

GERMAN TREATMENT OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR
IN WORLD WAR II

A Thesis

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PREFACE

This study, admittedly written for an academic purpose, has a greater meaning for the author. Having personally experienced almost a year under German detention as a prisoner of war did not yield anything approximating a broad view of what the German Nation had formulated in the way of program and policy toward its prisoners of war. The fact of having been a prisoner is, in truth, helpful only in that it renders a perspective which has proved useful in dealing with the various categories and phases of prisonership that are dealt with. Research has yielded what experience has not.

Material used was, with six notable exceptions, available locally at the Detroit Public and Wayne University (including Medical and Law) Libraries. Personal thanks are due the Wayne library personnel for ordering material not in their possession from Switzerland. Miss Gowans, the Documents librarian, rendered valuable assistance. Much material was taken from the Swiss publication, Revue Internationale de la Croix-Rouge,¹ which was available at the University of Michigan Library in Ann Arbor. The correspondence between the American Legation at Bern and the State Department regarding POWs was available in paraphrased form at the Prisoner of War Information Bureau, Provost Marshal's Office, in Washington. Lt. Col. E.M. Harris of the Army's Historical

1. Written in French, all translations are my own. Quotation marks indicate as literal a translation as could be managed.

Division sent mimeographed reproductions of Army press releases concerning prisoners of war. The Yankee Kriegies and A. Vulliet's YMCA Report were sent by the National Office of the YMCA. Barbed Wire Interlude was published in 1945 by an ex-Kriegie with business inclinations. It was sent to fellow ex-prisoners of Luft IV. The Prisoners of War Bulletin was made available at the Detroit Office of the American Red Cross. Finally, for unpublished material, I am indebted to Dr. Leslie Caplan (now in Minneapolis, Minnesota) and Captain Wm. F. Wigger, USAAF, (of the Wayne University R.O.T.C.) both of whom were prisoners in Germany.

Encouragement and assistance was rendered by Dr. Paul Butterfield of the history department whose enthusiasm over choice of subject and whose guidance over and around obstacles enabled me to carry the undertaking to completion. Last, but not least, I am grateful to my wife, Jane, whose patience, suggestions, and assistance are intimately connected with any value the study may yield.

Detroit, Michigan
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As a postscript, I must acknowledge my own prejudices. I extract no enjoyment from hunger, sickness, fear, threats, death, or war.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Preface.....	11
 Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Field of Thought.....	1
B. Specific Problem.....	2
C. Methods Used.....	9
D. Conclusions to be Reached.....	11
II. SOME HIGHLIGHTS IN THE EVALUATION OF THE PRISONER OF WAR CONCEPT.....	13
III. QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS WHO WERE PROPERLY CONSIDERED PRISONERS OF WAR.....	17
A. Who Were Considered PWs by the Geneva Convention.....	17
B. Questioned Qualifications.....	18
C. German Qualifications.....	19
D. Statistics.....	22
IV. GERMAN ATTITUDES AND ORDERS.....	28
A. Before the War.....	28
B. Early Stages of the War.....	32
C. Post Invasion Attitudes.....	34
D. As Defeat Approached.....	37
V. CAPTURE CONDITIONS.....	43
A. The Rules.....	43
B. Capture Conditions in Germany.....	44
C. Interrogation.....	54
VI. PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS.....	61
A. Locations.....	61
B. Safety.....	63
C. Administration.....	65
D. ICRC Visits and Reports.....	67
E. Naval Camps.....	75
F. Concentration Camps.....	76
G. Luft Camps.....	79

VII.	DISCIPLINE.....	83
	A. General Discussion.....	83
	B. Procedures.....	84
	C. Examples of Discipline Resorted to at Various Camps.....	95
VIII.	BASIC NEEDS.....	99
	A. Food.....	99
	B. Clothing	110
	C. Housing.....	115
IX.	LABOR.....	118
	A. Convention Provisions	118
	B. Work Assignments.....	120
	C. Remuneration.....	131
X.	ACTIVITIES OF THE CAMPS: INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL NEEDS.....	133
	A. Convention Provisions (Articles XVI and XVII).	133
	B. Education.....	133
	C. Religion.....	139
	D. Relief Society Activity.....	141
	E. Miscellaneous Recreation.....	143
XI.	MAIL.....	145
	A. Outgoing.....	145
	B. Incoming Mail.....	147
XII.	HEALTH.....	153
	A. General Physical.....	153
	B. Dental Health.....	158
	C. Deaths.....	159
	D. Mental Health.....	161
	E. After Effects.....	164
XIII.	ESCAPE	167
XIV.	TRANSPORTATION.....	173
	A. Men.....	173
	B. Transport of Materials.....	183
XV.	TERMINATION OF CAPTIVITY.....	186
	A. Repatriation.....	186
	B. Liberation.....	189

XVI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND PROSPECTS.....	193
A. German Observations of the Geneva Convention..	193
B. Responsibilities.....	199
C. Future Prospects.....	203
D. Proposals.....	207

APPENDIX

A. Locations of PW camps.....	210
B. Photostat of German PW record.....	215
C. Photographic reproduction of <u>Lagorfeld</u>	217
D. Photographic reproduction of "Escape - no longer a sport" Leaflet.....	218
E. Deposition of Dr. Leslie Caplan.....	220
F. Photographic reproduction of "recruit" leaflet....	235
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	236

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Field of Thought

How American prisoners of war in Germany were treated, particularly in regard to the Geneva Convention relating to their treatment,¹ is one phase of World War II that has as yet not been handled in any scholarly fashion. It is a phenomenon to be expected, perhaps, for the subject lends itself much more readily to a narrative, "literary" style than it does to a reportorial survey with its share of causal relationships that more closely approximates history. It is the intention of this work to describe rather than generate any arguments.

That the field of description has been limited to the area of American prisoners of war² is not so much a manifestation of "nationalism" as it is of expediency. There is no justification for distinguishing what happened to American POWs, apart from Allied prisoners, except that the scope of this study would have increased fivefold had that limitation not been decided upon. It is to be understood, therefore, that there is no intention of being evasive in not comparing the heinousness or severity of treatment accorded prisoners of other nationalities held by Germany. As American POWs

1. Prisoner of War Convention, Treaty Series No. 846 (Washington: GPO, 1932).

2. Hereinafter variously referred to as POWs, PWS, prisoners and Kriegies (a diminution of Kriegsgefangenen).

saw it, and there can be little argument on the point, the Russians received by far the worst treatment of all prisoners held by Germany. The Germans explained that Russia was not a party to the Geneva Convention and therefore could not expect the protection afforded by it. We, however, shall be looking at U.S. nationals against whom no such exception could be leveled.

B. Specific Problem

The problem, thus, is to investigate how Germany lived up to a set of rules to which she openly acceded upon the signature of Edmund Rhomberg, for the President of the German Reich. These rules are embodied in one of two parts of that treaty generally known as the Geneva Convention. On July 27, 1929 signatures were affixed to two conventions. The first was concerned with treatment of sick and wounded in the field; the second, relating to prisoners of war, is more properly and specifically referred to as the Prisoner of War Code.³ This code, which for our purposes will be referred to as the Geneva Convention, expanded the 1907 Hague Regulations regarding prisoners of war into 97 specific articles. It tended to emphasize right of PWs rather than their duties. Divided into eight general sections, it covers such phases

3. The International Committee of the Red Cross (hereinafter referred to as the ICRC) prefers this appellation to distinguish it from the Convention Relative to the Amelioration of the Sick & Wounded in the Field. cf. footnote 1 in Revue Internationale De La Croix-Rouge, XXIV, No. 284 (Aug. 1942), 590. Hereinafter referred to as Rev. Int.

whose primary purpose was to establish hospital localities and safety zones.⁵ Likewise eschewed by powerful states, it too missed becoming a part of international law.

Annexed to the Convention of 1929 was a "Model Agreement" concerning repatriation and hospitalization in neutral countries for reasons of health. It had not been ratified along with the PW Code. The German Government, taking the initiative, communicated their desire to reach an agreement on the matter to the Swiss Legation in Washington. There followed an exchange of notes dated March 4 and March 30, 1942 between the Secretary of State and the Swiss minister in Washington (representing German interests) which was tantamount to an agreement. The Model Agreement thus became part of international law.⁶

International legislation never has the flavor of immediacy that local regulations have. Thus, PW Custodians in the United States received from the War Department in 1943 a sixty-five page publication, PW Circular No. 1, clearly delineating the rules to be followed in the treatment of their subjects. Such publications were cataloged in Swiss bibliographical lists.⁷ Nothing corresponding to such a

5. Ibid.

6. 56 U.S. Statutes at Large 1507. Executive Agreement Series 255.

7. Rev. Int., XXVI No. 497 (Jan. '44) 163-66.

as (1) qualifications, who is "eligible", (2) capture conditions, (3) conditions of captivity including relations with the outside world, reception of mail and parcels; relations with the authorities, both the Detaining Power and the representative of the state of origin which is the Protecting Power, (4) terminations of captivity by repatriation or the culmination of hostilities, (5) death in captivity, (6) the roles of Bureaus of Information and Relief which, incidentally, authorize the creation of the Central Agency of the International Committee of the Red Cross, (7) further qualifications permitting such civilians as newspaper correspondents to be considered as PAs, and (8) an executive section which defines those conditions under which the Convention comes into force, etc. This Convention was ratified by the U.S. Senate on January 7, 1932 and on January 16 President Hoover affixed his signature to it.

Subsequent attempts to formulate further agreements regarding prisoners of war met with little success. In 1934 the ICRC proposed the "Tokyo Draft" which would have extended the protection afforded prisoners to non-military personnel.⁴ The great powers were not enthusiastic about this idea. Later, in 1933, the same agency proposed the "Draft of 1933"

4. International Committee of the Red Cross, Report of the International Committee of the Red Cross on its activities during the Second World War (September 1, 1939 - June 30, 1947) (Geneva: 1948), 1A, 190. Hereinafter referred to as the Report of the ICRC.

directive was published by the Germans. At least Swiss bibliographic lists, which presumably would have noted such important regulations, do not mention any.^{7A}

Having regulations does not per se insure that those regulations will be observed. Unfortunately the Geneva Convention provides for no sanctions.⁸ No party, either ally, enemy, or neutral, can force a signatory to obey the terms of the Convention. Agencies of the Convention like the International Committee of the Red Cross are likewise impotent insofar as enforcement is concerned. The extreme sanction, war, cannot be brought into force. It already is in force. As in numerous other treaties, it is up to the signatories themselves to uphold the statutes which they have formulated. Under these circumstances it appears that reciprocity seems to be the main force insuring observation of the Convention; "We'll treat your PWs in the same manner in which you treat ours." This leads to a rather anomalous formula of success, one based on fear of the enemy. There is, in addition, an intangible moral sanction in operation, one embodied in the desire to have the world see that the

7A. Before the U.S. entered the war there had been enacted in August 1940 the Verordnung über das Verfahren bei Zustellungen an Kriegsgefangene und in Kreisgefangenenlagern internierte Personen.

8. One theoretical sanction or penalty might be that all potential "Protecting Powers" would refuse to represent the interests of any state that obviously violated the Convention.

Convention is being observed rather than evaded. Morality also operates to keep the objective of ultimately attaining peace in sight. A country that did not observe the Convention would be making the culmination of hostilities a much more difficult job.

Although sanctions are not provided for, the Convention does made provision for inspections by the neutral Protecting Power who may visit all places, without exception, where PWs are interned.⁹ In the course of their visits the Representatives of the Protecting Power and the delegates of the ICRC looked for infractions of the Convention. When they were found, they were brought to the attention of both the camp authorities and the governments of those prisoners held in detention. In this manner the U.S. Government was informed of violations involving American PWs. These, however, comprise only a small fraction of the non-observances that will ultimately be brought to light.¹⁰ Such reports, however, were used as the basis of protests to the Detaining Power, Germany, on numerous instances.

The virtual plethora of derelictions make both interesting and gory reading. But more than that, their sum total

9. Prisoner of War Convention, Article LXXXVI.

10. Files of the Judge Advocate's office in Washington containing depositions taken from recovered American personnel are still under security classifications and are thus unavailable except for official use.

offers an answer to the problem of this examination, i.e. how did the Germans treat American prisoners of war and was this treatment "legal"? Surprisingly enough, quite diverse and conflicting opinions have been voiced. Gilbert Hedfern, the editor of the Prisoners of War Bulletin, an American Red Cross publication, has cited letters to show the divergent points of view. A repatriate from the Camp at Sagan said, after his return to the U.S., that the international rules established at Geneva were being observed "to the letter" by the Germans. He said further in stating his case, "The German guards have high regard for their prisoners."¹¹ Another letter from a PW still in Luft III said:

Save them [Red Cross Bulletins] so I can get a laugh when I get back. The best way to appreciate them is to have it in one hand and a book of Damon Runyon in the other, then try to ascertain which is the more fabulous.¹²

It should be added in fairness to the Bulletin that for morale purposes certain types of available information regarding the treatment of American PWs was best not given to the next-of-kin to whom it was regularly mailed. Thus reporting on prisoners was not done with complete objectivity. And yet a spokesman for the International Red Cross had the following to say:

11. American National Red Cross. Prisoners of War Bulletin, 11, No. 7 (July 1944), 1. Hereinafter referred to as the PW Bulletin.

12. Ibid.

...the entire course of the war was marked by countless lapses, by partial violations of some particular stipulation of the said Convention.¹³

and

...it is impossible to enumerate all the occasions on which the provisions contained in the Convention were violated - for that it would be necessary to examine thousands of reports...¹⁴

Treaty violations can be categorized in multiple ways. Probably as accurate as any is Siordet's scheme which encompasses

1. Unintentional violations, those due to circumstances of war. Thousands of PWs cannot possibly be properly cared for while a belligerent makes a last ditch stand. Neither can that power control the targets of enemy bombers.

2. Deliberate violations, generally designed to get better discipline. Prohibited penalties and employment are used to make PWs "conform".

3. Violations due to "misinterpretation," those due to different standards or points of view. What one country maintains is a sufficient food ration or level of hygiene may not meet another's valuation.

4. Violations due to carelessness and ignorance, said by some to be the most frequent kind of violations. Frequently effected by minor officers who knew little or nothing of the provisions of the Convention, they caused untold hardships and engendered much lasting enmity for the German nation and the German people.¹⁵

13. Frederic Siordet, Inter Arma Caritas (Geneva: ICRC, 1947), p. 48.

14. Ibid., p. 49.

15. Ibid.

C. Methods Used

For purposes of this survey, an arbitrary number of facets of gefangenschaft (forming chapter headings) have been established. To each of these categories can be relegated a substantial amount of authoritative source material. In this manner it is hoped that a general idea can be extracted of how American prisoners were treated. The evidence used includes documentary reports, depositions, accounts of various witnesses, and a modicum of personal observation. There is, admittedly, one obvious lacuna. Notwithstanding the several memoranda from the German Foreign Office that will be cited, it is regrettable that more documents emanating from German sources cannot be offered. Although German records were purposely destroyed on a large scale, there are in existence a number of German "War Diaries" which will be, perhaps are being, used in compiling the history of World War II. In addition, the Historical Division of the Army has "coaxed" some 500 narratives of the war from various German Officers.¹⁶ Such material, as is to be expected, is not freely circulated.

From the viewpoint of maintaining as much objectivity as possible, the best sources of information are those ascertained by neutral states or neutral organizations.¹⁷

16. Dr. Hugh M. Cole, "Writing Contemporary Military History", Military Affairs, XII, (Fall 1948), 162-67.

17. The latter have one shortcoming. They frequently tend toward self-praise while rendering an account of how PWs were treated.

Secretary of State Hull sought exactly such information when he wired to Bern, Switzerland:

In view not only of its interest in the welfare of its own nationals in enemy hands but also of its interest in the preservation of the humanitarian standards set by the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention to which this government and the German government among others, are parties, the Department would appreciate receiving any information that Swiss representatives in Germany and German controlled territories may obtain in the course of their activities for the protection of American prisoners of war and internees, particularly in the course of their camp inspections of prisoners and internment camps, as to whether the German government has taken or is taking steps to place all prisoners of war on the same basis regardless of whether the countries to which they owe allegiance are or are not parties to the Geneva Convention and regardless of the treatment that is being accorded by those countries to German prisoners of war.¹⁸

It was, furthermore, the express duty of the Central Agency for Prisoners of War, a branch of the International Committee of the Red Cross, to collect all information regarding PWs and forward same to the prisoners' own countries.¹⁹ Their reports have a cross-sectional flavor at best; to make a complete report on conditions would have been impossible due to the limitations placed upon them by the Detaining Power. Many complaints by prisoners, however, were sent directly to the Red Cross in Geneva.

Personal on-the-spot accounts bearing an element of

18. Telegram 2461, October 31, 1942.

19. Siordet, op. cit., p. 27.

freshness are also used in this work.²⁰ German records of their American prisoners tell virtually nothing.²¹

D. Conclusions to be Reached

A "reading" of Germans' reaction versus Americans was generally less severe than that toward the other Allies, the majority of whom were involved in the war twice as long as the U.S. was. On the same side of the ledger, testimonies make it appear certain that German treatment was generally less severe than that bestowed on Americans by Germany's Axis partner, Japan.²²

Some mention should also be made of the War Crimes trials and the implications regarding PWs that can be drawn from them. The precedent of the recent Nuremberg trials, the Leipzig trials of 1920, were almost farcical. After a long lapse of time it was very difficult to get the Germans to turn over accused war criminals. Original lists of "wanted" were cut down extensively; justice, to put it mildly, was lenient; the accused literally got away with murder. The Nuremberg trials, while correcting many post-

20. During the War of 1812, the U.S. maintained representatives in Great Britain who kept in close contact with PWs and reported on their detentions to the U.S. Government. This practice, unfortunately for purposes of this paper, is no longer in vogue.

21. Cf. Appendix B for photostatic copy of German PW record.

22. U.S. House of Representatives, "Special Compensation Benefits for Prisoners of War", 80th Congress, 2nd Session, Hearings on H.R. 5851 before Subcommittee on Compensations and Pensions of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, May 21, 1948.

World War I faults, dealt only with the biggest, most notorious violations. Being concerned with PW treatment, we must recognize that it would be a virtual impossibility to prosecute every individual who made himself a party to some violation of the Convention. Therefore, the authoritative transcripts divulge only a fraction of the material in which we are interested.

Once more, before entering into the body of evidence, it is advisable to make obvious the purpose of the ensuing material. Whereas another work treating of PWs is concerned with "expressed governmental policies and rules",²³ the intention of this study is to reveal the actual treatment accorded American PWs in Germany. Wherever possible, the causal factors that resulted in infractions of the rules will be brought out.

Assuming that people's actions reflect what they are thinking, this study is an attempt to show what the Germans were thinking, from the way they acted particularly toward PWs. Why they thought as they did is a problem for social psychologists.

23. Cf. preface of Wm. S. Flory, Prisoners of War, (Washington: American Council on Public Affairs, 1948).

CHAPTER II

SOME HIGHLIGHTS IN THE

EVALUATION OF THE PRISONER OF WAR CONCEPT

During the course of history, the prisoner of war concept has undergone a most intense metamorphosis. From the time when capture was equivalent to being chained as a galley slave, the notion of what prisonership entails has changed to the extent that in the twentieth century a prisoner not only is protected, but also has various rights. How this legal status came to be can be cursorily sketched.

Although it is reputed that Cyrus, King of Persia in the fourth century B.C., ordered his troops to care for enemy wounded and in the Persian Wars spared, with the aid of divine intervention, the life of his captive Croesus,¹ the earliest wars were generally wars of extermination. If, by some accident, a captive was taken, he could be dealt with in whatever fashion his captor chose. He could be forced to work, tortured, or killed. With the development of the economic value of his labor, the practice of taking prisoners became more prevalent. Prisoners were then invariably sold into slavery.

By the Middle Ages, the custom of ransoming developed. For prices varying with their rank, captives were sold back to their countries or armies. With the circumstance that

1. Siordet, op. cit., p. 12; Manuel Komroff (ed.), The History of Herodotus, Book I, (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1946), pp. 33-34.

captives of both belligerents had been captured and detained by the enemy, the custom of prisoner exchange soon evolved.²

In modern times the greatest development has taken place in the realm of the treatment of prisoners. By decrees of May 4 and June 20, 1792, the French Revolutionary Government asserted that prisoners were to be protected. Shortly after the American Revolution and the formulation of the Confederation, a treaty with Prussia was concluded which included a section on the treatment of prisoners of war.³

In 1859, during the Italian campaign at Solferino, Henry Dunant, a Swiss tourist, seeing the distress and destruction of battle, could not bear to remain passive. His attempt to organize relief, to help the wounded, saved an estimated 3,000 men.⁴ His accomplishments in the area of caring for the sick and wounded led logically to caring for captives.

The American Civil War marked further considerations regarding prisoners. At President Lincoln's request in 1863, Francis Lieber prepared a codification of regulations pertaining to PW treatment. His ideas were adopted by the U.S.

2. Buel W. Patch "Prisoners of War", Editorial Research Reports, I (Feb. 2, 1942), 85.

3. 8 U.S. Statutes at Large 84 (1785). A Treaty of Amity and Commerce.

4. Sordet, op. cit., p. 10.

government and were embodied in the general orders of the War Department, appearing as a field manual.⁵ The inherent notions of the American publication were subsequently adopted formally by Germany in the Franco-Prussian War (albeit the provisions were never maintained).

International scope, relative to PW comportment, was first afforded by the Hague Convention of 1899. This, in turn, was amplified and clarified by the Hague Convention of 1907 which devoted an entire section to prisoners of war. By its terms, the capturing power assumed definite obligations regarding the treatment of its captives. It was this agreement that governed treatment of prisoners during World War I. It was Article II of this agreement that provided the loophole through which the treaty was reduced to meaninglessness.⁶ This article stated that the Convention was binding only as long as all the belligerents were parties to it. The entrance into the war of non-ratifying states automatically cancelled its effectiveness. This obvious weakness made it mandatory for the belligerents to reach bilateral agreements among themselves on matters relating to PW treatment. The amendment of the 1907 Convention became inevitable.

5. John Martin Vincent, "Francis Lieber", Dictionary of American Biography, Dumas Malone (ed.), XI (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1933), p. 238.

6. 36 U.S. Statutes at Large 2277 (1907). Convention-War on Land.

In 1921, the Tenth Annual Conference of the International Committee of the Red Cross began drafting the Code that was to become, upon ratification, the 1929 Prisoner of War Code that governed prisoner treatment during World War II.

CHAPTER III

QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS:

WHO WERE PROPERLY CONSIDERED PRISONERS OF WAR

A. Who were Considered as PWs by the Geneva Convention

Taking precedent from the 1907 Convention, the Geneva Convention specifies that members of armies, militias, and volunteer corps are to be given prisoner of war status upon capture.¹ The volunteer forces must have, however, a recognizable insignia and/or uniform and must be led by a recognized commander. In addition, certain persons who follow the armed forces (e.g., newspaper correspondents, sutlers) are, upon capture, entitled to be treated as PWs.² In general terms, then, all persons belonging to the armed forces of belligerents, be they army, navy, or air force personnel, are included. Whether they were in a combatant or non-combatant capacity did not jeopardize their status. Women are obviously included; the Convention ambiguously states that they are to be treated with the respect due their sex.³

International law provides a few other qualifications. Diplomats, high officials, a sovereign and his family, when captured, are entitled to PW treatment.⁴ Deserters who

1. Article I.

2. Article LXXXI. They must, however, be certified by the armed forces whom they are accompanying.

3. Article III.

4. Flory, *op. cit.*, p. 29. The author states that there is some dispute as to whether the sovereign's entire family may be kept as prisoners of war.

flee into the hands of the enemy also fall under the prisoner of war category.⁵

Having enumerated those persons whom the Geneva Convention considers "eligible", we may next ask when the state of prisonership begins. The Convention itself does not treat specifically of this matter but rather seems to assume that no problem is posed. One authority has said of the topic:

Prisonership probably begins when he [the potential prisoner] is no longer capable of resistance because he either has been overpowered or is weaponless, when he has voluntarily and individually ceased to fight, or when his chief has surrendered his command.⁶

B. Questioned Qualifications

"Protected personnel" are those individuals who are engaged exclusively in caring for and transporting the wounded and the sick. Although they are not referred to in the PW Code, the companion Convention concerning the treatment of wounded and sick in the field specifies that they are not to be considered as prisoners, that they are to be repatriated upon capture.⁷ Frequently, however, they were kept in detention.⁸ It is probable that a few medics jeopardized

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 39.

7. Article IX & XII.

8. Siordet, op. cit., p. 64. Section 20 of Airmail letter 11887 from the American Legation at Bern to the Secretary of State, June 9, 1945 is a signed deposition testifying that a U.S. medical officer who entered German lines under a flag of truce with an ambulance full of wounded German personnel, was detained as a PW.

status, it is customary practice, according to international law, to have prisoner status forfeited upon the commission of a war crime. Other violations that warrant suspension of PW protection are (1) violation of parole, or (2) espionage. The former merely entails the breaking of a promise, customarily to abstain from doing something, and is usually a written agreement.¹² Espionage, on the other hand, is a more complicated matter. The accused must be (a) in search of, or already in possession of, some information, (b) such information must be intended for enemy possession, (c) the information-seeking mission must be carried on in a theatre of war, (d) the alleged agent must be acting in secret or under false pretenses.¹³ These qualifications do not include non-disguised soldiers such as forward patrols or reconnaissance patrols. Conversely, anyone utilizing enemy flag, uniform, insignia, or emblem could be deprived of PW rights.

Anglo-American aircraft crews were objects of special consideration as the bombing of Germany got under way. Certain practices of air warfare resulted in a German memorandum¹⁴

12. Frequently paroles were given not to attempt escape if permitted for exercise walks outside the confines of the PW enclosure.

13. Flory, op. cit., p. 37.

14. U.S. Department of State, Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression (Washington: GPO, 1948), III, 531-32, Document 731-P3. Hereinafter referred to as NCA.

which dealt with specific acts, such as shooting Germans who were descending in parachutes, attacking German planes which had made emergency landings and whose crews were in the vicinity, attacking railroad trains engaged in civilian transportation, or strafing civilians. Doers of such deeds could be shot without a court martial. Interestingly enough, in the copy of this memorandum which fell into Allied hands, General Jodl, in a handwritten notation, observed that it was indeed dangerous to attack an aircraft which has been forced to land, but "...to attack an airplane which has made an emergency landing, can not be classified as gangster method but is in complete agreement with the strictest standards of civilized warfare."¹⁵

Aviators were the subject, further, of a secret memorandum emanating from Hitler's headquarters on July 5, 1944.¹⁶ This document advised that aviators who participated in raids on small communities (this being done, says Hitler, as a reprisal measure against the celebrated V-1 bomb) which are neither military, communication, nor armament targets, cannot be accorded POW treatment. Rather, he said, they

15. Ibid. It may be noted that all the German "conditions" could be argued. It is conceivable that a citizen would shoot to kill a descending armed paratrooper and under many conditions might say that a descending airman was indistinguishable from the paratrooper.

16. NCA, III, 538. Document 741-PS.

should be treated as murderers. This is, incidentally, merely a continuation of the policy inaugurated in 1942 by Der Fuehrer, at which time he began his fanatic call for the extermination of all enemies caught indulging in so-called commando activities. In the autumn of 1944 he again called for the extermination of "...all terrorist and sabotage groups..." including "...all parachutists not captured in the actual combat zone."¹⁷

While the Germans maintained that their own paratroopers were in no way distinguished from the regular German military forces,¹⁸ they viewed enemy parachute soldiers in quite another light, as the following telegram from Secretary Stettinius indicates:

The government of the U.S. has received information which clearly shows that Allied military personnel who served as parachutists during the fighting in France were captured by German authorities and treated as Franc Tireurs.¹⁹

D. Statistics

Although an American newspaper correspondent, captured with the British in North Africa in November of 1941 speaks of himself as possibly being the first American prisoner of

17. Telegram 1560 from Ambassador Grew, April 24, 1945.

18. Report of the ICRC, I A, 367-68.

19. Telegram No. 3604, October 23, 1944. Figuratively meaning sharpshooter, franc tireurs were considered guerilla fighters. As a result, when captured, they were beaten and killed.

war in Germany in World War II, the fact that the United States was not yet in the war makes his claim a bit shaky.²⁰ Mr. Denny, until his release, was rather a political prisoner of the Gestapo. As far as research was able to determine, the first American prisoner of war appears to have been Lt. (s.g.) John Dunn, USN, of New Haven, Connecticut who was captured on April 14, 1942.²¹ The names of forty four American PWs captured at Dieppe in August of 1942, the first prisoners of the American land army, were reported to the Central Agency for Prisoners of War (the Agency created by the Geneva Convention) by the German authorities on the 25th of September of the same year.²² Who the first prisoner was and when he was taken are minor points. Of more importance is the number of prisoners taken in the ensuing three years. Official statistics on the number of American PWs in Germany have, to this date, never been released.²³ This has not prevented various quarters from making their

20. Harold Denny, Behind Both Lines (New York: Viking Press, 1942), p. 97.

21. Reprint of Feb. 8, 1944 issue of the Kriegle Times of Stalag Luft III in PW Bulletin, II, No. 8 (August 1944).

22. Rev. Int., XXIV, No. 287 (November 1942), 816.

23. The Government's Strength and Statistics Branch in Washington has stated that there were 125,890 prisoners of war and interned civilians. However, there has been no breakdown regarding how many prisoners there were, in which theatre imprisonment occurred, or to which branch of the armed forces the prisoners belonged.

own estimates. They run, roughly, from 90 to 120 thousand.

Until the time of the Allied landings in North Africa in November of 1942, the bulk of American personnel sent into action were from the Air Forces. Of the number shot down in this early phase of the war, the Germans transmitted information regarding their capture to Geneva "usually without delay."²⁴ After November, the American forces increasingly participated in major battles both in Africa and then in Europe. Not unsurprisingly, this greater involvement in land operations, particularly in Italy and in France, resulted in the capture and detention of greater numbers of PWs. Simultaneously the Air Forces threw greater efforts onto the continent. Almost one half the flying personnel captured in 1943 were Americans who descended in numbers approximating an average of four hundred per month.²⁵ On a Schweinfurt raid of October 1943, the Air Force lost 69 B-17 Fortresses, an equivalent of over 500 airmen on one mission.²⁶

By October 1944, according to an estimate of an American Red Cross representative, Maurice Pate, reports had been sent to "each of the 110,000 families of American POWs".²⁷

24. Report of the ICRC, II A, 264.

25. PW Bulletin, II, No. 3 (March 1944).

26. Joan David, "Our Captured Airmen", Flying, XXXV (November 1944), 34. 346 of the 541 "missing" airmen were subsequently reported as PWs.

27. PW Bulletin, III, No. 2 (February 1945).

Another estimate, as of the same period, quartered the above figure.²⁸ Early in 1945, the German operational staff of the Wehrmacht estimated they held 230,000 Anglo-American prisoners, 62,000 of whom were American.²⁹ However, after the recovery of 47 out of 73 Pw camps and hospitals where Americans were held, the State Department estimated that Germany still held between sixty and sixty-five thousand American soldiers.³⁰

Post-war tottings revealed other facts. The Secretary of War stated that from June 6, 1944 to the end of hostilities, "MIAs"³¹ (excluding the Air Forces) amounted to 58,568.³² He stated further, that between seventy and eighty thousand Americans had been released from German camps. A War Department press memorandum soon afterward referred to "90,000 former prisoners of war" and said further:

This figure, 90,000, the War Department believes, represents substantially all the United States personnel taken prisoner in the European fighting.

28. Midwestern Area of American Red Cross, POW News Notes, I, No. 3 (Dec. 28, 1944). This minimization, I believe, is obviously inaccurate; perhaps was even a misprint.

29. NCA, Supplement A, 901, Document 606-D. In the month of Feb. alone approximately 6,000 American PWs were taken by the Germans, cf. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 315 (March 1945), 214.

30. Press release in U.S. Department of State Bulletin, XII (April 29, 1945), 810.

31. "Missing in action" includes prisoners of war.

32. War Review by the Secretary of War at Press Conference, May 10, 1945.

A check made of casualty reports concerning such personnel who already have been returned to military control indicates that few of them had not been reported previously as prisoners of war. It is not expected that many of those who are still being carried as missing in action will appear later as having been prisoners of war.³³

An official Army radio report a fortnight previously said, "...There were about 100,000 [American prisoners of war] held by Germany in the last stage of the war."³⁴ Still higher estimates were given. A House of Representative hearing on a related subject spoke of over 118,000 ex-prisoners of war (some of whom probably were detained by the Japanese).³⁵ Finally, while not differentiating between PWs and interned civilians, the International Red Cross made the following report:

The alphabetical card file established by the American section [of the Central Agency of Prisoners of War at Geneva] numbers 330,000 cards which report on 120,000 cases. A separate catalog concerning PWs and interned civilians in the Far East has been established.³⁶

In the presence of so many estimates covering the range that they do and in the absence of an "official" figure,

33. U.S. War Dept. Press Memorandum, May 31, 1945.

34. U.S. War Dept. Summary of War News Report given by Col. Albert L. Warner on May 20, 1945.

35. U.S. House of Representatives, "Special Compensation Benefits for Prisoners of War," 80th Congress, 2nd Session, Hearings on H.R. 5851 before Subcommittee on Compensation and Pensions of the Veterans Affairs Committee, May 21, 1948.

36. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 319 (July, 1945), 539.

any conclusion reached might be criticized as being arbitrary. It appears that a compromise estimate would rather closely agree with that of P.E. Ryan who suggests there were 95,000 American prisoners of war held by Germany.³⁷ This estimate, in any event, is probably within five percent of the correct number.

37. "Prisoners of War", Ten Eventful Years (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1947), III, 642.

CHAPTER IV

GERMAN ATTITUDES AND ORDERS

A. Before the War

World War I may be considered a precedent regarding the subject at hand. During that conflict General Stenger, as leader of the 58th German Brigade, is alleged to have ordered that no more prisoners of war were to be taken; they were, rather, to be killed.¹ After the war, the British called the Commandants of twenty German prison camps to trial for having urged that excessive cruelty be used. In a sense, thus, the ensuing evidence will "prove" whether history repeats itself. To the writer, the World War I record rather shows that there was nothing inherently new, as far as German treatment of prisoners is concerned, in World War II.

As a preface to World War II and apparently keeping in mind possible consequences or results of the "acquisition" of Czechoslovakia, the OKW² drew up in 1938 a list of violations of international law that might be expected from troops in combat.³ Offering a clue as to what could be expected in the future, this military body decreed that forcing enemy prisoners of war to work in what might be considered war work (e.g., digging trenches, producing or loading munitions, etc.)

1. Sheldon Glueck, War Criminals, Their Prosecution and Punishment (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1944), p. 24.

2. Oberkommando der Wehrmacht, Armed Forces High Command.

3. NCA VI, 789-814, Document C-2.

could be justified as a necessity of war, or by asserting that the enemy did it first. They go on to say that the Germans should use discretion when reproaching their enemies who do these verboten things, "for it is possible that similar accusations could be made against us..." The German army headquarters was, it appears, playing a variation of a theme by Hitler who said, "No so-called international law, no agreement, will prevent me from making use of any advantage that offers."⁴ Der Fuehrer's disdainful attitude toward conventions was further exemplified when he exchanged the negative for the positive by saying, "Treaties for me are significant only so long as they are useful to my intentions."⁵

In March of 1940, Rudolph Hess used his high position in the Nazi Party to get Party leaders to spread the word to the people that enemy fliers who had bailed out had to be seized and had to be immediately arrested or "liquidated" (Unschadlich gemacht).⁶ The German High Command on October 15, 1942, in distinct contrariety to Article II, Section 3 of the Geneva Convention, stated:

4. Sheldon Glueck, The Nuremberg Trial and Aggressive War (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1945) p. 88, quoting from H. Kauschnig, Hitler Speaks, p. 21.

5. RGa, VIII, 643-47, Affidavit H of Generaloberst Franz Halder.

6. RGa, III, 107-08.

Treatment of German prisoners contrary to international law or inhumane treatment on any battlefield... will henceforth have to be atoned for by all prisoners taken by Germany without distinction as to their nationality.⁷

The U.S. Minister in Switzerland interpreted this statement to be not so much a deliberate decision of the military and political authorities as an impulsive manifestation of the High Command's feelings. In the same unexcited tone he noted, seemingly in the defense of this stand, that there were not many American prisoners of war being held by Germany at this time anyway. Also in October of 1942 came the notorious Hitler "Commando" order.⁸ Issued with a top secret security classification and aimed primarily at the British, it ordained that all commandos, even uniformed commandos, were to be followed until they were caught and killed. Contrary to the customary rules of war, their surrender could not be accepted. A legal argument accompanied this stand. It was said in its defense that the commandos at whom it was directed used illegal means of warfare, means not recognized in customary rules of warfare. Such personnel, it was argued further, were themselves instructed to kill any PWs they might have taken, particularly if the encumbrance of

7. Translation contained in telegram 5205, Nov. 15, 1942 from Leland Harrison, U.S. Minister to Switzerland to the Sec. of State. See below, p. 42, for statement on reprisals by a captured foreign office spokesman.

8. EOA, I, 154, Document 498-PS; II, 291, 361-63; III, 416-17.

capturing prisoners in any way hindered the success of the mission to which they were assigned. Hitler's defense of his own policy to deprive commandos of the protection afforded by the Geneva Convention was expressed on the day after he issued the order in these words:

England and America will therefore always be able to find volunteers for this kind of warfare, as long as they can truthfully assure them that there is no danger of loss of life for them. At worst, all they have to do is successfully commit their attack on people, traffic installations, or other installations, and upon being encountered by the enemy, to capitulate.⁹

Such a declaration was fraught with danger in its lack of limitations. When the order says to disregard where said commandos come from, by land, sea, or air, the way seems paved for the practice of shooting first and asking questions later. Thus, by a not too tortuous twisting of the order, bailed out airmen might be shot on the pretext that they were commandos such as those described in the order. Another indication of the trend that would be followed in the formation of a PW policy can be extracted from the "Reichenau" document (found by the Russians after the recapture of Klin) in which the German Field Marshal says, "... supply of food to prisoners of war is unnecessary humanitarianism."¹⁰

9. NCA, III, 427-30. Translation of Document 503-P3, written by Hitler on October 10, 1942.

10. Quoted in "German Treatment of War Prisoners", New Europe, July-August Supplement (1943), p. 44.

With as much adverse preparation as was made regarding the treatment of prisoners, it appears obvious that German policy toward Americans could not possibly have been without flaw.

B. Early Stages of the War

Belligerent governments received in July 1943 an appeal from the ICRC to respect the right of men to be treated according to law and without arbitrariness "...even in the face of military considerations." Twenty-two countries responded favorably, Italy and Hungary among them, but Germany offered no such answer.¹¹ However, the German authorities did communicate the names of PWs captured in Sicily to Geneva, designating them as belonging to the forces of the "Parachute Infantry."¹² A similar request was sent out in August 1943. This appeal asked that the rights of PWs be preserved; that the practice of depriving certain PWs of their status cease. Of the eighteen belligerents to reply, none represented the Axis powers.¹³ Instead, in the same month, a Himmler order was issued which stated, "It is not the task of the police to interfere in clashes between German [civilians] and English and American fliers who have bailed out."¹⁴ In December of

11. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 303 (March 1944), 135-92.

12. Rev. Int., XXV, No. 297 (Sept¹⁹⁴³), 722.

13. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 305 (May 1944), 349-53.

14. HGA, I, 154.

the same year, a third such Red Cross request was distributed, this one urging belligerents not to resort to reprisals or retaliatory measures. True to form, Germany again refused any assurances.¹⁵

The next year, 1944, showed a continuation of previous policies. Ernest Kaltenbrunner, chief of the security police, in April, authorized a circular regarding bailed-out fliers.¹⁶ Repeating the Himmler-Hitler order of August 1943 prohibiting police interference in altercations between Germans and bailed-out Anglo-American terrorfleiger, warning the people that any act of befriending captured enemy airmen would warrant dire punishment; it ordered further that apprehended enemy pilots had to be tied up to prevent escape. In the same month Secretary of State Hull wired to Bern asking for a Swiss investigation of the report that had come to him regarding an American PW, Lt. Leventhal, whose nose was broken by a German guard and who was paraded through the streets of Frankfurt with a sign reading, "I am a member of the race which started the war."¹⁷

American terrorflieger were the subject of a timely bit of advice offered by Hitler to the Japanese Ambassador, Oshima, when they met at the Berghof in May 1944. At that

15. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 306 (June 1944), 429-33.

16. NCA, Supplement A, 592-94, Document 3855-PS.

17. Telegram 1156, April 5, 1944, from Secretary of State Hull to American legation in Bern.

time the German leader humanely suggested that the Americans should be hung by the Japanese, not shot.¹⁸ The President of the International Red Cross, Carl J. Burckhardt, expressed the opinion that, if it had not been for his organization, the Germans would surely have denounced the Geneva Convention by the end of 1943.¹⁹

C. Post Invasion Attitudes

As Allied forces undertook the invasion of France on June 6, 1944, a meeting took place at Der Fuehrer's headquarters, the minutes of which reflect the emotional disturbances engendered.²⁰ In an attempt to eliminate or at least discourage strafings by low-flying Allied pursuit and fighter aircraft, the meeting adjudged that such a violation of the rules of war deserved nothing less than lynching. Every instance, they urged, should be particularized and publicized. If interrogations should reveal a terror-flienger who had escaped lynching, he should be segregated and handed over to the SD²¹ for "special treatment" (sonderbehandlung). Keitel, the chief of the OKW, perhaps fearing that Germany's slip was showing, attached and initialed the

18. NCA, VI, 655. Partial translation of Document 3780-PS, a secret Reich letter signed by von Sonnleithner.

19. PI Bulletin, III, No. 6 (June 1945).

20. NCA, III, 533-36. Document 735-PS.

21. Sicherheitsdienst, the Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence Agency of the SS.

remark, "I am against legal procedure! It doesn't work out!" To insure the success of the measure, Martin Bormann issued a secret circular declaring that those people who participated in lynchings should be immune from police measures and criminal proceedings.²² Ambassador Ritter of the Foreign Office, offering legal advice on how to handle terrorflierer, said on June 20:

In spite of the evident objections from the point of view of foreign policy and of International Law, the Foreign Office agrees on the whole with the intended [OKW] action...

In the cases of lynch-justice, the strict establishing of the criminal facts and circumstances ... is not very important. Firstly, no German authority is directly responsible; death had already occurred before a German authority handled the case.

And regarding "special treatment":

A way out if necessary would be not to allow suspected airmen to assume the legal status of a prisoner of war at all to begin with...

The Foreign Office continued by suggesting how to legally make a prisoner of war out of a captive. All that is necessary is a summary court hearing. Coldly continuing:

Naturally this way out would also not prevent Germany being reproached for breaches of the agreements at present in force, and would also perhaps not prevent reprisals being taken against German prisoners of war.²³

Balkan resistance in July brought out a Keitel order that so-called partisan groups, including Americans who

22. NCA, II, 903. Document 057-PS.

23. NCA, VII, 236-39. Document D-780.

San Francisco

cooperated with these forces in Southwestern Europe (notably in Yugoslavia), were not to receive recognition as PWs but rather should be treated as specified in Hitler's "Commando" order.²⁴ General Warlimont issued a memorandum to clarify the 1942 Hitler order in the light of the recent Allied landings. Soldiers who were taken prisoner or who surrendered during "open combat", he said, were not to be treated according to the Commando ruling. He specified further that that ruling was not to pertain to enemy soldiers in uniform. Doubtful cases were to be turned over to the SD who were to act as a sort of court to determine whether the Commando order was to be applied.²⁵

Further post-invasion nervousness was manifested the following month, August, when the German authorities ordered that reserves of food in PW camps could not be built up. Not only were supplies on hand to be used up, but reserve stocks were to be separated from the camps for which they were intended. A notice was sent to the Red Cross in Geneva to cease or reduce relief shipments until existent reserves were consumed.²⁶ Difficulties arose with International Red Cross delegates. Delegate Scapini, fearing his

24. NCA, II, 373.

25. NCA, II, 371-72.

26. PW Bulletin, III, No. 2 (February 1945). At Luft IV (where the writer was interned) all PWs were, at the time, on half-rations, i.e. two PWs had to share one R.C. food parcel, designed for one person's consumption, each week.

arrest, was forced to seek refuge in the Berlin International Red Cross offices.²⁷ Speaking in defense of the recall of one of its delegates and general criticism by the Germans, the ICRC commented:

The offices of the Wilhelmstrasse tried to put pressure on the delegates by interpreting Article 87 of the Convention in an extremely restrictive sense, and by claiming to confine the right of intervention of the ICRC to the field of welfare.²⁸

D. As Defeat Approached

Chaos was pretty well established as the normal condition of Germany by 1945. Russian advances from the East sent vast hordes of Germans scurrying westward. Western air supremacy went unchallenged. In February, as thousands of American prisoners of war trudged wearily in what seemed to be an interminable forced march (more respectably called camp transfers), the Operational Staff of the German armed forces discussed the merits of denouncing their international agreements. A record of their considerations discloses the thinking that eschewed formal denunciation. For instance, although Article XCVI clearly provides for the right of denunciation, it was said:

Strictly formally, a denunciation of the agreements [both of the agreements comprising the Geneva Convention of 1929] is not possible. The Conventions concerning PWs and wounded provide for no denunciation...²⁹

27. Telegram 5834 dated September 5, 1944, from Ambassador Harrison in Bern to the Secretary of State.

28. Report of the ICRC, I A, 244-45.

29. ICRC, Supplement A, 894-97. Document D-606.

From a defensive point of view, it was noted that denunciation would give the enemy the excuse necessary for using any means of warfare he wished. This, the German Staff apparently thought, would be more unsparing on the Germans than fighting the "admissable" weapons of war. "According to experience" (italics mine), they said, unrestricted warfare had a greater effect in a limited space than on an offensive force operating without space limitations. In other words, Germany's position of being hemmed in, operated to preserve the Geneva Convention. Regarding civilian populations, renunciation could only jeopardize those in German territory occupied by the enemy. Militia organizations such as the Volksturm, legalized by the Geneva Convention, would, upon renunciation, automatically become illegal. Finally, to announce the termination of the Convention would obviate Germany's right to criticize the enemy's terror tactics such as the bombings of hospitals, ambulances, etc.

All these arguments led to one conclusion: there would be small advantage for Germany by such a move. Millions of prisoners, among whom were thousands of Americans, were actually being used in Germany's defense program (with the sanction of the Geneva Convention being given only to indirect help). Denunciation would only stir up unrest in PW Camps that were at the moment inadequately guarded. There was concern also for German soldiers held captive by the Allies. Without a Convention, there would be no Protecting Power to

look after their rights and welfare.

Epitomizing the "expediency" argument was the opinion of the Supreme Commander of the German Navy:

...it appears in general...to be more correct to apply measures which are considered necessary for military or other reasons and which are in contradiction to the Geneva Convention, according to the situation of the moment, without previously announcing them by a withdrawal.³⁰

In other words, whereas from the Naval point of view U-Boats could attack hospital ships without withdrawing from the Convention, so also, from the point of view of PW custodians, prisoners' rights could be violated just as easily while still nominally adhering to the Prisoner of War Code.

After the war in Europe was ended, Dr. Eric Albrecht, ex-chief of the Legal Division of the German Foreign Office, was captured by U.S. military authorities. Dr. Albrecht, who served after world war I in Mixed Claims Commissions both with the United States and Great Britain, was interviewed by Foreign Service Officer S.K. Lafoon. A memorandum of their talks offers illuminating insight on the temper of German thought as well as considerable factual material.³¹ Apparently familiar with many phases of the German war effort, Albrecht spoke on diverse topics:

1. Germans had stopped the repatriation ship, Gripsholm, in September 1944 in Norway on the pretext that a spy was on board. The Foreign Office, he said, was not responsible for this act.

30. HGA, Supplement A, 898-99.

31. Enclosure to airmail letter No. 469 dated June 6, 1945.

2. The Foreign Office was not an executive organ. It could only apply for its information to the Police or to the High Command. They do not question the information received from these sources.
3. The Foreign Office would have gladly accepted a U.S. proposal for the continued exchange of PWs (Feb. 1945), but the High Command said that lack of transport and hospital space would make it impossible to accept at that particular time. Thus it was the internal condition of Germany that caused their non-acceptance. German authorities did not have the time to do anything about the U.S. proposal that German doctors act in lieu of the Mixed Medical Commissions. In this respect, he thought, the Geneva Convention did need revising. The first basis of exchange of sick and wounded PWs should be a certificate by a medical officer of the Detaining Power, and the Mixed Medical Commission then could function as a Court of Appeal.
4. He personally felt that the U.S. had treated German PWs fairly.
5. At the end of November or December 1944, General Gottlieb Berger was appointed to head all PW Camps in Germany. Berger, head of the Waffen SS and leader of one section of the political SS,³² appointed his own staff. He appointed representatives of the two branches of the SS that he headed as well as members of the German Red Cross. It was Albrecht's opinion that Berger made no changes in PW camp guards, but did place key men in camps to report to him on administration. Waffen SS, he said, were sometimes guards in camps. Asked whether the SS took over the camps in July 1944, he replied, "It might be true."

32. Of the three types of SS in Germany, the Waffen SS really represented the Army, the Political SS dealt with internal matters, and the Police SS were the controlling power of the German police system. There is, incidentally, some question regarding Berger's position. Kaltenbrunner, at the War Crimes Trials, denied that Berger controlled the PW camps from October 1944 on (as was suggested at the time). Instead, he said, Himmler, as chief of the German Replacement Army, headed all PW installations and Berger was the General Deputy for Himmler. cf. NCA, Supplement B, p. 1320-21. Berger's own testimony speaks of his being selected as "Administrator" of PWs in September 1944. Cf. NCA, Supplement B, p. 1533-34.

6. Regarding concentration camps, the Foreign Office knew of their existence but could not interfere in such matters. His office did, however, make arrangements with the SS that nationals of western powers would not be sent to such camps. When the interrogator asked about U.S. nationals in the Duchenstein Camp, Albrecht said that, as a matter of fact, he did know of a few instances in which this was done, but such cases were mainly due to error in establishing their nationality.
7. Specifically regarding the treatment accorded American PWs, Albrecht explained that the hardships of the evacuation toward the end of the war were caused by the suddenness of the Russian advance. Camps in Central Germany, he admitted, were already crowded before the influx from the east. This made conditions "...not as good as they should be but it could not be helped." The breakdown of railroad transportation, he added, only added to difficulties. Albrecht denied the existence of any policy to intentionally mistreat PWs. The "no mistreatment" policy, he said, was primarily the policy of the German Foreign Office and, incidentally, the policy of the German High Command. The German populace voiced objection to the good treatment accorded to prisoners of war especially because they received Red Cross food in addition to their German ration. While the Foreign Office unflinchingly insisted on the PW's right to receive Red Cross parcels, the High Command wavered, but in the end agreed that such assistance could be continued. Albrecht claimed ignorance of any ill treatment to PWs in the Western part of Germany.
8. The Geneva and Hague Conventions, he said, are not perfect, but they are good. They should have been applied in this war. Some Germans thought these Conventions should have been ignored, he added.
9. The United States would find American property intact and ready to be handed over to the respective owners, if it was not destroyed by bombings or other war causes.
10. Albrecht could not recall any instance in which

the Germans had considered reprisals against treatment of German PWs in the United States.

Analyzing the general outlook and attitude of this functionary who was by no means unimportant, it appears that he sings the typical German refrain, "I'm not responsible. I was told to do it." His office was responsible for nothing but good; it was the higher officials who established policy and they could not be questioned. If hardships were incurred in the war, the war was to be blamed, or perhaps, impersonal factors such as "internal conditions". He saw room for improvement in international legislation but was unaware of declarations made contrary to international law by his own High Command with whom, even had he not desired it, he was in close liaison.

This may help understand the evidence to follow.

CHAPTER V
CAPTURE CONDITIONS

A. The Rules

Articles V and VI of the PW Code define legal capture treatment. About the only obligations set up are (1) that the PW must give his name, rank, and serial number and (2) that he is obliged to surrender military equipment. By far the greater emphasis is laid upon PW rights or protections. He may not be coerced to give information, nor may he be "threatened, insulted or exposed to unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment". He may not be deprived of his personal belongings and is entitled to keep metal helmets and gas masks. Money may be taken away but a receipt must be given for the amount determined. He cannot be divested of "insignia of rank, decorations and objects of value".

Articles VII and VIII govern conditions immediately after capture and likewise stress rights rather than duties. The first consideration is to remove prisoners from combat zones, the purpose obviously being to take them out of danger. They might be kept in combat zones only if they were sick or wounded and could not be safely moved. If they are obliged to walk to safety, they are not to be taken over twenty kilometers per day, "unless the necessity of reaching water and food depots requires longer stages". Captors are bound to notify the Central PW Agency in Geneva not only the names of PWs taken, but also their mailing addresses. Prisoners, on the other hand, must be given the opportunity to

write to their families as soon as possible. Prisoners captured at sea were to be granted their rights as soon as possible after they reach port.

The above summary, I believe, discloses the "datedness" of the treaty. It seems to be distinctly oriented toward considerations of land forces. Although mention is made of captives taken at sea (presumably naval forces), nothing is said of according protection to air forces. Notwithstanding the fact that incorporating such matters into the treaty would not insure that observances would follow, the treaty could be brought up to date in this respect.¹ Technological military advances, such as those which boosted the importance of air power, will inevitably have the effect of tending to outmode the Convention. The present trend toward "all out" wars, providing a semblance of respect for law is preserved, must lead to the greater extension of such protections as those theoretically afforded by the Geneva Convention.

B. Capture Conditions in Germany

Probably very few men, upon capture, knew their rights as PWs. Military training films on the subject were shown, but conditions seldom seemed to approximate those pictured. There was something unrealistic about the advice of an Army booklet, If You Should Be Captured, which suggested that

1. Saying that horses may be confiscated from PWs is certainly an anachronism. Article VI.

PWs ask their captors for a copy of the Geneva Convention in English so that they might better know their rights. A PW can make a nuisance of himself, but he cannot argue with his captors. A cigarette lighter might be an item of personal use, but very few accompanied prisoners through interrogation.² Capturing personnel frequently confiscated money, watches, and rings as "souvenirs". For these, no receipts were given.

Among the first Americans captured were those taken in North Africa. An anonymous officer, recording his experiences in the Infantry Journal, told how personal articles were confiscated.³ Any indication by the prisoners that such seizures did not suit them resulted in their being roughly treated. Unwounded PWs not only carried their wounded comrades, but wounded Germans also to areas behind the fighting. Other Americans told the lieutenant that they were forced to carry back dead German soldiers. There was no formal interrogation immediately upon capture, but the lieutenant described what he suspected was the "friendly approach", whereby a German officer, asserting that he wished to improve his English, tried to cultivate a conversation. The German ration consisted mainly of sauerbrot which many prisoners

2. The author managed to keep on "Electrolite", a flameless lighter, only by posing it as an inhalator.

3. Lieutenant X, "Ten Days a Nazi Prisoner," Infantry Journal, LIV, (May 1944), 30-33.

found difficult to keep down. Once it successfully entered the digestive system, it bloated the eater with gas. Using tin cans for utensils, the Kriegies, collected the rest of their host's food: a couple of tablespoons of boiled peas (dehydrated). As is inevitable on any battle area, diarrhea and dysentery were rampant. The unique German delousing process assured all that went through of a plentiful supply of lice. From Tunisia the prisoners were transported across the Mediterranean to Europe. This trip was extremely distressing. Sent down into the hold of the ship in large numbers, the prisoners suffered from inadequate ventilation and toilet facilities. Absolutely no water was given them. Fortunately for Lieutenant X, but unfortunately for others, the vessel was bombed. Axis personnel quickly abandoned ship. Sinking in shallow water, it was left with five hundred PWs, many of whom were sick and wounded, to shift for themselves. After the bombing attack, the Germans sent a power launch to evacuate the stranded prisoners. What was to follow was described by another prisoner captured in North Africa: "A German officer warned us that the further we got from the fighting, and the closer to Germany, the worse we would fare. Brother, he wasn't wrong!"⁴

Seeking something to say in favor of German behavior is, at best, a difficult task. They did, however, comply

4. Col. C. Ross Greening and Sgt. Angelo M. Spinelli, The Yankee Kriegies (New York: YMCA, 1946), unpaginated.

with that section of Article VIII directing that the Central Agency of POWs in Geneva be notified of captures of prisoners of war.⁵ As the war progressed, however, they became remiss in this matter. Geneva was thus able to announce by mid-1944:

The man of confidence of one German Camp has just sent to Geneva a list of close to 3000 names of PWs (American). This is the first information obtained about these men.⁶

Capture conditions after June 1944 showed steady deterioration. A request by the Secretary of State that the Swiss protest to the Germans listed the following instances:⁷

1. Between June 19-29, 1944, 682 Americans and other Allied nationals were crowded into a 70 by 80 foot room at Stalag 133 near Chartres, France. They had no washing or toilet facilities. Water was issued in amounts approximating one cup per man per day. Some men collapsed for want of food.
2. On June 29, 1944 sixteen American non-coms were beaten and kicked by their German guards and by German civilians. These men were marched down the street so that they could be held up to ridicule.
3. A group of Americans captured on June 16th near Coen were forced to go two days without food. For three weeks these same Americans were forced to perform labor prohibited by the Geneva Convention (Articles XXXI and XXXII) such as digging up and helping to detonate unexploded bombs, and building and repairing a landing field for German fighter planes. It was evident, the Secretary of State pointed out, that they were thus also being detained in dangerous areas in contravention of Article VII.

5. Rev. Int., XXV, No. 298 (October 1943), 769.

6. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 306 (June 1944), 406.

7. Telegram 727 dated February 16, 1945 from the Secretary of State to the American Legation in Switzerland.

4. During the severest December weather, American prisoners were stripped of outer garments and shoes upon capture. In exchange they received wooden shoes and old clothing. Many severe cases of frozen feet resulted, some of which, said the Secretary, may subsequently necessitate amputation.

Again, about all that can be said in German favor was that they forwarded to Geneva notices of capture and notices of death.⁸ They also allowed American PWs to mail capture cards from collection camps in France.⁹

Although it was by no means unique, the capture of Air Force personnel deserves special attention. This is due not only to the fact that air combat reached unprecedented extents in World War II, but also because it appears that the Germans wished to accord "special attention" to the enemy they so frequently tabbed Terrorflieger. In sketchy terms, an airman's Gefangenschaft was as follows.

When the unfortunate day came for the typical A. F. Kriegie-to-be, he found himself in an aircraft disabled by fighters or flak, frantically checking his parachute harness. Never having made a practice jump did not hinder him for a moment, for there was something sinister about burning metal and feathered propellers. If he was over enemy territory he would most certainly be received by at least one armed German. quite abruptly he became a prisoner of war.

8. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 311 (November 1944), 850.

9. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 504 (August 1944), 652-53.

Still shaky from his most recent experience, he was taken to the nearest military installation for questioning. He was immediately deprived of money and valuables which might assist in an escape attempt. His flying attire, which most certainly would make him conspicuous, was confiscated. For this he could be grateful, for flying attire frequently marked a man as a special target for dirty looks, threats, spit, and stones. His next destination was the renowned interrogation center, Dulag Luft located once at Frankfurt, later at Ketzlar.¹⁰ The camp's specialty was solitary confinement which was meted out without stint, the theory being that isolation loosened the tongue. Questioning varied. The diverse types will be described below. Prisoners were returned to solitary at the whim of the interrogator. Two extended doses were customarily the limit. After his release from the modern Inquisition, the PW received his first Red Cross aid in the form of a "capture parcel". This contained incidentally, his capture card, the first official notice of his capture which was forwarded to Geneva and from there was, in turn, sent to the War Department.

Following the Dulag, the prisoner was taken to a distribution center. After a couple of days of reunions and snapped experiences, he was sent by trainloads to his permanent camp, which was, at least until some time in 1944,

10. Durchgangslager der Luftwaffe.

under the control of the Luftwaffe.

This probably seems a rather moderate procedure in the absence of the too-frequently gruesome details. That such things occurred, however, can be easily shown. Depositions prepared by PWs while they were still in German custody tell, for instance, of an airman being shot by civilians as he was descending in his chute. The same man, a sergeant, was refused first aid by the Bürgermeister of the town he came down in, "Velgast", and, as a result, died en route to a hospital apparently from loss of blood.¹¹ Another officer testified that he witnessed the fatal shooting of two paratroopers by German soldiers.¹² Ambassador Harrison in Switzerland received statements of thirty-one Air Force officers declaring that they had been beaten and generally mistreated by German soldiers and civilians in the presence of German Army officials who in no way intervened.¹³ The attacks came from various levels: Gestapo privates and officers, the Heimwehr, the Wehrmacht, the Berlin City police, the Luftwaffe, the Landwacht, and assorted civilians among whom was even the New Brandenburg town veterinarian. An American

11. Enclosure No. 1 to Airmail Letter 11987 to Secretary of State dated June 9, 1945. Deposition of Lieutenant Leverett.

12. Ibid. Enclosure 3. Deposition of Lieutenant Patrick. While the paratrooper is not unique regarding PW status, his mode de combat does make him different from a bailed out flyer and does, perhaps, account for some of the instances cited herein.

13. Telegram 5541 from Harrison to Secretary of State dated August 24, 1944.

officer repatriated in early 1945 testified that a fellow American, Herbert Gibers, when captured by the Gestapo after having temporarily evaded apprehension, was beaten so severely that he lost the use of both legs for a time.¹⁴ An airman, Captain Eddie Printon, who landed unwounded upon a Berlin balcony, was picked up by the Security Police. He was pronounced dead upon arrival at his destination.¹⁵ Numerous other instances lie behind such wires as the following sent by Secretary Stettinius, which says in part:

The U.S. Government continues to receive reports from reliable sources that American aviators who have parachuted from their disabled craft have been attacked and killed by German military personnel, officials, and civilians.¹⁶

It is evident, thus, that Air Force personnel were far from being in an enviable position during their gefangenschaft.

14. Airgram A-227 from Acting Secretary of State Grew to Bern, dated March 24, 1945.

15. Telegram 4345 from Bern to the Secretary of State dated July 15, 1944.

16. Telegram BAS-2751 from Secretary of State Stettinius to Bern, dated August 10, 1944. This wire, substantiated by specific instances of German practices against which the U.S. wished to protest, mentions among other things, an article appearing in the Voelkischer Beobachter on May 28-29 which "...can be viewed not only as an admission of the loss of authoritative control over the civilian population, but as abetting reprehensible acts of violence against prisoners of war whose protection is guaranteed under existing codes of civilized warfare. The publication of such articles is an invitation to murder, and it is not astonishing that as a result thereof, acts of violence...occurred..."

Again looking at the larger picture regarding capture conditions in Germany, we now approach what was sometimes called "the beginning of the end". Vast numbers of American infantry personnel were captured in December of 1944. A Geneva camp report on Stalag IV B (Muhlberg) reported that five thousand American PWs were interned there, the overwhelming majority of whom were captured on the Western Front during the second half of December. In November, a few months before, there had been only 414 Americans there.¹⁷ A deposition of a lieutenant captured on the 19th of December affirms that he was taken to a "Slave Labor Camp" at Frum at which most of the workers were American NCOs taken during the Ardennes offensive. Forced to work on roads and railroads, the men were fed twenty small crackers and one tenth of a can of cheese per day for this labor.¹⁸ Immediate implications of being captured in the Ardennes offensive were told to Newsweek's Moscow correspondent by Lt. Everett Murray who recounted having gone three days without food upon capture.¹⁹ The fourth day, on which his group had to march "another" eighteen kilometers, they were fed two boiled potatoes apiece. The men were then billeted in pillboxes; were given no blankets. For three successive days

17. PR Bulletin, III, No. 3 (March 1945).

18. Enclosure No. 71 to Airmail Letter 11687 to Secretary of State dated June 9, 1945. Deposition of Lt. Truxes.

19. "From Nazi Brutalities to Soviet Care - on Foot," Newsweek, XLV (April 9, 1945), 59-60.

they again received nothing to eat. This was interrupted by the order to resume marching eastward, on which occasion each man got one sixth of a loaf of bread.²⁰ On the following four days' march the men were given a bowl of soup each day and a small package of "dog biscuits". The first Red Cross food was given when the group reached Wirges (probably Nürges which is located about 130 miles east of the Ardennes forest) at which time one Red Cross parcel was given for every ten men. The assemblage ultimately reached Stalag IV B (Mühlberg) after a four day train ride during which time they were not once allowed off the padlocked boxcars. The officers in the group, for some unfortunate reason, were then assigned to Oflag 64 in Poland, where on the twenty-first of January they began a return (westward) march in a vain effort to outdistance the Russians.

In Belgium there occurred the infamous Malmédy massacre in which over one hundred American PWs were slaughtered after they had surrendered.²¹ Although at the time of this writing (August 1949) a Senate Subcommittee is investigating charges that the Germans were intimidated into making false confessions, seventy two Nazis were convicted of the crime. Since then sentences have been commuted on a wholesale scale.

²⁰. When it did appear, German bread usually came in an underweight 2 kilogram loaf. Thus each man would have received less than 12 ounces.

²¹. Cf. U. S. House of Representatives, "Investigations of the National War Effort," 78th Congress, First Session' House Report 718 (Washington: GPO, 1945), p. 6.

The Germans must have seen indications that their efforts were rapidly being overwhelmed by those of the Allies. It was, perhaps, because of this that they still further disregarded the Geneva Convention. In January 1945, members of an American military mission, wearing uniforms, who were captured behind the German front in the Balkans, were taken to the Mauthausen Concentration Camp where they were shot.²² Such an incident illustrates the frenetic capture policy that American captives were faced with.

C. Interrogation

About all that can be said generally of interrogations is that all the information a prisoner was obliged to give was his name, rank, and serial number. While there was no rule prohibiting the Germans from making further inquiries with the prospect of obtaining military information, they far exceeded the bounds of law (and decency, if it is an acceptable criterion) in the manner they conducted their interrogations as the following evidence will show. If a prisoner chose to reveal information, and a few undoubtedly did, that was his decision to make. Article V, however, was written to protect prisoners who had no attachments to the enemy and would refuse to help them in any way. It was they who were not to be "threatened, insulted, or exposed to

²². Trial of the Major War Criminals (Nuremberg, Germany: The International Military Tribunal, 1947), I, 28. Affidavit of Adolph Zutte, Adjutant of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp.

unpleasant or disadvantageous treatment of any kind whatever." Although the point might, I suppose, be disputed, mental anguish obviously falls under this last category.

Upon arrival at an interrogation camp in Germany, a Kriege was invariably given a dose of solitary confinement. Intended to soften him up for interrogation, this quarantine lasted anywhere from one day to several weeks. In a bare cell with nothing evident to occupy his mind, it was thought that he would more eagerly seek someone to talk to... even if it were the German interrogator. If the prisoner changed his attitude about talking at that time, it was customary to let him meditate a while longer in a barren cell.

Methods of approach varied between two extremes. At one end was the "talk, or else..." modus operandi; at the opposite end was the indirect "let's be friends" tack. The latter was by no means as popular as the former, for it usually proved slightly ridiculous to be conversing about a mutually "acceptable" topic and suddenly find a "significant" question popping in from nowhere.²³ Balking at this point, the prisoner was then usually told by his interrogator that there was really no information he could give that German intelligence was not already in possession of. Many a prisoner was left in open-mouthed wonderment as all the military installations he had been at through his training were recited to him

23. Cf. Guy Morgan, POW (London: Whittlesey, 1945) p.49.

and even, perhaps, where and when his unit reached combat. Germans wanted their wards to think that they knew all the answers.

The other approach may be seen from information sent the Secretary of State from Bern.²⁴ In this instance a group of officers upon arrival at Luchenwalde (Stalag III A) got the taken-for-granted "solitary" assignment. During this period they were allowed to drink only during their morning washing period during which time they received rough treatment from the guards for "overuse" of water. The prisoners were forbidden to look out their cell window; disobedience resulted in the outside shutters being closed, leaving the cell in complete darkness. The food during the nine to twenty days of solitary was described as being unpalatable. Interrogation took place mainly in the cells. A German captain who conducted the inquiries said that if no information was given, the prisoners would remain incarcerated for several years or until the end of the war. He also stated that the treatment they were getting was only retaliation for the treatment given German PAs by the British. The report concludes by noting that the officers were coerced into signing statements that they were well treated. The reporter contends, in conclusion, that the men were released only because their cells were needed for a new batch of prisoners.

²⁴. Telegram 6 from Bern to Secretary of State, dated January 1, 1944.

Another officer attested that he was struck on the jaw by a civilian (whose duty and reason of presence were not apparent to him) when he refused to answer questions.²⁵

Air Force interrogation took place almost exclusively at Dulag Luft located at Oberusel near Frankfurt Am Main. British and American airmen were transported great distances to be brought there for questioning.²⁶ Again the approaches varied. One of the favorite ruses used to extract information was the fake Red Cross form.²⁷ Told that filling out this "neutral" questionnaire would facilitate their capture being reported, the unwary prisoner might easily volunteer information that no interrogator could have got. Packages of American cigarettes were "inducements" dangled before tobacco-starved GI's who may have gone weeks without a smoke. The American legation in Bern wired a rather accurate description of this center to the Secretary of State.²⁸ The description, it was said, was a composite picture derived from interviews with PWs who had been interrogated there.

25. Enclosure #3 to Airmail letter 11887 dated June 9, 1945 from Bern to Secretary of State. Deposition of Lt. Lewis.

26. For example, one informant, Lt. Wigger who was shot down in the Mediterranean off the tip of North Africa spent his five days there from March 20-25, 1943. This was later recorded in his War Log, p. 69.

27. "This is your Enemy", Air Force, XXVIII (January 1945), 13.

28. Telegram 5660 from Bern to Secretary of State, dated August 30, 1944.

The Bern agent noted that, "It is possible that the report is colored somewhat by the unpleasant memories of the POWs." The following summary may explain their feelings.

Upon arrival at the center, the prisoners are virtually unclothed. Sometimes receipts are given for confiscated personal property. They are then put into 12 by 15 foot cells. Each cell has an opaque glass window which is constantly closed. The bed, made of either iron or wood, has a straw-stuffed mattress, no pillow, and one blanket. While in solitary, the PWs leave this enclosure a couple times each day to go to a filthy latrine.

Food is meager and miserable. It consists of two pieces of bread, a small amount of margarine, and a cup of ersatz tea or coffee given at 6 A.M. At noon a thin soup is doled out. The "breakfast" menu is repeated in the evening. No Red Cross food is given at all during interrogation. Other deprivations include reading matter, cigarettes, and exercise.

After an average of a week in solitary, prisoners are brought before an interrogator and are questioned in English. Naturally, many more queries than those authorized are asked. The Germans say that they must be given this information before PW rights can be granted. This brings forth various responses. Prisoners who decline to talk are kept in solitary, specifically known cases ranging up to twenty-two

thirty one, and thirty seven days.²⁹ Further questioning may take the "friendly" twist. Trying to obtain the inter-roguee's confidence and induce him to make statements, it is not unusual to hear mentioned the names of comrades or various other familiar details that may be gotten from German intelligence files (regarding family, home town, etc.).

Appealing to their hunger is also common. The contents (food and cigarettes) of Red Cross parcels, allegedly obtained from Americans who have left them behind at hospital installations, are sometimes placed before prisoners at their interrogation. When this type of questioning nets no results, threats are made. The PW is told that if he does not open up he will either be hung or shot. In some cases (apparently where it was strongly suspected that the PW was in possession of vital information) continued close-mouthedness meant turning over the prisoner to the Gestapo who interned him in a Frankfurt prison for further questioning.³⁰

Notwithstanding the fact that Article LXXXVI establishes

29. Enclosure No. 1 to Dispatch 7535 dated January 13, 1944 from Major W.F. Todd, Senior American Officer at Dulag Luft, to the Swiss Legation charges that Officers were kept in unheated solitary rooms for as long as 45 days for refusing to give more information than that required under the Geneva Convention. Article LIV specifies that the duration of a single punishment may not exceed thirty days.

30. Article LVI states: "In no case may prisoners of war be transferred to penitentiary establishments (prisons, penitentiaries, convict prisons, etc.) there to undergo disciplinary punishment."

the right of the Protecting Power to visit all places where prisoners are interned, the Germans never did permit unlimited inspection at the Dulag.³¹ Following dismissal, prisoners were sent to a distribution center at Netzer. It has been suggested that the relatively good treatment received there was designed to make the Kriegie forget the interrogation treatment meted out at Oberursel. During the short stay groups were formed for transport to permanent Luftwaffe camps. After a journey via boxcar ranging from two to five days, this camp was reached.

31. The first Red Cross report on Dulag Luft dated March 4, 1943 was apparently limited to the infirmary of that camp where incidentally, the reporters thought conditions were satisfactory. cf. Rev. Int., XXV, No. 293, (May 1943), 365-68.

CHAPTER VI

PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS

A. Locations

At various stages in the war, German prisoner of war camps literally existed all over the continent of Europe. They reached from the Baltic Sea in the north, to the septentrional borders of Spain in the south; from the Brest peninsula in the west, to Sofia in the east. Actually, however, the greatest bulk of the camps could be found in Germany proper. Those in conquered areas (Belgium, France, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Denmark, etc.) were relatively few in number.

During the earliest stages of the war, camp locations were kept secret. In communiqués and communications the Germans would indicate the name of a camp and the nationalities detained therein without any mention of location. A knowledge of the boundaries of German military districts could, however, give a rough idea of the location. Thus, the camp referred to as Stalag V C would be known to be somewhere in the fifth military district. Then came a time when the secret of location could no longer be preserved. The occasion: the sending of relief shipments from the International Red Cross in Geneva. Consignments had to bear some address. The Germans, desiring that Red Cross aid be rendered, soon after issued the railroad station names, to which freight could be forwarded for specific camps.¹

1. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 372 (October 1945), 703-00.

Camp designations are briefly explained. A Stammlager, abbreviated Stalag, is a permanent camp for non coms or enlisted men, excluding Air Force personnel, or a base camp from which work detachments were sent out. Camps for Air Force prisoners were designated as Stalag Luft, or Stammlager der Luftwaffe. An Oflag, or Offizier Lager, is obviously a camp for Officer personnel. A Marlag, or Marine Lager, contained naval personnel. A Dulag, or Durchgangslager, was the transient camp from which assignments to permanent camps were made. Injured or wounded prisoners were sometimes assigned to a Lazaret, or military hospital. These various type camps, as mentioned before, could be found throughout Germany. The Stalags customarily bore a Roman numeral, identifying in which Wehrkreise (of the twenty-two military districts comprising the Greater Reich) they could be found. Stalags designated by an Arabic numeral (344, 357) bore no relation to the Wehrkreise system. Likewise, Luft Camp numbers were not associated with the military districts in which they were located.² Lazarets customarily bore the number of the camp to which they were attached. A roster of camp locations can be found in Appendix A. It is possible that locations cited are not completely accurate, for even the Provost Marshal General's office requested during the war that they be notified of camp changes revealed

2. PW Bulletin, II, No. 12 (December 1944).

through letters to next of kin. Official channels, apparently, could not keep them up to date. It has been estimated that at the end of 1944 there were in Germany a total of 160 base camps (Stalags, Oflag, Luft Stalags) and 100,000 work detachments detaining anywhere from ten to one thousand prisoners.³ Due to the circumstances of the period, it is virtually impossible to estimate at how many of these Americans were to be found.

B. Safety

To assure the relative safety of prisoners while in detention, the Convention of 1929 provided, by Article IX, that camps should be neither in deleterious climates nor in areas jeopardized by fighting or bombardment. While nature remained characterized by relative stability, aerial bombardment underwent drastic changes in World War II. While Allied bombers were undoubtedly within reach of all camps, knowledge of their existence naturally evoked consideration in the selection of military objectives. There were, nevertheless, instances in which Americans were endangered to various extents due, perhaps, to a combination of factors; one being their camp locations, the other being "errors" in the bombing accuracy of Allied aircraft.

Red Cross estimates establish the number of PW camps bombed or machine-gunned in Germany and in occupied France as being about thirty.⁴ Of these, the majority were located

3. PR Bulletin, III, No. 4 (April 1945).

4. Report of the ICRC, I A, 316. The estimate covers November 1943 to May 1945.

in the Rhine Valley. Perhaps by coincidence, at the end of 1943 an inquiry was made of the Germans as to why a Luft camp, which had been in a country location, was transferred to the outskirts of a Rhine town, thereby exposing the PWs to greater danger from aerial bombardment.⁵ Of the prisoners exposed to such dangers, the majority were probably those employed on work detachments, especially those on Kommando establishments attached to railroads or factories, or those located in heavily populated districts. Although there is no indication whether it was the exception or the rule, the OKW in a release dated September 13, 1944 stated that not one American PW working on Munich work detachments had been injured as a result of air raids during July of that year.⁶ In August, an International Red Cross cable notified American authorities that two Americans had been killed at Stalag 398 during an air raid.⁷

In late December 1944, sixty American Officers were killed during a raid on Limburg. Stalag XII A, where they were detained at the time, was located precariously close to the railroad marshalling yards that were, apparently,

5. Ibid, footnote 1, p. 310.

6. Quoted in Telegram GEM-633 from Leland Harrison to Secretary of State dated September 22, 1944.

7. Telegram 1716 from Stettinius to Bern dated August 7, 1944.

the intended target.⁸ Information from Paris, asserting that the camp was only 600 yards from the marshalling yards, was the basis for a U.S. protest.⁹

Safety precautions against bombardment within the camps were, apparently, the subject of further U.S. consternation as the following excerpt of a telegram by acting Secretary of State Grew attests:

Government of the United States views with the greatest concern the ruling of the German High Command prohibiting the construction of air raid shelters in POW camps at which American Air Force personnel are held.¹⁰

In spite of the aforementioned incidents, an unsigned article (probably written by the editor, Gilbert Redfern) in the Prisoners of War Bulletin, mentioning that the War and State Departments had taken up this matter, said, "...it is understood to be their considered opinion that the Germans have not deliberately placed prisoners of war where they might be in serious danger of being hit by Allied bombs."¹¹ This is another example of catering to next of kin morale.¹¹

C. Administration

Until some time in 1944, the OKW assumed complete

8. Telegram 707 from Bern to Secretary of State dated February 1, 1945.

9. Telegram 92 from Paris to the Secretary of State dated January 7, 1945.

10. Telegram 392 from Grew to Bern dated January 23, 1945.

11. PW Bulletin, III, No.5 (May 1945)

jurisdiction over PW camps. Under this set-up, corresponding branches of service assumed immediate responsibility for similar branches of PWs. Thus, a Marine Offizier would head a naval camp, a Luftwaffe person would command an airmen's camp, etc. Of the Commandants, it has been estimated that about one third of them had themselves been prisoners of war in World War I.¹² Supplementary training included a six week course on the terms of the Geneva Convention. These circumstances and this training must have imparted to these administrative officers some empathy and understanding of the PW's plight. In contradistinction to the era of SS control, this was a fortunate period for prisoners of war.

Testimony offered at the Nuremberg trials asserted that Martin Bormann, Secretary to the Fuehrer and Head of the Nazi Party Chancery, (who was being tried in absentia) at the time he had issued the secret circular prohibiting police measures against those civilians who participated in mob actions directed at Anglo-American airmen, issued open orders which took the jurisdiction over PWs away from the OKW and handed it over to Heinrich Himmler. This order of September 1943 directed, further, that all PW camp commanders should be under orders of local SS commanders.¹³ Thus, while the

12. "6,000,000 POWs," Fortune, XXVII (Feb. 1943), 198.

13. NCA, II, 903. Document 058-PS.

personnel in immediate charge were not changed, there had taken place an obvious move to shift top level responsibility. Bormann, early in 1944, as a spokesman for the OKW, ordered Nazi Party jurisdiction over prisoners of war particularly when they were employed as forced labor.¹⁴ Calling for harsh and brutal treatment of Allied captives, he directed that firearms and corporal punishment not be withheld in exacting labor services. Shortly before, the Secretary of State had received information that SS control was becoming a fact.¹⁵ Reliable sources divulged that a Colonel close to SS circles was being groomed for the job of Director of the OKW Prisoner of War Information Bureau. Also plans were being formulated to assign the organization and the guarding of PW camps to superior police authorities. At the moment SS officers in Wehrmacht uniform were in charge of recruiting PW camp personnel. Thus, it was contended, SS officers would soon completely replace Wehrmacht officers. In the light of this information, credence is lent to the contentions of Dr. Albrecht.¹⁶

D. ICRC Visits and Reports

Summaries of ICRC visits to PW camps in the United States mention specific installations such as Camp Crowder, Fort

14. Ibid. Document 656-PS.

15. Telegram 8167 from Bern to Secretary of State dated December 16, 1944.

16. See above, p. 40.

Leonard Wood, etc. Similar summaries of visits to German camps or labor detachments made before November 1943 did not specify in a like manner.¹⁷ Thus, while no visits to American PWs were noted until mid 1943, the visits made subsequently to installations including Americans, give no clue to the number of Americans thus served. In the month from July 15 to August 15, 1943 the Red Cross announced that its representatives had visited eleven oflags, stalags, lazarets, and work detachments in wehrkreise II; nine in district VII; two in district XI; one in X; and one in IV.¹⁸ While we may surmise that American personnel may at this time have been held, for instance, at Stalags II A, II B, their work detachments, and Luft I in the second military district, there is no way of knowing whether these were among the eleven installations visited in that area. Beginning in November, however, the monthly summary of visits specified which camps in a specific military district the Red Cross delegates had reached.¹⁹ Thus, from November 25 to December 17, 1943, out of sixteen installations contacted by Red Cross delegates, we know that two harbored American personnel.

Reports of visits made varied. Being man-made things, the human, subjective factor, of course, was as important as

17. Cf. Rev. Int., XXV, No. 300 (December 1943), 949.

18. Rev. Int., XXV, No. 297 (September 1943), 637.

19. Cf. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 301 (January 1944), 5.

the situation surveyed. Generally, however, it can be said that the delegates maintained an unemotional impartiality in their dossiers. Hence the reports offer a rather accurate delineation of the camps concerned. Following are condensations of reports on several American installations.

Stalag II B, as of March 1944, was composed exclusively of Americans. Numbering several thousands, over half their number stayed at the base camp while the remainder were sent out to forty-two work detachments. Their labors were approximately 90% agricultural, 10% industrial or craft-like. Located just outside a small town (Hammerstein), the camp stood on a sandy expanse completely exposed to the winds. The winters were very cold; the summers were very hot. Each of the three large barracks were divided into two sections by an intervening bathroom-washroom chamber. Each half-barrack housed more than two hundred men who slept in three-tiered wooden bunks. Although there were electric lights throughout, they were so feeble that it was impossible to read or write in the evening. Each half-barrack had two or three large stoves for heating purposes, but only insufficient warmth could be gained from the sixteen kilograms of coal allotted each day for each stove. Under no circumstance could this ration heat a room of this size, certainly not when broken windows were not replaced. Also the barrack roofs leaked.

Bedding consisted of an insufficiently stuffed mattress

and two blankets, one issued by the German government, the other by the Red Cross. Food, prepared in a central mess in three modern cauldrons, was carried to individual barracks in wooden buckets. Eating was made difficult by the lack of utensils. However, eight hundred earthen plates were going to be distributed and others were expected in the coming days. Clothing appeared satisfactory, each PW having a uniform, while those that worked had two. Everyone had a pair of leather shoes; men who worked at agricultural pursuits were asking for another pair. Everyone had underwear. Tailors and cobblers kept the clothes and shoes in repair.

Although there was no camp canteen, the men could buy three cigarettes daily, one razor blade per month, and two boxes of matches per month. Beer could be consumed to the extent the men wished.

The camp had a disinfection station and a modern shower station which was always in operation and thus permitted the PWs to take three or four warm showers per month. Barracks' wash basins were equipped with taps which had an uninterrupted supply of potable water. Needs were estimated to be at least a thousand uniforms for the large number of new arrivals.

Describing the health situation, the delegate noted that one room of the designated infirmary was used for hospitalization purposes. In it the sick occupied double bunks. Of two other rooms, one was used for medical treatments and the other for dressings. It is to be noted that the infirmary

tends only to those who are not severely sick; serious cases are taken to a nearby lazaret which offers excellent facilities. Like a small hospital, it can take care of all operations, was equipped even for specialized medical analysis. There were forty sick men in the infirmary at the time of the visit. Many suffered with furuncular inflammations (boils). Attention was offered by two American doctors and two medics who, together, tended from thirty to forty sick patients every day. In addition to the above, another half-barrack shelters four hundred men with stomach troubles and another one hundred who can not work (twenty of the latter having touches of non-ulcerated tuberculosis). The doctors report that those that work are in good health and have experienced no epidemics. Medical needs include serums against tetanus, typhus, and diphtheria. There had been no deaths until the time of this report. The doctors asked further that a mixed medical commission put in an appearance to examine the invalids for repatriation. Although there was no American dentist, one of another nationality administered dental attention. He complained of the scarcity of professional tools and equipment and asked that the Red Cross send some.

Spiritual needs were administered by two chaplains who said Mass every day.

The men had books, playing cards, and a sports area. There was an orchestra and a theatre group also.

Every man, including those on work detachments, received

a full Red Cross food parcel each week. Considering that Red Cross requests would be filled, the reporter concluded that the camp was satisfactory.²⁰

A subsequent report on Stalag II B indicated that conditions had retrogressed. The work detachments had become so scattered that it was impossible for the representatives of the Protecting Power to visit them all. ^{mean-} While the "chronic overcrowding" at the main lager continued. It was mentioned also that a year previously prisoners had been shot while attempting to escape and that next of kin had been notified of their deaths.²¹

Of Stalag III B (Furstenberg) where, at the end of 1943 about 3000 Americans were concentrated, a representative of the War Prisoners Aid of the YMCA said, "On the whole the Nazis have treated American and British prisoners well and lived up to the terms of the Geneva agreement governing such matters." The Red Cross food parcels, he reported, enabled the Kriegies to eat better than German civilians.²²

By mid - 1944, as in the case of most other camps, Red Cross reports indicated that the men at III B were subjected to "overcrowding, insufficient electric light, insufficient fuel for heating, and insufficient hot water for washing

20. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 304 (April 1944), 988-91.

21. PW Bulletin, II, No. 9 (September 1944).

22. "American Prisoners in a German Camp", Newsweek, XXII (October 13, 1943), 46.

clothes". In addition, camp authorities had announced a one third reduction of basic rations because the PWs had thrown food away. The prisoners countercharged that food quality had become worse, that sometimes twenty percent of the potatoes were inedible.²³

A report on Stalag VII B (Memmingen) based on ICRC visits relates that in August, 1944 there were 513 American PWs there out of a total number of eleven thousand. By the end of September, their number nearly doubled. Five hundred Red Cross packages were the only casualties of a bombing raid which destroyed the camp warehouse.²⁴

In January 1945 a PW camp in a "by-passed" area, St. Nazaire, was visited by a delegate. Holding only a score of French and Americans, the camp commandant, a captain of the German Navy, said that his wards were fed thrice daily and received the same food as their German guards. The men lived in some buildings of an unused factory and were in no wise cramped for space. They received medical attention and serious cases were taken to a hospital. The prisoners, the majority of whom had been captured the previous month, were still wearing the clothes they were captured in, but had received an issue of underwear from the French Red Cross. The only work demanded from them other than their own camp duties,

23. PW Bulletin, II, No. 8 (August 1944).

24. PW Bulletin, II, No. 12 (December 1944).

was cutting wood for their German guards. The guards made purchases for the prisoners in the stores of the city, since there was no canteen available. The French Red Cross had supplied them with reading material, cards, and checkers, but could do little in the way of food since the situation in St. Nazaire was so critical. The reporter thought their conditions could be described as being very good, particularly since they probably would have to spend only a short time longer in detention.⁷⁵

Similar conditions were reported in February regarding a camp on one of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Jersey. Likewise sheltering only a score of prisoners, these men, most of whom had been captured in Normandy in the summer of 1944, lived in two barracks.⁷⁶ Compelled to work, the prisoners were in no wise employed in violation of the Convention. They had sufficient kitchen, washroom, and latrine facilities. Although all the men had written mail, none had received answers. The Red Cross delegate, M. Callias, intervened in this matter by asking and receiving permission from the Germans to have their mail come to the island directly from Lisbon. Electrical service was, at the time, "interrupted", but when it had been in operation, prisoners were occasionally taken to see a movie. Red Cross parcels did not

⁷⁵. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 316 (April 1945), 269-70.

⁷⁶. Officer segregation was ludicrously maintained by having three officers maintain living quarters apart from eighteen enlisted men.

reach the island. Food donations from the civilian population were brought to the prisoners by a representative of the British Red Cross of Jersey.²⁷

E. Naval Camps

Very few of the American prisoners taken in World War II belonged to Naval forces.²⁸ Greater in number were members of the Merchant Marine who, when captured, were treated as internees rather than as PWs. To this end the one exclusive naval camp in Germany was divided into two sections which, together, comprised Marlag - Milag Nord. Some twenty odd American Navy PWs were held in the Marlag in March 1944, according to an ICRC report.²⁹ They, along with British, Norwegian, and Greek prisoners, were divided into two groups: the officers were kept in "Marlag O"; the enlisted men in "Marlag M". Other than their becoming increasingly more crowded, the delegate registered no complaints. Their clothing, he noted, showed extreme wear. The well-constructed barracks were amply lighted, ventilated and heated.

Among the twenty-one diverse minority groups (to the British majority) interned in the Milag, there were about

27. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 317 (May 1945), 367-68. An account of a visit to the Ile of Groix where two U.S. prisoners of war were being held is given in Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 317 (May 1945), 367.

28. The World Almanac and Book of Facts for 1946, E. Eastman Irvine (ed.) (New York: The New York World-Telegram, 1946), p. 44 lists a total of 67 as of June 1945.

29. Rev. Int. XXVI, No. 306 (June 1944), 456-58.

fifty American merchant seamen.³⁰ The men were customarily separated by nationality, each national group being housed together. Apparently there were large numbers of wounded among them: not only did they have an exceptionally well-stocked and equipped lazaret; also about sixty men of diverse nationalities had recently qualified for repatriation before a Mixed Medical Commission, while another one hundred seventy were awaiting their chance to appear for the same purpose. While nobody was required to work, a few volunteered to work in nearby farms.

F. Concentration Camps

Prisoners of war customarily were not sent to Concentration Camps, those institutions which by Nazi design became systematized death factories. It was, therefore, rather comforting for the American people to be assured by their Congress that American PWs had escaped the Concentration Camp programs of hunger, disease, beatings, hangings, and other sadistic methods of extermination.³¹

30. Po Bulletin, II, No. 7. (July 1944).

31. "No prisoners of war are confined in any of these political-prisoner camps, and there is no relationship whatever between a concentration camp for political prisoners and a camp for prisoners of war." U.S. Senate, "Atrocities and other conditions in Concentration Camps in Germany", 79th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Document 47 (Washington: GPO, 1945) p.4. See also U.S. House of Representatives, "Investigations of the National War Effort", 79th Congress, 1st Session. Report Pursuant to House Resolution 10. (Washington : GPO, 1945) p. 18.

There exists, however, some question as to whether American prisoners did entirely and without qualification escape being sent to concentration camps. The evidence to follow, furthermore, sheds light on our secondary theme, did the Germans abide by the Geneva Convention? For complete observance and respect cannot possibly be reconciled with a single PW having been incarcerated in these camps for political reasons.

Among the evidence introduced at the Nuremberg trials was an official report of the U. S. Third Army, Judge Advocate Section, on the investigation of war crimes.³² This report states that among the victims of the Flossenburg Concentration Camp were American prisoners of war, whose deaths were attributable to the SS who ran the camp. At the same trials, the prosecution, in the process of interrogating Kaltenbrunner, disclosed that consonant with the adopted policy of turning over recaptured escapees to the Gestapo, "...over six hundred American prisoners were found in a Gestapo Concentration Camp."³³

PWs in concentration camps may have been exceptions rather than the rule, but there were, apparently, such "exceptions" in a number of camps. In September 1944, Hallett Johnson of the American Legation in Stockholm wired to the

32. NCA, IV, 999-1004. Document 9309-PS.

33. NCA, Supplement B, p. 1342.

Secretary of State. He was told by an informant, he said, that some American fliers shot down in Munich had been sent to the concentration camp at Dachau, that these fliers included negroes.³⁴ About the same time, Americans were being interned in Buchenwald, as the following protest wire indicates:

The government of the U.S. takes strong exception to the action of the German Authorities in detaining American prisoners of war in a concentration camp at Buchenwald, Germany. It is known that a number of Americans were held at this camp under deplorable conditions from August 20 to October 19, 1944.³⁵

The telegram, further, objected to the fact that the prisoners were required to sleep outdoors on the ground without any blankets, that they were mixed with the civilians of other nationalities, and that they were threatened with permanent detention if they would not "talk".

As mentioned previously, fifteen members of an American mission in Slovakia were executed at Mauthausen Concentration Camp in January, 1945.³⁶ Their execution was authorized by a radiogram from Kaltenbrunner, but an order received in the Spring of 1945 called for the destruction of all evidence on the matter.

The briefest evidence regarding the presence of Americans

34. Telegram 3447 from Stockholm to the Secretary of State, dated September 2, 1944.

35. Telegram 493 from Grew, Acting Secretary of State, to Bern dated January 29, 1945.

36. Cf. footnote 22 in previous chapter.

at concentration camps was an entry in a PW's log:

"Oct. 21, 1944 - 25 Sgts. arrive from Buchenwald Concentration 'Lager'."³⁷

G. Luft Camps

As long as a semblance of order was kept up in Germany, American fliers who had been shot down were sent to Luft Camps regulated by the Luftwaffe. In the course of the war, after a Kriegie was dismissed from the Dulag he was sent to one of five camps.³⁸ Lufts I and III were officer camps; Lufts IV, VI, and VII were for enlisted men. Camp locations were changed on various occasions with the result, for instance, that after July 1944, there is properly no record of Luft VI (formerly at Hydekrug and subsequently squeezed into the already crowded quarters of Luft IV at Gross Tychow). "Military necessity", especially after January of 1945, caused many such movements.

Since, almost without exception, all Air Corps prisoners held ranks above Private, they were not obliged to work. An infinitesimally small number volunteered. This being the case, Luft camp existence had to provide means of keeping prisoners occupied. For this reason, the dichotomy of ennui and eager activity reigned in these camps. Much depended on how much relief material could be acquired from the Red Cross.

37. Lt. Wigger, A Wartime Log, p. 130.

38. For locations see Appendix A.

Luft camps were usually large in size with great concentrations of personnel. Generally divided into sections or "compounds" to facilitate such administrative duties as taking roll-calls, each section became a community in itself. There was no official means of contacting neighboring compounds. The ten to fifteen barracks with anywhere from six to twenty four men per room became, therefore, self-reliant entities. They established their own classes, theatre programs, and security measures. They had to rely on the ingenuity latent in their own ranks to cope with such recreation problems as not having a baseball or a bat, such engineering problems as digging a tunnel.

The Luftwaffe, in addition, maintained its own hospitals. A December 1943 report on the Paris "Luftwaffen lazarett" (the ninth floor of the Beaujon Hospital) revealed it as being an excellent installation.³⁹ Under the command of a Stabsarzt, who ordered that two men split a weekly Red Cross parcel (because, he said, a full parcel might result in overeating and would thus complicate the healing of wounds and the mending of fractures!), some twenty British and American PWs nevertheless registered no complaints of ill treatment.

Camp conditions varied from one installation to the next. Reports on the two officer camps will illustrate this

39. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 304 (April 1944), 293-94.

point, Luft I at Barth held about 3,000 Americans as of July 1944.⁴⁰ They were not segregated from the British airmen also held at this camp. Non-coms served as orderlies as provided in the Convention. Housing facilities were crowded. The men in the wooden barracks occupied triple-tiered wooden bunks; the overflow lived outside in tents. Their health remained good. They received full Red Cross parcels and were permitted, in addition, to cultivate small garden plots with seeds sent from the Red Cross. A lieutenant repatriated from the Camp described it as "one of the best camps in Germany".⁴¹

Luft III at Sagan, on the other hand, as of November 1944, held over twice as many Americans.⁴² Of the constantly arriving newcomers, about eighty percent were Americans. A one half reduction in Red Cross parcels resulted in a general loss of weight among the PWs. A protest letter by the Senior American Officer, Brigadier General Arthur Vanaman, to the Swiss Legation stated:

The barracks in all three American compounds are greatly overcrowded and the center compound is without adequate toilet and lighting facilities. In the center compound there are no accommodations for water other than that which is carried by hand and the general water supply is at various times inadequate in the west and south compounds. The air space

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40. PW Bulletin, II, No. 10 (October 1944).
 41. PW Bulletin, II, No. 12 (December 1944).
 42. PW Bulletin, III, No. 3 (March 1945).

per individual is now about one half the normal amount required and more POWs are anticipated.⁴³

To these allegations a German memorandum dated October 21 responded that building plans for aviator PWs were being vigorously pursued.

Similar variations could be detected in the luft lagers for enlisted men. Luft VI, until its forced evacuation from Heydekrug in July 1944 had, among other "privileges", full Red Cross rations. An ICRC report on Luft IV (to which the Heydekrug men had been transferred under extremely severe conditions) established the camp "strength" as reaching almost eight thousand Americans as of October 1944.⁴⁴ Twenty four hundred had come from Luft VI. Forty barracks were divided among four compounds. Each room designed for sixteen men was forced to accommodate twenty four. "Third stories" were added to double deck bunks and still nineteen hundred men were obliged to sleep on floors. Both heating facilities and sanitary installations were adjudged to be inadequate. Although the general health remained good, the infirmary was overcrowded with men suffering from nutritional difficulties.

43. Enclosure to Airmail Letter 9979 from General Vanaman to the Swiss Legation dated September 13, 1944.

44. PW Bulletin, II, No. 12 (December 1944). Transport conditions are treated below, Chapter XIV.

CHAPTER VII

DISCIPLINE

A. General Discussion

In general it may be said that discipline has two purposes. Most obviously, it is used as a method of punishing insubordination. Perhaps not quite as evident, discipline is a method of impressing upon prisoners the role that, it is hoped, they will accept and follow while they are kept in detention. When used in this latter sense, the question of law violation need not rise at all. American prisoners of war were subjected to both types of discipline during World War II. The purpose of this section is to investigate the manners in which it was used by the Germans.

Prisoners, while in detention, are subject to the laws and regulations operative in the armies of their captors. They must abide by the municipal laws and the criminal laws accepted in the country in which they are held. These laws and regulations are, in turn, somewhat limited by international law. Thus, theoretically, it was impossible for a POW to be sentenced for a crime without a proper trial. Likewise on a theoretical level, a prisoner could receive no greater disciplinary punishment for attempted escape than arrest for thirty days. Corporal punishments were inadmissible, as were collective punishments. In respecting Germany's criminal laws, the prisoner could neither attack German nationals nor damage or destroy government property.

That discipline, in terms of a cliché, intended to

"keep the prisoners in their place" was less readily regulated by international law. While threats, reprisals, and confiscations were not allowed, there was nothing to prevent a German Commandant from calling roll calls a dozen times a day. He could likewise employ guards whose express duty it was, in blunt terms, to snoop all day long, to see that not a single German regulation was in jeopardy. He could use dogs to patrol PW compounds. It is possible, however, to apply the yardstick of consideration (or civilization) to the disciplinary methods that actually were practiced by the Germans in World War II.

B. Procedures

Privacy is a luxury that was not afforded to a prisoner of war. Everything that he thought, said, or planned was considered to have implications upon German security. It was for this reason that guards (inconsiderately and inaccurately referred to as "spies") were employed within PW compounds to keep daily routines exposed to German scrutiny. Americans humorously described a hierarchy into which these personnel seemed to be organized.¹ Lead men were called "Coons" or "ferrets"; their assistants were called "weasels". Not only did they openly circulate throughout the barracks; furtively they hid around corners, crawled in the spaces under the barracks, and, on occasion even ascended into the

1. Greening and Spinelli, op. cit. and Morris J. Roy, "Goon Baiting", Behind Barbed Wire (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1946) unpaginated.

"attics" over prisoners' living quarters. Prisoners gave them many hurdles to encounter. Disposing of old razor blades through slits in floorboards gave the "ground weasels" a hard time. It is recorded that on occasion they were christened with hot water as they penetrated under barracks. Prisoners reasoned that both sides could play the game of unwritten rules.

Unannounced inspections, frequently by the Gestapo, were another camp institution. Such visits were designed to insure the fact that verboten articles were not in the possession of Kriegies. Since, however, not infrequently camp guards themselves brought in such articles in return for Red Cross cigarettes, chocolate, or soap, the prospect of a Gestapo indagation on occasion resulted in a "tip off" which permitted such articles to be hidden, thus avoiding unnecessary difficulties between the Gestapo and the Camp authorities.² At any event, the virtual chaos resulting from searches made prisoners uncooperative to such ventures. Whenever possible they "insisted" that a responsible German officer be present during the searches. They consistently registered complaints with the Protecting Power over the effects of these incursions. One such protest regarding a search at Stalag III B precipitated a Swiss inquiry. An explanatory memorandum from the German Foreign Office stated defensively that the

2. Spinelli and Greening, op. cit., p. 4.

search was conducted by a person replacing the Commandant of Stalag III B, not by civilians, as alleged. Based on the suspicion that the PWs had arms in their possession and also had engaged in prohibited relations with the outside world (verbotene Beziehungen zur Aussenwelt), the Foreign Office admitted that detectives participated in the searches. Confiscations, they said, took place only for reasons of security.³ This illustrates that legal justifications, rather than "So what?" attitudes were resorted to by the Germans.

World War I witnessed the use of dogs to patrol PW enclosures. Precedent was followed in the recent war. Used particularly for the night watch were large species such as Schnauzers, Alsations, Bull Mastiffs, and Police dogs. Notwithstanding the intelligence that has been imputed to such canines, PWs who were obliged to live outdoors in tents were given many sleepless nights by such animals which were allowed to roam at random.

Another aggravating method used to impress PWs of their position was the use of roll calls. Normally called twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, some camp commandants discovered their disciplinary effect and ordered them much more frequently. Many factors entered into their efficiency. Duration was equal in importance to frequency. Roll calls which could be taken in a matter of minutes were made into

3. Enclosure to Airmail Letter 10483 from Bern to Secretary of State dated January 5, 1944.

lengthy affairs sometimes lasting for hours. The decision regarding whether the count was "stimmt" was, of course, one for the detaining authorities alone to make. Although a PK representative made the count with the German guards, his only function was to check on their addition. Many a second count which satisfied the authorities, merely corroborated the number arrived at the first time. Recounts sometimes were caused by a Kriegie who was asleep in his bunk. Even after he had been accounted for, a complete tally was ordered. Weather was also a factor to be considered. A second count in rain or in snow was always tantamount to punishment. Although inclemency in some camps merited "inside" counts, there was no rule prohibiting the authorities from ordering the prisoners outside. Armed guards standing behind the prisoners apparently liked the procedure no more than the PKs themselves. When their patience wore thin, "incidents" were more likely to happen. In their eagerness to get the count over, they became particularly aggravated by any deed which might possibly be construed as a cause for further delays. Moving lips or a turned head, on more than one occasion, unslung their rifles, ultimately precipitating more movement than had occurred in the first place.

Article XVIII, under the general heading of Internal Discipline, provides, perhaps ambiguously, that prisoners shall, when saluting officers of the Detaining Power, give the salute of the forces to which they (the prisoners)

belong. The ambiguity of Section 2 was transformed into a "situation" by the Germans who insisted that their Fascist salute be given.⁴ PWs who refused were punished. Some officers were, furthermore, ordered to salute German non-coms who held high positions in their camps. This was in violation of the final section of Article XVIII.

Martin Bormann, as a Wehrmacht spokesman, did his utmost to intensify conditions of camp discipline. In the fall of 1943 he issued a circular ordering harsher treatment for PWs.⁵ He contended that guards had become too lenient, had even become "protectors and caretakers of the PWs". To the theme stated by Bormann, von Graevenitz, chief of PW Affairs, added:

The intention of treating non-Soviet PWs strictly according to the Convention of 29...has in many cases led to forms, which are not in harmony with the total war forced upon us.

The PW must according to the Convention "be treated humanely and especially be protected against acts of violence, insults, and public curiosity". This does not mean, however, that a similar care must be granted him as is required for German soldiers...

The circular goes on to say that leaders of labor detachments and guard personnel must keep in mind that their main duty lies in exploiting the PWs to the greatest extent.

4. Report of the ICRC, I A, 250. This source mentions, incidentally, that the Allies ultimately recognized the Fascist "Heil" as a military as well as a political gesture.

5. NCA, III, 225-29. Document 228-PS.

Guards who were under the impression that they should have friends among the Poles are "defeatists and are to be prosecuted on the charge of subversion of national defense".

On another occasion, in an undated letter to all Reichsleiter, Gauleiter, and leaders of Party-affiliated organizations, Bormann reiterated a Wehrmacht order that PW guards could force obedience with weapons if no other means were at hand. Furthermore, he continued, the guard could use that weapon "...as much as is necessary to attain his goal..."⁶ Repeating these military orders to the aforementioned civilians was the equivalent of demanding similar treatment by German contractors or workers with whom prisoners of war came in contact. A guard, he said, should act in self-defense not only over his person, but also over "his honor and property, and third parties, such as his state."⁷

Shackling is generally conceded to be an example of inhuman treatment prohibited by the Convention. It was not, however, expressly prohibited. Early in the war, in fact before the U.S.' entry, it was agreed that prisoners, under no circumstances, were to be handcuffed. Then in 1942 occurred an incident that gave the Germans a "reprisal" excuse, notwithstanding the fact that reprisals are expressly forbidden by Article II. In 1940 the Germans had occupied some

6. NCA, II, 54. Document 656-PS.

7. NCA, II, 536.

of the Channel islands. In early October 1942, Sark, one of the smaller islands, was invaded by a small Commando party. A German officer and four enlisted men were captured. By a British admission, these men were handcuffed for safekeeping. When the Germans learned of this, they immediately threatened to reciprocate. A few days later, on October 8, they did.⁸ Within the week an Army directive regarding shackling was issued.⁹ Paragraph one stated:

(1) Shackling: Shackling is permitted within the realm of military necessities, and is therefore neither dishonorable nor inhuman.

A subsequent directive temperingly added:

...as an exceptional measure in an emergency.

Authorization was thus conveniently established. Ultimately American prisoners were handcuffed. Protests were registered with the Protecting Power.¹⁰ When the Swiss pressed for an explanation, a German memorandum, either forgetting or bolstering the Sark Island affair, explained that as early as March 1941 two German officers who had escaped from a Canadian Camp were recaptured and handcuffed after crossing the St. Lawrence River. How did the Germans know of this

8. L.C. Flynn, "The Geneva Convention on Treatment of Prisoners of War", George Washington Law Review, XI, (June 1943), 509.

9. NCA, Supplement A, 367-68. Document 1265-PS.

10. Enclosure No. 2 to Dispatch 9491 from Bern to the Secretary of State dated October 9, 1944, is the testimony of two officers who had been handcuffed by the Germans.

incident? "The photographs of both the handcuffed officers appeared in the North-American press," the memorandum said.¹¹ On a previous occasion when the U.S. had protested an instance of handcuffing,¹² the German Foreign Office, answering, disclaimed any responsibility for the incident and claimed that the action was taken as a security measure since it was known that the officers involved intended to escape during the trip.¹³

After the war, at the war crimes trials, General Adolf Westhoff was asked whether Field Marshal Keitel had ever ordered the shackling of prisoners. Westhoff answered, "The order stated that stricter guarding of the prisoners was necessary, and shackling was to take place." He added that the Field Marshal probably had the British announcement (of 1942) in mind when he stated that no assurances could be given that there would be no shackling. Regarding the handcuffing of Americans, Westhoff swore that Keitel had never ordered that they be shackled during transport.¹⁴ The testimony appears contradictory. In one breath a general shackling order is admitted; in the next there is a denial that it was ordered

11. Enclosure No. 3 to Dispatch 9491, German memorandum R 2801 T.

12. Telegram 2665 from Stettinius to Bern, dated August 3, 1944.

13. Telegram LFG-173, 5053 from Bern to Secretary of State, dated August 5, 1944.

14. NCA, Supplement B, 16 46-47.

against American personnel. The plea of innocence sounds rather weak.

Confiscation was sometimes used as a method of discipline. Either as a result of a search or as a result of mail examinations, some articles were taken away from rightful owners. Although corrective conditions were never stated in so many words, there was generally the understanding among prisoners that some German condition or order had to be more satisfactorily met if the articles were to be returned. It was with this cause-effect relationship that a prisoner's diary said:

June 14, 1944 - 53,800 cigarettes confiscated from 6 barracks.

July 27, 1944 - 43,900 cigarettes returned to this camp.¹⁵

and on another occasion,

November 28, 1943 - Band played "God Save the King." Ban placed on playing of instruments for one month as punishment.¹⁶

Jewish segregation and attempts to make it an established practice among POWs was another Nazi effort to use discipline as a means of putting prisoners in what the German thought was his deserved place. At first, apparently, the move was made openly. In a puzzled (perhaps naive) tone, Secretary Hull asked the Swiss authorities to find out

15. Wigger, op. cit., p. 129.

16. Ibid., p. 127.

why the Germans had requested the names of Jewish prisoners of war.¹⁷ A couple of months afterward a notice was posted on a bulletin board at Luft IV (which the author himself read) declaring that a shipment of religious literature was expected soon. The prisoners, said the camp authorities, could cooperate by marking down their religious preference when an appropriate roster would shortly be circulated. Almost miraculously, all the Poles became Protestants! At Luft I segregation was carried out.¹⁸ Thus were prisoners disciplined for things they might have done, according to Nazi reasoning, because of their particular religion.

Prisoners, of course, were also disciplined for things they did do and were alleged to have done in violation of German regulations. Although the Convention provides for a judicial procedure to be followed, some German "justice" circumvented these requirements.

While awaiting their trials, some accused Poles were placed in forms of detention which made it appear as if they had already been convicted. Protestations to the Germans brought back, via the Swiss, the explanation that such "Sonder Kompanien" (special companies) were created to prevent escape.¹⁹

17. Telegram 1381 from Hull to Bern, dated April 21, 1944.

18. Roy, op. cit., see "The Camp Set-up".

19. Telegram 3468 from Bern to Secretary of State, dated June 1, 1944.

Trials themselves varied. A tribunal investigating the escape and alleged assault on two German guards by two American officers, Lt. W.R. Haines and Lt. D.G. Naughton, illustrates the degree to which judicial procedures were flaunted by the Germans.²⁰ At their trial, on April 26, 1944, (a) the German guards allegedly assaulted did not appear to testify; (b) statements of the accused written in German, which neither officer understood, were admitted as evidence; (c) signed but unsworn statements of the accusers were used during the trial, but the defense was not allowed to examine them; (d) the accused were forced to testify against themselves; (e) absence of a competent court stenographer resulted in an inaccurate summary of evidence and testimony admitted by the court; and (f) the right of appeal by the accused (Article LXIV) was denied. The court sentenced them to one and a half years at hard labor.

Disciplinary arrests were usually spent in detention barracks attached to PW camps. Almost every camp had its "cooler". There, solitary confinement and restricted rations was the usual sentence for non-observance of any one of numerous German rules. The prisoner might be accused of destroying German property, breaking a parole, secreting or withholding the tin cans that part of the Red Cross food was packaged in, or not saluting a German officer. Some prisoners

20. Roy, op. cit., see "The Camp Set-up .

were sent to military prisons of the Wehrmacht for various offenses or misdemeanors against the common law.²¹

Aerial warfare precipitated one particularly vicious, from the prisoners' point of view, aspect of discipline. This was the trigger-fast punishment that came with any violations of air raid warning procedures, be they premeditated or otherwise. After the sound of an alert, no PW was to be seen outside his barrack. The possibility that alarms were confusing or were not heard, as was frequently alleged, was a problem left for prisoners to solve themselves. It was their lives that were thus endangered. Many prisoners were wounded, sometimes fatally, during air raids.²²

C. Examples of Discipline Resorted to at Various Camps
(Stammlagers and Oflags)

Among various specific objections to the treatment accorded PWs at Stalag II B, the U.S. Government protested the following disciplinary issues:²³

1. An American doctor, Captain McKee, was penalized for making complaints regarding the treatment of Americans to representatives of the Protecting Power.²⁴

21. Rev. Int., XXV, No. 294 (June 1943), 429.

22. This fact is documented in War Logs kept by PWs. Lt. Wigger's refers to such instances on p. 127 and p. 128. Roy's Behind Barbed Wire cites similar occurrences in the section called "The Camp Set-up".

23. Telegram 2089 from Secretary of State to Bern, dated June 17, 1944.

24. The doctor was subsequently sent to another camp where he was not allowed to practice his profession until he promised to stop levying criticisms of the Detaining Power.

2. Guards allowed police dogs to roam unattended and thus terrorize PWs.
3. In March 1944, six PWs who had unsuccessfully attempted escape were brought back to the Stalag badly beaten and bayoneted. Although in serious need of hospitalization, these men were immediately sent to begin their disciplinary punishment.
4. After his shoes had been confiscated as an anti-escape measure, a PW who refused to work without them, was shot by German guards.

Regarding the disciplining of a mentally ill PW who had been repatriated from Stalag III B, Secretary Hull wired as follows:

"An American POW, Cpl. Glenn H. Stoud, who was held at Stalag III B, was recently repatriated and was a mental case, has a broken nose from being struck by a German guard. His colleagues report that he was given no treatment for the broken nose by the German authorities."²⁵

At Stalag VII A, two American prisoners were struck with rifle butts when they did not respond to orders which they did not understand because they were given to them in German.²⁶ At the same camp prisoners were forced to stand in rain and snow without shoes for four hours as a penalty for not saluting German non-coms. Dogs were turned loose on PWs who refused to work in the snow without shoes. On this

24. (cont.) Dr. McKee actually had to submit to this restriction for sometime since his ideals did not permit abstention from criticizing German practices which affected American personnel. After the need for medical attention became rather urgent, the doctor was forced to compromise his principles and was again permitted to practice medicine.

25. Telegram 1158 from Hull to Bern, dated April 5, 1944.

26. Telegram 1157 from Hull to Bern, dated April 5, 1944.

occasion two prisoners were severely bitten.

An example of guard behavior at Oflag 64 occasioned State Department protest:

A report has been received from reliable sources that on the evening of July 21, 1944 a German guard, Unteroffizier Knorr entered room number six of the main building at Oflag 64, ostensibly for the purpose of searching a locker belonging to one of the thirty American officers quartered in that room. For some reason which was not apparent to the American officers present and without provocation, Knorr became enraged, drew his pistol, loaded it and threatened the lives of all those present in the room. No German officer was present at the time.²⁷

(At Luft Camps)

Similar disciplinary measures obtained at airmen's camps. At Stalag Luft 1 "deadlines" were used to designate restricted areas within the compound. Prisoners could be fired upon without notice if they entered such zones.²⁸ At the same camp, the Senior American Officer complained to the Protecting Power of an order which, the Camp Commandant claimed, emanated from the OKW. This order, in effect, obliged Americans to show respect for all German officers by saluting, although the Geneva Convention required that only

27. Telegram 893 from Acting Secretary Grew to Bern, dated February 28, 1945.

28. Telegram 829 from Grew to Bern dated February 24, 1945. The zones mentioned were customarily areas adjacent to surrounding barbed wire fences. Designated by a "warning wire" or low fence, so much as touching this boundary marker warranted being fired upon by guards. "Accidents" happened when prisoners thought they had secured a guard's permission to retrieve an errant ball or piece of laundry from beyond the wire. Airmail letter 2390 refers to a similar situation at Luft III.

equals or superiors be so respected. As a result of this German ruling, an American Major was summarily tried, convicted, and sentenced to fourteen days of solitary for failing to salute a German Captain.²⁹ The German Foreign Office perplexingly answered:

It is observed that the incident mentioned which led to the disciplinary punishment of prisoner of war Major Bronson took place in the German part of the camp. The German officer was on duty.

At Luft IV in the autumn of 1944 the Germans sharpened up their "disciplinary" acuteness by conducting target practice with machine guns and rifles from surrounding guard towers into the centers of the PW compounds. Ricocheting bullets endangered thousands of prisoners held there.³⁰

This may give some idea of how prisoners were disciplined and punished both for the things they did and for the things, it was thought by the Germans, they might possibly do.

29. Enclosures No. 1 & 2, Dispatch 10981 from Bern to Secretary of State dated February 26, 1945.

30. Enclosure 13 to Airmail letter 11887 from Bern to Secretary of State dated June 9, 1945. Statement of Sgt. Harris.

CHAPTER VIII

BASIC NEEDS

A. Food

Like the proverbial army, prisoners of war also move on their stomachs. While some may not need the calories used by an average soldier in combat, others, who are obliged to work for their captors, often need more. Caloric needs, of course, vary. It has been estimated that an average of 2450 calories per day is the metabolic minimum necessary to maintain normal health for a person not expending a great deal of energy; a "heavy worker" needs at least 3400 calories.

Alimentation for PWs in Germany had two sources. There was, first, the German ration. By the terms of the Geneva Convention, PWs were supposed to receive rations equivalent in quantity and quality to those given the depot troops of the Detaining Power.¹ The other food source was that delivered by the International Red Cross. Supported by National Red Cross societies, the IRC was able to maintain transport machinery. Expenses were covered by the subscriptions of National Societies.²

If an index could have been made to show the "food situation" for PWs in Germany, it most certainly would have

1. Article XI. For purposes of interpretation, depot troops get the minimum food standards.

2. It should be made clear, however, that the contents of the food packages so important to the survival of thousands of American prisoners, were paid for by the United States Government.

varied directly with every upward or downward trend of the food situation in the country as a whole. That is, in the earlier phases of the war while the German economy maintained a semblance of stability, a PW could reasonably expect to be fed regularly, albeit meagerly, and would have that expectation fulfilled.³ As conditions became aggravated for Germany, the PW could expect nothing, and get it. One curious observation, perhaps to be expected, was made by many PWs who marched across Germany as the end of the war neared: they will attest to the fact that the food situation in country districts was never desperate. Rural inhabitants ate cookies and invariably had food to exchange for Red Cross items such as chocolate, soap, or cigarettes, or for personal belongings such as watches, rings, or shoes. Depending almost exclusively on this bartering, by February of 1945 the average basic ration of prisoners, many of whom had to march long distances every day, dropped to 1350 calories per man.⁴ It is seen, thus, that food standards fell substantially below both legal standards and basic requirements.

Although the Geneva Convention set food standards by the amounts given to depot troops, in the Spring of 1942 the German Supreme Command rather positively suggested that

3. Denny, the newspaper correspondent captured with the British early in 1942, speaks of rations including 200 grams of bread plus other starches and a piece of fresh fruit every day. cf. Behind Both Lines, pp. 133-34.

4. Report of ICRC, I A, 255.

another criterion should be adopted.⁵ It stated that prisoners' rations should be the same as that received by the German civilian population. The ICRC reported that, in practice, Pw rations never equaled those given to civilians. Prisoners received neither the basic rations allotted civilians, nor the supplementary rations sporadically offered them. However, when the government ordered restrictions for civilians, they never forgot to order corresponding reductions for Pws.

American Red Cross publications give some idea of German rations of American Pws:⁶

Weekly ration of:	(General) Early 1944	(Stalag II B) Mid 1944	(Oflag 64) Fall 1944
Meat or fish	10 oz.	9 oz.	9 oz.
Bread	5 lbs.	5½ lbs.	5½ lbs.
Vegetables (fresh & dehydrated)	5 lbs.	---	9½ lbs.
Cheese	2 oz.	2 oz.	1½ oz.
Salt	5 oz.	---	---
Sugar	6 oz.	6 oz.	6 oz.
Potatoes	11 lbs.	8½ lbs.	11½ lbs.
Margarine or fats	8 oz.	8 oz.	8 oz.
Jam or marmalade	6 oz.	3 oz.	6 oz.
Tea	---	2 oz.	---
Ersatz coffee	---	---	½ oz.

This schedule offers notable deficiencies of proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals. Other observations can be made. The vegetable consumption at Oflag 64 undoubtedly includes produce

5. Report of ICRC, I A, 254.

6. Cf. En Bulletin, II, No. 2 (February 1944); II, No. 6 (June 1944); and III, No. 2 (February 1945).

grown by PWs in garden plots allotted to them by the German Government. Not all camps were so fortunate. The meat was often of unascertainable origin. Prisoners were relieved to be told it was horsemeat. Not many PWs would risk eating the cheese. The "brave" ones were invariably banished from their rooms while they were in possession of various foreign-labeled brands. It had to be kept outside. Potatoes, often frozen, were usually small sized. Peeling this variety, of course, left little to eat. Both margarines and jams were synthetic products derived from coal, it was asserted. The "coffee", ersatz without dispute and reputedly made from acorns, was used for shaving more frequently than for drinking, especially when still warm. The so-called tea was reported to include, among other things, thyme, mint, sage, lavender stalks, wild pea, violet petals, lime blossoms, beach mast, chestnut husks, various barks and unidentified twigs, heather blossoms and shoots, apple pips, rice grains, rose thorns and petals.⁷

Fortunately, Red Cross food usually supplemented this German ration. From those unfortunate circumstances when it was not forthcoming, however, prisoners were enabled to record, "we lived to see the time when we had to put guards on the garbage dumps to keep our men from rooting through it

7. According to the report of a "former agricultural research worker." Cf. Guy Morgan, *op. cit.*, p. 199. It is admittedly hard to explain how some of those ingredients reached Germany.

like animals."⁸

Canteens, as provided for in Article XII, were figments of the imagination. This did not prevent the Germans from formulating regulations regarding the operation of same. The profits from these mythical institutions were to be used for the prisoners. It was even decided that profit allocation was to be reached by a joint discussion between the Camp Commandant and the Prisoners' Man of Confidence.⁹ Unfortunately, the well-intentioned canteens for the procurement of "food products and ordinary objects" never really got out of the blueprint stage. Razor blades had to be made available and were, in painfully sparing numbers, to conform to no-beard regulations.

Red Cross food parcels unquestionably supplied the primary means of subsistence for most American PWs in World War II just as they did in World War I. Food was distributed to the camps as instructed by National Red Cross Societies. The American Red Cross ordered their Swiss trustees to insure every American of one food parcel per week, and the ICRC complied, insofar as such orders were consonant with German regulations.¹⁰

8. Greening and Spinelli, op. cit.

9. Airgram A-528 from Bern to Secretary of State, dated September 7, 1944 quotes German regulations in operation since 1943.

10. PW Bulletin, III, No. 1 (January 1945).

That "half rations" became so prevalent was due, to a limited extent, to the fact that camps were often filled up more rapidly than expected. This is verified by the fact that barracks were often belatedly constructed. The main difference, however, is that Red Cross food in no way, other than transportation, became a deficit on Germany's war potential. Red Cross parcels were never limited insofar as production was concerned.

Besides filling their stomachs, Red Cross relief supplies were used for other purposes by their American recipients. By consummating "deals" with their German guards or civilian co-workers, prisoners were able to acquire items which they ordinarily would never have gotten. The "austauschen" method reaped everything from medicines and writing paper to cameras and radio tubes.

On the debit side, Red Cross supplies had a tendency to generate antagonisms among allies. The inequalities of distribution caused four almost-distinct ethno-economic groups.¹¹ At the top of the ladder were the Anglo-Americans who got the most; French prisoners received the next greatest amount; Yugoslavs got a few; and at the bottom were the Russians who received none officially because, said the Germans, they were not parties to the convention. On rare occasions, on the initiative of a capable camp leader and only with German

11. Dr. A.L. Cochrane, "Medical Experiences as a Prisoner of War in Germany", The Bulletin of the U.S. Army Medical Department, VII (March 1947), 239.

consent, a few Red Cross relief items were transferred to Russian hands. Essentially a matter of jealousy, this type of heterogeneity was emphasized and came into play whenever these groups were found in proximity to one another.

As suggested above, Red Cross food kept many an American PW's floundering head above water. By some standards, it buoyed him above the level of his German captors. Maurice Pate, a Red Cross official, after a European junket reported:

The American prisoners receiving regular Red Cross food packages eat better, and have more tobacco, than the Germans guarding them. Thus far, too, the American prisoner with his Red Cross and private parcels eats as well as, or better than, the average German civilian.¹²

Red Cross fare was used as a lever to readjust German rations. When the Red Cross ordered an increase in relief supplies to compensate for restrictions on German rations, the Germans kept their scale balanced by using the Red Cross increase as an excuse for further diminishing the diet they furnished to PWs.

To receive one's first Red Cross parcel, whether it was "full" or not, was a most pleasant experience, for usually the prisoner had endured for some time on skimpy German rations. Weighing about eleven pounds; the compactly packaged cardboard container provided approximately fourteen thousand

12. PW Bulletin, III, No. 2 (February 1945). It should be noted, in connection with this statement, that few PWs received regular Red Cross aid and personal parcels were a rarity.

calories of food. Assuming that it would be consumed in a week, its food value, in conjunction with daily needs, has been depicted as follows:¹³

Average Daily Contribution of Red Cross Standard Food Parcel		Average Daily Requirement for Sedentary Workers.
Calories	1939	2500
Proteins, grams	80.5	70
Fat, grams	106.5	55-77
Calcium, grams	1.2	.8
Iron, milligrams	11.1	12.0
Vitamin A, Int. Units	8,920	5,000
Thiamin, milligrams	3.0	1.5
Ascorbic acid, milligrams	90.0	75.0
Riboflavin, milligrams	5.0	2.2

It can be seen that the Red Cross parcel did not completely answer a prisoner's caloric needs even on "full rations."

What it did most efficiently was take care of fat, protein, mineral and vitamin requirements, items that were obviously lacking in German rations. Red Cross food, thus, served well as a dietary supplement. From the eater's viewpoint, rather than the statistician's or the dietician's, the standard parcel consisted of the following:¹⁴

Powdered milk.....	16 oz.	Army biscuits.....	7 oz.
Oleomargarine.....	16 oz.	D Bar (Chocolate)...	8 oz.
American cheese.....	8 oz.	Coffee (soluble)....	2 oz.
Corned Beef.....	12 oz.	Salt and pepper.....	1 oz.
Pork Luncheon Meat..	12 oz.	Jam.....	6 oz.
Liver Paste.....	6 oz.	Sugar.....	8 oz.
Tuna or Salmon.....	8 oz.	Vitamin tablets.....	16
Prunes or raisins...	16 oz.	Soap and cigarettes	

Although this might not stimulate the salivary glands of the

13. PI Bulletin, III, No. 4 (April 1945).

14. Ibid.

reader, it was manna for literally thousands of American PWs. In fact it was surpassed by only one possible thing, the once-a-year Christmas parcel which contained:¹⁵

Plum pudding.....	16 oz.	Playing cards.....	1 Pkg.
Boned turkey.....	12 oz.	Chewing Gum.....	4 Pkgs.
Small sausage.....	4 oz.	Butter.....	3 3/4 oz.
Jam.....	6 oz.	Games.....	1 Box
Candy.....	12 oz.	Cigarettes.....	5 Pkgs.
Deviled ham.....	3 oz.	Smoking tobacco.....	1 Pkg.
Cheddar cheese.....	4 oz.	Pipe, smoking.....	1
Mixed nuts.....	12 oz.	Tea.....	1 3/8 oz.
Bouillon cubes.....	1 doz.	Honey.....	6 oz.
Fruit Bars.....	14 oz.	Washcloth.....	1
Canned cherries.....	6 oz.	and a couple of pictures of American scenes.	

Delivered deep into Germany, such a parcel might appropriately be hailed as super-manna!

Contents of such parcels, if cooking facilities were made available, were readily adaptable to collective preparation. Since this was seldom the case, "combines" were formed to obviate the necessity of having food remain in open cans. It goes without saying that an individualist could "bash" virtually any item at one sitting.¹⁶

Transportation of Red Cross supplies from the United States to Europe was accomplished by neutral vessels. Sailing dates and routes to be followed were given to the belligerents so that the carriers would not be mistaken and attacked. Shipments were customarily channeled to Lisbon,

15. Am. Bulletin, 11, No. 12, (December 1944).

16. In vernacular for eating without restraint or without thought of saving food for the next day.

then to Genoa or Marseilles. From these ports it would be taken by train to Geneva. There it was frequently repacked. It then proceeded into Germany by train.¹⁷

Many difficulties were encountered in transportation as the war progressed. Train priorities were at a premium in war torn areas. The Mediterranean ports of Marseilles and Toulon were bombed by the Allies while they were still in German hands. When the Germans withdrew they themselves completed the job of destruction. It was militarily wise to render them useless so that they could not be used by the enemy. Air attacks on the German railroad system caused severe dislocations. Such incidents made the transportation of relief constantly more difficult.

Toward the end of 1944 transport reached a critical stage. It was at this point that observers noticed that several camps had completely exhausted their food stocks. Germany, it was alleged, was consciously hindering delivery of Red Cross relief. Not only were German trains needed for other purposes, it was also most disconcerting for Nazi officials to hear the protestations of populations near to PW camps who saw enemy prisoners receiving food while they went hungry.¹⁸ About this time farsighted Swiss officials took the first steps toward organizing a truck transportation

17. Siordet, op. cit., pp. 60-62.

18. Ibid., p. 59.

system. The Allies put four hundred motor vehicles at their disposal. By 1945 the seed of an idea planted six months before came to fruition.¹⁹ Sweden then became the main Red Cross depot. From Goteborg on the Kattegat, neutral vessels carried their sorely needed cargoes into the mine-sown Baltic. After a perilous two day trip they unloaded at Lübeck. From there, Swiss chauffeured trucks sought the columns of PWs who, by this time, were rather completely dispersed upon German highways. Their task had not been made easier by the German decision to prohibit the establishment of food parcel reserves at PW camps. This policy, in its most extreme form, completely destroyed the effective control of the ICRC over relief distribution. In February 1945, for instance, at Hammerstein in eastern Pomerania the Germans disposed of stocks of Red Cross parcels as they saw fit.²⁰ Parcels intended for prisoners were given to anyone who passed the storeroom. Both German soldiers and civilians could be seen with the Red Cross parcels in their possession in the city of Hammerstein. A Congressional report commented:

Since early this year [1945] the old discipline in Germany is gone. Our advancing armies are unearthing American Red Cross packages at various odd points where they are not supposed to be.²¹

19. PW Bulletin, III, No. 2 (February 1945).

20. Enclosure No. 11 to Airmail letter 11867 from Bern to Secretary of State dated June 9, 1945. Statements of Privates Hall and Brown.

21. United States House of Representatives, House Report 728, 79th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 15.

That such misdirection prevailed is not surprising. Gottlieb Berger testified at the War Crimes trial that he was rather surprised and ill-equipped to find himself appointed in September 1944 as Administrator over prisoners of war.²² In company with Himmler he had visited Hitler at the end of September. At that time Hitler expressed his opposition to the accumulation of foodstuffs at Pw camps. Himmler suggested that the food be moved, that it be assigned to the N.S.V., the National Socialist Welfare Organization. Hitler thereupon said that this plan was acceptable to him...as long as it was in compliance with international commitments (italics mine) and proceeded to instruct Berger to issue an order by which these food stores would be moved in two weeks. It was only when he was leaving the meeting with Hitler that he, Berger, learned that the food supplies in question were "mercy parcels for POWs which had been transmitted through the Red Cross". This intelligence, having come at such a late stage, did not change the plans to which Hitler had already given his approval. The entire gesture was most aggravating to prisoners who saw the accessibility of Red Cross supplies being transferred from themselves to an assortment of Germans, both civilian and military.

B. Clothing

Clothing, like food, posed a difficult problem in

22. NCA, Supplement B, p. 1533-34. Marked by the familiar "I'm innocent" tone.

countries that were involved in the war. Germany, as one of these belligerents, did very little toward helping to clothe the PWs it held in detention. Article XII of the Convention does not say that some assistance is better than none; it says, rather, "Clothing, linen, and footwear shall be furnished prisoners of war by the Detaining Power." It adds that these articles must be kept in repair and replaced regularly and that appropriate work clothes must be given to those obliged to labor for their captors. The Germans did not meet these commitments.

Closely associated with the uniform ordinarily worn by soldiers, even those behind barbed wire, are their insignia of rank and decorations. The right to continue wearing them was permitted by Article XIX. Again the Germans made mock of their country's agreement. It has been reported, "The ICRC had to intervene very often, in particular with the German authorities, to prevent not only badges of rank and decorations, but even uniforms from being taken away from PW officers and NCOs."²³

Flouting their commitments, however, was not done with completely impersonal unconcern. Rather than assume the "it's-only-a-scrap-of-paper" attitude, the German Foreign Office did attempt legal justifications of their actions. In answer to a U.S. protest, the Foreign Office wrote that

²³. Report of ICRC, I A, 250-51.

actually they were abiding by Article XII.²⁴ When British and American Airforce personnel had their uniforms taken away from them, it was only because they could easily be mistaken for civilian clothes. As strange as it may sound to the reader, the Foreign Office thought their cut, material, and color all seemed to resemble civilian garb. It must have been, therefore, with a touch of leniency that the Foreign Office decreed that the Commandants and Security Officers of the various camps could decide whether uniforms could be taken away. This was not, it should be understood, confiscation; receipts would be given for these articles. As a result the American Government, operating through the Red Cross, found itself compelled to carry the greatest load in this job of keeping American PWs clothed. Their job incurred many trying circumstances. The Wehrmacht had ordered in April 1942 that only those prisoners who needed leather shoes for their working obligations could have them; all others were supposed to wear wooden clogs.²⁵ As a result, although large quantities of shoes were stocked in camp stores, many PWs went without. It was only in the spring of 1944 that the German authorities relented and gave assurances that Red Cross consignments of leather footwear would be distributed without restraint. A neutral observer commented

24. Letter 9322 from Department of State to War Department dated September 23, 1944. Contains translation of German Foreign Office memorandum.

25. Report of ICRC, I A, 259-60.

on other reactions toward the clothing situation as follows:

The German authorities considered that, in view of the conditions created by "total war" and the destruction by air bombing of large stocks of clothing, they were entitled to reckon the clothing from the collective Red Cross consignments in their regular issues. This policy meant, in practice, that the P.O. in Germany were in most cases unable to obtain the clothes sent with the collective consignments from their home country, unless they handed in those which they were already wearing.²⁶

This, too, would undoubtedly be explained by the Germans as a "security measure". It must appear to be a fairly obvious formula that a prisoner's chances for escape would vary in direct proportion to the amount of clothes he possessed. The Germans, thus, reasoned that a prisoner whose escape chances were virtually nil would be the one with a minimum of attire.

Regarding working clothes (despite many [ICRC] protests):

Although the issue of working clothes falls within the responsibility of employers, the delegates ICRC in Germany noted that this obligation was only rarely honored.²⁷

A more detailed version of clothing, with particular attention paid to blanketing, was submitted in answer to a State Department request.²⁸ This lengthy survey, based on reports of Swiss neutrals, contained a welter of information and statistics from which the following has been extracted.

26. Ibid., p. 159.

27. Ibid.

28. Enclosure No. 1 to Respatch 7446 from Bern to Secretary of State, dated March 2, 1944.

1. At the beginning of the war the Germans issued two blankets to each POW. There were sufficient blankets to tide the PWs over the '42-'43 winter. As soon as Red Cross blankets began to arrive, the Germans took back one of their blankets from all PWs. During 1943, the Red Cross issued 20,000 blankets. That year (1943) was marked by some complaints about the shortage of blankets.

2. An October 1943 report on Stalag VII B stated that while each PW was considered to be in possession of one blanket, actually 1500 men were without any, having been issued a greatcoat in lieu of a blanket.

3. A report on Dulag Luft of November 1943 commented that the Senior British Officer was asking for more Red Cross blankets. Since the Germans were not providing sufficient clothing, it was being asked that the aviators be permitted to keep their flying kit. Similar complaints were forthcoming from Oflag 64, Stalag VII A, and Stalag 11 B.

4. Conflicting versions were given in response to a request of the International Committee for a clothing survey: The Germans said they furnished eighty percent of the clothing while the Red Cross furnished twenty percent; the Red Cross reversed the figures and said they gave the eighty percent. (According to the writer's observations, made in 1944, it is doubtful whether the Germans furnished one fifth.)

5. A camp report on Stalag XVII B showed that the prisoners depended entirely upon American Red Cross clothing.

6. A camp report on Stalag Luft III said:

For the American prisoners the position is not satisfactory. As already pointed out...personal clothing and uniforms are frequently confiscated and personal belongings taken without reason and without receipt.

7. A camp report on Stalag 317/XVII C (Markt-Pongau) says: "The clothing position is unsatisfactory."

Indeed it was, particularly in view of the fact that in most instances, with a minimum of German cooperation, Red Cross supplies could have been brought to the prisoners. This was without dispute the case up to the fall of 1944. Afterward, the Geneva truck brigade could probably have managed to continue this transportation. That prisoners went insufficiently clothed was indubitably the fault of the Germans.

C. Housing

Article X of the Geneva Convention provides that prisoners "shall be lodged in buildings or in barracks affording all possible guarantees of hygiene and healthfulness." The quarters were to be free from dampness and were to be adequately heated and lighted. Precautions against fire were to be provided. Housing standards (area per person, air space, fittings, bedding provisions) were to be equivalent to those afforded base troops of the Detaining Power.

In general, the barrack plan found in most camps was rather uniform. Two basic one-floor patterns with minor

variations were used. One type has been described as follows:

The barracks were of a Standard German type construction, approximately 40 x 130 feet, each containing ten rooms leading from a central hallway running lengthwise with the buildings. Two washrooms [sans running water] and a pit latrine for night use were located in the rear of the barracks, although it soon became necessary to use the larger washrooms for additional sleeping quarters. Each room, approximately 15 x 23 feet, was designed to provide facilities for 16 men in eight wooden, double-decked bunks. Bunks in a few instances were triple-decked, thus increasing the room capacity to twenty-four, but the same number was accommodated in all other cases by the assignment of eight or nine other men to sleep on the floors. They fared little worse than the others, however, as the bunks were of a crude type containing six slats, no more, no less, and the only buoyancy for one's weary bones in either case was an elongated paper sack filled with wood shavings. And these were soon compressed to form a mattress not unlike a sheet of wallboard.

A small stove, a table, and a few stools constituted the remainder of the furnishings.²⁹

The other type of barracks, previously referred to,³⁰ differed in size and format. Of considerably larger dimensions, it was almost as if two of the above-described barracks were pushed together with a community washroom in between. Each "half-barrack" sheltered about as many men as one of the other type. There was, however, no division into rooms, the bunks being arranged in "bays" to simulate the effect of being partitioned. It was virtually as if all the men were living in one large room. The obvious disadvantage of this arrangement was that snoring and germs were more communicable.

29. Robert W. Ludden, Barbed Wire Interlude (Alexandria, Virginia: 116 South Pitt Street, 1945), n.p.

30. See above, p. 69 in reference to Stalag II B.

Prison ships apparently passed out of vogue before World War II. With the possible exception of vessels that were used in the transferring of prisoners (such as the Heydekrug group), there is no record of prisoners being detained on such boats for any considerable length of time.

From the crowded conditions at most PW camps and from the continued construction of barracks, it appears that the Germans failed to anticipate the number of PWs who would be taken. At any rate, the hurried building of camps left much to be desired, not only in barrack construction, but also in the supply of other camp facilities such as washrooms, latrines, shower rooms, etc. These deprivations precipitated the anxieties of many prisoners.

C. Remuneration

Nazi economy has been described as being one of state capitalism. Both capitalism and the Geneva Convention thus agreed that prisoners should be paid for their labor. How much they were to receive was a matter for the state to decide. In practice, those prisoners who worked in industry theoretically earned sixty percent of the rate paid to civilian workers. Due to the odd circumstances of war, however, they could have collected these earnings only if Germany had won the war. Thus, few (if any) prisoners regretted their Reichsmark poverty. The small allotments they did receive were rendered virtually worthless by the restrictions imposed upon how they could be spent. Prisoners working at agricultural pursuits customarily earned their largest remuneration in the manner of their being fed and housed by their employer. In addition a small daily wage was given.²²

Value of pay received was subject to agreement reached by the belligerents. Through the instrumentality of the Protecting Power, Germany and the United States reached such an agreement. It was decided that the rate of exchange should be two and one half Reichsmarks to the dollar. This remained in effect throughout hostilities and was not altered until late in 1946 when the Reichsmark was devaluated from forty to thirty cents.²³ At the former rate, the standard

22. Report of the ICRC, I A, 287.

23. Ibid., 283-84.

prisoner of war agricultural pay of seventy pfennige meant that an earning of twenty eight cents per day was customary.

Officers and non-coms who did not work were not entirely forgotten as far as money was concerned. The former were to be paid on a par with equivalent officers of the Detaining Power. They could be paid either in lagergeld or the regular currency of the Detaining Power. The Convention does not provide that non-coms receive military pay. In the rare instances in which they did receive compensation, it was in the form of "camp money".²⁴ Of value only at camp canteens (frequently only a figment of the German imagination), this lagergeld was, in economic terms, comparatively overvalued. As a result, prisoners were only too eager to dispose of it. In many places it came to have value only as card playing currency, something like poker chips. Probably its most widespread value was as a souvenir of the PW camps.

24. A photographic reproduction can be seen in Appendix C.

CHAPTER X

ACTIVITIES OF THE CAMPS - INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL NEEDS

A. Convention Provisions (Articles XVI and XVII)

Articles XVI and XVII of the Geneva Convention were of primary interest and benefit to those prisoners of war sans work obligations, those who were cooped up all day without anything specific to do. The first of the aforementioned articles provides for complete exercise of religious liberty. This Ps right was to be limited only in that it had to comply with "measures of order and police issued by the military authorities." Article XVII states briefly, "So far as possible, belligerents shall encourage intellectual diversions and sports organized by prisoners of war." Prisoners of war seriously attempted to implement these provisions to the greatest extent. To those who were not previously aware of the fact, it soon became apparent that, as some sage said, "Doing nothing is the most tiresome job in the world because you can't quit and rest." Hence, it was recognized, could be as great a danger as a disease. One of the major duties of a "Man of Confidence", as the elected American representative of American Ps was called, was to keep his finger on the intellectual and moral pulse of the men he represented.

B. Education

For their own edification and where the existence of the essential raw materials permitted, prisoners established educational programs in their camps. An example of the primitiveness they were reduced to was the customary camp

"newspaper". The singular is used intentionally, for it consisted merely of a single penciled copy tacked upon a central bulletin board. Sometimes several sheets of scarce paper were devoted to an issue. Contents varied. Compound "news" (when the barber shop would be open, if a shipment of Red Cross parcels was expected, etc.) was generally emphasized. News concerning the outside world had to have an obvious source. Consequently "flashes" of importance were circulated surreptitiously. Some titles showed imagination, Ge-fengenon Gazette,¹ Kriegle Kosmos; others sounded rather trite, This Week, Barbed Wire News, etc. All served more as symbols of temporarily divorced cultural patterns than as mediums of useful information.

Prisoners had no monopoly on printing newspapers. Their German captors tried their hand at it too. The Geneva Convention did not prohibit the dissemination of propaganda, and this was precisely the purpose of the "American" sheet called The OK, The Overseas Kid.² With a high premium placed on reading material generally, the Germans fully exploited the situation whereby prisoners had to make a sacrifice to

1. A reproduction can be seen in a special supplement to Pu Bulletin, September 1944. Some idea of the underground paper, FOR-WON (Prisoners of war waiting on winning), can be formulated from reproductions in Behind Barbed Wire.

2. An early copy is reprinted in the "Personal and Otherwise" column in Harper's Magazine, CLXXXIX (November 1944). The same issue has an article by am. L. Shiren entitled "What the Germans told the prisoners", pp. 536-42.

get out a one page paper of their own. The extent to which "advantage" was taken enabled Geneva to report:

The ICRA also had to intervene to induce certain Detaining Powers to refrain from carrying on political propaganda amongst PW. This happened especially in the case of the German authorities amongst Allied PWs.³

The story of OK sheds considerable light on the problem currently undertaken. The first issue of this English-printed weekly appeared on May 9, 1943. On its masthead appeared a question mark which served as an introduction for the front page announcement of a name contest. The winner was to be awarded 120 cigarettes. A name typifying American vernacular arrived with the fourth issue. One A. R. Mowr presumably won the cigarettes. His suggestion marked the epitome of prisoner contribution. Virtually the sum total of all the rest of the paper was the product of German machinations regarding means of splitting Eastern and Western allies. In every conceivable form from subtle propaganda to outright lies, the Germans attempted to hold a new adjunct to their war effort. The four tabloid sized pages would include an "Editorial" column, "World and war news", "Military", and a "Home front" column. Under these titles what a multitude of ulterior motives lurked: The first issue devoted a full page to the Volkswagon -- the car that Hitler presumably made available to the German

3. Report of ICRC, I A, 251. Although propaganda is not specifically mentioned, it may have been considered inhumane or insulting treatment forbidden by Article II.

working man. The psychological appeal was geared to the interests of young men with traditions of mechanical ingenuity. Another section had a "German lesson" conducted by Otto Koischwitz, once an instructor at Hunter College in New York. "Home front news" of the third issue told of ever increasing numbers of U.S. Army desertions. The editorial of the fourth issue purported to reveal the "true" character of Communism. In a most clever manner, the Germans used American sources for leads. For example, they jumped at an article by author-farmer Louis Bromfield in Readers Digest entitled "We aren't going to have enough to eat." Similarly, they relished a Hearst (Chicago Herald and Examiner) editorial called "Soviet Russia: Foe of Peace" and a comparable McCormick (Chicago Tribune) complaint that government censorship was being used to hide U.S. government failures. These subjects, it was thought, would break down prisoner morale. This was the German short-term propaganda objective. They wanted to cultivate a defeatist attitude among their prisoners.

However, in the long run, this newspaper had quite another aim. In blunt terms, the German editors (a number of whom, suggests Shirer, were representatives of the Foreign Office and of the Propaganda Ministry) thought that the paper might serve well as a means of spreading the seeds of Nazism to the United States. It was for this reason that much of the text, upon analysis, could be shown to contain definite anti-semitic and anti-negro prejudice. In the event that the

prisoner-reader would not "fall" for either scapegoat, the editors liberally made "bait" out of England and Russia. A concerted effort to keep the paper before the prisoners was made, the idea being that the prisoners would have to be exposed if they were to be propagandized. To this end there was a liberal (but late) sports coverage. Besides utilizing cartoons, crossword puzzles and cheese-cake pictures of German glamour girls in varying stages of undress, the editor asked for contributions from American prisoners. The Germans did not miss a bet insofar as strengthening their propaganda machine was concerned.

Education in a more formal sense was also to be found behind barbed wire. Classes were held at a number of camps. It is not to be understood, however, that such classes resembled anything one might find in ordinary secondary schools. In the first place, supplies, such as paper, pencils, blackboard, chalk, textbooks, were at a painfully low level. Secondly, trained personnel were too few in number. Finally, plant facilities were virtually non-existent. Based primarily on the initiative and enthusiasm of the prisoners themselves, schedules of classes were set up and potential sites were sought for conducting the classes. Where weather permitted, sessions were held outdoors. Where this was impossible, arrangements were made to have certain barrack rooms used for certain classes. Washrooms also were taken over for educative purposes. With so many adverse conditions, it is not surprising to learn that many prisoners readily recognized that the

greatest effectiveness of such classes lay in their keeping the men occupied rather than in teaching them something specific along technical or professional lines.

The Germans themselves did not do much more "encouraging" than to allow the entry of various materials sent by relief organizations such as the Red Cross, YMCA and the European Student Relief Organization. Books, of course, had to be censored before reaching prisoner of war camps. In this regard, the Germans did draw up a "master list" which simplified the problem of book censorship.⁴

Apparently at one time the German authorities had some notion of placing university students and graduates in separate camps, presumably for purposes of continuing their educations. Red Cross observers noted that such a specialized camp was in fact established at Stargard in the Spring of 1941.⁵ Such idealistic plans, however, had been given up by the time the United States entered the war. The most that can be said on behalf of the Germans is that they did not make a point of hindering the organization of classes within the compounds.⁶ It was probably felt that the Kriegie was out of mischief as long as he was attending classes, perhaps trying to learn a language. It was with this in mind

4. Report of ICRC, I A, 278.

5. Ibid., p. 279.

6. Andre Vulliet, Preliminary report of the war prisoners aid, Young Men's Christian Associations during World War II (Geneva: International Committee of the YMCA, 1946) p. 41.

that educational supplies were introduced to prison camps. Literally tons of paper, pencils, protractors, everything (including a mimeograph machine) met with German approval. Yet what entered was not sufficient. Classes still had to be called off for lack of anything to write on or with. Probably the most enviable and impressive scholastic record was established at Stalag Luft III where, in three years, the camp "university" with a staff of about sixty teachers gave over seven thousand courses.⁷

C. Religion

Freedom of religion, as established by Article XVI, probably was respected to an equal if not greater degree than most prisoner rights. One prisoner account speaks of a camp chapel in which regular services were held "for all faiths".⁸ It would be reasonable to ask whether this included prisoners of the Jewish faith. A YMCA opinion was contained in a report that "Spiritual and religious life was given utmost freedom, even in the case of the Jewish faith".⁹ In seeming contradiction, the same survey points out one paragraph later that "Most books requested could be sent in with the exception of those written by German-Jewish refugees". One cannot expect rationality on this subject. Perhaps speculation regarding different kinds of "Jewishness"

7. Ibid., p.24.

8. Greening and Spinelli, op. cit.

9. Vulliot, Preliminary Report, p. 40.

is best left unsaid.

The Geneva Convention, by Article XVI, specifies that, "ministers of a religion...shall be allowed to minister fully to members of the same religion." German military authorities concerned with prisoners of war decreed that chaplains could be authorized to visit work detachments, providing they were sufficiently guarded. A second "provision" caused protest: the German authorities said that these traveling chaplains had to return to their base camps the same day they started out. This effectively eliminated visits to a number of detachments which proved to be too distant to fulfill the German terms.¹⁰ Chaplains whose rounds were thus curtailed protested to Swiss representatives of the Protecting Power. Their complaints ultimately were brought to the attention of the U. S. State Department, who in turn protested to the Detaining Power.¹¹

About as objective a picture as one could hope for regarding religious activity was embodied in a statistical report on Stalag XVII B.¹²

Covering the ten month period from January to October 1944, the report reveals:

10. Airgram from Department of State to War Department dated Sept. 27, 1944.

11. Telegram MAE 949 from Bern to Secretary of State dated Aug. 25, 1944.

12. Letter from Red Cross Delegate, A. Cardinaux, to Colonel Bresee, of PMG, dated March 1, 1945.

Camp population.....	4,172
Catholics.....	31.5%
Orthodox Catholic...	.2%
Protestant.....	65.85%
Jewish.....	1.8%
No religion.....	.65%

Service Attendance

<u>Sundays</u>		<u>Weekdays</u>	
Holy Mass.....	27,674	Morning Prayers.....	16,688
Holy Communion.....	4,547	Holy Communion.....	7,871
General Services...	22,403	Evening Services.....	9,126
Total Services.....	134	Special Services.....	752
		Total Services.....	407
		Hospital Visits.....	53

D. Relief Society Activity

Relief societies (and their activities) are provided for by Article LXXVIII of the Convention. As mentioned before, several separate organizations actually participated in this work during the recent war. The YMCA was typical of them. Its activities have been described rather carefully (and with a great deal of pride) at the request of the Provost Marshal General.¹³ As a duly accredited agency, the YMCA employed only eight full time and two part time visitors or delegates. This small staff, generally, but not always, accompanied by a German officer, made 2,500 visits to over

13. Cf. Vulliet, op. cit.

one hundred and fifty base camps and several thousand work detachments during the war. Regarding execution of program, in the words of a YMCA representative:

In Germany proper, at least until the time when systematic Allied bombings completely disrupted communication and somewhat affected the equanimity of the German authorities toward Allied prisoners, the regular War Prisoners Aid program was easily carried out.¹⁴

As proud as delegates had a right to be of their accomplishments, they nevertheless reported:

...as in every country holding prisoners, work detachments scattered all over the map, often more than 100 miles from their base camp, did not always get their full share of materials directed to base camps and their stock of supplies often looked rather slim.¹⁵

Prisoners themselves paid grateful tributes to such relief organizations. Profuse thanks were offered for books, sports equipment, and religious articles received. In a letter to the War Department, a group of senior officers of various luft lagers observed, "It was largely through the efforts of the YMCA that the mental attitude of the prisoners of war remained so fine throughout their incarceration in Germany."¹⁶ Acknowledged also was the help rendered during the evacuation marches which began in January 1945 and lasted until the end of the war. Some idea of the seemingly bottomless hole they kept trying to fill up may be seen from

14. Ibid., p. 40.

15. Ibid., p. 51.

16. Greening and Spinelli, op. cit.

the following incomplete list of relief supplies sent from the international offices in Geneva during 1944 to American camps.¹⁷

Pencils.....	15,184	Sports Shorts.....	6,759
Erasers.....	2,376	Gym Shoes (prs.)...	7,491
Skip ropes.....	1,836	Chess sets.....	1,301
Chest expanders.....	489	Play cards.....	21,133
Softballs and baseballs.	9,542	Xmas decoration sets	300
Handballs.....	3,161	Guitars.....	213
Tennis balls.....	3,166	Ukuleles.....	269
Boxing gloves (prs.)....	1,634	Flutes.....	1,370
Ping Pong balls (doz.)..	1,054	Violins.....	93
Sports Jerseys.....	6,679	Saxophones.....	89
		Accordians.....	53

The extent to which sports equipment was used varied proportionately with the food supply of the camp. As food supplies dwindled, the more strenuous sports were foresaken.

E. Miscellaneous Recreation

A reciprocal agreement of April 1942 allowed the showing of films (originating in their own country) to prisoners of war.¹⁸ Relief agencies undertook the job of distribution. Almost three hundred modern American films and over one hundred 16 millimeter sound projectors were sent to camps in Germany. This does not mean that all prisoners were given the opportunity to see movies. If German authorities wished to be contrary, they could always arrange to have electrical power supplies "interrupted". Furthermore, transportation lowered the odds of ever seeing movies for prisoners detained in outlying camps. Luft IV, for instance, never showed such

17. Vulliet, op. cit., p. 51.

18. Report of ICRC, I A, 281.

films.

Likewise, no consistency was shown in the German practice of granting permission to cultivate small garden plots within prison compounds. The decision was a matter for Camp Commandants. When permission was granted, seeds were procured from relief agencies. Prisoners then spent considerable time at their small-scale farming endeavors. Sometimes permission was retracted by the authorities. At one camp it was claimed that prisoners were using garden plots to dispose of excavated earth that had been accumulated in the process of digging escape tunnels.¹⁹

State Department correspondence suggests that in early 1943 the German Government was prepared to enter into a reciprocal agreement permitting the installation of radios in prisoner of war camps.²⁰ There is no record of this agreement having been officially settled. Rather it remained for prisoners of war to while away the hours not listening to a radio, but planning and scheming how to manage to "sneak" radio parts into the camp.

19. PW Bulletin, II, No. 9 (September 1944).

20. Telegram 2680 from Bern to Secretary of State dated April 27, 1943.

CHAPTER XI

MAIL

A. Outgoing

Mail provisions, Articles XXXV through XLI are enumerated in that section of the Geneva Convention appropriately entitled "External Relations". Sending and receiving mail was a PW right whose psychological importance cannot possibly be overestimated. Indeed, the liberalization of mailing rights and the facilitation of mail delivery probably would have minimized the number of psychological breakdowns that occurred among prisoners of war. As conditions existed, transportation and distribution proved to be exasperating stumbling blocks in the path of an efficient mail system.

In conjunction with Article XXXVI authorizing the belligerents to determine the monthly allowance of letters and postcards, the minimum generally established was two letters and four cards.¹ Beginning with the "capture card" (sent during the first week of captivity), this number was seldom, if ever, exceeded. Frequently a lesser number was allotted. Camp Commandants, if they felt inclined to make explanations, could plead a paper shortage as easily as they could explain the lessened quota as a punishment. Both rejoinders, incidentally, were actually given to American PWs. The "punishment" angle may have been suggested by the Foreign Office.

1. Report of ICRC, I A, 349. Cards offered the writer seven lines, each five inches in length, while letter forms contained twenty four such lines.

One of their memoranda dealing with this subject decreed that a prisoner of war serving a disciplinary sentence, although he might receive unlimited mail, would only be allowed to send one letter every three weeks.² Censorship, of course, could become a delaying factor under any conditions. As a security measure, all outgoing letters were carefully screened. Nevertheless, with all the time spent in censorship, embarrassing items still slipped through. A corporal at Stalag II B, for instance, wrote in a letter to his sister that while he had been struck with a rifle, some of the other prisoners "got the other end of the gun."³

Additional limitations placed on prisoners' mailing privileges were local in character but nevertheless affected sizable numbers. At Stalag II B and IV B an order was given that communications could be addressed only to blood relations bearing the same name as the sender!⁴ This unnecessary measure was intended to reduce the number of letters being sent. It is conceivable that some prisoners, ^{those} those without such same-named blood relations, incurred a most unusual deprivation as a result. When reports alleging a four month

2. Memorandum quoted in Telegram SFG-541 from Leland Harrison to Secretary of State dated September 19, 1944. Article LVII says merely that prisoners under disciplinary punishment shall be allowed to send and receive letters.

3. E. Thomas Baily of the State Department acknowledged receipt of a photostatic copy of this letter in his letter to Col. Bresee, Office of PKG, dated January 15, 1945.

4. Telegram 464 from acting Secretary of State Grew to Bern, dated January 24, 1945.

mail interdiction at Stalag III B reached the State Department, the Swiss were asked to conduct an inquiry. Asked about this matter, the German authorities, denying any knowledge of the ban, gave the rather unsatisfactory answer that the measure must have been one ordered only by the Commandant of Stalag III B.⁵

Provisions for sending money or valuables home, as established by Article XXXVIII, were rarely, if ever, utilized by American personnel. The explanation is simple enough. In the first place, American prisoners' dependents were customarily provided for by allotments withheld from prisoners' pay (which continued without interruption). In the second place, existing rates of exchange would have meant that the prisoner had to work four 70 pfennig days in order to be able to send a dollar home. Such a seven or eight dollar per month allotment would have appeared slightly ridiculous in the United States. Prisoners, in other words, did not have the money to send home.

B. Incoming Mail

"We lived for it, and just about the worst punishment we could receive was for our captors to withhold our mail."⁶ In such terms did prisoners of war describe what mail could mean to a person in detention. While there were no formal

5. Telegram 2581 from Bern to Secretary of State dated May 2, 1945.

6. Greening and Spinnelli, op. cit.

limitations placed upon the number of letters that could be written to prisoners, in effect practical considerations constituted a limitation. The Red Cross urged next of kin to recognize the fact that a flood of letters would mean overburdening loads for German censors. If this were to happen, prisoners' mail would be even further delayed. The Red Cross held that it would be desirable for everybody to get fewer letters with less delay than to risk the eventuality of some prisoners getting more correspondence at the expense of delays in others' mail.

Mail delivery in wartime was wrought with difficulties. For example, in June - July 1943 some ten thousand letters were dispatched from the United States to Geneva, destined for American prisoners in Italy. By the time the letters reached Switzerland, however, the prisoners had been moved up into Germany. All Geneva could do was promise that forwarding would occur as soon as the neutral Prisoner of War Information Bureau received lists of new addresses from the Germans.⁷ Even under more "ordinary" conditions, delivery took inordinately long periods of time. In unusual instances, a letter might reach its destination in a month; it was considered exceedingly fast for a letter to arrive after two months; generally, it took three months for a letter to reach the PW camp.⁸ The Senior American Officer of Oflog 64

7. Rev. Int., XXV, No. 299 (November 1943), 380-31.

8. PW Bulletin, II, No. 3 (March 1944).

reported that the average delivery time of letters delivered in May 1944 was ninety eight days.⁹ Numerous reports and complaints of this nature apparently reached Switzerland, for in June 1944 the President of the International Red Cross, Max Huber, addressed a memorandum regarding mail delivery to all belligerents.¹⁰ In the most diplomatic terms, he said that he should like to recall attention to Articles XXXVI - XL of the Convention which regulated connections of prisoners of war with the outside world. More bluntly, he said that complaints charging unnecessary delays in delivery were apparently well founded; that it had been established, in some cases, that mail had been routed through unnecessarily tortuous paths; that censors had, not infrequently, delayed mail anywhere from several weeks to several months. During the next month, July, the United States authorities, concerned over the number of prisoners whose addresses were still not known by their families, asked the Red Cross in Geneva to undertake the task of forwarding letters to these men.¹¹ A department (dubbed "Directory Service" by the Americans) was formed to this end. They received their first batch of undressed letters on the day after Christmas 1944. There followed a deluge of about twelve thousand letters per week. About eighty percent of these were immediately dispatched to

9. PK Bulletin, II, No. 9 (September).

10. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 307 (July 1944), 509-11.

11. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 314 (February 1945), 132-34.

prisoners whose current addresses were known. The Red Cross estimated that this service cut about three months off of previous delivery time which, for these men, might have been five or six months.

Another alleviating factor in the problem of mail delivery was the Allied reconstruction of port facilities in Marseilles. Its reopening in November 1944 greatly facilitated transportation, at least to and from Switzerland.

Disruptions, from the German point of view, could generally be blamed on the enemy. They contended that (1) German air mail flights between Lisbon and various points in Germany had been forced to stop by the Allied occupation of France, (2) warfare around the Marseilles - Switzerland line had accounted for mail disruption from June to October 1944, and (3) increased numbers of prisoners (the number of Americans tripled from June 1944 to February 1945, according to the Red Cross) itself constituted an onerous censorship load inevitably resulting in delays.¹²

Personal parcels of food or clothing were authorized by Article XXVII. In practice, next of kin were permitted to send one such parcel plus four "units" of tobacco every sixty days.¹³ These parcels were subjected to pilferage and

12. PW Bulletin, III, No. 2 (February 1945).

13. The parcel, not to exceed eleven pounds when packed, had to be mailed in a manner permitting ease of postal inspection. Each tobacco unit consisted of three cartons of cigarettes, or one hundred cigars, or twenty four ounces of chewing or smoking tobacco.

confiscation from various quarters. The U.S. State Department protested that "...extensive pilferage of next of kin parcels takes place after they have left the control of the American authorities."¹⁴ As frequently as not, German authorities had excuses. To explain the confiscation of sixty thousand cigarettes from private parcels, one camp commander claimed that small compasses were being concealed in some packages.¹⁵ When a neutral observer was asked to check on the allegation, he was shown photographs of compasses concealed amidst cigarettes. Tobacco parcels, incidentally, were not prepared by individuals as were food and clothing packages. Such parcels were sent only upon application to one of a list of tobacco companies drawn up jointly by a number of government agencies representing the armed forces, the State Department, and the Office of Censorship.

Despite continued representations to the Germans through the Swiss, these practices prevailed. About all the American authorities could do was formulate protests against German actions in this regard.

It has been contended that shortcomings and failures in the area of mail exchange can be attributed to weaknesses of the Geneva Convention as well as to German behavior. In the

14. Telegram 2684 from Stettinius to Bern, dated August 4, 1944.

15. Telegram HIS-523 from Bern to Secretary of State, dated August 30, 1944.

words of one ICRC spokesman:

The experiences undergone in the course of the present conflict shows that the application of the rules regarding correspondence of prisoners of war in the 1929 Convention was not sufficient to establish the liaison that ought to have been attained...in certain cases.¹⁶

It would appear, upon examination, that considerable room for improvement exists in this area of the Convention.

. 16.. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 302 (February 1944), 138.

CHAPTER XII

HEALTH

A. General Physical

A physical state of well-being in a prison camp depends upon several factors. Three important considerations, food, clothing, and shelter, have already been discussed. In addition, there should have been adequate hygiene facilities to prevent the onslaught of disease and adequate medical facilities to treat ailments after they had once made their appearance. As far as the former were concerned, reports on officer camps suggest that hot showers were allowed once per week.¹ Generally speaking, camps for enlisted men were less fortunate in this respect. American prisoners, nevertheless, managed to keep themselves reasonably clean; the Red Cross kept them adequately supplied with soap.

Regarding the incidence of disease and illnesses, Articles XIII - XV of the Convention provide that sanitary measures to assure healthfulness must be taken. This includes the treatment of sicknesses. The Convention does not, however, state that a PW can present himself on sick call whenever he wished, for it was conceivable that some prisoners might try to evade their working responsibilities in this manner. In practice the Germans adopted an unwritten rule that only a certain small percentage (ranging from one to five percent) of men could present themselves at the medical

1. PW Bulletin, II, No. 4 (April 1944); II, No. 6 (June 1944).

inspections customarily held every few days.² Findings of such inspections revealed that "Cases of malaria were few, but there was a great deal of furunculosis, and diseases such as tuberculosis, ulcers, gastritis, nephritis, etc."³ At labor detachments, physical ailments which were small in themselves became serious debilities due to inadequate treatment.

Another infection that manifested itself freely in prison camps and among prisoners of war generally was dysentery and associated diarrheal disorders. Not quite as prevalent during relatively stable conditions of imprisonment, this disease hit virtually everyone during the forced evacuation marches beginning in January 1945. As a result of drinking unsafe water or of living in filth, dysenteric inflammations of varying intensity became a major health problem. With little or no medicine available from the Germans, it became a common sight to see prisoners of war forced to relieve themselves on country highways, village streets, and even, on occasion, in more public localities of some of the larger cities of Germany.⁴

Permanent PW installations, in observation of Article XIV, generally had sick wards of infirmaries where an attempt

2. Report of ICRC, I A, 265.

3. Ibid., p. 268.

4. Capt. Leslie Caplan, "Death March Medic", Air Force, XXVIII (November 1945), 13.

was made to take care of prisoners' health needs. Although reports of deficiencies in this regard came most frequently in the later stages of the war, one of the rarer correspondences from Britain in the fall of 1943 declared that at Luft III/ prisoners could not leave their quarters at night, even for extreme or emergency medical aid.⁵ Anyone attempting to leave could be shot without warning. Although this is in apparent violation of the second section of Article XIII, it is conceivable that its "day and night" provision refers primarily to lavatory facilities. At any rate, the American Ambassador to Britain suggested that the existing situation was contrary to Article II (humane treatment). The United States protested to the Germans in early 1944 that at Stalag II B wounded and tubercular patients were invariably kept together with healthy POWs.⁶ This obviously violated Article XIV. About five months afterwards, the German Foreign Office issued a memorandum denying these charges.⁷ They stated that wounded prisoners were hospitalized and that tuberculars were isolated at Stalag II B.

5. Airgram A - 1497 from Ambassador Winant to Secretary of State dated November 30, 1943. Winant's information probably came either from a repatriate or an escaped PW.

6. Telegram 1157 from Secretary of State Hull to Bern dated April 5, 1944.

7. Memorandum included in Airmail Letter GEK-989 from Department of State to War Department dated September 23, 1944.

A similar routine took place in the Summer of 1944. The Senior Camp Officer at Oflag 64 wrote a protest letter to the Swiss Legation in Berlin.⁸ He charged ill treatment of sick American officers who were sent to Posen to appear before a Mixed Medical Commission regarding their repatriation. Mentioning, incidentally, that on their journey from Schubin to Posen the men were forced to march in the streets instead of on the sidewalk (provoking public curiosity), the main protest was concerning treatment after they had arrived at their destination. The group of nine officers and one enlisted man were billeted in a deserted, filthy building once used, apparently, for tubercular prisoners. When the Senior American Officer refused to enter such quarters, the group stood in the road for three hours until one sick officer had to lie down. The Germans, said Col. Drake, offered the ultimatum: either use the old building or continue standing in the road. Under this condition, the quarters were accepted under protest. One of the blankets given the group, continued Col. Drake, still had vomit of a former user on it. Bedbugs abounded. While an improvement was promised by a German major, this entire procedure had occurred in Posen on a previous occasion. Some three and a half months later, the German Foreign Office offered their rebuttal.⁹ The whole thing, they said, was a

8. Letter by Col. Thomas D. Drake to Swiss Legation dated May 4, 1944.

9. Memorandum R 1888 T/4 dated August 16, 1944.

maneuver to discomfort the German authorities. The description of the quarters was both exaggerated and misleading, they contended.

Although not mentioned specifically, the spirit of Article XIV undoubtedly includes rendering therapeutic treatment to wounded prisoners of war (especially since it calls for "temporary prosthetic equipment"). In fact, the Germans did notify the International Red Cross of the methods being employed in the rehabilitation of wounded prisoners.¹⁰ As reported, the treatment consisted mainly of (a) sports, (b) medical gymnastics, (c) manual labor (sewing, knitting, embroidering), (d) practical craft skills (carpentering, tailoring, shoemaking, cabinetmaking), (e) blind-craft (weaving; making brooms, mats, baskets, brushes), and (f) miscellaneous activities such as gardening, kitchen work, and laundry work. In all due fairness, it must be admitted the Germans undoubtedly did render valuable rehabilitation treatment in many instances. However, in all due objectivity, it should be pointed out that "miscellaneous" activities predominated. There is almost an element of combined irony and humor in a contention, for instance, that amputees had to peel potatoes and do their own dirty washing for therapeutic reasons.

Summarizing, the collective physical health of American

10. PW Bulletin, II, No. 3 (March 1944).

prisoners of war, while generally good as compared to prisoners of other nationalities, had serious impairments in several areas. An Army doctor, noting that the incidence of TB among Americans was not comparable to its incidence among other liberated Allies, nevertheless generalized that "The prevalence was so great as to suggest a grave spread of tuberculosis as a result of the conditions of imprisonment."¹¹ While epidemics were kept in check by the use of all vaccines that could be acquired, no such preventative measures could be taken against the development of stomach and digestive disorders. Camp reports almost invariably mentioned this situation. Thus, in February 1944 (when food, by later comparisons, was relatively plentiful) ICRC delegates mentioned that at Stalag III B twenty eight Americans were kept in the infirmary with stomach disorders, while at Stalag II B four hundred men (out of three thousand, thirteen percent) were confined to barracks with stomach troubles that rendered them unfit for work.¹²

B. Dental Health

Dental trouble proved to be both a figurative and a literal sore spot in the health conditions of prisoners of war. There existed in the camps neither enough dentists nor enough equipment to treat ailments. Critically dependent

11. Colonel Esmond R. Long, "Tuberculosis in German Prison Camps," The Military Surgeon, XCVII (December 1945), 449-50.

12. PW Bulletin, II, No. 6 (June 1944).

upon the kind and amount of food available, prisoners' teeth demanded much attention. A Red Cross survey observed, "Caries and other dental troubles spread rapidly..."¹³ While the Red Cross tried to comply with camp requests for dental supplies, there appeared to be a constant backlog. Notwithstanding the fact that the Detaining Power was supposed to foot the medical bills (Article XIV), the American Red Cross established a revolving fund which, through the Swiss representatives, was made available for the payment of fees incurred in special dental treatments.¹⁴

...some regulations [German] in fact only permitted the supply of dentures to prisoners of war who had lost at least fifteen teeth during captivity and were suffering from gastric disease due to insufficient mastication.¹⁵

In brief, German dental care was wholly inadequate.

C. Deaths

The death rate of American prisoners of war in Germany was approximately five per thousand. This was considered to be a "normal" ratio.¹⁶ It admittedly does not specify

13. Siordet. op. cit., p. 65.

14. PW Bulletin, II, No. 9 (September 1944).

15. Report of ICRC, I A, 266.

16. Siordet, op. cit., p. 53. Considering the total male population in the United States from 1939 - 41, the U.S. Department of Commerce estimates a mortality rate of 2.46 per M at age 20, 2.92 per M at age 25, and 3.33 per M at age 30. cf. United States Life Tables and Actuarial Tables, 1939-1941. (Washington: GPO, 1946), p. 22. Based on white males only, these figures would be still further reduced.

whether prisoners killed upon capture entered the estimate. The exact statistics are difficult to establish. In any case, for our purposes they are of relative unimportance.

Article LXXVI, treating of prisoner of war deaths in captivity, specifies that death certificates shall be drawn up just as for soldiers of the national army; that honorable burial be given; and that graves shall be marked, respected, and maintained. In regard to wills being formulated, it is generally conceded that a dead prisoner's effects will be forwarded, through a neutral intermediary, to the state of origin.

We have already seen, to a limited extent, how death visited American prisoners in Germany. Some men were killed upon capture; others were killed during air raids. Some just became sick and died without too much "help" from the Germans. They may have had heart ailments or severe cases of pneumonia. Sometimes the Germans had nothing to do with these deaths, but more often they were implicated in some way, as the following protest wire suggests:

The responsibility for the deaths of three American prisoners from acute appendicitis rests upon the German authorities because the medical care which they have provided has not been such as to insure that the prisoners receive every kind of medical attention they need.¹⁷

Specifically concerning burials, American authorities were in no wise satisfied with the reports which reached

17. Telegram 3641 from Secretary of State Stottinius to Bern, dated October 25, 1944.

them. In one protest Secretary Stettinius detailed that an American aviator had been buried without a coffin, that this "grave" remained opened for some days before being filled in, that no clerical service was performed at the interment, and in a grand climax, that the dead man's personal belongings were stolen.¹⁸ Violations of Article LXXXVI were corroborated in a report from the Swiss Legation in Berlin.¹⁹ They reported that (1) French prisoners of war who decorated the graves of American airmen buried in a forest near Stalag XVII C were punished for having paid this respect, (2) British prisoners were refused permission when they sought to bury the bodies of American airmen which had been on display four days for "sight seers", and (3) chaplains at Stalag XVIII A were also refused permission to bury Air Force personnel; were told, in fact, that airmen were not worthy of a military burial.

Another Article bites the dust.

D. Mental Health

Mental health of prisoners, although very closely interrelated with physical health, warrants separate investigation. It goes without saying that physical exercise, even walks under guard escort, served to break the interminable routine of prison life which seemed to precipitate

18. Telegram 2611 from Secretary of State Stettinius to Bern, dated July 29, 1944.

19. Contained in Airmail letter 9353 from Department of State to War Department, dated September 25, 1944.

mental breakdowns. One prison camp doctor listed psychoneurosis as one of the main troubles encountered. Its consequences were virtually on a par with tuberculosis and certain dietary deficiency diseases.²⁰

Mental disturbances were derived from several factors. Among the most obvious were the individual temperament of the prisoner afflicted and the gravity of the situations and conditions he found himself subjected to. A group of military psychiatrists meeting in England in the fall of 1944 and discussing length of incarceration, concluded that adverse psychological effects became more noticeably marked after 18 - 21 months imprisonment.²¹ Propaganda dispensed by such newspapers as OK and aimed specifically at prisoner consumption did much to cause the disillusionment that led deeper into mental unbalance. Hunger also should be considered. Prisoners who describe themselves as having been on the verge of cannibalism certainly could have been motivated in almost any direction by the food drive. The enforced celibacy of gefangenschaft undoubtedly was another factor, particularly for those men who, suddenly finding themselves deprived of bi-sexual gratifications, tried to make "strange alliances". Mental strain was caused also by a general fear of being forgotten, a manifestation best seen on the faces

20. A.L. Cochrane, "The Medical Officer as a Prisoner in Germany," The Lancet, II (September 2, 1945), 411-12.

21. "The Prisoner of War Comes Home" reprinted in Mental Hygiene, XXIV (July 1945), 531.

of disappointed prisoners after a PW mailcall.²²

Like the factors, the symptoms of mental disturbances were manifold. A prisoner might merely be restless or nervous; he might become apathetic; in the most severe cases the prisoner considered himself impervious to all rules and restrictions, thus endangering not only himself but his comrades as well. In an example at Luft IV, a prisoner made frequent attempts to leave the compound, explaining that he only wanted to see his wife who was in another compound. Another camp was burdened with a prisoner who, by the testimony of two medical officers, was obviously suffering from schizophrenia.²³

American authorities, looking out for the welfare of American PWs, asked German authorities to make some provision for the treatment of mental cases. In almost mocking words the Germans replied:

Due to special technical difficulties, it has not been possible so far to establish assembly hospitals for insane British and North American prisoners of war.

High Command of German Army will further endeavor to establish a special hospital.²⁴

Swiss observers noted that, in view of the military events

22. P.H. Nerman, "The Prisoner of War Mentality, its Effect after Repatriation", British Medical Journal, I (January 1944), 8-10.

23. Enclosure No. 3 to Dispatch No. 9662 from Bern to Secretary of State dated October 27, 1944.

24. Translation of German memorandum in Airgram A-268 from Bern to Secretary of State dated February 12, 1945.

of the times, the establishment of such a special hospital was extremely doubtful. They were right in their observation.

E. After Effects

Two essentially opposite positions have been tendered in regard to the effect that prison camp life had upon ex-kriegies. A special study of 275 severe cases of malnutrition among U.S. personnel concluded:

Liberated American prisoners of war are recovering quickly and fully from the malnutrition caused by starvation in Nazi prison camps. They will not suffer permanent ill effects if the starvation was not complicated by other conditions.²⁵

The survey mentioned that starvation tended to reduce resistance to infections. This apparently explained the incidence of TB, jaundice, rheumatic fever, diphtheria, post-diphtheritic polyneuritis, and myocarditis. The report continued:

Although mental changes are considered to be common in pellegra, no severe mental disturbances which were a direct result of starvation were found.²⁶

This may have been due to two factors: first, in most cases, starvation diet was not extended long enough to cause dementia; second, prisoner malnutrition was general and did not hinge on an absence of greens (as it did in southern regions of the U.S. where pellegra was rife).

The other after-effect theory can best be understood by

25. "POWs Recover Quickly", Science News Letter, XLIX (July 21, 1945), 39.

26. Ibid.

a comparison between an ex-prisoner of war and a deep sea diver. The diver, this theory would say, gets the "bends" after he is returned to the surface of the water. Similarly, it could be said the lasting impressions and effects of gefangenschaft are not immediately discernable. Supporters of this thesis, in all probability, have a psychiatric orientation. A typical example and argument for this stand follows.²⁷

The ex-POW being observed, Corporal B., obviously was affected by a traumatic experience. He had no history of previous nervous instability before joining the army. In March, 1944 he was taken prisoner at Anzio. His unit took a severe beating; many were killed. While being transported from Italy to Germany, five men escaped from the truck. The rest were immediately lined up, presumably to be shot. Instead, however, they were beaten with rifles and bayonets and were forced to sit on their haunches the entire night. This experience constantly recurred in the ex-corporal's dreams and constituted an obvious manifestation of social maladjustment.

Hearings before Congressional Committees regarding claims by American ex-prisoners of war on their captors echoed this argument.²⁸ Although most of the testimony

27. Major Susan Davidson, "Notes on a Group of Ex-prisoners of war", Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic, X (May 1946) 91.

28. U.S. House of Representatives, Enemy Property Commission, Hearings on H.R. 1000 before the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, 80th Congress, 1st session, pp. 173, 312-13.

CHAPTER XIII

ESCAPE

May 10, 1944, eight officers who escaped from Barth arrived here.¹

There is assuredly an exciting story behind these brief words and many such stories could be told. Our interest here, however, is to examine in what manner the Germans entered the escape picture. Descriptions of American ingenuity will be minimized.

The Geneva Convention establishes certain rules regarding escape attempts in the section on "Penalties Applicable to Prisoners of War". Escape and/or attempted escape is mentioned specifically or by obvious implication in Articles XLVII - LII inclusively (with the exception of Article XLIX). All the regulations are oriented toward protecting prisoner "rights". They aim at the preservation of the unwritten rule that it is the duty of a prisoner to escape if the opportunity avails itself.² The only limitation of this trend is the provision of Article XLVIII that "special surveillance" may be exercised over prisoners who have attempted escape. For all other purposes, punishment is to be "reduced" to the absolute minimum" (Article XLVII). Authorities are to "exercise the greatest leniency in deciding the question of whether an infraction committed by a prisoner of war should be

1. Wigger, op. cit., p. 149.

2. This was, in fact, a written regulation during the Civil War. cf. U. S. General Order No. 107 of July 3, 1863.

punished by disciplinary or judicial measures...especially when it is a question of deciding on acts in connection with escape or attempted escape" (Article LII).

For purposes of better understanding the rules that obtain, it is perhaps desirable to "dissect" the general term "escape". An attempted escape is the participation in any preparatory movement such as drawing plans or tunneling. Attempt ends when the PW flees or puts himself beyond the jurisdiction and control of his former captors. Escape itself is the process of leaving that detention. Successful escape is marked by return to military control of the ex-PW's country of origin.

Prisoners' decisions to attempt escape depended on various factors. Due consideration had first to be given to the direct preventative measures enforced. This included strength of guard personnel, detaining effect of barbed wire, and frequency of searches made to scotch escape plans. Such an attempt also had to consider the escapee's physical condition, whether he could endure the rigors that escape usually entailed. Lastly, psychological factors had to be considered. One could not ignore what was usually the customary punishment for failure. There had to be a feeling of purposefulness that included a reasonable chance of success before an escape attempt would be made.

After an evaluation of these factors had been made and prospects looked good, one or a group of prisoners would make

the break. Two privates attempted such an escape from their work detachment in the winter of 1943. Civilians recaptured them and they were returned to the farm where they had been employed. A German Officer ordered two guards to return them to the base camp. A short time later, other members of the work detachment were called to carry the bodies of their two dead comrades. Each one had been shot in the back. The guards alleged that they had attempted to escape again.³ It is not to be inferred, however, that escapees were invariably shot. Colonel Greening who jumped train while being transported was at large in Italy for six months before being recovered and sent to Stalag Luft I.⁴

Other prisoners attempted escape from prison camps by tunneling. Of the many attempts, there were few successes.⁵ The men burrowed under the barracks' rooms and in devious ways attempted to hide or disperse the evacuated earth. Sometimes this material was secreted in eaves-corners under barrack roofs; sometimes it was carried out of doors to be sprinkled in minute quantities around the camp grounds. The Germans never relaxed their search for such activity. Three non-coms apprehended at Stalag Luft VI were court martialed on charges of destroying German property while in the process

3. Telegram 434 from Bern to Secretary of State dated December 20, 1943.

4. Greening and Spinelli, op. cit.

5. In Col. Greening's camp over a hundred tunnels were dug.

of tunneling.⁶ The usual punishment was thirty days of solitary confinement.⁷

On March 24, 1944, a mass attempt at escape by approximately eighty British officers from the North Compound of Luft III at Sagan was brought to a bloody, abortive end. An official order read to the Senior American Officer on April 6, announcing the death by shooting of forty seven R.A.F. officers who had escaped, declared that the Luftwaffe no longer could be held responsible for the safety of escaped officers.⁸ The executions, ordered by Hitler, were carried out by eighteen Gestapo and SS officers. Four days after the British massacre, the Commander of the Security Police issued a top secret order to all branches of the SP. It said in part:

Should escaped British and American officers or nonworking NCOs be recaptured, they are temporarily to be placed under guard in the custody of the police, outside of the POW camp and out of sight of POWs.

The disposition of such recaptured prisoners of war was left up to the discretion of the OKW, but

In this connection the Chief of the Sipo [Security police, Gestapo] and the SD [Intelligence and counter intelligence Agency of the SS] has issued the following instructions:

6. German court martial document enclosed in Airgram from Bern to Secretary of State dated September 1, 1944.

7. Greening and Spinelli, op. cit.

8. Wigger, op. cit., p. 128.

1. The Stapo Leitstellen will take over from the Camp Commandants the escaped officers who have been recaptured and take them in accordance with the procedure hitherto in force, should circumstances not necessitate special transport, to the Mauthausen concentration camp. During the transport - not on the way to the station, if this could be seen by the public - the POWs are to be chained...⁹

Further Gestapo jurisdiction over prisoners of war who had attempted escape (as well as others such as those who refused to work or were accused of the commission of sabotage or crimes) was established in July 1944. This was done through the Kugel Erlass (Bullet Decree) issued by the Sixth Corps Area Command.¹⁰

A Foreign Office memorandum of August announced that prisoners of war escaping either in German uniform or in civilian garb could, if recaptured, automatically be tried for espionage.¹¹

In September, the Germans printed a leaflet warning prisoners of war, "The escape from prison camps is no longer a sport!"¹² This cataclysmic "change" of affairs, they said, was brought about by the capture of a secret and confidential enemy military pamphlet entitled "The Handbook of Modern Irregular Warfare". When the United States protested this wholesale attempt to intimidate prisoners of war,

9. NCA, VII, 906-08. Document L-158.

10. NCA, II, 287.

11. German Foreign Office Memorandum R 8838 dated August 8, 1944.

12. Cf. Appendix D.

the Foreign Office blandly (and untruthfully for it was seen by the author at Luft IV) replied that the leaflet was posted at only two camps, Luft III and Oflag 64.¹³

Striking modifications of the Geneva Convention regulations regarding escape were thus made as the war progressed. Stories of successful escapes have been rather well protected by security regulations. Suffice it to say that escapees who deposited themselves into the hands of underground movements were generally smuggled back into Allied Control; those who successfully reached Switzerland were given sanctuary and were free to leave (unlike internees) when the Allies finally gained a corridor of exit adjacent to Switzerland.

13. Airgram A-633 from Bern to Secretary of State dated April 26, 1945.

CHAPTER XIV

TRANSPORTATION

A. Men

Transportation in World War II technologically progressed in much the same manner as did methods of production and destruction. The recent war having been as "advanced" as it was, it seems worthwhile to investigate how advances in transportation seeped down to the level where they could be of some value to prisoners of war. German treatment of war prisoners can in this manner be evaluated.

The Convention itself says very little about transport and/or transfer. Regulating capture conditions, Article VII specifies that evacuation by foot should not exceed twenty kilometers per day unless greater stages appear to be necessary. Speaking of PW safety, Article IX declares that prisoners are not to be sent into areas of fighting or bombardment. Articles XXV and XXVI specify that movements shall only be undertaken if prisoners' health warrants, and when they are moved, they are to be informed of their new destination and be able to take their belongings with them. Article XLIV tries to protect the prisoners from being deprived of their authorized fellow-prisoner representatives, saying that these men of confidence shall not be transferred before ^{being} given an adequate opportunity to inform their successors of "affairs under consideration".

Although this section will primarily be devoted to conditions of transportation toward the end of World War II,

brief mention may be made of preceding circumstances. An example of marine transport from North Africa has already been cited.¹ Personnel captured in Tunisia and Sicily were taken to collection stations in Italy and then moved via rail into Germany. This leg of the journey was far from comfortable. The prisoners were jammed into freight cars without any water or sanitary facilities.² Prisoners subsequently captured in Italy received essentially the same treatment. Those captured on the western front after invasion usually were less fortunate in several respects. Reports indicate many more instances of "marching" to rear echelons. Aerial warfare, further, constituted a greater hazard, precipitating protests like the following over an incident that occurred on June 7 near Les Mesnil Vigot, France:

The Government of the U.S. has received a report from a reliable source that American prisoners... while being evacuated in trucks from the zone of combat, were compelled by the German authorities in charge to remain in the trucks while the convoy was under air attack.³

Two Americans who attempted to get out of the truck were killed by German guards. By nightfall sixty two had been wounded. For want of medical attention (that did not arrive until days later) several died during the night.

Convention violations increased after D-Day. Secretary

1. See above, p. 46.

2. Greening and Spinellit, op. cit.

3. Telegram 211 from Acting Secretary of State Grew to Bern dated January 13, 1945.

Hull wired a protest early in June that:

Department has received reliable report that two wounded Americans were transferred recently from Dulag Luft to Stalag Luft VI in a railroad box-car.⁴

During the trip which took five and a half days (averaging about one hundred miles in twenty four hours), no medical attention was given. Food consisted on one loaf of bread. They were given no drinking water.

Camp movements undertaken in 1944 likewise proved to be contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the Convention. Information regarding such movements should have been forwarded through the appropriate German bureau to "the interested Powers" (Article LXXVII). The Central Agency reported, however:

According to American PW lists drawn up by "men of confidence" and sent to the Central Agency, it has been ascertained that an eastern camp, which harbored American aviators, has been transferred into the interior of the country. This news has been confirmed by a note from the ICRC delegation in Germany.⁵

No mention, it can be seen, is made of the German authorities having volunteered this information.

Perhaps one of the most infamous (and well publicized) incidents regarding a "transportation" violation was occasioned upon the decampment of Luft VI at Heydekrug in July 1944. The "Heydekrug Run" files in the War Crimes Division

4. Airmail letter 2083 from Secretary of State Hull to Bern dated June 17, 1944.

5. Rev. Int., XXVI, No. 310 (October 1944), 786.

of the Judge Advocate General's Office run into literally thousands of pages of depositions, many of which will remain in their security-classified-limbo until classifications are removed and they can be subjected to scrutiny. Available unclassified material offers an outline of the event.⁶ The evacuation began on July 14, 1944. The two thousand prisoners were first taken to Memel where they were put aboard the Masuren. The two day, 300 mile voyage to Swinemunde was made under the most adverse conditions. In the first place, the men were handcuffed. The hold of the vessel was much too small for this human cargo. Ventilation was of the poorest sort, a particularly bad feature since there were no toilet facilities. Drinking water was issued in the sparsest amounts. No German rations were issued at all, apparently because the men were given Red Cross rations before leaving camp. One prisoner who experienced the ordeal said he personally witnessed three cases of wild hysteria as a result of this treatment. After docking at Swinemunde, the men were transferred to boxcars which took them to the railroad station nearest Luft IV at Gross Tychow. The distance from the station to the camp, approximately three kilometers, was lined with guards armed with machine guns. Many had police

6. Telegram 3707 from Stettinius to Bern dated October 30, 1944; Telegram SAS-541 from Harrison to Secretary of State dated September 19, 1944; Enclosures 14 and 17 (depositions) to Airmail Letter 11837 dated June 9, 1946. Also see Appendix E for pertinent deposition by Dr. Leslie Caplan.

dogs with them. At the order of the German transportation officer, Captain Pickardt, a column was formed. As soon as it started moving, the Captain ordered the prisoners to double time. When the Feldwebel set an irregular pace, the men ran into others in front of them, stumbling, tripping. At this point the guards started using bayonets, rifle butts, and dogs to urge the men forward. It was impossible to keep baggage under these conditions. The men jettisoned their meager belongings while they were bitten by dogs, cuffed about, and bayoneted. Many injuries were incurred. One prisoner, suffering a concussion, was temporarily blinded for several days. Bruises, abrasions, and bites, when treated, were officially recorded by the German medical officer as "sunstroke". When the men finally reached the camp site, they had to wait from twelve to thirty hours in the verlager without food before they were admitted. The entire process was, in a word, deplorable and constituted one of the most notorious departures, on Germany's part, from the Geneva Convention.

Other transportation violations can be pointed out. One prisoner testified that in November, soon after he bailed out of a disabled aircraft, he was forced to march at least thirty miles to reach an interrogation point.⁷ Later

7. Enclosure No. 12 to Airmail letter 11887 from Bern to Secretary of State dated June 9, 1945. Deposition of Lt. Davidson.

the same year, 1944, the SAO of Dulag Luft received intelligence from a British Transport Leader that a group of 180 men (to which he had been assigned) had been on board a train that was attacked by three P-51s. The German guards would not allow the prisoners to seek safety outside the boxcar. As a result, three Americans were killed and three were severely wounded.⁸

But the "best" was yet to come. The instances enumerated above become insignificant when compared to the evacuation marches begun in January 1945 and lasting until the end of the war. Affecting thousands of American prisoners along with those of other nationalities, these movements caused untold hardships through starvation and exposure. It is likely that more American prisoners died during these four months than during all the previous months and years of Kriegsjahre combined. And as if weather⁹ and alimentation were not enough to contend with, prisoners sometimes were exposed to bombing attacks of their own air force.

Since channels of diplomatic correspondence all but collapsed during this period, it was extremely difficult to get official estimates of the number of prisoners involved in these camp transfers. International Red Cross officials

8. Enclosure No. 1 to Despatch 11397 from Bern to Secretary of State dated April 10, 1945.

9. Temperatures dropped in some places to twenty degrees below zero, Fahrenheit, according to report in War Int., XXVII, No. 317 (May 1945), 370.

commented:

Transfers of camps which have been in operation for several months in the eastern and western sections of Germany affect over 50,000 American prisoners of war according to information which today assumes a rather fragmentary form.¹⁰

Thus, as the war took a turn for the better for the Allies, it took a turn for the worse for prisoners of war. Journeys which ordinarily would have taken days took weeks, as people and supplies jammed German highways and railroad facilities.

The estimated 50,000 prisoners represented many different camps, six of the major camps (Stalags II B, III B, III C, Stalags Luft III and IV, and Oflag 64) themselves accounting for about 29,000 men.¹¹ Their destinations, seldom stated to them as provided in the Convention, were generally toward the ever-receding interior of Germany. The War and State Departments summed up the situation as follows:

All the camps in East Prussia, Poland, and that part of Pomerania east of the Oder River are being moved westward. This includes among others Stalag Luft IV, Stalag II A, and Stalag III B. Similarly, Stalags III B and III C are being moved westward. Stalag Luft III is being evacuated to the southwest. Prisoners of war in the northern part of Silesia are being moved northwest and those in southern Silesia, particularly at Stalag VIII B and Stalag 344, are being moved southwest across Bohemia. It is understood that the officers from Oflag 64 are being sent to Stalag III A at Luckenwalde, between

10. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 316 (April 1946), 298.

11. PW News Notes, I, No. 6 (March 5, 1945).

Berlin and Leipzig. The destination of the other prisoners has not been confirmed.¹²

Relief stations were planned by the International Red Cross to alleviate the prisoners' plight. A depot for Red Cross parcels was first established at Lübeck, then another one was set up at Demmin. A Red Cross representative proposed a third one at Neubrandenburg, and soon a virtual network evolved with additional terminals being created at Anklam, Waren, Neustrelitz, Parchim, and Teterow.¹³ The system was not a panacea, however. Many of the prisoners traveling on secondary routes never came in contact with these relief stations. Civilians sometimes hampered the distribution of supplies. On occasion the prisoners themselves created difficulties. It was with extreme reluctance that "check-off" systems verifying which prisoners had received parcels were utilized.

An on-the-spot record kept by a PW from Luft III gives the prisoners' impressions. The exodus from Sagan began at 2300 hours on the night of January 27. Snow covered the ground; the temperature hovered at about two degrees below zero. In a week's time, the men had covered 530 kilometers, 80 kilometers by foot. After reaching a new camp, the prisoner wrote:

Travel weary, irritated sick south compound men...

12. Joint statement of War Department and Department of State reprinted in PW Bulletin, III, No. 3 (March 1945).

13. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 317 (May 1945), 372-73.

arrived at their new quarters Stalag VII A, Mooseberg, Bavaria. Men jam packed in barns, sleeping in shifts [sic.], eating from cans, thought of Stalag Luft III as the Country Club it was reported to be. Hungry, eagerly awaiting each issue of reich rations.¹⁴

The same war log computed German rations from January 27 to February 3 as having been $1\frac{1}{2}$ loaf of bread, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of margarine, $\frac{1}{2}$ pound of meat, and 4 cups of barley.

Prisoner versions of the evacuation from Luft IV shed further light on transport conditions.¹⁵ The men not able to march left the camp late in January. They were crammed into boxcars and had no knowledge of their destination. On one occasion they went without water for thirty-six hours, on another for forty eight. Some guards "charged" cigarettes for bringing much-needed water. A medical officer, explaining how two hundred men out of fifteen hundred contracted stomach and or intestinal ailments, testified that at one time a "mix-up" resulted in drinking water being given in a container that had been used for body wastes. Furthermore, the German ration contained spoiled meat.

A PW doctor who accompanied the "able bodied" marchers from Luft IV reported:

We were on the road for 86 days during which we marched, starved, froze, marched, scratched our

14. Wigger, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

15. Enclosures 15 and 16 to Airmail letter 11837 from Bern to Secretary of State dated June 9, 1945. Depositions of Lt. Boggess (a medical officer) and Sgt. Shields (a "train commander").

lice, suffered disease and marched some more. We laid in filth, slept in barns or fields and dodged aerial strafings. We marched from the Eastern Front to the western Front and then doubled back to the Eastern Front. We covered 600 miles.

For food we averaged 770 calories a day of German rations for the first 53 days of the march... If it had not been for the Red Cross food parcels we received occasionally many more of us would have died.¹⁶

This reporter tells how, after weeks in which stragglers (and medics who stayed back to help them) were gun-buffed for lagging, the Germans got surprisingly humane during the last thirty days, apparently finally realizing that the end of the war was soon to come.

Of the aimlessness of the marches suggested above, a Red Cross delegate reported:

The German commandants of the two columns of Pws could scarcely furnish information regarding the route that was followed. For example, the Red Cross delegate was told that the head of one column would be at Petschau, while in reality the first Pws had hardly reached Buchau - situated some 30 kilometers distant from the point indicated.¹⁷

This anarchy overcame virtually all of the once-orderly columns of prisoners. Lacking a definite destination, a group from Stalag 344 was spread out 60 miles; those from Stalag VIII B extended some 75 miles from Schlan to the Koenigsgratz region.¹⁸ It can be imagined what difficulties

16. Captain Leslie Caplan, "Death March Medic", Air Forces, XXVIII, No. 12 (November 1945), 12-13. See also Appendix B for deposition of Dr. Caplan.

17. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 316 (April 1945), 100.

18. Pw Bulletin, III, No. 4 (April 1945).

Red Cross trucks, seeking to bring food to these men, encountered under these conditions. According to a Swedish military source, during this period the Germans themselves requested that trucks be put at their disposal to aid in moving prisoners of war.¹⁹

B. Transport of Materials

Just as the movements of prisoners of war reflects a serious, if not critical, breakdown in the German transportation system from the beginning of 1945 on, movements of relief supplies would indicate the same thing. The number of German railroad cars in use was severely limited. There was absolutely no certainty as to the arrival of packages sent by rail from either Switzerland or Lübeck. A typical delay was reported in a letter received at ICRC headquarters from the Man of Confidence of one camp.²⁰ Arriving in Switzerland at the end of March (1945), the letter stated that a shipment which was to have contained provisions for his camp for the month of September (1944) and which had left Switzerland at the beginning of November was received at his camp during the second half of February (1945)! Still rail transport remained in theory the most practical means of carrying large quantities of supplies. "The Division"²¹ of the ICRC

19. Telegram 603 from Secretary of State to Bern dated February 18, 1945.

20. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 316 (April 1945), 180.

21. La Division des secours du Comité International.

for this reason organized "train-blocs". They collected not only German but also French, Belgian, and Swiss railroad cars to be used exclusively for the revictualling of prisoners of war in Germany.²² The French Société Nationale des Chemines de fer sent one thousand cars and Belgian authorities sent seventy five. The first bloc of fifty cars carrying food and medicine left Buchs, Switzerland on March 6. It arrived at Moosburg two days later, having traveled the 330 kilometers in 43 hours and ten minutes, an average of 7.7 kilometers per hour. This perhaps explains why the Division was prompted to organize a motor pool to supplement faltering railroad deliveries.

Twenty five American trucks donated by the Allied High Command first entered Germany, with German authorization, on March 7, 1945.²³ Swiss chauffeurs were accompanied and guided by fourteen German Army personnel. Carrying 120 tons of food and medicine, they first rendered assistance in the Bohemian cities of Eger, Carlsbad, and Marienbad where many PW evacuees were located. Then they moved back into Bavaria to seek other needy PWs before returning to Switzerland to restock. French convoys steadily grew in size. By May, 296 vehicles (primarily American but including some French and Canadian trucks) were being used to feed prisoners in the

22. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 316 (April 1945), 287.

23. Ibid., pp. 288-89.

south of Germany.²⁴ To some extent this service was duplicated in the northern areas.

It is ironical that in the midst of war, this slight gesture of international cooperation brought relief above and beyond the compass of the Geneva Convention.

24. Rev. Int., XXVII, No. 317 (May 1945), 377.

CHAPTER XV
TERMINATION OF CAPTIVITY

A. Repatriation

Under the title "Termination of Captivity", Articles LXVIII - LXXV of the Geneva Convention provide for the return of prisoners of war to the control of the country of their origin. In these provisions, by far the greater attention is paid to conditions of repatriation. In addition, Article LIII pertains to punishment relative to eligible repatriates, and the entire Annex or Model Agreement adjoined to the Convention proper is concerned with conditions of repatriation. Repatriation is, thus, an important aspect of gefangenschaft. It is not, it should be remembered, the main means by which prisonership ended. Liberation, which is discussed below, affected many more men. It might also be mentioned that captivity was ended by other means such as escape, serving the detaining state (treason or desertion), or death.

Repatriation, as has been mentioned, succeeded ransoming as a method of regaining captured personnel. It is customarily accomplished on a reciprocal basis. To be declared eligible, a prisoner had to present himself before a Mixed Medical Commission whose duty it was to make decisions regarding the physical and mental health of potential repatriates. Although Article LXIX specified that such three member commissions were to be composed of two neutrals and one physician appointed by the Detaining Power, this procedure

was not always considered to be in the best interests of the belligerents. Consequently, as a matter of fact, the Mixed Medical Commissions varied considerably.¹ Sometimes there was only one neutral and two representatives of the Detaining Power; at other times there were no neutrals represented at all. Some commissions operated with only two members.

When the United States entered the war only three Swiss doctors, d'Erlach, Stern, and Fuchs, were assigned exclusively to such repatriation work in Germany. They had been examining British prisoners of war. A U.S. - German agreement extended their duties to the examinations of American PWs.² Obviously this small corps of men could not successfully cope with the job as the war progressed. The ICRC repeatedly made expressions of their desire to increase the number of commissions in operation. At the same time neutrals lacked confidence in the operation of existing commissions. The Medical Section of the ICRC, in spite of many attempts at verification, said that they were "never [*italics mine*] able to verify officially that the decisions taken by the Medical Commission were put into effect. Very often men were kept in camps when, as they claimed, they had been passed for repatriation."³ In any event, the shortage of

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1. Report of ICRC, I A, 387.
 2. Rev. Int., XXV, No. 298 (October 1943), 775.
 3. Report of ICRC, II A, 297.

personnel, particularly neutral doctors, tended to reduce the number of men who were passed for repatriation. At the same time the attitude of German authorities had the same effect, as indicated in the following excerpts of a letter written by an American doctor who was interned at Luft IV:

Geneva says a man may be repatriated for peptic ulcer. We had several men with peptic ulcer, diagnosed by German doctors and German X-rays. However, we didn't have the X-rays - just the reports - so the German doctors rejected these fellows.

I remember the repatriates who left Luft 4 in January 1945 and they were definitely cripples. There were amputees, at least one paralysis case, a case of insanity...

The Germans turned down many sick cases. I know that if a fellow had one eye, he had to stay.⁴

Attitudes and local conditions exerted as much influence on the overall repatriation policy as did the Geneva Convention.

There were some half dozen exchanges between Germany and the United States during the war. Prisoners of war were not included in all of them. For instance, none of the fourteen Americans involved in the first exchange, October 1943, were military personnel. In the spring of 1944, thirty five sick or wounded American prisoners of war returned on board the Gripsholm.⁵ The Barcelona exchange of

4. Letter from Dr. Leslie Caplan to author in answer to questions regarding repatriation, Minneapolis, June 4, 1949. Section II, A, 3, of the Model Agreement suggests that prisoners shall be repatriated for "Blindness in both eyes, or in one eye when the vision of the other remains below 1 in spite of the use of corrective glasses; reduction in acuteness of vision in case it is impossible to restore it by correction to the acuteness of $\frac{1}{2}$ for one eye at least..."

5. PW Bulletin, II, No. 5 (May 1944).

May 1944, involving over a thousand repatriates of mixed nationality, again did not include a single American prisoner of war (and included but nine American civilians). In June the Gripsholm returned sixty four American soldiers and one war correspondent, Mr. Larry Allen.⁶ It can be seen that up to this time, covering over a two year period of active opposition to Germany, less than a hundred American soldiers had been repatriated under the terms of the Convention. In September, however, 235 American servicemen were aboard the exchange ship when it pulled into New York harbor.⁷ This tempo increased as close to five hundred American prisoners were conducted across the Swiss border from Konstanz to Kreuzlingen in January 1945.⁸ In February, 463 men arrived on the last exchange voyage made by the Gripsholm.⁹ The bulk of the men repatriated, it can be seen, were restored to their country ~~to their country~~ in the last stages of the war when, by most considerations, a prisoner of war could be nothing but a liability to the German war machine.

B. Liberation

Although over a thousand American prisoners of war were returned to American control by the capitulations of

6. PW Bulletin, II, No. 8 (August 1944).

7. War Department Press Release of October 18, 1944.

8. PW Bulletin, III, No. 4 (April 1945).

9. PW Bulletin, III, No. 3 (March 1945).

Romania and Bulgaria,¹⁰ the great bulk of liberations came toward the end of the war as the Allies invaded Germany proper from both the east and the west. In early April the Secretaries of State and War issued a joint statement:

In general, conditions under which American prisoners are held in Germany today are deplorable. The offensives of the Allied Armies on the East and on the West have overrun 27 of the prisoner-of-war camps and hospitals out of the 78 in which American soldiers were known to be held. These military operations have resulted in the liberation of approximately 15,000 Americans on the Eastern and Western fronts. However, the German Government has hastily evacuated 36,000 American prisoners into the interior of Germany, where 34,000 others were already being held.¹¹

Later in the month, after having freed another twenty installations, the same sources estimated that sixty to sixty five thousand Americans were still being held as prisoners of war. At this point, the State Department received a one-sided offer from the Germans. They said, bluntly, that they would not attempt to further evacuate prisoners of war, that instead they would be left in the camps.¹² The United States was quick to officially acknowledge and accept the offer.

Secretary Stettinius wired:

Request Swiss to inform German Government that the Government of the U.S. accepts the offer of the German Government to leave in all camps all prisoners of war as Allies advance and for its part the

10. War Department Press Release dated October 18, 1944.

11. War Department Press Release dated April 12, 1945. Note, incidentally, the Stettinius-Stimson estimate of the total number of PWs reaches 85,000.

12. Press Release, Department of State Bulletin, XII (April 29, 1945), 810.

Government of the U.S. obligates itself not to return to active duty American prisoners of war recovered by the Allies under this arrangement.¹³

The agreement was to go into effect at 2359 Bern time, April 29, 1945 if no word to the contrary was received from Germany. None was. Quite to the contrary, a May 1 press release revealed that:

...The German Government has requested the Swiss Government, as Protecting Power, and International Red Cross to dispatch representatives to those camps which are not yet liberated.¹⁴

This was, however, more easily said than done. Very few of the camps that remained to be liberated were taken over by Swiss or Red Cross delegates. At Luft I, in the path of the Russian advance, orders for the evacuation of the Stalag were received from Berlin on April 30 but they were rescinded by Himmler's headquarters which instead ordered the guard personnel of the camp themselves to leave.¹⁵ A few Germans, primarily those who thought they could not survive the rigors of an evacuation march, remained in the camp. American personnel took over camp administration awaiting the arrival of the Russians who made their first appearance during the afternoon of May 2. Several days before, Stalag VII A at Moosburg had been liberated by the U.S. Third Army under similar conditions. In the west, the recovered PWs

13. Telegram 1507 from Secretary of State to Bern dated April 10, 1945.

14. War Department Press Release dated May 1, 1945.

15. Lowell Bennett, Parachute to Berlin (New York: Vanguard Press, 1945), pp. 226-27.

were almost immediately taken back to "repatriation centers" from which they were flown to England. Those liberated by the Russians had to be more patient. General Eisenhower advised prisoners to stay in their camps temporarily instead of adding to the chaos that characterized Germany's roads and highways. Generally his advice was accepted, the men realizing that a planned evacuation would be faster and safer than an unplanned one. Toward the middle of May, U.S.-Soviet exchange points were set up at Wismar, Wustmaru, Ludwigslust, Magdeberg, and Leipzig. At these stations the "ex-PWs" were returned to American military control. They were then taken to one of four assembly centers (Brussels, Namur, Sedan, and Thion) for processing. Their next stop was one of several points of embarkation such as Paris or Le Havre where they awaited boat or plane transportation back to the States.¹⁶

16. PW Bulletin, III, No. 6 (June 1945).

CHAPTER XVI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND PROSPECTS

A. German Observation of the Geneva Convention

To answer decisively whether the Geneva Convention, one slight area of international law, had been upheld by Germany throughout the war is very difficult thing to do. Qualifications of one sort or another can invariably be registered. It is, perhaps, appropriate that opposite contentions be summarized while keeping in mind that the treatment of prisoners of war was bound to be a relative thing in the strictest sense of the word. Some American PWs were treated more severely than other Allied nationals; others were accorded comparatively "soft" treatment. Generalizing, it may be said that American prisoners were not mistreated to the extent that were other nationalities held by the Germans. The Germans themselves repeatedly alleged (particularly toward the end of the war) that they felt more allied to representatives of the West than to the "barbarians" of the East. This appears, however, to have been nothing but a ruse to win clemency in the inevitable calling-to-trial. The inhumane treatment of many Belgians, French, Dutch, Norwegians, as "western" representatives, explodes the myth of any east-west differentiation.

Proceeding with the "pro" contentions (that the Convention was observed), we find many impressive statements from presumably reliable quarters. Early in the war, the State Department itself contended that Germany was keeping its

word, was abiding by the Convention.¹ Similarly, Congressional hearings assumed a rather defensive position regarding German behavior.

In general, the German government has endeavored to accord to American prisoners of war the standards of treatment prescribed by the Geneva Prisoner of War Convention. The German authorities have, however, adopted a less liberal interpretation of some portions of the Convention than has our government. It is probable that the exigencies of the situation in Germany are in part the reason for this. The primary example of unliberal interpretation of the treaty by the Germans is in connection with the food ration for prisoners of war.²

After suggesting that perhaps the Germans are not to blame for this because "base troops" (with whom prisoners are to be fed on a par) are not actually defined in the Convention, the report continues by pointing out that rules of housing, clothing, medical care, etc. have been complied with. A continuation of the same report prepared during the next session of Congress hedged a bit further:

From the very beginning reports have been received from the Swiss Government on maltreatment of American prisoners, but all were of a minor nature and none as serious as those received between the early part of December 1944 and just prior to VE-day.³

The Provost Marshal General, in a magazine article he had

1. Press Release, Department of State Bulletin, VI (May 23, 1942), 447.

2. U.S. House of Representatives. Investigations of the National War Effort, 78th Congress, 2nd session, House Report 1992.

3. U.S. House of Representatives, Investigations of the National War Effort, 79th Congress, 1st Session, House Report 728.

written, said that although certain "lapses" were brought to light by the capture of enemy prison camps, essentially the Convention had been observed.⁴

Some prisoners, furthermore, sang the same refrain. A Britisher commented:

Between 1940 and the beginning of 1945, British and American prisoners of war, in organized camps, were treated on the whole correctly (though not always humanely) by their captors. For the Germans, when they obey the letter of the law, are sticklers at it; but their treatment of Russians, Poles, Jews, and civilian prisoners left us under no illusions as to their complete unconcern with the spirit of it.⁵

A SAO, Colonel Spivey, wrote in a February 1944 issue ("designed for home consumption") of the Kriegle Times:

Those who detain us have not treated us badly, and have given us many small concessions which have made our incarceration lighter.

The spirit of the Geneva Convention has been carried out and our treatment, in general, has been good.⁶

Red Cross personnel also saw the Geneva Convention as having been a guidepost to German behavior. The American Director of PW Relief said:

Reports which reach the American Red Cross from many sources indicate that the Germans are adhering to the Geneva Convention...⁷

4. General A.L. Lerch, "The Army Reports on Prisoners of war," American Mercury, LX (May 1945), 538.

5. Morgan, op. cit., p. xii.

6. Reprint of Kriegle Times in PW Bulletin, II, No. 8 (August 1944).

7. PW Bulletin, II, No. 3 (March 1944).

During the last month of the war, the editor of the Prisoners of War Bulletin, Gil Redfern, possibly referring to the German "escorting" of relief supply trucks, bent over backwards to comment:

Recent instances of flagrant violations of the Convention by Germany have been reported in the newspapers. These are unfortunate and deplorable, but, at the same time, it may be noted that the German authorities in some instances have done more than was required of them under the Convention in facilitating the delivery of relief supplies to prisoners in Germany.⁸

An International Red Cross official, admitting that "exceptions and violations" occurred, stated that on the whole the Convention was observed.⁹

Operating on the assumption that Anglo-American prisoners were treated according to the Convention, one student of the situation has given the argument a negative twist:

As a part of their diabolical shrewdness the Nazi Military authorities are "hedging" against the future by treating certain American and British prisoners of war satisfactorily and then allowing some to escape so they can report on the good treatment they received. The treatment of Russian prisoners of war is a truer indication of Nazi mentality and guilt.¹⁰

Such statements, suggesting complete or partial observation of the Convention, could be cited ad infinitum. There are, however, just as many opposite allegations which contend

8. PW Bulletin, III, No. 5 (May 1945).

9. J.M.E. Duchosal, "The Revision of the Geneva Conventions," Political Quarterly, XIX (January 1948), 32-40.

10. Glueck, War Criminals, p. 227.

that the Germans lived up to neither the letter nor the spirit of the Prisoner of War Code. Merely saying that the Convention was or was not observed does not prove any point. Personal experiences of the writer might even be criticized as being unreliable. However, the body of evidence cited in support of this thesis, taken from a wide variety of sources, absolutely denies that the Geneva Convention was observed by the Germans in their treatment of American prisoners of war. Statements to the contrary are, in most instances, "explained" as salve for next-of-kin wounds. Those made after V-E Day are unfounded but also can be "explained". Notwithstanding whether they came from partisan or neutral sources, statements to the effect that the Germans observed the Convention are indications that the German propaganda machine succeeded in its aim of creating a scapegoat (the barbaric Russians) to detract attention from the inevitable prosecution of German nationals who had violated international law. In this connection it appears that a striking parallel between World Wars I and II will be recorded in history. Furthermore, very similar treatment was accorded American prisoners in Germany during World War I.¹¹ At that time there was also a divided authority which made it difficult to determine who exactly was responsible for certain conditions. Prisoners lived in overcrowded quarters. They were shot while in the Stalags. They

11. Cf. Ambassador Gerard's account in My Four Years in Germany (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1917), pp. 155-97.

suffered mental breakdowns. Food rations were similar. Work details then offered a cheap source of labor (particularly advantageous to the Junkers). Dogs were used within camps for patrolling prisoners. Efforts were made to recruit prisoners of war into the German Army.¹² Apparently the comparison ends there. For while the United States refrained from joining with co-belligerents of World War I in submitting names of former enemies they wanted taken to trial, U.S. participation in post-World War II crimes trials constituted a marked departure from precedent.

An apt summary of the position of this thesis was offered by the prosecution at the Nuremberg trials:

American prisoners, officers and men, were murdered in Normandy during the summer of 1944 and in the Ardennes in December 1944. American prisoners were starved, beaten, and otherwise mistreated in numerous Stalags in Germany and in the occupied countries, particularly in 1943, 1944, and 1945.¹³

This is more in keeping with the evidence herein presented. Virtually no aspect of prisoner treatment included in this study shows it to have been in complete agreement with the Geneva regulations. When neutral sources reveal twenty seven instances of mistreatment of American prisoners of war at one camp, it is impossible to believe that this is merely an exception to the rule.¹⁴

12. Cf. Appendix F for reproduction of "recruiting" leaflet distributed to Anglo-American prisoners.

13. International Military Tribunal, Trial of the Major War Criminals (Nuremberg, 1947) I, 53-54.

14. Telegram 4995 from Bern to Secretary of State, dated August 4, 1944.

3. Responsibilities

The Nuremberg trials admittedly offer a legal means of assessing responsibility for infractions of the Geneva Convention. The legal point of view of an international tribunal, however, may be and has been criticized. In order to thoroughly evaluate their work, critics should have training in law which would enable them to be fully conversant with the legal codes in question. Few people are endowed with this knowledge. Thus, while information derived from the trials is cited, it is not to be considered an exclusive yardstick for measuring guilt or complicity.

Responsibility can generally be categorized under two rubrics, individual and collective, but to distinguish between them is a precarious assignment. Individual liability, more easily understood and demonstrated, has as a concept far outstripped collective responsibility. Yet, theoretically, a soldier is not responsible for carrying out the orders of his commander or his government. Rather, that commander or that government becomes responsible.¹⁵ By this interpretation, however, the entire German Army could have been cleared of all complicity. The question further arises as to how a government or any administrative body can be punished by means other than punishment of the individuals comprising it. As a matter of fact, the Nuremberg trials were

15. Cf. Paragraph 366 of the American Rules of Land Warfare, War Department Document 467 (Washington: GPO, 1914).

conducted on the premise that international law applies to all people. Individuals who executed acts of state clearly in violation of international or criminal law, notwithstanding the fact that they were "carrying out orders", were held to be liable to trial and punishment by courts representing the injured party or parties. In this manner the limits of that universal custom, reification, were reached. As frequently as international law is described as the law of nations, a final analysis indicates that a "nation" is no more than the sum total of the inhabitants of that state; the German Nazi Party was no more than the combined efforts of its adherents. It was some of those inhabitants and some of those adherents who were responsible for violations of the Geneva Convention. Those who have an inclination to reify may state that the German Nation or the Nazi Party can be blamed.

Which individuals were responsible? Although the complete list will never be drawn up, we do not have an unsolved crime on our hands. Names, if not concrete clues, are to be found in the evidence contained in the preceding chapters. German nationals of varying ranks and statuses enter the picture. They are connected in divergent ways. Thus, Wilhelm Hafner, a policeman in the town of Langenselbold, in December 1944 shot and killed a defenseless American prisoner of war, technical Sergeant Donald Rein (not under any

sentence), through the instigation of his police chief, one Alfred Bury.¹⁶ Bury, typically blaming orders from above, implicated his Landrat, Johann Loser who had ordered that every enemy flier who landed in their territory was to be shot. The Landrat's order, in turn, was entirely in keeping with the directive given to the German Army that American airmen were to be treated as criminals, that they were not to be protected against lynchings by the German people.¹⁷ Continuing with "House-that-Jack-built" relationships, we may implicate the German Foreign Office. A letter by Ambassador Ritter (approved by von Ribbentrop), offering legal advice on this matter, virtually indorsed the directive by saying that in cases of lynchings

...the German authorities are not directly responsible, since death had occurred, before a German official became concerned with the case.

and in answer to an OKW query,

The Foreign Office cannot recommend on this occasion [*italics mine*] a formal repudiation of the Prisoner of War Treaty.¹⁸

High ranking officials, in some instances deprived of

16. NCA, Supplement A, pp. 424-25. Document 2931-PS.

17. NCA, I, 154. Document R-118.

18. NCA, III, 526-28. Document 728-PS. The implication appears to be that other conditions or another occasion might well warrant repudiation. Admiral Canaris who, it is alleged, invariably objected to orders that contravened the Geneva Convention, significantly met his death for his role in the July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler's life. See affidavit of Leopold Buerkner, NCA, VIII, 647.

blaming someone above themselves, pointed obtusely. Excerpts from the testimony of General Adolf Westhoff at the Nuremberg trial offer an example:

Repeatedly during conferences in the Ministry, when somebody would say that we didn't have to bother about the Geneva Convention, I would get up and I would say, "Gentlemen, the Geneva Convention has been signed by the Fuehrer [sic.], and we are therefore a party to it. In my opinion, until I get specific orders from the Fuehrer that the Geneva Convention can be disregarded, it is therefore my duty to abide by the rules and act so that the rules of the Geneva Convention will be observed."

Saying that his Service Department of the POW Information Bureau therefore disregarded the Geneva Convention only upon specific orders from above, he added

...to try and oppose the Gestapo was quite an impossible task for the Chief of the Service Department for Prisoner of War Affairs. The Gestapo was much too powerful a body for that, and we were much too small. I knew that it was Passe's [presumably Hans Posse, one time Secretary of State in the Department of Economy] opinion that the Geneva Convention was merely a piece of paper, just as you must realize, gentlemen, that the opposition to the Geneva Convention was entirely caused by the Party. If ever there were difficulties in connection with breaches of the Geneva Convention into which we made investigations, then these difficulties were due to these Party developments.¹⁹

As the spotlight shifts to Nazi Party activities we see men like Martin Bormann and deputy Helmut Friedrichs more clearly. Bormann, constantly worried that the Geneva Convention did not provide adequate punishment for prisoners, directed Gauleiters to report all instances in which PWs were treated too leniently. Following, he ordered that

19. NCA, Supplement B, pp. 1644-45.

Kreisleiter keep in touch with PW Camp Commandants to assist in the assignment of PW labor. Any recalcitrance by prisoners, he said, could be coped with by corporal punishment or the use of firearms. In an act of crowning glory he signed the decree transferring jurisdiction over prisoners of war from the OKW to Himmler and the SS.²⁰

These, then, were the men and the organizations who made mock of the 1929 Convention. They were not confined to one class or group. They could be found anywhere in Germany. Given half the chance, they would blindly follow the directions of their leaders. And when their deeds caught up with them, it was those leaders whom they blamed.

C. Future Prospects

Recognizing that the essential provisions of the Prisoner of War Code were too often ignored,^X respected in an inadequate manner, or violated, what improvements can be brought about? Obviously improving international relations to the point where war could not exist would answer all our problems. Idealistic suggestions, however, will never satisfy the needs of practical realists who as early as February 1945 responded to a memorandum of the International Red Cross calling for the revision of the Geneva Convention to meet changed

20. Trial of the Military War Criminals, I, 340. Lasting tribute will possibly be paid to him in medical circles by referring to cruelty psychoses such as sadism and sexual perversion as "d'Himmlerisme" says Charles Richot in "La Médecine au Bagne", La Presse Médicale, LIII (July 14, 1945). 389-90.

conditions. Their deliberations have as yet not been translated into a new convention. It is unlikely that any radical changes will be made in the concept underlying the new code.

From one viewpoint it might be said that this type of international legislation has the effect of putting makeup on the face of war to make it appear more attractive. In a sense it is comparable to the outlawing of dum-dum bullets. A person assuming this viewpoint might ask what benefits this "prettying up" process can yield. An answer can be given, but with difficulty. The gist of the explanation lies in differentiating humanitarian ideals from all others. Thus, a revised Convention might make war "unfavorable" in a humanitarian way. To illustrate this apparent contradiction, a number of articles might be amended or added which would eradicate all prisoner work obligations. The Detaining Power, by this gesture, would be forced to spend more time, effort, and money for the upkeep of their prisoners and, perhaps, would think twice before engaging in any conflict that would place them in such a disadvantageous economic position. The main weakness of this proposal lies in that a belligerent might seek an "out" that was more to his interest than becoming responsible for a number of prisoners. In fact, under revised regulations he might be more inclined to do away with prisoners who had no economic value to him than under the present convention which, it should be

remembered, puts a greater emphasis on prisoner rights than on prisoner duties. The question remains, would any extension of captor duties and obligations push the Convention to a point of diminishing returns? In World War II many provisions existed which were not to Germany's interests. Attempts were made to circumvent those provisions. If more of this type were added, we might expect more attempts at contravention.

Yet conventions of this sort are not based on national interests alone. The ever-increasing "all-out" character of war has made men realize that the future holds a chance of all mankind being wiped out. Man is just egocentric enough, however, to think the world would be a worse place without him. As a result he has tried, and will continue trying, to formulate methods whereby segments of mankind will be spared extinction. As mentioned earlier in the paper, prisoners, actually a minority group, have for hundreds of years been offered some measure of protection. The Prisoner of War Code of the future will try to offer more protection. It can do this by three methods. First, it can extend the privileges of the Protecting Power. Second, it can amplify and clarify provisions that were open to dispute in the past. And third, it can take into consideration problems caused by new techniques.

By definition, the Protecting Power is "...a neutral State to which a belligerent power intrusts its interests in

the enemy's territory..."²¹ It is to be distinguished from the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is also a neutral but which is invested with a more or less international mandate rather than an appointment by merely one nation. Neutral Switzerland represented the U.S. in World War II. It received help from the ICRC in the execution of its duties. That assistance was restricted in that German authorities limited the number of ICRC delegates in the country to sixteen.²² It is to be noticed, however, that Article LXXXVI provides inspection rights for representatives of the Protecting Power rather than for representatives of the ICRC. In practice, delegates from both groups conducted camp visits during World War II and should be able to do so in the future.

There is no reason to believe that the Protecting Power procedure will be changed. Swiss neutrality is today no less a principle of their foreign policy than it was during World War I. At that time some combatants scoffed at the century old Swiss tradition, but it has survived the acid test of two World Wars. Today, as in World War II, it is an armed neutrality that appears to be well adapted to survive the era of power politics and all-out war. Furthermore, belligerents have had reasons to appreciate this policy.²³ For

21. Sjordet, op. cit., p. 43.

22. PN Bulletin, III, No. 4 (April 1945).

23. Edgar Bonjour, Swiss Neutrality, its History and Meaning, translated by Mary Hottinger (London: Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1946), Chapter 15.

example, it has enabled them to acquire certain products of Swiss industry (for which they, in return, supply raw materials and food), it has shortened their battle lines, and it has permitted the internment of sick and wounded prisoners of war who are of no value to a war effort. Even Hitler, who showed a minimum of respect for national sovereignties, did not attempt to violate that neutrality. The League of Nations in 1938 recognized Switzerland's unique position and granted it permission to abstain from participating in the application of League sanctions.²⁴ Thus Switzerland's neutrality appears to be in no particular jeopardy. As far as the coming of the Atomic Era is concerned, Swiss neutrality will be destroyed no sooner than the populations of the belligerents.

As long as Swiss neutrality is maintained, it can be expected that the ICRC, a Swiss rather than an international committee as the name suggests, will survive. In time of war they will probably continue to render comprehensive reports of their camp visits and continue in their role of relief society. It is hoped that a revised convention would provide for fewer limitations on their visits.

D. Proposals

Premised on the questionable theory that principles of civilization deserve higher consideration than the mere waging of war, I would suggest the following additions and

24. Ibid., p. 118.

revisions be incorporated into the future Code.

1. The Code should state definitely at what moment prisonership begins.

2. The Code should expressly define the status of protected personnel regarding capture. It should unconditionally state, for instance, that Medical Corps personnel are not to be taken into custody.

3. Merchant Marine personnel should be recognized as prisoners of war.

4. Repatriation should be facilitated by authorizing a greater number of Mixed Medical Commissions. International organizations such as the International Red Cross or the World Health Organization could subsidize inspecting doctors.

5. Air force personnel and paratroopers should be granted specific capture conditions. Once in the custody of recognized authorities they, like other military personnel, are entitled to protection by virtue of their PW status.

6. The treaty should be brought up to date regarding military developments. Horses (Article VI), for instance, serve a negligible role in modern warfare.

7. The unwarranted use of solitary confinement, particularly as a prelude to interrogation, should be outlawed.

8. Corporal punishment should be unequivocally prohibited. Although the current code does prohibit corporal punishment, Article XLVI says in effect that if the soldiers of the Detaining Power can be flogged, so can the prisoners

of the Detaining Power.

9. Religious discrimination among prisoners should be proscribed.

10. Prisoners, as a mark of respect, should be required to give only their own salute to detaining officers.

11. Shackling should be expressly forbidden.

12. Men of Confidence should be granted a wider latitude of freedom. They could easily be authorized, for instance, to make canteen purchases in the nearest town.

13. Work prohibitions should be increased. Perhaps only work at agricultural pursuits could be agreed upon. Certainly such duties as cleaning up mine areas should be added to prohibitions against the manufacturing and transporting of arms.

14. The Code should specify a minimum amount of food, expressed in terms of caloric value, that prisoners should receive. Quality could match that of depôt troops.

15. The dissemination of propaganda by the Detaining Power among PWs should be prohibited.

16. Mail forms of a less cold, impersonal character should be established. A letter a day each way, to and from the prisoner, should be allowed. Delivery could be speeded up by the subsidization of a neutral mail delivery system.

17. A permanent committee representing enemy powers should be established in a neutral country to expedite matters relating to prisoners of war such as the delivery of relief supplies.

18. Provision should be made for at least one hot shower per week for all PWs.

19. Medical attention should be made available to all prisoners, wherever they are detained and at all times, day and night.

20. Conditions relating to the transfer and transport of prisoners should be designed especially to protect them while they are traveling aboard ships and trains.

21. Monthly visits to all camps by both the Protecting Power and the ICRC should be authorized. In addition, such emergency visits as might seem necessary to them should be allowed.

The incorporation and observation of such regulations, I believe, would make for much less post-war enmity between countries which had been at war with one another. It should be interesting to match these suggestions with modifications which will appear in the coming Prisoner of War Convention.

Stalag Locations

Numerical designation	Location, proximate to
II A	Neubrandenburg, Mecklenberg
II B	Hammerstein, Pomerania 99 work camps in vicinity of Koslin and Stolp.
II E.	Schwerin, Mecklenberg
III A	Luckenwalde, Brandenburg
III B	Fürstenburg, Brandenburg also Kommandos (U.S.A.) #1-5.
III C	Altdrewitz, Brandenburg
IV A	Hohnstein, Saxony 13 work camps near Dresden
IV B	Mühlberg, Saxony
IV C	Wistritz, Czechoslovakia
IV D	Torgau, Saxony
IV D/2	Annaburg, Saxony
IV F	Hartmannsdorf, Saxony
V A	Ludwigsburg, Württemberg
V B	Villingen, Baden
V C	Offenburg, Bavaria
VI C	Osnabrück, Bavaria
VI G	Bonn, Rhineland
VII A	Moosburg, Bavaria
VII B	Memmingen, Bavaria
VIII A	Gorlitz, Silesia
VIII B	Teschen, Poland

VIII C	Sagan, Silesia
IX B	Bad Orb, Hessen-Nassau
IX C	Bad Sulza, Thuringia
X B	Bremervorde, Hanover
X C	Kienburg, Westphalia
XI A	Altengrabow, Saxony
XI B	Fallingbostal, Hanover
XII A	Limburg, Hessen-Nassau
XII D	Waldbreitsbach, Bavaria
XII F	Freinschein, Bavaria
XIII B	Weiden, Bavaria
XIII C	Hammelburg, Bavaria
XIII D	Mürnberg Langwasser, Bavaria
XVII A	Kaisersteinbruch, Austria
XVII B	Gneixendorf, Austria
XVIII A	Wolfsberg, Austria
XVIII C	Markt Pongau, Austria
XX A	Torun (Thorn), Poland
XX B	Marienburg, East Prussia
XXI A	Posen, Poland
344	Lamsdorf, Silesia
357	Kopernikus, Poland
383	Hohenfels, Bavaria
393	Puppling, Austria
Work Camp 21	Blechhammer, Silesia

Marine Camp and Oflag Locations

Milag-Marlag	Tarmstedt, Hannover
IV C	Colditz, Saxony
VII B	Eichstätt, Bavaria
VIII F (Oflag 74)	Braunschweig, Brunswick
IX A/H	Spangenburg, Hessen-Nassau
IX A/Z	Rotenburg, Hessen-Nassau
X B	Nienburg, Westphalia
XIII B	Hammelburg, Bavaria
XIII C	Ebelsbach, Bavaria
XXI B (64)	Altburgund, Poland

Luft Camp Locations

I	Barth, Pomerania
III	Sagan, Silesia
IV	Grosstychow, Pomerania
VI	Heydekrug, East Prussia
VII	Bankau, Silesia
Dulag Luft	Wetzlar, Nassau

Lazarett Locations

IV A	Elsterhorst, Saxony
IV G	Leipzig, Saxony
V B	Rottenmünster, Württemberg
VI C	Lingen, Hanover
VI G	Gerresheim, Rhineland
VI J	Düsseldorf, Rhineland

VII A	Freising, Bavaria
IX B	Bad Soden, Hessen-Nassau
IX C (a)	Obermassfeld, Thuringia
IX C (b)	Meiningen, Thuringia
IX C (c)	Hildburghausen, Thuringia
X A	Schleswig, Schleswig-Holstein
X B	Sandbostel, Hanover
XIII D	Nürnberg Langwasser, Bavaria
Marine lazarett	Cuxhaven, Hanover
Luftwaffen lazarett	Wismar, Mecklenberg

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