this is Austria, not England! I would willingly exchange it for any slum in London, because there I should be truly free.

ENJOYING THE SUNSHINE
A well-earned rest after strenuous work at Stalag XVIII.

The Invasion
Stalag XVIII.
20.6.44.
Everyone is excited about the invasion. The news of it we get from the papers makes us feel more in a complete backwater, or perhaps “Dead Sea” would be a better term, than ever, and though it makes us more hopeful, it also disturbs us more! The flute practice has gone steadily on, with no great improvement, but a good deal of enjoyment. I was playing in the cellars this afternoon, and a sweep appeared to do the flues, so I proceeded to tootle away in a cloud of soot with no very adverse effects! I’ve been to one recital of Bach’s harpsichord pieces—most delightful. Otherwise the flute and some lectures.

A very interesting series of lectures has started on the story of various British industries between 1919 and 1939. We have had a lot of rain recently which has interfered with the games, and I have only been able to manage one game of badminton and a tennis double.

Tea in Style
Stalag XVIII.
30.5.44.
Five weeks have now passed since I last received mail from you. I’m not unduly worried as we have expected this for some time.

The weather is glorious; we had our tea in style outside with Sid and his band playing for us. To-day I worked till mid-day, then went sunbathing with my mates just alongside a running stream close to camp.

Camp Clubs
Stalag IVB.
2.6.44.
They have started clubs here and I am in the Notts and Derby Club. We have a meeting every week and ask about home news.

Being full-rank N.C.O.s we don’t have to work, and we spend our time playing football and other games. Yes, we are keeping ourselves fit for when we get back. One of my parcels was packed in New Mills.

Baker’s Birthday
Stalag XVIII.
Undated.
This is how I spent my birthday. I procured the necessary drinks; got off work early to do some baking; and made over 100 doughnuts and a filling of butter creams. For dinner we had poultry soup, baked potatoes, peas and poultry and tomato sauce. For tea fruit and custard and doughnuts.

Artistic handicrafts made by civilian internees at Ilag Biberach/Riss, Wurt.
STALAG LUFT III

There was little change in the camp since it was last visited in February, 1944. There are still six separate compounds. The middle and south compounds contain American prisoners of war. The west compound is still not ready for occupation. The East, North and Baharia compounds are entirely British.

The total strength of the camps is 5,239; of these 3,500 are British officers, 138 British N.C.O.s, 185 British other ranks, 1,900 American officers, 299 American N.C.O.s, and 47 American other ranks.

Very little improvement has taken place in the interior arrangements of the camp. In the East compound 37 officers are compelled to sleep on the floor. The division of the large sleeping rooms in the Central compound into smaller ones has not yet taken place owing to a shortage of wood and labour. Conditions in the North compound are fairly satisfactory except for leaking roofs, which the German authorities have promised to repair in the near future.

Washing and bathing facilities are satisfactory throughout the camps with the exception of the South compound, where there are still no bathing facilities; men in this compound have to go to the West compound for baths and showers.

There has been considerable improvement in the patients in the two hospitals (one in the East compound and the other in the North compound). Many have received specialist treatment in the last few months. The drug position is still rather unsatisfactory. The beds in the sick quarters attached to the Centre compound were stated to be unsuitable for patients. The prisoners are to be allowed to make string supports and to restuff the mattresses with Red Cross packing materials.

Recreational and sports facilities in all camps are excellent. The sports ground in the East compound is not as extensive as in the other compounds.

The general feeling is that this camp shows a considerable nervous tension following the recent mass attempts at escape and the deaths of many of the officers concerned.

The Baharia compound is situated five kilometres from the main camp. The bathing and washing and sports facilities here are unsatisfactory.

Another visit to Stalag Luft III will be arranged as soon as possible.

(Visited April, 1944.)

DULAG LUFT, WETZLAR

KLOSTERWALD

This has been transferred from Frankfurt to a slightly elevated position north of Frankfurt. It was formerly a German Army camp and is at present under reconstruction. It will be ready for occupation in three weeks, but in the meantime airmen arriving in this camp are accommodated in 18 tents in a large compound on the Eastern side of the camp area. Three of the tents are reserved for the permanent camp staff, seven for officers, seven for other ranks, and one as a sick quarters. The proper camp when completed should be adequate.

