

American Prisoners of the Luftwaffe: Images and Realities

by

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Abstract

"American Prisoners of the Luftwaffe: Realities and Images," provides readers with a comprehensive picture of the lives of World War II American fliers held in German POW camps. The material included in this work begins with some of the hair-raising experiences that the fliers went through prior to capture and internment in a POW camp. Interrogation procedures are discussed as a means of dispelling the myth that all captured American soldiers revealed only their name, rank and serial number to their captors. This project focuses on the harsh realities of camp life that these men endured. Images from movies such as *Stalag 17* and the *Great Escape*, and episodes of *Hogan's Heroes* are used to reveal some of the fallacies and realities that have become part of the American mythology concerning the lives of Prisoners of War.

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Respectfully,

Nancy A. Ketzler

American Prisoners of the Luftwaffe: Realities and Images
Introduction

Aircraft were first introduced as military weapons in the Great War of 1914-1917. However, it was during the Second World War that these winged machines dramatically changed the way wars were waged.¹ The use of aircraft to attack important industrial facilities brought war to the homes of civilian populations. Allied aircrews often faced lynch mobs when their craft went down near populated areas. American and British fliers lucky enough to be captured by German military authorities instead of civilian mobs found themselves spending the rest of the war behind the barbed wire of specially-run Luftwaffe Prisoner of War camps. The exploits of Allied Air Force prisoners of war have been chronicled in numerous books and made the subject of films and even a long-running television series. It is upon these dramatized portrayals of Prisoners of War camps that many Americans base their perceptions of what life behind bars was like during the Second World War. Because of Hollywood's tendency to glamorize the lives of these men, many people do not realize the tedious nature of the existence POWs endured during their enforced stay in the Third Reich. As Douglas Collins once

¹The Italians first introduced aircraft as weapons of war in their campaign against Libya in 1911. Salvatore G.A. Alberti, *The Italian Colonization of Libya: 1911 to 1940*. (M.A. Thesis, Youngstown State University, 1993), 12.

wrote,

Some films about prisoners-of-war life give the impression that the stalags were fun; that the guards were heel-clicking clots; that the prisoners spent their time shouting defiance at the Germans; that they were always busy creeping under the wire or vaulting over wooden horses while others dug tunnels. But such a picture applied only to the tiny parts, not to the whole. . .The issue was survival, and survival demanded obedience and circumspection.²

This project endeavors to disprove some of the inaccuracies that Collins objects to in media presentations while also presenting the more realistic aspects that are also included in the films and television episodes. Due to the length of this project, film images used in this study are restricted to some of the most widely viewed of Hollywood's war related offerings: *The Great Escape*, *Stalag 17*, and several episodes of *Hogan's Heroes*.³

As a relatively young American, my own perceptions of wartime Germany and Prisoner of War life were shaped by the images I saw on television. Coming from a generation of Americans who often spent more time in front of the television than reading books, my first images of war came from movies like *Stalag 17* and *The Great Escape*, and television programs such as *Hogan's Heroes*. As a result of my early fascination with the

²Douglas Collins, *P.O.W.* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc., 1968), 53.

³John Sturges, *The Great Escape* (Hollywood: The Mirish Company, 1963) video recording; Billy Wilder, *Stalag 17* (Hollywood: Parmont Pictures, 1952) video recording; *Hogan's Heroes*, Television Program, 1965-1971.

heroics of these cinematic soldiers, I developed a real interest in the business of war and its effect on the men who fought. My interest in the daring of men in uniform did not remain in the cinematic world for long, and I soon turned to military history texts to learn what actually happened to America's fighting forces during the Second World War. This work is the culmination of my fascination with the exploits of American Prisoners of War captured by the Germans--both those who appeared on the big screen as well as those whose actual experiences gave life to those celluloid pictures.

This exploration of history and its appearance in the entertainment field intends to show some of the realities that American Prisoners of War lived, while distinguishing them from some of Hollywood's more imaginative portrayals of prison camp life. Highly profiled escape and espionage activities in the camps included in the films will get short shrift in this paper as only a small percentage of prisoners actually attempted escapes and even fewer of these attempts succeeded. Instead this project focuses on the day-to-day routines of Allied Air Force prisoners in the camps.

As a preparation for this work, the first two chapters are devoted to setting the scene for the reader. Chapter One briefly outlines what some American air crews experienced prior to bail-out and examines their chances for survival in the air and on

enemy soil. Along with this is an overview of the types of escape and evasion training made available to American air crew by intelligence officers during the Second World War. As a follow up to this preparatory information, Chapter Two highlights the interrogation experiences for American aircrew at the Dulag Luft (Durchgangslager) where they encountered trained Luftwaffe interrogators.⁴ This period of internment is important to explore as it sets the stage for the prisoners' indeterminate stay as guests of the Third Reich. Information gleaned from unwary captives aided the Luftwaffe's cause in the air war. Chapter Three contains information regarding camp administrative setup. This chapter includes comparisons of camp staff as portrayed by Hollywood actors and the German personnel on whom they are based--most notably the myth that all German guards and officers were as easily fooled as Sergeant Schultz and Colonel Klink. As Bernie Melnick, a former American Prisoner of War once put it, "The Germans were no dummies. In fact they were very smart and crafty."⁵ Guards who cared for the inhabitants of the prison camps knew what went on in their camps and could not be

⁴The Dulag Luft, or "Through-going Camp," was the way station for processing all enemy air force personnel. Raymond F. Toliver, in collaboration with Hanns J. Scharff, *The Interrogator: The Story of Hanns Scharff, Luftwaffe's Master Interrogator* (S.L.:p.l., 1978), 13.

⁵Tom Bird, *American POWs of World War II: Forgotten Men Tell Their Stories* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 1992), 98.

classified as idiots. Chapter Four covers the entertainment segment of the thesis--again *Hogan's Heroes* will dominate in examples. Most of the outrageous antics in *Hogan's Heroes* will not be discussed as they are part of the myths surrounding prisoner of war life--camps were not country clubs or breeding grounds for saboteurs. This is about bringing the realities to light, not about pointing out the obvious misconceptions.

Chapter One: From Combat to Capture

Clipped Wings

Like a thunderbolt they hit us,
Lord, it seemed they filled the sky,
You could see their cannons spitting
And the burning tracers fly,
The fighters deadly chatter,
Above the engine's roar.
As they zoom and curve, and fire,
Bank around and give you more.
Focke-Wolfe, [sic] one ninety!
Coming in at six o'clock!
Your tracers go out streaming,
Now his wings begin to rock,
The black smoke trails behind him,
It's then that you both know
He can't get out, he's had it,
His ship is going to blow.
Just one big puff of flame and smoke,
But he's quickly forgotten,
For there's fighters everywhere.
Now one of them has got us,
He came from hell knows where.
Our ship's full of thick white smoke,
Our bomb bays all aflare.
The radioman is on the floor,
Beside our engineer.
The time has come to hit the silk,
A call they'll never hear.
So out the left waist window,
The slip stream's mighty tug,
And then a breathless moment
Like floating on a rug.
Fishing for a rip cord!
At least [sic] you reach and pull.
A jar upon your harness,
And your chute is open full.
Then down, down, down
Through eternity you fall
Your body tired and aching
From the swiftness of it all.
Now thoughts of things are many,
As you start to look around,
Then through the clouds you break
And soon after hit the ground.
Now there are Germans all around you,
Your flying days are o'er.

Comes days of dull monotony,
Your [sic] a prisoner of war!⁶

Sgt. Clipton J. Stewart

During the Second World War, Allied airmen flew thousands of bombing, reconnaissance, strafing, and fighter escort missions over European territory. American airmen flew from bases located in England, Italy and North Africa. Inevitably many of these aviators failed to return home. Although the Eighth Air Force does not have accurate records for the number of men captured and taken to POW camps, records do list a total of 22,632 Eighth Air Force fliers missing by the end of the war. Americans in the Ninth and Fifteenth Air Forces also flew combat missions over Europe during the Second World War. While statistical information on the battle losses for these units is unavailable, it is reasonable to use the statistics available for the Eighth Air Force as representative of the other two American units. A further breakdown of these statistics shows that of American airmen listed as missing in action, 91.2 percent of them (20,640 men) crewed bombers while 8.8 percent of the missing (1,992 men) piloted fighters. From these figures, corresponding conclusions about the composition of prisoner of war camps can be

⁶Sgt. Clipton J. Stewart, "Clipped Wings" Folder L4 WWII, Poetry and Songs, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

made.⁷

Allied planes were shot down by antiaircraft artillery, more commonly known as flak (an abbreviation for the German term, Flugzeugabwehrkanone), or by enemy aircraft. Flak accounted for approximately three-fourths of all U.S. bombers downed in the Second World War.⁸ American pilots encountered flak on most of their missions. The greatest danger to the pilots and their crews came from not knowing the exact locations of antiaircraft guns. Allied Headquarters' inability to accurately predict the strength of enemy aircraft in mission areas exacerbated pilot loss rates. The majority of Allied losses caused by flak were grounded in pilots' inability to successfully locate and avoid areas of heavy flak. Aircraft downed by enemy fighters were often outnumbered by superior forces or surprised by wily German pilots who took advantage of concealing cloud cover.

The limitations of American-built aircraft hampered the abilities of their pilots, both experienced and inexperienced, in combat situations, and resulted in high casualty rates throughout the air war. An estimated two-thirds of all crewmen shot down by

⁷All of the statistical figures have been compiled by the author from mission and incident reports listed in Roger A. Freeman, *The Mighty Eighth War Diary* (Osceola, Wis: Motorbooks International, 1990).

⁸Kenneth Philip Werrell, *The Tactical Development of the Eighth Air Force in World War II* (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1969), 305.

enemy pilots or flak were inexperienced in combat flying. Pilot limitations, such as inexperience and battle fatigue, contributed to the high personnel losses experienced by American Air Force units. Incapacitated Army Air Force fighters and bombers in the European Theater of Operations also suffered from such malfunctions as disabled engines, fires and onboard explosions.⁹ Veteran combat pilots, those who had flown 100 combat hours or more, were alert and wary of cloud cover that could conceal enemy fighters. Experienced combat fliers possessed good vision and a sense of teamwork. When enemy aircraft came within range experienced American fighter personnel were ready to protect nearby Allied aircraft with firepower.¹⁰ No matter how alert they were, even experienced fighter pilots and seasoned bomber crews were shot down in combat situations. Often their planes caught fire, making return to England impossible. Their only chance for survival was to crash-land on enemy soil or to leave their damaged aircraft and parachute into enemy territory.

Crews that managed to escape their burning planes and parachuted safely away faced new dangers once they landed. A downed airman in enemy territory had one duty: to evade capture and make his way to friendly territory. Most airmen did not manage to evade capture due to injuries, proximity to enemy

⁹Werrell, 222.

¹⁰Werrell, 122.

personnel, or unfamiliarity with the land and language of the territory where they landed. An estimated 50% of all downed fliers were injured when first captured. Most of them sustained injuries while attempting to escape from their damaged planes.¹¹

Intelligence Officers conducted briefings on escape and evasion techniques for bomber crews and fighter pilots before they left on missions over Europe. Fighter pilots and bomber combat crews attended a one-time briefing speech on the subject of escape and evasion before engaging the enemy in the sky. This single speech informed fliers about escape and evasion techniques their commanders expected them to use if shot down over enemy territory.¹² Despite heavy losses among their ranks, most members of the American Army Air Force doubted the need for intensive escape and evasion training. Most aircrews took the scanty training they received on escape and evasion procedures seriously only after large battle losses.¹³ The amount of misinformation provided to American Army Air Force personnel by their Intelligence Officers during briefings on the location of flak-free routes and the strength of enemy fighters in mission

¹¹Joan David, "POW: Our Captured Airmen: How Are Airmen Treated? How Do They Live in Nazi Prison Camps? What Happens if They Escape?," *Flying*, November 1944, 32.

¹²Andrew Strieter Hasselbring, *American Prisoners of War in the Third Reich* (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1991), 11.

¹³Hasselbring, 14.

areas caused the men to doubt the validity of information they provided about escape and evasion procedures. In skits preformed for camp entertainment, fliers who later found themselves in POW camps portrayed the Intelligence Officers who briefed them on escape and evasion techniques as ignorant clowns.¹⁴

Barwick O. Barfield, a navigator with the Bloody 100th Bomb Group, was one of the few fliers who took the escape and evasion briefing seriously. Intrigued by the information presented in the escape and evasion briefing, Barfield researched the chances of surviving a crash landing and becoming a POW. Through his research, "Barfield learned that a navigator has a 50% chance of being captured and held as a POW (after being shot down or crash landing), a 30% chance of being killed, a 10% chance of being wounded so severely [he] would not be able to return to active duty, and a 10% chance of completing all of [his] required missions."¹⁵ Survival rates varied from craft to craft and with the location of various crewmen within the craft.

The escape and evasion information presented to airmen in lectures focused on how to safely bail out of their aircraft, and how to avoid capture once they parachuted to the ground. Bailing out and parachuting techniques remained purely theoretical for

¹⁴Hasselbring, 13.

¹⁵Marilee W. Barfield, *Days Not Forgotten*, (S.L.: p.l., 1993), Folder L4 Germany, Rackheath Memories, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio, 8.

aerialists until the moment of crisis arrived. The omission of bail-out procedures and parachute drills from training was prompted by the hurried pace at which all forms of training were conducted and the immediate need for fliers in combat.¹⁶ The bailout experience was treacherous for many fliers. Parachute procedures rarely went by the book, and many men who survived the experience of parachuting from a badly damaged plane recount extraordinary stories of what occurred at the moment they left the air for uncertainty below. Because of adverse conditions, not all pilots were able to leave their craft after they sustained heavy damage. Fighter pilot Lt. Franklin Bunte stated in an incident report recorded after his release from a POW camp that when his P-51 Mustang caught fire while on a mission, he did not have time to exit his craft before the fire spread and immolated him. Instead, he ditched his fighter in a nearby lake, dousing the flames that had spread from the motor to his clothing. Safely out of the craft, Bunte made his way slowly to shore where he "was soon picked up by civilians and turned over to the Luftwaffe."¹⁷

Due to the amount of heavy flak that accompanied most bomber and fighter missions, some airmen sustained injuries prior to bailout. When a fellow crewman was too badly injured or somehow

¹⁶Hasselbring, 12.

¹⁷Freeman, *The Mighty Eighth War Diary*, 213.

prevented from bailing out by himself, fellow crew members assisted. Such was the case when bombardier Robert Sanders' parachute caught fire in a B-24. Navigator Robert Callahan became aware of Sanders' predicament before he bailed out. Callahan allowed Sanders to strap himself onto his back, thus allowing two men to use a single parachute. While these two men landed safely in England, the story of their exploit exemplifies the cooperative spirit which existed between crew members.¹⁸ The proper bailout procedure airmen were supposed to follow did not allow for two men to use a single parachute. Instead, men were expected to go to the escape hatch, throw themselves at the propellers, duck down under the wing and roll off the tail. Those who jumped directly out usually hit the tail dead on and were decapitated or sustained other injuries that killed them instantly. As fliers who successfully bailed out of their craft knew, instructions were all well and good, but things seldom went according to plan.¹⁹ The above-mentioned stories are just a sampling of the difficulties men encountered while escaping from damaged aircraft.

Evasion lectures stressed the importance of parachutes in the initial stages of evasion attempts for airmen. Delaying the

¹⁸Freeman, *The Mighty Eighth War Diary*, 281.

¹⁹Al Zimmerman, *Behind The Wire: Allied Airmen in German Captivity* (8th Air Force Historical Society, 1994), Video recording.

opening of parachutes after exiting an unsalvageable aircraft reduced the amount of time airmen were visible to search parties on the ground and increased the fliers' chances of getting safely away from his landing site. Information Officers cautioned fliers to bury their parachutes once they touched the ground. Parachutes left out in the open and the wreckage of crashed airplanes provided clues for German search parties.

The disposal of parachutes removed the initial point of reference for German searchers. After disposing of his parachute, the airman was supposed to collect any material that might have fallen out of his escape kit and then hide from local search parties until dark when he would begin the dangerous journey back to Allied territory.²⁰ Allied fliers kept any number of things in their escape kits. While the contents of escape kits were at the discretion of individuals, American fliers were all provided with a few basic items. Basic escape kits contained maps made of rice, magnetic compasses disguised as trouser fly buttons, dexedrine tablets for extra energy in a crisis situation, halazone pills to purify water, foreign currency and key phrases in a couple of different languages.²¹ Sidearms were the one item Information Officers advised aircrews

²⁰Hasselbring, 14-15.

²¹Ed C. Cury, *Time Out For War: An American Airman's True Firsthand Account of Survival in Nazi-Occupied Territory* (Moore Haven, FL: Rainbow Books, 1988), 13.

not to include in their escape kits. Allied commanders feared shootouts between downed fliers and German search parties if sidearms were included in escape kits.²²

In addition to evasion techniques, Intelligence Officers provided fliers with information about their rights as Prisoners of War according to the Geneva Convention. U.S. airmen were told that it was their duty to attempt escape if captured. They were reassured that while escape was their primary duty as a Prisoner of War, POW status did not imply that the captured soldier had acted illegally while carrying out combat duties.²³ In May of 1944, the United States War Department issued pamphlet No. 21-7 listing the rights of Prisoners of War to all American airmen in the European Theater of Operations.²⁴ This pamphlet simplified the terms of the 1929 Geneva Convention regarding POWs, encouraging American soldiers to stand up for their rights with military firmness and correctness at all times.²⁵ The War Department pamphlet informed potential POWs of their rights and their duties while in the enemy's custody. Initially, the most

²²Hasselbring, 14.

²³Robert Doyle, *Voices from Captivity: Interpreting the American POW Experience* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 37.

²⁴U.S. War Department, "If You Should Be Captured These Are Your Rights," *War Department Pamphlet No. 21-7*, (16 May 1944), Folder L4 WWII, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

²⁵U.S. War Department, "If You Should Be Captured These Are Your Rights," 5.

important aspect enumerated in the pamphlet reassured Airmen of their right to the same medical care for injuries and sickness as members of the enemy's Army received. Additionally, POWs were supposed to be protected from acts of violence by civilians and enemy military personnel.²⁶

Many American fliers naively believed that outside of Germany itself, the native populations would welcome them into their homes and help them back to England if they managed to evade initial capture.²⁷ Within Germany however, the Allied fliers' belief in the friendly nature of local populations was nil.²⁸ Allied airmen were captured by civilians and military personnel alike. Downed airmen faced the greatest danger from civilian mobs. Sometimes these mobs severely beat their prisoners, and occasionally lynched them. Civilian mobs were particularly ferocious in their treatment of Allied airmen in

²⁶U.S. War Department, "If You Should Be Captured These Are Your Rights", 5.

²⁷Hasselbring, 17. Underground escape routes operated during the Second World War, aiding thousands of Allied military personnel to evade capture by the Germans. M.R.D. Foot, *Resistance: An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism, 1940-1945* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1976), 31.

²⁸After May 1944 downed airmen in Germany did not have the option of trying to safely escape capture as Hitler declared open-season on Allied airmen following the debacle called the Great Escape. See Appendix one for warning poster posted in all prisoner of war camps warning of the consequences for an escaping prisoner. Folder L4 Germany WWII, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

areas that sustained heavy damage from bombing raids. Civilians often referred to enemy fliers as "Luft Gangsters," or "Terrorflieger," equating the damage done to their homes by bombing missions with criminal actions committed against innocent civilians.²⁹ Significant numbers of downed airmen were murdered by the German populace. No one knows how many airmen were killed and tortured by German civilians. Missing airmen were often untraceable.³⁰

Most American Army Air Force personnel parachuting into German-held territory were captured upon landing. Lucky airmen were captured by an armed German soldier who greeted them with the words, "For you the war is over."³¹ At the beginning of the air war, Reichsmarshall Hermann Goering, head of the German Luftwaffe, followed a policy of treating captured American and British Airmen who came under Luftwaffe jurisdiction fairly as a means of protecting captured Luftwaffe men from abuse.³² Most German soldiers abided by the Geneva Convention regarding the treatment of captured enemy soldiers, out of a sense of self-preservation. On May 27, 1944, at the behest of the Fuhrer,

²⁹Doyle, 133.

³⁰*Behind the Wire.*

³¹R.W. Kimball, *Clipped Wings*, Narrated by O.W. Chiesl, (S.L.:p.1.,1948), Kimball Collection 62-D1, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio, Preface.

³²Hasselbring, 7.

Adolf Hitler, Goering rescinded his order for police protection of captured Allied airmen.³³ Civilians did not feel bound by the rules of warfare and often brutalized or killed fliers they captured. Quince L. Brown Jr., the Oklahoma Ace, is one of the unfortunate fliers whose fate at the hands of a German civilian has been documented. On 6 September 1944 the Oklahoma Ace, a veteran of 97 combat sorties, was shot down on a strafing mission in the Gemuend area. Witnesses saw Brown parachute safely to the ground near the town of Weirmuehle, Germany. Before military personnel arrived to take Brown prisoner, he was shot in the head at close range by a German civilian.³⁴ Fliers who were handed over unharmed to military authorities by the civilians who captured them knew how fortunate they were. One prisoner of war described the first moments of capture as

a terrific nervous shock. . .because it involves extreme personal danger during the minutes before the enemy decides to take you instead of shooting at you, and. . .because you suddenly realize that by passing from the right side of the front to the wrong you have become a non-entity in the huge business of war.³⁵

American airmen during the Second World War received little training for the type of intensive flying they were required to do in combat situations. As a result of the lack of combat

³³*Behind The Wire.*

³⁴Freeman, *The Mighty Eighth War Diary*, 340-1.

³⁵David A Foy, *For You the War is Over: American Prisoners of War in Nazi Germany* (New York: Stein and Day, 1984), 134.

training, many aircrew fell into enemy hands. These men knew one thing, that they and their captors should behave according to the regulations set forth in the 1929 Geneva Convention. The rules guiding the conduct of Prisoners of War and their "hosts" were enforceable only in regard to military personnel of both sides. Legally, the behavior of individual civilians was not defined. Despite their knowledge of this fact, many downed fliers depended upon the good nature of civilian populations to protect them from capture by nearby military units. In this regard, they were sadly mistaken, especially those who encountered German civilians in areas that were frequent bombing targets.

Upon capture, American airmen found themselves under the control of an enemy that had previously been thought of abstractly--designated in terms of targets, not actual cities or populations. The first people that a downed airman encountered decided his fate, if he lived or died and the type of treatment he initially received. Allied fliers received the best treatment if they were captured by German soldiers. Those who encountered German soldiers when they first landed had the greatest chances for survival. Respect for military codes ran strong in the traditions of the German army; these codes including fair treatment of captured enemy personnel. Such codes of honor held little sway among the civilian populations. Lynchings, maiming, and torturing of downed airmen were not uncommon among civilian

populations that had endured repeated bombing raids. At this time, German soldiers were a newly captured airman prisoner of war's sole means of protection against angry mobs.³⁶

Allied airmen who survived their brush with angry civilians were transported by German military personnel from the point of capture to local holding facilities located in nearby towns. Once incarcerated, these men began the long, tedious existence of a Prisoner of War.

The Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare defined prisoners of war as "combatants who have surrendered, or due to injury are unable to continue to fight and came unto the control of their adversary."³⁷ Nearly one-half of all POWs were wounded prior to capture. Allied POWs in need of immediate medical attention were sent to the nearest hospital after they were positively identified.³⁸ Many injured POWs were treated at the hospital and then transferred to the Luftwaffe interrogation center, better known as the Dulag Luft, for processing after their wounds healed enough to permit them to travel. Those who sustained severe injuries were sometimes eligible for immediate

³⁶*Behind the Wire.*

³⁷W. Michael Reisman and Chris T. Antoniu, eds., "Hague Rules of Aerial Warfare, [signed February 19, 1923, at the Hague, not in force] Article 24." *The Laws of War: A Comprehensive Collection of Primary Documents on International Laws Governing Armed Conflict* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 14.

³⁸Foy, 46.

repatriation. The cases of potential candidates for repatriation with severe injuries such as the loss of limb(s), blindness or paralysis were reviewed by a panel of German and neutral doctors. After a prisoner was selected for repatriation, he waited in the hospital until an exchange of prisoners was arranged.³⁹ Downed airmen who did not sustain injuries prior to capture or those whose injuries did not require hospitalization, generally experienced a similar sequence of events. They followed the pattern of initial capture, questioning and detention in a local civilian center, and finally, transfer to Dulag Luft for processing and intensive interrogation.

After capture, the airman was taken to the nearest military or police headquarters. While in the custody of local forces, the prisoner was briefly questioned and searched. Captured prisoners were searched for valuables, money, and any items that could be used in an escape attempt. When any of these items were found, they were confiscated and their owners given receipts.⁴⁰ To aid them in their search for contraband, German soldiers were provided with a list of objects to be taken from Prisoners of War upon capture. This list covered almost any item that a downed enemy airman could conceivably possess.⁴¹ (See Appendix Two for

³⁹David, 32.

⁴⁰David, 32.

⁴¹Luther Victory, compiler, "List of Objects to be Taken From Prisoners of War," *A Chronicle of Stalag XVII B*

List of Objects to be Taken from Prisoners of War). The list of objects to be taken from captured enemy soldiers provided to German soldiers was much more explicit than the terms provided by the 1907 Hague Convention. Article Four of this document mandated that prisoners of war were to remain in possession of all "personal belongings, except arms, horses, and military papers. . . ." ⁴² While the Germans used a broad interpretation of the Hague Convention regarding the items they took from prisoners, they remained within the boundaries provided in the Hague Convention. Information given to Allied soldiers about the material that could be confiscated by enemy forces, should they be captured, conforms to this list. Gas masks, helmets, means of identification and insignia of rank are additional items that captured airmen had permission to retain in their possession according to the list provided to them by the U.S. government. ⁴³ After the Germans relieved newly captured prisoners of contraband property, they placed their prisoners in holding cells, usually

Krems/Gneisendorf, Austria (Houston, Texas: Marathon Oil Company, 1991) Folder L4 Germany WWII Stalag Luft 17B, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

⁴²W. Michael Reisman and Chris T. Antoniou, eds., "The Hague Convention (IV) Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land, Annex to the Convention [1 Bevans 631, signed on October 18, 190, at The Hague]" *The Laws of War: A Comprehensive Collection of Primary Documents on International Laws Governing Armed Conflict*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 150.

⁴³U.S. War Department, "If You Should be Captured These are Your Rights", 9.

located in the local jail. The prisoners remained in the local jails until transfer to the Luftwaffe interrogation center, or Dulag Luft, could be arranged.

Transport to Dulag Luft generally entailed a lengthy, uncomfortable trip by rail.⁴⁴ Fliers en route to the Dulag Luft remained in an uncertain position regarding their status as Prisoners of War. While the Geneva Convention held the German High Command, OKW, responsible for the treatment of captured enemy officers and enlisted men, the OKW did not accept this responsibility until the POW was placed in a permanent camp.⁴⁵ Arrival at Dulag Luft was the first step that a captured airman took toward possible identification as a legitimately recognized Prisoner of War. Many prisoners who arrived at the interrogation center did not arrive in uniform, having earlier found ways of disguising themselves and throwing away their dog tags in efforts to avoid being captured. Once captured, however, the absence of these regulation items of apparel placed the airman in very real danger. Captured fliers knew that if they were apprehended out of uniform and could not gain recognition as a Prisoner of War, they ran the risk of immediate execution as a commando, spy, or saboteur. Interrogators at Auswertestelle West, a component of the Dulag Luft, often used this fear of being labeled as a spy to

⁴⁴Foy, 46-7.

⁴⁵Foy, 45.

extract information from prisoners.⁴⁶

The transference from active combat duty to Prisoner of War for a flier was followed by a brief period of shock and uncertainty. Once taken into protective custody by the German military and properly identified as a member of an enemy military organization, the flier began a period of indefinite internment as a prisoner of war. Fliers underwent a series of intensive interrogations at the Dulag Luft prior to placement in permanent camps. During these interrogations, the prisoners were threatened, bribed and tricked into revealing important military information, sometimes without even being aware that they had done so.

⁴⁶Foy, 45.

Chapter Two: Trade Secrets: The Battle of Wits Between American
Air Force POWs and their Luftwaffe Interrogators.

For You the War is Over

"For you der var iss ofer"--the flier heard the phrase;
But it took a while to sink in--he still felt slightly dazed.
Short hours before his plane had roared through skies above still
blue.
With tons of death in her belly and a damn good fighting crew.
"For you der var iss ofer"--you can make it what you please,
"Solitary, treatment rough, or else a life of ease.
"The information that you give can not hurt you at all--
"So what is that phrase you yankees use?--Ach! How about playing
ball?
"We can give you food and cigarettes, and quarters so good as our
own--
"Or else some lead from a firing squad--and a grave simply marked
unknown
"Your commander we know is Colonel Blank; you flew with umpteenth
group;
"All your training was done out West--you see we have most of the
poop."

The "jerry" told him so darn much the flier's head just reeled,
He heard the voice as from afar--"Now just where is your field?"
He was still a kid with his life ahead and he didn't want to die,
But just as he opened his mouth to speak a scene flashed past his
eye;--
The boys of the group were back at the bar and the old toast rang
on high
"Here's to those that have gone before and here's to the next man
to die!"
Then the bombs rained down from evening skies, and the craters
where they fell
Were the gates through which his buddies passed to swell the
ranks of hell.

He tried to laugh--it wouldn't work; he hoped it was just a
bluff,
But if this guy was telling the truth, it was certainly gonna be
rough.
He was scared, its true; but what the hell--he'd played the game
and lost.
He'd laughed at death up in the sky and now he'd pay the cost.
"For me the war is over. Bud, you've sure got something there--
"But there's a million more just like me and they'll still be in

your hair;
"You've got me where you want me; you can put me 'neath the
grass--
"But I've five more words to say first, Major--Blow it out
your--."47

Lt. Thomas J. Scanlon

Previous to capture, American Air Force personnel were told that it was their duty to remain silent on all aspects of their mission should they fall into enemy hands. When the possibility of capture became an actuality, many fliers vowed to maintain a code of silence throughout the course of their interrogations. Along with the vow of silence on all military matters, many American airmen felt it was their duty to stand up for their rights as outlined by the United States Department of War.⁴⁸ The vow to remain silent and adhere to all aspects of military courtesy was a difficult undertaking and it took all of a prisoner's wits to avoid answering questions put to him by Luftwaffe interrogators who excelled at their craft.

Few interrogators resorted to violence to obtain the information they desired from their captives. Instead, they used

⁴⁷Lt. James J. Scanlon, "For You the War is Over" Poetry and Songs, Folder L4 Germany WWII, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

⁴⁸U.S. War Department, "If You Should Be Captured These are Your Rights." The rights spelled out in this pamphlet are similar to those which prisoners invoked as their rights under the Geneva Convention regarding the rights of prisoners. For full details on Captured Prisoners' rights, as spelled out by the United States War Department, see Appendix Three.

a combination of diversions, veiled threats, and carefully constructed bits of evidence to coax each prisoner into revealing new bits of information about his mission, unit, and personal life. Skilled interrogators convinced their prey to reveal facts during the course of conversations, sometimes so slyly that the informant did not even know that he had just provided the enemy with vital bits of data. After a profitable interrogation session, Luftwaffe staff members analyzed the newly acquired information and applied its use to furthering German victories in the air as well as using it to coerce other prisoners in later interrogations.⁴⁹

The site of this specialized activity was Auswertestelle West, commonly referred to as Dulag Luft. The original Dulag Luft, or center for the evaluation and processing of airborne enemy soldiers, was located at Oberursel. On September 10, 1943, the location of the Dulag Luft shifted from Oberursel to Frankfurt am Main.⁵⁰ The shift in location was made in response to the growing number of captured enemy airmen who were required

⁴⁹Luftwaffe staff members at the Dulag Luft were chosen as interrogators based upon their intellect, innate curiosity, and gregarious nature. The other determining criteria for interrogators was certified fluency in an enemy language such as English or French. Further study is required to ascertain the means by which these men obtained their positions at the Dulag Luft. Toliver, 48, 50.

⁵⁰Foy, 53.

to undergo interrogation before placement in a permanent camp.⁵¹ Throughout the war, all captured airmen were sent to the evaluation center known as the Dulag Luft. The Luftwaffe intelligence gathering service at Auswertestelle West, located a mere seven and a half miles northwest of Frankfurt am Main, Germany, served as the depository for all records regarding enemy air forces. In addition to its status as Luftwaffe archives on enemy air forces, Auswertestelle West served as the primary interrogation center for downed enemy airmen who landed in Germany.⁵² The process of sending all captured fliers to one specific processing station began November 1941.⁵³ Auswertestelle West was one of three components that made up the Dulag Luft, or transit camp. The other two sections of Dulag Luft were the hospital at Hohemark, and the transit camp at Wetzlar.

The period of a POW's stay at Dulag Luft lasted anywhere from one week to over a month before transfer to a permanent camp for the duration of the war.⁵⁴ The duration of a flier's stay at

⁵¹Toliver, 78. To avoid confusion, the terms Dulag Luft and Auswertestelle West will be used interchangeably when referring to the interrogation center proper regardless of the center's location, first at Oberursel and later at Frankfurt am Main.

⁵²Toliver, 13.

⁵³Toliver, 13.

⁵⁴Arthur A. Durand, *Stalag Luft III, the Secret Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 71.

the interrogation center depended on a number of variables: measure of cooperativeness on the part of the prisoner; amount of information expected to be obtained (the higher the rank, the more information was generally expected to be obtained); and the number of prisoners coming in at any one time. After particularly intensive air battles, large shipments of prisoners entered the interrogation center, placing time constraints on staff members who processed them into the prison system.

All captured enemy aviators, except the Russians, were slated for transportation and later interrogation at Oberursel regardless of where they were taken prisoner in German occupied territory. With the exception of the Russians, who almost never entered the Luftwaffe's interrogation center, national origin, type of aircraft and final mission had no bearing on a flier's eventual destination from Dulag Luft. While these specifics did not enter into the calculations that brought an airman to Oberursel, they were utilized in determining who interrogated the newly arrived prisoners. As an example of German efficiency, the Luftwaffe interrogation detachments specialized in specific nationalities and were sub-divided into bomber and fighter categories as a means of extracting the most information in as little time as possible.⁵⁵ Specialization on the interrogation team's part meant that each interrogator was familiar with the

⁵⁵Toliver, 50-52.

history of his prisoner's air force, bases and many of the units to which he might belong, making it that much easier to extract required information in the course of each interview.

Previous to the arrival of new prisoners at Auswertestelle West, a team of Luftwaffe investigators compiled dossiers on enemy crewmen, aircraft, squadrons, groups and units for use in interrogation. The staff at Auswertestelle West was extremely well-prepared for their task of obtaining useful information from incoming prisoners. The archives at this facility included newspaper clippings from dozens of United States newspapers. Selected clippings mentioned the activities, promotions, graduations, and marriages of enemy fliers. Additionally, Luftwaffe agents tracked the histories of individual fighter and bomber units, their missions, transfers, and shifts in leadership. A technical unit attached to the Luftwaffe interrogation headquarters tracked and identified the remains of downed aircraft, so that when enemy crewmen were brought in for questioning, ships and crews could be matched together, thus providing one more link for interrogators to use in properly identifying their prisoners.⁵⁶ The BUNA (Beute und Nachrichten Auswertung), which made sense of materials confiscated from captured airmen's belongings, aided the Luftwaffe's investigation prior to the interrogation of a prisoner. Scraps of paper,

⁵⁶Toliver, 52.

leftover train tickets, photographs, and pay stubs all provided clues to the location of an airman's home base and unit.

BUNA head materials analyst, Professor-Doctor Bert Nagel, examined these materials closely, and from them often obtained proof positive identification of an airman's unit. Through careful scrutiny of countless passport photographs and pay stubs, Nagel and his team identified the peculiarities used by individual base photographers in dressing their subjects and trimming their photographs along with the individual manner in which each base's mess sergeant marked his mess tickets.⁵⁷ After collating information contributed by BUNA analysts under the direction of Dr. Nagel, along with the accumulated data provided by the Press Department, the Squadron History Unit, the Victory Credits Registry, the Map Room, and the information provided by the Reception Office personnel who first observed the prisoner's personal habits, the interrogator was well-prepared to begin the interviewing process.⁵⁸ Preparation prior to the first interview was key to the success of each interrogation. The more information available on each prisoner, the better the interrogator's chance of gaining additional information.

While the interrogators were busy utilizing the talents of their fellow staff members at Auswertestelle West in preparation

⁵⁷Toliver, 55-58.

⁵⁸Toliver, 52.

for each individual interview, their intended subjects, the newly arrived POW's, were kept in solitary confinement.⁵⁹ The arrangement of separating incoming airmen from prisoners in the midst of the interrogation process and prisoners in the process of being transferred to their permanent camps prevented prisoners from sharing information regarding interrogation proceedings. By keeping the new arrivals ignorant of the format of the interrogation process, the Luftwaffe kept newly arrived captives at a psychological disadvantage and therefore in a vulnerable state.⁶⁰ Occasionally, a break in routine occurred and two or more prisoners would be assigned to the same cell. When this situation occurred, the cell that held the prisoners often came equipped with listening devices for the convenience of Luftwaffe agents. Luftwaffe staff sometimes gained information by listening to the prisoners' conversations in these rooms, although it was more common for the prisoners to find ways to circumvent the devices or to render them ineffective. