A HAPPY New Year to all readers of this journal. The old, old wish, and by it I mean above all a New Year that will bring with it the speedy return of your loved ones to home and freedom. After the great events of the past few months we may look ahead with some confidence that the day of deliverance will not be deferred for many months. Out there our prisoners of war know how things are going, and the news of Allied successes has helped to counteract their disappointment at having to spend yet another Christmas in camp.

**Christmas Parcels**

The latest news I have about Christmas parcels came in the following cheerful cable from Geneva:—

First wagons containing postal bags with Christmas parcels reached Switzerland first instant. First wagons with Christmas parcels left for camps to-day. Are doing everything possible expedite despatches. Have reasonable assurance that 50,000 Christmas parcels will leave for camps first fortnight December and hope we shall be able despatch at least 50,000 more in time for Christmas. Greatly regret inability service all camps before festivities but hope all camps will be serviced before fifteenth January.

—And Future Parcels

Stop press news about the general parcels situation is that Red Cross and St. John have advised I.R.C.C. that the flow of Red Cross food parcels to Geneva is now such that they may authorise camp leaders to resume the full issue of one parcel per man per week when the supplies in the camps permit.

**Worth Going Short!**

We know that the flow of parcels into the camps was resumed after a few weeks' hold-up, which the men in the camps endured cheerfully because they knew what caused it. A man in Stalag 344 wrote on October 1st: "You know of course that parcels have been stopped for quite a time, but on Friday and Saturday everyone was overjoyed to hear that several thousand had arrived, so now perhaps I'll get some of the parcels that have been sent to me. We are all quite happy." On October 9th a lieutenant in Oflag VIIIB wrote that the Germans had increased their food by 30 per cent., and that 5,000 food parcels had just come in.

—And my friend, Robin, in Stalag 383—I know of him through frequent letters from his mother—says that they were reduced to half a food parcel a week for a few weeks, but that they expected the reduction and he personally was so fit with all that he had had before that it was no hardship at all and worth going short considering the circumstances that caused the shortage.

**Royal Gift to Prisoners**

The Royal Christmas gift to the Red Cross Camp Libraries was a fine three-volume edition of Pepys' Diary. The gift was chosen personally by the Queen and each volume has a special book plate inserted: "This book forms part of the library presented at Christmas, 1944, by the King and Queen to the British Prisoners of War, with Their Majesties' Best Wishes." The books were sent to Germany some months ago and already letters of appreciation have been received. One came from the R.S.M. who is Camp Leader of Stalag 344, adding to his thanks the assurance from the camp of loyalty and devotion coupled with our gratitude. His message has been forwarded by Red Cross and St. John to Their Majesties.

Her Majesty the Queen has sent a personal Christmas message to all sick and wounded prisoners of war and civilian internees in Germany through the Senior British Medical Officer.
German Theatre Ban

The Prisoners of War Department has recently received the information that according to an order from the General in command, all theatrical performances in prisoner of war camps situated in Wehrkreis (or military zone) VIII have been forbidden. The reason given for this ban is that all German theatres have been closed. The report, however, states that concerts and variety shows are still allowed.

The matter has been taken up with the appropriate authorities and it is hoped that the ban will be very soon removed. It should be understood that the ban only affects, so far as is at present known, the camps in Wehrkreis 8.

Transit Camp

I have received a letter from a family, whose son gives his address at Stalag XI, which states that this camp has not been mentioned in The Prisoner of War. It was, as it happened, mentioned last month in the Camp List as having been moved, but the real answer to the query is that the camp was, until recently, used only for a comparatively small number of Indian prisoners. Since the fighting in France, however, it has been used for British prisoners, but, so far as I can make out, chiefly as a transit camp. The prisoners normally appear to pass on before they have had time to write descriptive letters, and so there is little news about it.

Improved Conditions

In the November issue we published a report from Stalag 344 which stated that conditions in Detachment E 165 were not very satisfactory. I am glad to hear that the matter has been taken up with the father of an assistant cook in the camp that "some improvement has been made, but the real answer to the query is that the ban will be very soon removed. It should be understood that the ban only affects, so far as is at present known, the camps in Wehrkreis 8."

All Vittel Internees Freed

The Civilian Internment Camp at Vittel is now empty. Some of the internees have been repatriated and a number of others have made their way to their homes in France unofficially. The remainder appear to be in one of two places. They are either in the Cité Universitaire, Paris, pending their return to the United Kingdom, or to their homes in the more outlying parts of France, or else at Lar Bourboule, near Clermont Ferrand, which is a Displaced Persons Camp for non-British and non-United States prisoners. All these ex-internees are now able to write letters and postcards to their relatives in Vittel. All of them are now able to write letters and postcards to their relatives in Vittel.

SIR ARTHUR ABRAHAMS

With the death last month of Sir Arthur Abrahams, the Red Cross and St. John War Organisation has suffered an irreparable loss. His long association with Red Cross affairs gave him a knowledge and experience that were unique, while his personal qualities of character, ability, his wisdom, and not least his genial sense of humour will be sadly missed by his colleagues.

He served with the B.R.C.S. Commission in France as Deputy Director of Stores in the last war, and during this war he has been treasurer of the B.R.C.S., vice-chairman of the Stores Department, a post that carried with it the responsibility for purchases to the value of tens of millions of pounds.

Thousands of people to whom even his name was unknown in hospitals, prisoners of war, the victims of invasion in Russia—have good cause to mourn a man who literally gave his life in their service. He had been in poor health for years, but he never spared himself and his end was hastened by his recent visit to Moscow, as one of the principal executive officers of Mrs. Churchill’s “Aid to Russia” Fund.

Great Britain, and, as there were ample Red Cross supplies at Vittel, we have no reason to imagine that they will be suffering from lack of food or comfort.

Repairing Their Watches

Thirty-nine watch repairing outfits have been sent out to camp leaders since September, 1943, through the International Red Cross, whose delegates reported that very many watches had broken down. A list of the 120 items was enclosed with each set and instructions were given that the outfits were to be handed over to Red Cross watch makers. The enthusiastic reception that greeted the arrival of these parcels is indicated by the requests which came from a number of the camps for additional supplies of spare parts, and these have now been met. Latest reports from Geneva indicate that practically all British camps are now provided with watch repair outfits.

Prisoners’ Prize Essays

As I mentioned last month, the British Legion offered £75 as prize-money for prisoners whose essays did not reach this country in time to be judged in their own camp competition, “My Post-war Hopes and Ideals.” Sapper Cyril Casey, Royal Engineers, of Wimbledon, Fit. Lt. J. C. W. Bushell, of Beaminster, and Lt. Walter Gedhill, Royal Marines, of Shaw, Lancashire, each won £25. Sapper Casey, who is 29, was a cabinet maker before the war, but now hopes to be a professional watch maker. His mother has matriculated.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

It is surprising what a large number of next of kin of prisoners of war fail to notify the appropriate Service Department or Records Office of a change of their address. The omission to do this not only delays their receiving important news, but often means that they cannot be given such information at all.

The difficulties caused to repatriated men by out-of-date records of addresses were very apparent after recent repatriations. Many arrived back in this country without knowing that their families had moved, and one can imagine their distress and disappointment at not being able to get into touch with them immediately, or on arriving at their old home to find that the family had moved away or been, as happened in one case, that the house had been demolished in an air raid and the family evacuated.