The tents allow accommodation for 318 men, and the new camp will hold 540 prisoners. On the day of the visit there were 48 British officers, 28 British other ranks, 37 American officers, and 46 American other ranks.

The men who form the permanent staff sleep on single iron beds with straw sacks and three blankets. Officers and other ranks in transit sleep on the ground on sacks filled with wood shavings; 20 men in each tent.

A recreation room and dining room adjoins the cookhouse; it contains sufficient tables and forms.

When entering the camp the prisoners have a hot shower in the German guards' washroom. Daily washing is with cold water. Excellent medical attention is given by a German doctor.

There were no serious complaints about the camp. As it is a transit camp the men seldom stay for longer than eight days.

(Visited May, 1944.)
The Prisoner of War

September, 1944

the Camps

The capacity of the camp on the day of the visit was 5,000; the actual number of prisoners of war in the camp was 3,604 (979 British and 2,625 American), which resulted in bad overcrowding in all barracks. The North compound is, however, to be enlarged and in an emergency situation tents could be erected to accommodate a total of 5,000 men.

Whitewashing is badly needed in the South compound. A number of new barracks are not weatherproof, the roofs are leaking and are continuously repaired. Lighting and ventilation are inadequate throughout the camp.

Bedding is sufficient and beds are triple-tiered.

The food ration is felt to be insufficient and of poor quality. Only one hot meal a day is served. There is lack of fruit and vegetables in the diet. The supply of Red Cross food is abundant. Medical or dental treatment is given by two British medical officers under the supervision of a German doctor. The sick quarters are far too small for the increasing number of prisoners of war. The commandant promised that it would be enlarged within five weeks. The senior British medical officer stated that although the camp was overcrowded, the general state of health was good, probably owing to the fact that the air from the nearby sea is so healthy.

The clothing position is satisfactory. Religious activities are well organised. Educational activities have been discontinued owing to the lack of room.

The sports field in the compounds is large enough for any kind of outdoor games. The camp is situated near the woods which surround this camp north of Frankfurt.

Dulag Luft

STALAG VIII C KUNAU

Dulag Luft is situated just outside the small town of Kunau near large pine woods, in a healthy district.

The total number of British prisoners of war in the main camp is 543 and 1,228 are in 19 work detachments.

All the prisoners in the main camp are accommodated in three brick one-storeyed barracks of the usual type, plus outside offices. Lighting has been improved considerably. Washing and toilet facilities are adequate.

The camp hospital and sick quarters contained 45 patients who were under the care of a Naval doctor and two British medical orderlies. None of the cases was serious. The drug position has improved and there is now a considerable supply of necessary medicines. Dental treatment is satisfactory.

Clothing and footwear is in good condition.

Indoor recreation and entertainments are well organised, but lately opportunities for playing football outside the compound has been greatly reduced owing to a lack of guards.

Regular church services are held in the camp theatre by a Church of Scotland chaplain. He has so far been unable to visit the work detachments.

The only complaint about the mail concern the delay in the censoring of letters in the Stalag. Many letters which have been forwarded from Italy are still waiting to be sorted.

(Visited April, 1944.)

STALAG VIII A GORLITZ

The situation of Stalag VIII A is in the open country a few miles from Gorlitz. The camp consists of large, well-built brick barracks which are already rather old.

There are 1,096 British prisoners of war in the main camp and 2,082 British prisoners of war in the 47 work detachments dependent on the Stalag.

Interior arrangements in this camp are satisfactory.

The water supply for bathing and washing has been most unsatisfactory and was only turned on for half an hour daily. The pipes are, however, under repair and should now supply all the necessary water.

On the day of the visit there were 20 patients in the sick room, 80 in the convalescent barracks, and 10 in the lazaret. No serious cases were reported. Medical attention is adequate. Dental treatment is fairly good, but there is a shortage of material for making artificial dentures.

A Church of England chaplain holds regular services in the camp; so far he has been unable to visit the work detachments.

Recreation and exercise are reported to be satisfactory.

No complaints were made regarding the letter mail, but several prisoners complained about the non-arrival of private parcels from home.

(Visited April, 1944.)

STALAG LUFT I.

Five prisoners enjoy refreshments—a luxury at this camp where canteen supplies are very small.
UNDER a hot sun and a cloudless sky the men of Stalag 344 were rewarded on Wait-Monday for all the industrious preparations they had made for the day’s programme. Nothing quite so ambitious had ever been attempted before, and their many letters home about it (“It’s something I shall remember for many years to come,” a typical one has said) have no doubt of its unequalled success. The morning started with a carnival procession round the main roads of the camp, headed by the military band and consisting of elaborate tableaux enacted by men in various costumes made from an even greater variety of material—paper, cardboard, towels, tin—anything that could be fashioned to their purpose. Thus arrayed on hand-drawn carts came a dramatised Tale of Two Cities, Antony and Cleopatra, and the Peary King himself....

The prizes, we hear, went to the South Africans for their realistic group of drilling Zulus, and to the R.A.F. for an impressive entry of a model Lancaster bomber, followed by complete bomber crews representing America and every country in the Commonwealth.

Fun of the Fair
While the sporting events proceeded in the afternoon brisk business was being done in the stalls and side-shows of a fair in another part of the ground—with skittles, darts, “coconut” shies and, of course, the tattooed lady. “It meant a tremendous amount of work, but it was worth it,” writes one of the stall-keepers, who points out that the fair’s total takings of 65,000 cigarettes and 4,000 P.O.W. marks have been given respectively to the camp’s Comforts Fund for hospital patients and new prisoners and to the Welfare Fund for medical and musical needs.

Two Birthdays
With the Whitsun hiliarities scarcely over, one man in Stalag 344 had to set about preparing for another celebration—his birthday. A great cake was the outcome, iced with whipped-up butter and milk powder, and made perhaps of ground biscuit and raisins. Those at any rate were the ingredients favoured by a young flight lieutenant in another camp for his birthday—his third in captivity and a quiet one, he says, although it luckily coincided with an excellent production of Philadelphia Story in the camp theatre by an all-Canadian cast.

Green Thoughts
“Whatever sport, subject or other pursuit you care to mention I am convinced,” an inmate of Oflag VIII B writes home to Scotland, “that you could find a first-class exponent of it in this camp.”
But after supper nowadays, though free for the theatre, music, reading, chess or a leisurely stroll round the camp, “I cannot help thinking that the peaceful summer evenings are ideal for golf”—and for that pursuit, of course, there would be little use in finding an expert on the premises. The nine-hole course laid out at Stalag IV B is a prison camp feature as rare as it is popular, though most players there admit that the wooden golf balls “take some getting used to.”

The Prisoner of War

LIFE AT OFLAG VIIB Shown in a drawing by one of the officer prisoners there.

The Brighter Side

It takes me half an hour to get made up, and then I look like a cross between Nellie Wallace and the Widow Twankey.” During the day he compensates for these nightly performances by playing strenuous outdoor games.

Red-letter Field Days
While rugger affairs preoccupied Oflag VA at the time of the camp’s International match, when Britain beat New Zealand by 7-5 ("the wettest June in history... comments somebody...") made the conditions ideal”), the talk at Stalag IV B centred on soccer. League football there was getting ready for the cup competition, and with thirty-two teams in for it, each representing a barracks of about 170 men—many of them peace-time professionals—the enthusiasm ran as high as the standard of play. The eventual winners were entertained afterwards to a mammoth tea party and a concert held most deservedly in their honour.

Birds in Hand
Pets, too, are popular at Stalag IV B. In addition to some puppies, whose antics seem to be causing a lot of amusement, a few wild birds have now settled down here to a pampered domestic life. “We have nine of them,” writes a bombardier who forgets to mention their sort or size. “They have been kept by us since they were five days old and have become extraordinarily tame. They are fed by hand; can be picked up and carried with a toothbrush; will perch on your arm or shoulder whenever they feel like it; and after flying off for an hour or so will always return. But,” he adds pessimistically, “they’ll probably finish by trying to play with the cat.”

The paragraphs on this page are based on letters from prisoners of war. Most of them refer to activities in the big base camps and it should not be assumed that they are typical of conditions in all camps or in outlying working detachments where facilities for sport and amusement are much more restricted.

This birthday card was sent home by an R.A.F. sergeant to celebrate his small son’s fifth birthday.
“SEND US BOOKS...!”

How This Call Has Been Answered by the Indoor Recreations Section, Now on the Eve of its Fourth Anniversary

Games of all kinds are packed here.

From the beginning it was apparent that libraries containing books of every category, indoor games, music, plays and materials for dramatic performances were a paramount necessity for the welfare of prisoners, since the vital needs of food and clothing had been provided.

It was decided that the main work of the Indoor Recreations Section of the Prisoners of War Department at St. James’s Palace, should be to supply these needs for the use of the camps as a whole, rather than to individual prisoners—which service developed later. Consequently all parcels in the early months were addressed to Camp Leaders to enable them to start building up libraries and to develop recreational facilities.

Books of All Kinds

Already the work of the Educational Books Section had been in existence for some months, but letters from prisoners containing such words as ‘Books are food and drink to me’ made it clear that educational books must be supplemented by a carefully selected supply of fiction ranging from the classics to the latest detective and Wild Western novels, travel, biography, art, etc.

Requests began to pour in from camp leaders for books dealing with English country life, for plays to perform in the camps and for theatrical make-up and artists’ materials. Through the long and fluctuating fortunes of war, these requests have steadily increased. It is difficult to recapture the atmosphere of the early days of the Section’s foundation in September, 1940, and to believe that so much could have grown out of a beginning beset with so many obstacles.

First Parcels Go Out

At the end of 1940 when a permit was obtained, the Indoor Recreation Section was able to supplement parcels of books ordered by them but despatched from booksellers. All these consignments bore Red Cross labels, and were addressed to the Camp Leaders. Each parcel contained an average of 10 books, selected with the greatest care, so as to include reading matter of the widest possible variety. It will easily be imagined with what impatience the return of the acknowledgment cards included in every parcel was awaited.

Music Begins

The next adventure for the Section was to purchase and send musical instruments. In the early months of 1941, ten complete orchestras consisting of fourteen instruments, selected by the experts of the Services Musical Instrument Fund were despatched to the larger camps in Germany.

Gifts of second-hand music began to pour in to the Indoor Recreations Section as the result of next of kin and friends receiving constant requests from the prisoners for music of all kinds—especially dance orchestrations, light orchestral arrangements, and vocal scores and libretti of operettas and musical comedies. In addition the Section began to purchase music on a large scale. A special staff of workers was gathered together to deal with this very important expansion.

The service to individual prisoners of forwarding instruments either belonging to the prisoner himself, or procured on behalf of the next of kin, had been begun early in 1941.

Reserve at Geneva

Book parcels addressed to the Camp Leaders direct were taking a long time to reach their destination. To create an additional source of supply, arrangements were made with the Intellectual Relief Section of the I.R.C.C. to store a reserve of books. These could be distributed immediately to any new camp to form a basis for the Library, which would then be supplemented by books sent direct from this country.

Tribute should be paid to the wonder-
How They Help

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

The Prisoner of War

Devon villages of Exbourne and Jacobstowe, and in the course of their recent Victory Garden’s Week of games, sales and concerts, they provided the Fund with a few shillings over £40. A similar week at Montacute, Somerset, brought in a very welcome £120.

Seamen Prisoners

Better Allowances for Large Families

An increase is announced in the minimum allowance paid to the families of merchant seamen in the hands of the enemy.

The new minimum, which takes effect from June 1st this year, is in accordance with the rates established for the dependants of dead or missing seamen. It will ensure that exceptionally large families will now be adequately provided for — a provision that was not always proved possible under the arrangements formerly in operation.

Under the Government’s revised plans, in the cases in which this new minimum payment is made — the arrangement for the payment of contributions to the Merchant Navy Officers’ Pension Fund, or a private Pensions Scheme, of which the seaman is a member, and of pocket money at the prison camp as well as the reservation of a small balance for payment to the seaman on his return home, will be continued, but without any charge to the seaman or his dependants.
FOR COLDER DAYS

Keeping the continuity of the pattern and still decreasing on every 4th row at the neck edge, decrease 1 st. on the neck row, and every alternate row at the armhole edge, until 34 st. remain.

Keeping the continuity of the pattern, proceed without further shaping at the armhole edge, but still decreasing on every 4th row at the neck edge until 24 st. remain.

Continue without further shaping, until the work measures 6½ inches from the commencement of the armhole, finishing at the neck edge.

**Shape the Shoulder as follows, keeping the continuity of the pattern:**

1st Row.—Work to the last 8 st., turn.

2nd Row.—Work to the neck.

3rd Row.—Work to the last 16 st., turn.

4th Row.—Work to the neck.

Cast off.

Slip the st. from the safety pin on to a No. 9 needle, the point to the centre, rejoin the wool and proceed to work the Right half of the Front as follows:

1st Row.—K. 2, p. 2. Repeat from * to the end.

2nd Row.—P. 2, k. 2, p. 2. Repeat from * to the end.

Repeat these 2 rows, until the work measures 12½ inches from the commencement, finishing at the end of a 2nd row of the pattern.

**Divide for the Neck as follows:**

Next Row.—K. 3, p. 2, (k. 2, p. 2) 13 times, k. 2, p. 2 tog. Slip the remaining sts. on a safety pin and leave for the present, turn.

Proceed on the former set of st., for the left half of the Front as follows:

1st Row.—P. 2, k. 2. Repeat from * to the end.

2nd Row.—K. 3, * p. 2, k. 2. Repeat from * to the last 5 st., p. 2, k. 1, k. 2 tog.

3rd Row.—P. 1, k. 2, * p. 2, k. 2. Repeat from * to the end.

4th Row.—K. 3, * p. 2, k. 2. Repeat from * to the last 4 st., p. 2, k. 2 tog.

5th Row.—K. 2, * p. 2, k. 2. Repeat from * to the end.


7th Row.—K. 1, * p. 2, k. 2. Repeat from * to the end.

**Shape the Armhole as follows:**

Keeping the continuity of the pattern, and decreasing 1 st. at the neck edge on the next row, and every following 4th row, cast off 6 st. at the beginning of the next row, and then decrease 1st. at the armhole edge on every row following, until 42 st. remain.

THE NECKBAND

Join the shoulders of the Back and Front together.

With the right side of the work facing, using the set of No. 12 needles and commencing at the Left Shoulder, join the wool and knit up an even number of st., to the centre V., then knit up the centre st., which always remains a knit st., continue to the end of the round. (On the original 180 st. in all were knit up.)

1st Round.—Work in k. 1, p. 1 rib to within 2 st. of the centre st., sl. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., k. the centre st., k. 2 tog., continue in rib to the end of the round.

2nd Round.—Work in rib to within 2 st. of the centre st., sl. 1, k. 1, p.s.s.o., k. 1, p. 2 tog., continue in rib to the end of the round.
PARCELS
DELAY IN DELIVERY

Steps have been taken to explain to all British Camp Leaders that individually addressed parcels (letter, post of kin and permit) handed to the Post Office up to the beginning of March, 1944, should reach the camps normally; but that owing to a variety of circumstances there is likely to be a very considerable delay in the delivery of parcels handed in after that date.

Recreations and Sports Equipment

In view of the transport difficulties referred to by the Postmaster-General, it is no longer possible for this department to forward musical instruments, music, indoor games, artists’ materials, theatrical make-up, exercise books, etc., to individual prisoners of war.

Art articles already sent in for demanding will be returned to the senders it desired. Correspondence with regard to the above should be addressed to the Indoor Recreation Section, Prisoners of War Department, St. James’s Palace, S.W.1.

The same conditions apply to equipment for outdoor sports, correspondence about which should be addressed to the department, and marked “For the attention of Mr. A. F. Cox.”

Transit Camps

Red Cross food parcels will continue as far as possible, be sent by the International Red Cross Committee to areas where there are British and good food.

PENGUIN BOOKS

The Penguin Press Co. regrets that it has had to cancel its service of saw Penguin books to prisoners of war. The despatch of further parcels has therefore ceased, and any unexpended subscriptions will be returned to next-of-kin through booksellers.

SLEEVELESS PULLOVER

(Continued from previous page)

Repeat 2 rounds 4 times more.

Cast off in rib.

ARM HOLE BAND

With the right side of the work facing, and using a pair of the No. 12 needles, join the wool and knit an even number of st. along the armhole edge. On the original 138 st. were knitted up. Proceed in k. 1, p. 1 rib for 10 rows. Cast off in rib. Work second armhole in same manner.

MAKE-UP

Omitting the ribbing, press the work on the wrong side, using a warm iron and a damp cloth. Join side seams. Press side seams.

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

The Prisoner of War

September

Letters to the Editor

Festions?

When sending is will next of kin kindly always give their name and address so that their letters may be answered by post if, for any reason, it is not possible to reply in this Journal.

Labels and Coupons

As we are no longer allowed to send next-of-kin parcels, what shall I do with my label and coupons?

The Postmaster-General has recommended that no further next-of-kin parcels should be handed in for the present, but their despatch has not at any time been prohibited. Instructions about labels and coupons were given on page 15 of the August Journal.

Camps in Eastern Germany

There are rumours about camps in Eastern Germany being moved. If this is so, how soon shall I be informed of my husband’s new address? He is a prisoner in Stalag XXI.

As soon as information is received about the transfer of any prisoner of war the next of kin is informed; but this news is frequently received in the first instance by the next of kin from the prisoner himself.

Soap for Parcel

Should the soap which I bought to send to my son, who is a prisoner in Stalag XXI, be now returned to my next-of-kin centre?

The despatch of a next-of-kin parcel at any time has been prohibited. We would recommend you to keep the soap and all other articles which you may have ready for your parcel in case the despatch should again be allowed to forward parcels to prisoners.

Taken Prisoner in Normandy

I have been notified that my son was taken prisoner in Normandy. How soon shall I receive an address where I can write to him?

It is impossible to say how soon his camp address will be known, but you will be told by the Red Cross how to address your letters to him until you receive his permanent camp address.

Musical Instruments

It has been stated that a limited number of parcels, mainly music, books and games, is still being sent to the camps. Will my son, who is a prisoner in Stalag 383, receive the musical instruments for which he asked recently?

We have no knowledge of the statement to which you refer. If the musical instrument for which your son has asked was despatched before the recommendation made by the Postmaster-General that no further parcels should for the present be posted to prisoners, your son will no doubt eventually receive it, though its delivery may be delayed.

Examination Papers

Are examination papers still being sent to the camps in Germany?

Yes. The chairman of the Prisoners of War Department referred to these in his message to next of kin in the August Journal.

Clothing Coupons

When my house was bombed recently clothing coupons issued to me by my next-of-kin centre were destroyed. To whom should this be reported?

You should write to the Clothing Centre at 14, Finbury Circus, London, E.C.1., giving a full explanation of the circumstances.

Change of Camp Name

Why was Oflag VIII changed to Oflag 7A?

The numbering of camps is entirely a matter for the German authorities. The change in this case was made after the prisoners had been moved from Maerkisch-Trueben to Waggen in a quite different part of Germany.

New Camps

Will my husband, taken prisoner in Normandy, be sent to an entirely new camp from the one he is in?

So far the prisoners taken in Normandy appear to be going to already established camps, but it is impossible to say whether they will continue to do so.

Air-raid Shelters

Are all camps equipped with air-raid shelters?

The majority of camps in Germany are equipped with air-raid shelters. Should, however, the representatives of the Protecting Power when visiting any of the camps discover that adequate air-raid shelters were not available, they would immediately bring this to the notice of the German Government.

Camp Location

Can you tell me the location of Stalag 7A?

Stalag 7A is at Hohenstein, southeast of Dresden. (Red Cross map, reference F5.)

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