It is perhaps not generally realised that when a repatriation is expected to take place, advance notifications are on most occasions sent out by the Service authorities to the next of kin of any men who may possibly be included. Long after the last repatriation party had arrived some of these preliminary notices were being returned by the G.P.O. as undeliverable because the addresses had moved and could not be traced. Do not overlook, therefore, the importance of notifying at once any change of address to the Service authority concerned and to the Red Cross.

The Red Cross is anxious to help repatriated men in any way, and is ready to send messages for them as soon as they reach hospital or a convalescent depot.

Transport is arranged for those who are returning direct to their homes from a convalescent depot, and the fit men are helped with their travel arrangements and sometimes provided with accommodation. If, on the other hand, a repatriated prisoner should have to remain in hospital for some distance from his home for several weeks after his return, arrangements can be made by the Red Cross, if necessary, for his next of kin and one other relative to visit him there.

The next of kin should apply to the Red Cross prisoner-of-war representative in their district, who will arrange with the County Liaison Officer for the necessary enquiries to be made at the hospital. If after this the visit is considered advisable, railway concession vouchers can be issued for two return tickets at the cost of single fares, billets found, and assistance, if necessary, given with the cost.

If the next of kin would inform the local prisoners-of-war representative in their area when they have heard officially that their prisoner is likely to be included in a forthcoming repatriation, the Red Cross could do even more than it does now to help.
Visit to Geneva

As soon as the Allied advance northwards from the French Riviera began to develop, I determined to take the first opportunity of going to Geneva, and, accordingly, having received a warm invitation from the International Red Cross Committee, I left London by air on November 11th and landed at Lyons exactly four hours later. I was glad to find that the rest of the cargo consisted of Red Cross packages. These were medical parcels, which we have referred to them being shipped by this route, in order to build up at Geneva a reserve of vaccines, special drugs and dressings which experience has lately shown to be necessary. From Lyons, transport to Geneva is by road, and the service, though sometimes interrupted by weather, is proving most valuable for commodities of this sort, which are neither heavy nor bulky.

I completed my journey to Geneva by road, through country which had been fought over by the Germans and the Maquis, and in which some of the control posts are still manned by young men who have only an armband and a gun to distinguish them from civilians. I saw one or two villages which had been completely burnt out by the Germans. Fighting in this district had not been severe.

Our Good Friends

The principal object of my visit was to get to know our very good friends of the International Red Cross, and to convey to them personally our thanks for all that they have done for our prisoners of war. At the official luncheon which they were kind enough to give for me, I assured them, and this came from the heart, that without them my Department would have been powerless.

From time to time we have made demands on their organisation which might well have seemed to them unreasonable, and I should not have been surprised if there had been some indication of this. However, my experience was exactly the contrary. In all the conversations, formal and informal, which I had with various officials—and I met them all—I found not only great efficiency and the utmost friendliness, but a tendency to apologise for not having been able to do more.

The best possible feeling exists between the International Red Cross, the American Red Cross representative, Mr. James, and our own representative, Mr. Langstaff, who works in close co-operation with our consular staff. The Committee have spread their activities all over Geneva and beyond to other parts of Switzerland, notably at Valorbe, where there is a very big depot of our food parcels. The biggest depot in Geneva is at the Exhibition Hall (Salle des Expositions), a building nearly as big as Olympia, which is full of stacks of parcels of all sorts 30 or 40 feet high. One very big stack is composed mostly of parcels for French prisoners of war. These are not very well packed and are of all shapes and sizes; and in order to keep this stack standing up it is walled into sections by Canadian parcels which, as our readers probably know, are in crates of eight. There was also in this depot a number of American towels which had been damaged by sea water when one of our ships was sunk in the Mediterranean. All these were in process of being washed and renovated.

Largest Card Index

I also visited the world’s largest card index, referred to in the last number of this journal. It is an immense affair and takes up even more space than our index system at St. James’s Palace. Each card is punched with a number of holes and there is a very ingenious machine which can be set so as to produce all the cards of a certain category. For instance, names beginning with one initial, prisoners of any particular age, or of any particular nationality. I was immensely struck with the efficiency of this establishment, which deals with prisoners of all nations. This, however, does not prevent Madame Morier, who is in charge of it, from knowing nearly as much about British prisoners as we do.

As regards the actual situation I learned little that I did not already know. The new northern route, via Goteborg, is doing better than any of us expected, and is well organised as regards the forwarding of food parcels direct to camps. Deliveries from Marseilles to Geneva look like exceeding anticipation, so we may hope that soon our reserves will again accumulate.

Geneva shares our fears regarding transport through Germany, the possibility of many camps being moved, and the recent order of the High Command forbidding reserves in camps. At any rate, to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and several plans are being considered, and are being discussed with the German High Command.

In Closer Touch

The delegates who visit camps are based on Berlin, and not on Geneva, so I did not see them: but all the same, one had the feeling of being in much closer touch with our prisoners of war than one is here.

I came away encouraged by the feeling that I had made many good friends, with whom I can now correspond on a basis much more personal than was possible before; refreshed, in spite of a fairly strenuous time, by the novel experience of living in a town with no black-out and shop signs blazing—though there were air-raid warnings; convinced that whatever can be done for our prisoners of war the I.R.C.C. will do, in the spirit of forethought, strenuous endeavour, and Christianity.

The International Red Cross building at Geneva which is the Central Agency for prisoners of war.
The Brighter Side

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 fewer.

Night Club

A night club called "The Rumpot" has been started in Oflag 79. Of course, there is no drink, but there is plenty of tea, and if you hand it in yourself you can be served with food. The room is decorated with pictures; there is a dance band and a cabaret which lasts an hour. A captain writes: "It makes a change to spend the evening there, and one gets quite a different atmosphere. We are on short rations of food and cigarettes, but will be able to last out to the end of the war."

Iced Cake

Some of the contents of Red Cross food parcels were used to make two cakes for the birthday party of a prisoner in Stalag Luft III. One was a jam sponge cake and the other an iced cake, described as an unheard-of luxury. In the evening there was an outdoor concert, at which the band played both classics and swing. The band's trumpeter used to play in Billy Cotton's band. Another prisoner of war, said to be one of England's rising musicians, arranged a concert of chamber music recently in Oflag 79. Incidentally, Oflag 79 possesses a very fine choir, reported to be the best of all camps in Germany, according to the testimony of a lieutenant who wrote just after having sung Stanford's "Revenge" with them.

In Oflag 79 the Germans produced a cinema and there have been enthusiastic accounts of the films seen. One officer wrote that "last week we had an American film which I thoroughly enjoyed and some shorts, including an original Charlie Chaplin silent film—it must have been 20 years old." A later letter said that a film with Judy Garland caused a stir.

The Brighter Side of things here is due to the fine organization of the Red Cross under the direction of the Swedish Lord Gyllenhammar. The Red Cross workers are doing a splendid job, sending so many things to the camps that the Germans have to halt them at the gates. As I write this, a Red Cross van has driven into the camp.
LOOKING AHEAD
The Educational Books Section at Oxford discusses opportunities of the future for our prisoners of war

EVERYONE naturally looks forward to the future, but to prisoners of war this phrase is charged with special meaning and new with growing hope. As the end of the war comes nearer, there are more and more signs from the camps that the prisoners are keenly interested in post-war problems, and eager to make their contribution towards rebuilding the world, and hopeful or anxious about their own personal futures. There have been many requests for books and for Government White Papers on reconstruction problems, such as education, housing, town-planning, the land or civil aviation. More interest has been shown lately in seeking for technical qualifications in professions or trades rather than in general education. With this has come a greatly increased entry for examinations. Prisoners’ letters reflect the same feeling about the future in a more personal way. They long to settle down at home and start doing things again, and are mingled with anxiety to waste no more precious time and to find the right job. The result of this is a number of practical enquiries about training and possible openings. To answer these, many copies of the Government leaflets “Further Education and Training Schemes” have been sent out to the camps, while information has been gathered and questions answered on a great variety of subjects.

The Government have expressed in this leaflet their realisation of the urgent need of securing the service and influence of trained men and women in the professions, in commerce, industry and agriculture. Plans are already approved for giving grants for whatever further education or course of training may be needed to fit men and women from all the Services for responsible posts.

Post-war Opportunities
Each of the Dominions has its own rehabilitation scheme. All have the same intention: to give to each man personal consideration and whatever practical and financial help he may desire towards his future education, vocational training or choice of work. Plans are already advanced to advise and help all those who wish to further their education whether vocational or academic, and already a New Zealand student has received from his Government a grant of £250 for three years to study pharmacy for a London degree.

The Ministry of Education has recently issued a Memorandum, describing the post-war emergency training courses for intending teachers, and copies of this have been sent to the camps. Prisoners of war who are thinking of entering for the teaching profession have been invited to forward their names, through the Educational Books Section, for consideration by the Ministry of Education. One repatriated civilian internee has already been appointed as senior English master to a mixed school in Gloucestershire.

For those who have been taught in these camp universities and schools, written evidence is now given by the Educational Certificate approved by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, and this has been sent out in thousands to the camps, while requests are coming for more of this ‘valuable document.’ The men who have filled their time by studying will soon reap their reward. The future holds great possibilities for those who have either gained qualifications or improved those they already held.

Coming Home Qualified
The needs of total war have stopped the training of the young and thinned the ranks of all ages in every line of work. From the prisoner of war camps, newly qualified linguists, architects, farmers, lawyers, accountants and many others will come home ready to start work. A number of merchant seamen, too, will bring increased expert knowledge back to their ships. The Ministry of War Transport is now allowing prisoners of war to take certain theoretical papers of the Certificate of Competency as Master, Mate and Engineer, and 149 candidates have taken the examination in camp recently. The excellent results show a remarkably high standard of achievement.

For skilled men in all the trades there will be an urgent need to reconstruct so much that has been shattered. Many prisoners have used their time to improve their technical knowledge of various trades, asking for books on such subjects as plastics, textiles, compositing, or laundry work, and for recent trade periodicals. There is ample evidence also from all the different things that have been made in the camps that a high standard of constructive craftsmanship can still flourish in this machine age.

The possibility that some men will even have gained out of apparent loss is shown in the story of a repatriated prisoner who was a hod-carrier before the war. He had lost a leg and while in camp decided to study the technical side of his trade. He has now already secured a good job with a building firm.

The New Start
When the prisoners come back, having experienced something which we can only imagine, they will mostly look first to their homes and then to their work. Many will need practical advice on their new start. To help in this, the Government is setting up Resettlement officers all over the country, trained to give advice on every kind of problem of the return to civil life. Difficulties of adjustment will have to be faced, but the fine qualities of courage, energy, perseverance and initiative which have been shown by prisoners in the face of all that cramping captivity means should find fresh opportunity waiting at home in the work which lies ahead.
Diary of a P.o.W.

LAST YEAR in OFLAG VIIB

December 10th, 1943
To amuse myself I’ve started Urdu again, only this time with the Arabic Script; it is awfully complicated trying to write backwards, though. Brewing is progressing gradually. I went for a parole walk to-day, a combination of a walk and wood-gathering for fuel. Worked quite hard and brought back an enormous sack of fir-cones for our fire, so am very tired, but thoroughly enjoyed myself, especially the walk through the woods, which are very steep and covered with snow—a perfect Christmas card, in fact. To-night I go to someone’s birthday party, so quite a hectic life.

December 26th, 1943
We had a most successful party yesterday. I found my position as cooker rather onerous, but managed to get the meals ready more or less on time, though my temper was distinctly snappish at times.

January 10th, 1944
Had a disaster yesterday—gave my mess some rather tainted fish for supper. Wow! Haven’t we all been ill to-day—and it hasn’t stopped yet! Most unfortunate, especially the walk through the snow. Also the cinema, Hab mich lieb—not too bad. . . . Our room is being painted to-day, so we’re homeless.

February 10th, 1944
Here we’ve suddenly changed to walking in the snow—pretty cold, except when the sun is out. Last week I went for a parole walk with Sandy and, as luck would have it, we picked a perfect day, warm as summer. Also the cinema, Ich, like ich—too bad. . . . Our room is being painted to-day, so we’re homeless.

February 20th, 1944
Went for a walk in the snow last week—very cold and wet through; nearly got lost, and sunk, too, if it comes to that. Toboganning down one of the ramps—short and steep, and I fell off a lot. . . . I’m a bit sore in parts. Some keen skiers are skiing down one of the slopes in the camp. It looks quite fun, but rather hard work for such a short run.

March 10th, 1944
Went for a walk yesterday—very cold and lots of snow, but a fair amount of sun. Brewing and Urdu progress slowly.

April 30th, 1944
Went for a walk in June. I’m told, for brewing, and they say not very difficult, but I’ve not done much work. However, we’ll see. I went for another walk on Thursday with S.; a very nice, warm day, and the most lovely purple and white hyacinths out—you’d be thrilled by all the trees in blossom, and cowslips, etc., everywhere. A possibility of getting swimming later, too. Am working harder—exam soon.

May 9th, 1944
S. and I went for a walk to-day—the nicest day yet—and it was lovely; all the trees in blossom, and cowslips, etc., everywhere. The usual hush which always attends the intense concentration going on when everyone in the room is writing their letters has now fallen.

May 23rd, 1944
We have circus here last week! Great fun—just a small country type—no elephants—but after so long, absolutely thrilling, and ever so much better than the cinema. Quite nice female performers, too! Went for a walk with S. to-day, but only on roads as shooting season is open. Not as good as the wood.

June 12, 1944
We are now cheered up a lot this week, and I really hope to see you by Christmas this time.

June 20th, 1944
Sandy is now chief cook for a month, and is being kept very busy. Like all Scotsmen, he does like to do a job thoroughly and, consequently, does it a great deal better than I do; and in summer it takes a great deal of patience to prepare really decent meals when one might be outside. I went for another walk last week; this time through the town, and up to a charming little chapel, which has the priest’s house built on to it. It is known as the Lady Chapel and I believe is world-famous. Anyway, the altar and ceiling are well worth seeing, and the town, too, is very picturesque.

July 31st, 1944
News very limited. . . . Razor blades my only want if you send another parcel. The gardens are now in full swing, and we are consuming vast quantities of lettuce. We have them for every meal, including breakfast, but still they grow faster than we can eat them.

August 20th, 1944
Saw Shall We Dance a fortnight ago—very amusing, and nice to be able to really understand your film for a change. Also went for a walk with Sandy last Saturday—very hot day and very enjoyable; lots of wild raspberries. Brewing isn’t going. I’m waiting for exam. papers.

August 31st, 1944
We have had a lot of your letters—all sorts of dates. . . . Our three weeks of fine weather have come to an end, and it is raining hard. Bathing had just started, and a few had been out; neither S. nor myself were lucky enough. But that’s finished, too.

September 20th, 1944
Life here rather dull—like waiting for a thundershower. No parole walks, cinemas or bathing, for the last month, and, I fear, unlikely now. However, that shouldn’t worry us long. . . . My exam. is over—hurray, alas! The papers have refused to turn up, and it is thought unlikely that they will—so I’m rapidly forgetting all I learnt. But no one is working, so perhaps they’re all too excited. Don’t you dare ask either Sandy or me to do any cooking—at least not if you want to eat the product! Our ways are not yours, I’m afraid. . . . However, one day we’ll give you a P.o.W. dinner just for a trial!

September 30th, 1944
We are on half parcels, as you probably know, but some have just come in, and, anyhow, I managed to have a very good meal for my birthday, and finished off the cake from Granny. Just think, that’s the third birthday I’ve spent in this camp—what a waste of time! Now that the summer is over I’m doing a little more work, but still no sign of my exam. . . . Life, in fact, is rather dull; it doesn’t seem worth planning anything far ahead, but one feels one ought to, just in case. We tried to see Shangri-la the other day. The court was dry, but the surroundings weren’t, and we’re running out of words and clothes and parcels. We have arrived after a long gap—hope mine will be here soon—am running out of lots of little things.

October 15th, 1944
I have knitted myself a pullover! Four strands of wool, and knitting needles the size of a thick pencil. It is very thick and should keep me fairly warm. The wool was two strands of grey from old socks, etc., one of blue from an old pullover, and one of brown, also from a pullover. I was agreeably surprised it was so easy. You don’t have to look too closely at it, but the general impression is really quite good.

October 20th, 1944
Very busy at the moment, cooking all day long. When you look at the half parcels there’s so much more to be done to try to spin out the meat. . . . I doubt if we shall be home for Christmas now—alas! And I really haven’t any idea of what I want, except peace and quiet—but I’ll try to think.
January, 1945

The Prisoner of War

The Letters They Write Home

We are so pleased with it. We are now setting about working out a method of making it chime at the hours.

The Two Armies

Stalag VIlla. 3-9-44.

This week there came into camp quite a number of lads taken in France, looking very weary and travel-stained. We were in a position to put on a hefty brew for everybody; each was given some soup and a Red Cross food parcel, while a clothing collection was made in camp and well responded to. As old prisoners we know and appreciate the great moral value of such gestures and we were happy to be in a position to do it.

So for the present we have adopted a Fifer, a Girvan and Birmingham lad who still don't know what being a prisoner is all about—may they not be long enough here to realise it?

Naturally they were besieged by questions of all kinds, and most satisfying was the knowledge of the good conditions back home. We have come to the conclusion that we were active participants in an Army that used bows and arrows compared with today. Monty is a very popular fellow, and justly so as he has produced results that beggar description, and he has truly earned his latest promotion.

Two Jobs at Once

Stalag IVG. 3-9-44.

Every week seems to include an anniversary or celebration of some kind. Friday was our five years together celebration, after which we ran through all our experiences in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, etc. Today is yet another memorable day, in preparation for which as I write this I am cooking some oatcakes which we’ve agreed to try for a change; as a matter of fact, the fire is so hot at the moment that I’m using the knife more than the pencil. I ventured to taste one a minute ago—not bad for first time, but a little sad in the middle. Perhaps it would have been better to do one job at a time. While reading over your letters I’ve almost burnt the scones, so engrossed was I in your extract from the journal leading article. If you were so optimistic then, what must be your feelings now? Although I have recently omitted any statement in this respect, it is not through any lack of thought on the subject, but because I’m sure nothing I could find say would do justice either to the recent run of events or to our consequent feeling here.

Your attempt to make me feel homelike does not make me look back so much on happy memories, but look forward to happier times in the near future.

And now to return to the present—we had our visit to the cinema this morning. This was the first outing we’ve had for some time, so we enjoyed the change immensely. The title of the film was The Man Who Was Sherlock Holmes. Although not about the original Mr. Holmes, it was quite good.

Well, I’ve finished my oatcakes at last—to there are altogether. I made 13–3 good in “tasters.”

“Hardly Palatial”

Stalag 353. 19-8-44.

We are now much nearer home again after another journey under not exactly ideal conditions. This place is actually Stalag 353, but is now composed entirely of the 357 personnel. It seems possible that R.A.F. personnel may eventually move again to a Luft camp, as the available area for P.O.W. camps seems to be ever diminishing; but this may be our final billet.

One would hardly call it palatial. The barracks are rather more barnlike than Luft VI. The designers hit upon the brilliant notion of shoving stoves like brick walls across what bit of window space there is, thus effectually plunging the greater part of the room in Stygian gloom.

In the dim and distant future we may get electric lighting installed, but at the moment we are deprived of sense of touch to a high degree after sunset. The old crowd of us are still together.

Holiday Camp

Stalag 353 (Oflag). 29-9-44.

The temporary return to comparative civilisation has rather unsettled me and I haven’t been able to concentrate on anything since I came here about ten days ago.

It is a very strange sensation to be able to get up in the morning (after a cup of tea in bed), have a hot bath, and then go into breakfast in a dining room with waiters, then to go out into the garden and see no barbed wire and only one very unobtrusive German sentry. I don’t know how long I shall be here—anything from four to seven weeks, and I’m feeling very much better already. I shall go back to VIIB eventually.

We have walks every day in parties of 12, with a German interpreter, and on these walks we are allowed to pick up windfalls from the fruit, trees by the roadside, generally apples and pears and occasionally walnuts. As this is the first
These prisoners at Stalag IVD look fit and cheerful.

In winter at Stalag XVIII A the men enjoy snow battles.

The Prisoner of War

January, 1945

These prisoners at Stalag IVD look fit and cheerful.

From a Polish Airman

Stalag Luft III.
12.9.44.

THIS summer I read very little; I spent mostly my time outside. Taking opportunity of sunny days I washed a lot of my clothing for winter. Anyhow, my washing or cooking, though very bad, are better than my Spanish, so I could be now a maid of second class! After one and a half years of life in prison camp I am afraid I shall be lazy for work and too ready and game for all enjoyment. Our camp is now more thickly populated; we are living eight in one room. Beside seven Polish boys, we have one young American.

Our garden is full of tomatoes. As a result of humid summer vegetables are abundant. Livestock is also growing well. We have several new kittens. One Sqn. Ldr. has lizards in a hole protected by tins. The hare is growing very big.

On the Move Again

Stalag 357.
7.8.44.

This place is interesting, with aircraft flying around all day, railway trains passing and re-passing on the nearby railway, and a road running down the side of the camp. We feel like so many Rip Van Winkles wakened from our sleep.

Unfortunately, we are not to stay here for long; in fact, we have been told to prepare to move in a few days’ time. Marching to and from stations carrying all personal kit is certainly a nuisance, but this should surely be the last time.

An artist in the camp has made

Carnival Capers

Stalag 344.
18.9.44.

We held our annual carnival to-day (hope it will be the last!). Everything went off well, although we all had the “needle” the previous evening. Guess we are getting used to them by now.

The day started with the mayor and his wife riding round the camp escorted by the band. Afterwards he gave a speech—and what a speech it was!—then he declared the show could begin. There were stalls of Aunt Sally, darts, and, of course, we had a copper roaming around. If he caught anyone swearing or gambling they were fined. I tried to knock his hat off, but had to run for it, and someone got on the roof and let him have a bucket of water, which did not improve his temper.

Finished the day with a fancy dress dance. A Dutch couple won first prize.

This baby repatriate, waiting to board the Drott was born in Vittel Camp.

Fresh fruit I have had since being at the first camp, you will understand how much I enjoy it.

This place is actually a private house, originally a castle and later a hunting box, and is still known as a schloss. It is situated in very pretty well-wooded hilly country, quite near the Danube. Yesterdaly we visited a nearby monastery, quite a new experience for me, and were shown all its treasures, vestments, bones of saints and all.

From 383 to Luft VII

Stalag Luft VII.
2.8.44.

We have had our expected move at last, and have arrived in our Air Force camp—Stalag Luft VII; but our address is still Stalag Luft III, so the move should not interfere with our mail.

We all came here together from 383. It was quite a long journey, nearly three days and three nights. Fortunately, the weather was good and we saw quite a lot of the countryside.

We are now in smaller huts, six in each. They would house 100 hens easily. I was very sorry to leave our garden just as everything was ready to eat. The tomatoes were hardest to leave as we had over 60 plants with fruit just forming. However, the Army boys we left there will soon dispose of them.

We had a narrow squeak a little while ago as we ran out of Red Cross parcels. Fortunately, they arrived in the nick of time, and we were soon fixed up again. We have had a wonderful run with them, and haven’t missed a week for over a year.

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From a Polish Airman

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An artist in the camp has made
several hundred sketches of camp life, marching, etc., and intends to publish them after the war in book form. I have ordered a copy now, so that when it is all over you will be able to see for yourself what life is like here.

Bumper Crop
Stalag Luft III. 23.8.44.

We are benefiting a lot from our garden, having tomatoes every day and hundreds more to come. We have spent a lot of time for weeks on regular watering, etc., most of the plants having been grown from seed.

We have also new potatoes and lettuces, and soon the cabbages, onions, pumpkins and marrows will be ready. A small lawn is under my special jurisdiction, and there is also a flower bed.

Prisoner from Malta
Stalag IVF. 18.7.44.

Don't worry about me. The Jerries treat us as soldiers here and very well indeed. As a prisoner of war I have to do many different jobs because they like to see us busy. The job I am doing has nothing to do with war. I am pleased that you in Malta are having a better time, and hope that one day I shall enjoy it also. I am still wondering where I am going to settle down—in Malta or in England?—when I finish here. I have been away from home now more than five years and I'm browned off with seeing places.

Being a nice day to-day (Sunday) we are going for a walk. Last Sunday we managed to have some beer which was very good.

Open Air Service
Stalag IVF. 27.8.44.

The Padre came from Stalag this morning and, together with a few of the chaps from surrounding camps, we had a short service in our compound. The service, which was mainly hymns and an address, was followed by Communion. It was very pleasant indeed under the trees, with glorious weather. We have hardly seen a cloud in the sky for fourteen days now.

The tomatoes are ripening at the rate of about six per day. A big handball game to-night—Regulars v. The Rest.

... And So To Bed
Stalag VIIIIB (Hospital). 10.9.44.

I have spent another uneventful day, about the same as every Sunday. Got up about 8 a.m., washed, etc., had a cup of tea and went on parade at 9 o'clock. After we had attended to the wants of the sick and lame it was about 11 o'clock. More tea with bread and butter, jam and cakes. Then I helped to clean up the living room and our bedroom, after which I had a read out in the sun.

About 2 o'clock I had another wash and pressed my trousers, and went to football at four. Once more tea! Returned from football at 7 o'clock, had dinner of roast potatoes, greens and fried meat roll, followed by custard and prunes. A talk, more tea, then dancing, and so to bed.

Perfect League of Nations
Stalag VIIA. 28.8.44.

This is a transit camp for officers, so I may not be long in it. We are a perfect League of Nations—having officers from many nationalities, so it is a good opportunity for polishing my Hindustani, French and Italian.

I am very fit—thanks to the regular supply of Red Cross parcels—which are an absolute Godsend. In spite of my being nearly 30 I manage to play strenuous rugby three times a week. We take an occasional walk in the country and the other day four officers were taken down to the river for a swim.

I have taken up acting again and had quite a nice part in a recent production.

Autumn Sports
Oflag VIIIB. 10.10.44.

I am still playing a game daily, principally basket-ball or hockey. In case you still think these rather "sissy" games, I might say there have been a fair crop of broken bones and cracked ribs, but so far I've escaped with an odd bruise or cut.

Once more we are seeing the trees across the valley turn brown. They started suddenly last week, and are now a mixture of brown, yellow and green. Parole walks seems to have stopped permanently, but they were grand while they lasted.

Stalag 383 sent this Christmas card to the Mayor and Red Cross workers of Guildford, Surrey.
624 new prisoners arrived at Stalag Luft I between April and August this year, and it is said to be rather overcrowded.

OFLAG XIIIB, HADAMAR

At the main camp several senior officers have arrived, and are very comfortably accommodated in large spacious rooms. The morale in this camp is very high and general conditions are very satisfactory. There were 319 prisoners in the camp at the time of the visit. A new transit camp had been opened only a month before the visit, for British officers captured on the Western Front.

The camp is situated in the village of Hadamar, not far from the main Oflag. The prisoners are housed in good wooden hutsments in the courtyard of an old school. The officers sleep in dormitories holding twenty double-tier bunks and have mattresses, sheets, blankets and pillows. Washing facilities are adequate. The prisoners cook their own food, but there is a shortage of Red Cross parcels both in the transit and main camps. At the time of visit the men were receiving a parcel every ten days and these were shared and cooked communally. There were no patients in the infirmary at the time of visit, but the German authorities stated that a new transformer was being installed which when ready should provide a stronger light.

The prisoners can play games and go for walks in the huge courtyard. Outgoing mail is satisfactory, but no incoming mail had been received. There were no complaints, and for a temporary camp it gave the visiting delegate a very good impression. The men, who arrive very tired from the front, are easily satisfied and require a great deal of rest, which they are able to have in comfort. (Visited July, 1944.)

STALAG LUFT I, BARTH

Since the last visit in April, 1944, the strength has increased by 624, so that the total number of prisoners of war now in the camp is 4,088, of whom 3,414 are Americans and 674 British.

As a result of this increase in numbers the 46 Labour Detachments, making a total of 3,020 in the Stalag area.

The prisoner of war arrangements have occurred since the last visit in April, 1944. There are now 1,079 British prisoners of war in the base camp and 1,941 are dispersed amongst

IN every case where the conditions call for remedy, the Protecting Power makes representations to the German authorities. Where there is any reason to doubt whether the Protecting Power has acted it is at once requested to do so. When it is reported that food or clothing is required, the necessary action is taken through the International Red Cross Committee.

There are now two Church of England chaplains in the camp. This is a very satisfactory camp. The Man of Confidence works untringly for the good of the prisoners of war and has the support of the German camp authorities. There are, however, two things which spoil the smooth running of the camp. One is the existence of a discipline barrack, where prisoners of war awaiting trial by military courts are housed. At the time of visit 12 prisoners were living in this barrack in very overcrowded conditions. They are unable to have a bath more than once a month and have no facilities for recreation or exercise.

Difficulties also arise in regard to men who are graded "fit for light duties." The German doctor representing the Labour Exchanges invariably overrides the decision made by the British and German military M.O.'s and insists that

Three of the officers at Oflag XIIIB where morale is very high and general conditions most satisfactory.
ports from the Camps

The men are fit to work. Work in Germany at the present comes first. Fortunately, however, if a man should again become sick, when he has returned to his Labour Detachment, there is no difficulty in sending him back to the Stalag for treatment. (Visited July, 1944.)

LABOUR DETAACHMENTS DEPENDENT ON STALAG VIIIA

The German authorities thought this might be possible, provided that he would also agree to look after the prisoners of war of other nationalities in the area. These conditions, with regard to medical attention, are present in all other Detchments which were visited, but it is hoped that when a British M.O. is attached to the mine the position will improve.

The delegate asked that a British M.O. might be posted to this area and the German authorities thought this might be possible, provided that he would also agree to look after the prisoners of war of other nationalities in the area. These conditions, with regard to medical attention, are present in all other Detachments which were visited, but it is hoped that when a British M.O. is attached to the mine the position will improve.

The delegate also asked the owner of the mine to provide new accommodation for the men in this Detachment; this was agreed, but no date was mentioned.

Detachment No. 12402, Weisstein, was reported to be very good. There were 126 British prisoners of war here, 114 of whom work underground and the remainder on the surface of a coal mine. There were no complaints about working conditions at the time of the visit.

Living accommodation is, however, rather unsatisfactory. The building and the interior decorations are old and do not lend themselves well to the needs of the prisoners. The men have a small theatre. There were no complaints on either the working or living conditions, and the Man of Confidence was said to be on good terms with the German authorities.

The Man of Confidence from the following Detachments came to Detachment 12401 for an interview with the delegate:

No. 12401, Waldenburg-Altwasser. 138 British prisoners of war are employed in a gasworks. Working hours are 8, 10 and 12 daily. Those on the 8- and 10-hour shift have every second Sunday free. Those on the 12-hour shift have every Sunday free. There were no complaints, with the exception of the medical attention, and billets were said to be good.

47 British prisoners of war form Detachment 12701/2, Glatz, of whom 21 work in a gasworks and 20 in an iron foundry. There were no complaints.

At Detachment 11351, Weigelsdorf, 23 British prisoners of war make electric cables. The Man of Confidence complained that there was no proper drinking water installation, the men having to take their water from a nearby stream.

There were no complaints at Detachment 13001, Bad Langenau, where 34 British prisoners of war work on the railway.

Detachments No. 11505, Niesky, and No. 11506, Zinsendorf, were both reported to be satisfactory. There are 16 prisoners of war in the former who work in a clay pit; the men live in a stone house near the pit. Medical and dental treatment from German civilian doctors in the town are satisfactory. The nine prisoners of war from Detachment 11506 also work in a clay pit and are housed in a lovely old farmhouse in the midst of woods. (Visited July, 1944.)

STALAG XIA, ALTENGRABOW

There were 607 British prisoners of war at this base camp on the day of the visit. 2,427 British prisoners of war are dispersed in 27 Work Detachments, making a total of 3,028 in the Stalag area.

The interior arrangements are satisfactory. The barracks have, with the exception of two rooms, been redecorated and refitted. The remaining two rooms will be ready for use shortly. Washing facilities are primitive, hot showers are available once a week.

The prisoners of war are still only able to cook their private Red Cross food parcels on improvised cookers and fireplaces. The promised stoves had not materialised, but the German authorities promised to look into the matter once again. Fuel is somewhat short.

The two British M.O.s had no complaints about the infirmary, but the camp hospital is below standard. Medical supplies had been cut recently.

New supplies of clothing from Geneva had been received, but although it had improved the position, the situation is still not entirely satisfactory. Socks and towels are most urgently required.

The padre complained about the condition of the cemetery, and the Stalag authorities promised to form a party of men for the permanent upkeep of the churchyard.

Letter mail is said to be fair, but the parcels mail is bad—only two loads have arrived since October, 1943.

The conditions at this camp have improved since the last visit in May, 1944, but there is still much to be desired. Owing to the shortage of man-power and materials, it is difficult to effect the necessary improvements.

(Visited August, 1944.)

LABOUR DETACHMENT DEPENDENT ON STALAG XIA

Detachment No. 356/19, Halberstadt. 155 British prisoners of war are housed in three new barracks on the outskirts of the town, about a mile from the Junkers factory. The compound is reasonably large and has open splinter trenches. The men work at the factory digging air-raid shelters and canals. The hours are 11½ daily, the extra half-hour daily being worked so as to have Saturday afternoons free. One Sunday in three is free. The men who were formerly at Detachment 153/2 are now in this Detachment.

Living quarters are satisfactory.
The Prisoner of War

January, 1945

Double-tier beds, cupboards, stools and tables, electric light and good stoves. Although facilities were still rather limited, there was a lack of razor blades. This is a good Detachment with excellent understanding between the prisoners and the German authorities. The chief shortage was socks, but the German authorities promised to arrange for them to go for walks outside the camp until more facilities are available within the compound. (Visited August, 1944.)

Detachment 932/6 Wernigerode was opened in May, 1944. The only complaint was the shortage of sports gear and recreational facilities. When these have been supplied this will be a very good detachment.

The Man of Confidence from Detachment 170/26 Dessau, where 231 British prisoners of war work in a wagon factory doing various jobs such as welding and grinding parts of the machinery. There were a few improvements at Detachment 7002, Ufingen, which was opened in May, 1944. There were still a few complaints about working conditions, but the owner of the mine realises that, in future, it also should be closed. 52 P.O.W.s are employed in a quarry.

Detachment 7003, Ohlendorf, has improved considerably since the last visit in May, 1944. There were still a few complaints about working conditions, but the owner of the mine realises that, in future, it also should be closed. 52 P.O.W.s are employed in a quarry.

Another first visit was paid to Detachment 7006, Adelebsen, which was opened in December, 1943, which is not such a good Kommando as those mentioned above. 89 prisoners of war work in a stone quarry and live in an old stone house and a wooden barrack. The house has four small sleeping rooms with double-tier beds and two living rooms. A small room serves as a kitchen and sick bay. There are no cupboards. In the barrack there are two big rooms with one cupboard per two men.

Double-tier beds, cupboards, stools and tables, electric light and good stoves. The German authorities promised to look into them and do their best to improve conditions.

Detachment 602/1 Neuwegersleben, where 75 prisoners of war work in a cement factory was reported by the Man of Confidence to be satisfactory. There were no complaints.

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Detachment 47, prisoners of war at Detachment 243/4 Elbingersode, Kalkwerke, is laid out on a mountain slope overlooking a valley and consists of a new brick-built barrack situated in rather a small compound. 49 British prisoners of war work in a stone quarry for eight hours a day and four hours every second Sunday. The barrack is quite new, and the interior arrangements are very good. There are three sleeping rooms, a day room and combined washroom and kitchen; double-tier beds, a cupboard each, good blankets, sufficient sitting accommodation, electric light and central heating. Food is cooked at the factory and the Cross parcels can be cooked on the newly installed range.

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Double-tier beds, cupboards, stools and tables, electric light and good stoves. The men worked 10 hours daily in a wood factory. A few complaints were made and the German authorities promised to look into them and do their best to improve conditions.

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47 prisoners of war at Detachment 243/4 Elbingersode are employed by the Town Council on general labour. This is a reasonably good working Detachment. The hours were usually 12 per day with every Sunday free, but it was thought that in future the men would have to work every alternate Sunday. The chief shortage was socks, but the main Stalag have been asked for supplies.

There were a few improvements at Detachment 170/26 Dessau, where 231 British prisoners of war work in a wagon factory doing various jobs such as welding and grinding parts of the machinery. 18 men are employed in a nearby cement works. The men work 10 hours a day and have Saturday afternoons and Sundays free.

New splinter-trenches have been dug next to the prisoners' living quarters, which are reported to be good. The ventilation has been improved by adjusting two large windows on each side of the dormitory. The showers have been installed enabling each man to have two hot showers weekly. A small infirmary has been partitioned off. The only complaints were of a shortage of clothing and of newly captured prisoners. Medical and dental treatment is satisfactory, and clothing are satisfactory, but will be improved when transport becomes available to bring stocks from the main camp. There is also a lack of razor blades. This is a good Detachment with excellent understanding between the prisoners and the German authorities.
The Prisoner of War

January 1945

The Prisoner of War

STALAG LUFT III MEMORIAL

To the 47 officers of the R.A.F., Dominion and Allied Air Forces shot by the Germans after the mass escape. Memorial designed by F/Lt. W. Wyton Todd, A.R.I.B.A. and constructed entirely by officers in the camp with materials supplied by the Germans.

This drawing by F/Lt. B. L. Kenyon is reproduced by courtesy of The Times.

Stalag IVG Report from a British Camp Captain representing Working Detachments, in a letter to the Chairman of the Prisoners of War Department

I represent a total of over 1,200 P.O.W.s, divided amongst 25 camps ranging in size from 20 men to nearly 250. Each camp has a confidence man who may also have to work, depending on the size of the camp. These camps contain men are in regular touch with me by means of my visits to them which are unrestricted, and I see them on various other occasions such as Red Cross clothing issues, food parcel issues, etc. I in turn am in touch with the chief British man of confidence of the camp, who watches, officially, our interests at headquarters, by means of my visits to Stalag, when the camps’ individual requirements are reported to him. He is also allowed to make periodic visits to the working Kommandos.

Red Cross Food Parcels.—I travel regularly to Stalag with transport for these parcels. They are stored in a central magazine within one of the camps until distributed—usually about every four weeks. Every camp has a satisfactory reserve of parcels and every effort is made to keep this reserve constant.

Red Cross Clothing.—Clothing usually arrives in large consignments which I collect from Stalag. It is issued on the camp confidence man’s signature from the German stores under my direct supervision. The issue of the clothing within the camp is the direct responsibility of the camp confidence man who is in a better position to know the man’s personal requirements.

Every man in the area has a complete British uniform and at least one pair of British boots, but owing to the nature of the work of some men it is not possible to guarantee the perfect condition of this clothing. In fact in a number of cases replacements are needed. Boot repairing kit, i.e., leather, etc., has also been received and was most welcome but more is required in almost all camps. The camp shoemaker repaired boots while the stocks have lasted.

Work.—The work varies largely, from railway repair sheds to manufacturing ice for cold storage purposes. There are, however, a large number of men employed in factory or indoor work, although the work is actually usually harder. The hours all round have a tendency to be long and 10 hours a day is fairly general. Sunday work still carries on, but every other Sunday is free in most cases.

Camps.—These again differ widely, but a common form of billet in this area is a gasthof or hotel. Usually the prisoners are housed in one large room for sleeping, and the lavatories and washrooms are separate. The normal wooden barracks is not much used. Beds are in most cases 3-tiered and wooden, each man being provided with a palliase and two blankets. Cupboards for clothes, etc., are rather scarce.

Sports and Entertainments.—Football matches are allowed between working Kommandos. Also almost every form of sport or entertainment is allowed providing the facilities exist or can be provided.

Cinema shows are given every two or three weeks on Sunday mornings.

Three Lagers have their own concert parties. As there is not too much spare time to arrange and rehearse large-scale productions, Lagers must largely rely on their own ingenuity for entertainment within the camp. Much has been done by the camps themselves. Newspapers are produced in at least four camps. Whist drives, debates, and two boxing shows have also taken place.

Life in a Camp.—It cannot be described in a few lines—it is much too varied and only a genius at precis could attempt to do it. Suffice to say that as usual the British P.O.W. gets down to it and tries to make the best of it, grumbling perhaps, but nevertheless managing to keep cheerful. I am expressing the opinion of everybody in this area when I say that thanks to the Red Cross, life as a P.O.W. in a working camp, although not definitely a pleasure, is at least bearable. (Letter dated August 21st, 1944)
CHILDREN have been outstanding among those who help the Funds. This month we record some of the ways—from carol singing to selling kittens!—in which their efforts have brought in more than £340,000 direct since the beginning of the war. H. R. H. the Duke of Gloucester, in expressing his personal appreciation to them on several occasions, has acknowledged their devoted work.

Donations from the Aberavenny County High School for Girls, alone, now total £1,140, and Gipsy Road School, at West Norwood, has, by continuous support, contributed over £1,000. Substantial sums have been added to the regular contributions which are received by the many sales of hand-made articles, homemade cakes, jam and other good things, which have been produced in spite of present difficulties in obtaining materials and which have been outstanding for the high standard of skill achieved. On one occasion the girls of Sutton West Central School raised £20 by selling 153 dolls, whose prices ranged from 6d. to 7s. 6d.—adults were charged 3d. and pupils 1d. for the privilege of seeing them displayed.

At another school £12 was made by selling toy animals given by children, many of whose parents are German prisoners interned in Germany. A £20 cheque, the result of a sale of work held at a day nursery in Clifton, was handed by Joan Christopher (whose father is a prisoner of war in Burma) to Col. Dan Burgess, for the Red Cross.

Target for Parcels
A number of schools have aimed at targets to cover the cost of a specified number of food parcels which are sent to prisoners of war. Every week during the past year, enough money has been given to prisoners of war. Every week during the past year, enough money has been given to the Red Cross. One school which has had to move twice owing to bomb damage, and which has been outstanding for the high standard of skill achieved, was given by eleven children from Overton, five evacuees, who were all under 13 and had only arrived three weeks before, gave a concert unaided. Boys from Form 6a, Brent Modern School, Hendon, showed slides on India, and charged 2d. for admission.

Original Ideas
Of the numerous original schemes carried out, only a small selection can be made. The Wood-Choppers’ Gang, of Swansea, has worked hard and has had the cause at heart. Derek Birch, who lives in North Wales has raised £5 2s. 6d. by making and selling paper windmills, and seven-year-olds of Standard 1, St. John’s Boys’ School, Redhill, were inspired by a Red Cross advertisement on a sweet bag to organise a tuck shop for selling cakes, which was well patronised. Another story about cakes comes from Walthamstow, where the Red Cross profited unexpectedly because the cakes did not arrive for the annual winter tea at the Baptist Church Sunday School. The boys and girls themselves asked that the money so saved should be used to cheer prisoners of war. Bradford schoolchildren have collected 41,294 farthings during the past five years, and two children at Tolworth have found 700 safety pins for the organisation.

News of interest and fresh ways of helping are always arriving. Only last week a school at Islworth wrote to say that they had just started collections of their own, and one school which has had to move twice owing to bomb damage, has still managed to give support. Harry Reilly, of Bow, wrote: “Keep the good air, raising money by picking herbs and fruits from the hedgerows. In the Isle of Man enough foxglove leaves to make 500,000 special pills and rose-hips for 1,000 bottles of syrup were gathered, the proceeds amounting to £38 5s. 4d. Some students who were engaged on farming work during the holidays generously donated their earnings to the Red Cross. Another hard worker had an order for twelve wooden dolls from a friend who wanted them to be coloured in green and brown because she wished to give one to each member of the W.L.A. at the farm where her daughter was working.

Towards the Future
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WAR SERVICE GRANTS

To ensure that the families of servicemen, including those who are prisoners of war, shall be able to maintain a certain standard of living, the Government has a scheme of War Service Grants which can in certain circumstances supplement the regulation service allowances. The view is taken that there is a minimum below which none should fall—irrespective of the pre-service standard. Men still serving actively in the Forces know about these facilities, but P.O.W.s may not have heard, or may have omitted to tell their families that they may be eligible to benefit.

The grant can be made to any dependent or member of the prisoner of war’s family if the need is proved. Here are brief details:

In the case of a wife with children, grants are based on a comparison of the family budget before and after the husband’s enlistment. Grants which can in certain circumstances supplement the regulation service allowances. The view is taken that there is a minimum below which none should fall—irrespective of the pre-service standard. Men still serving actively in the Forces know about these facilities, but P.O.W.s may not have heard, or may have omitted to tell their families that they may be eligible to benefit.

The grant is assessed so as to provide the wife and children of serving men with a minimum standard income for living expenses of not less than 22s. a week for each adult, and 11s. a week for each child under 15, after fixed and reasonable commitments of the household, such as rent, rates, hire purchase, insurance, etc., have been paid.

If the pre-service household income was above this standard, a larger amount can be allotted and re-assessment is made if financial circumstances improve or grow worse. For example, the grant will generally be increased if the wife has had to give up work and it may be (but is not always) reduced if the soldier has been able to work.

The maximum grant is £3 a week.

Grants can also be paid to childless wives if they are unable to work because of age, incapacity, or heavy home responsibilities; and to dependants of servicemen who are prisoners of war.

Officers’ families are eligible to apply for War Service Grants equally with those of “other ranks.”

Application must be made on form WSG 21 which is available at any Post Office in Great Britain or Northern Ireland.

Write to your prisoner and tell him: "if a grant is made: it may take a weight off his shoulders."
Incident at My County Branch

For seven months after our son's capture, while on night reconnaissance at Cassino, we were unable to send him a parcel. We heard that he was ill, but we could do nothing for him. Then, through the Red Cross Prisoners of War Department at St. James's Palace, came the longed-for O.K.—a book of 40 coupons, labels and information about weight restrictions and post arrangements.

What should we send? Not a line yet received from him about his requirements, not a word about any clothing issue from German or British sources. Prospect of several hit-or-miss shopping expeditions before the parcel could be satisfactorily completed induced us to cancel our plans for a week's holiday due to begin in two days' time.

I telephoned the local office of the Red Cross. Sorry to trouble them, but did any member of the staff know anything about prisoners' most urgent needs. Wife and I were anxious not to waste an ounce of the 10 lb. allowed.

The same afternoon we met in that office a smiling, eager-to-help Assistant Commandant, who surprised us at once by producing, in 30 seconds, a complete duplicated set of papers recording all our welcome in the depot—yes, welcome is the most fitting word—or the amount of trouble taken by the staff to ensure despatch of the best possible parcel to our boy. They even took over the packing and posting of it.

Well, we had already cancelled our holiday, quite unnecessarily, but we left the Red Cross Depot feeling that we no longer needed one!

Red Cross Exhibition

An exhibition showing the work which is being done for prisoners of war in Europe and the Far East, for blind and deaf captives, the wounded and other victims of the war, is touring sixty of the leading cities and towns of England and Wales. The exhibition is training in a Red Cross and S. John Ambulance coach, lent by the L.M.S. Railway Company, and is open to the public without charge.

Notices

Exam. Results

A pass list for July to December, 1944, is now in course of preparation and will be published as soon as possible in the New Year. Copies of previous pass lists (July to December, 1943, and January to June, 1944), are still available on application to the Educational Books Section, at the New Bodleian, Oxford.

P.O.W. Exhibition Catalogues

A number of copies of the catalogue of the Prisoners of War Exhibition in London this summer are still available, price 6d. (or 7d. including postage), and those who wish to obtain one may apply to Mr. Tomlins, Red Cross, and S. John War Organisation, Publicity Department, 21, Carlton House Terrace, London, S.W.1.

Y.M.C.A. Sports Medal

A sports medal has been introduced recently by the Prisoners of War Exhibition of the World's Alliance of the Y.P.S.P. for those prisoners of war in European camps who—

1. have especially encouraged physical culture in the camp; or
2. in a general sports meeting have given exceptional performances; or
3. have fulfilled special sporting demands which have been set by the camp administration; or
4. have regularly for a long time performed some form of physical exercise.

Already more than 500 prisoners have won the medal, which is gilt-edged and designed on a white triangle within a red circle. News has arrived that a Flight Lieutenant at an R.A.F. camp has been presented with the medal by the British Empire, Committee for outstanding sportsmanship in major camp games and some minor games, and for the best all-round sportsmanship and organisation, etc.

Camps with less than 1,000 prisoners of war may be awarded up to 20 medals. In larger camps, 20 medals for every 1,000 prisoners of war and 10 medals for every additional 500 may be awarded.

CAMP LIST

Stalag VII-C has been moved to Bad Neustadt—Map reference B 5.

Please add: Stalag II A at Neubrandenburg—Map reference E 3.

County Representatives

Hampshire: Please note that Mrs. Deakin is no longer County Representative and that in future all correspondence should be addressed to: Mrs. Atkins, 20, Winn Road, Southampton.

Herefordshire: Miss B. M. Hughes, Herefordshire P.O.W. Fund, Palace Chambers, King Street, Hereford, has succeeded Mrs. Meredith as Secretary.

Photograph of Oflag IVC

We regret that the photograph showing a group of men at a Christmas party in the picture page "Groups from the Camps" on page 11 of the December issue, was incorrectly labelled as having been taken at Oflag I X A / Z. The photograph was actually taken at Oflag IVC.

FREE TO NEXT OF KIN

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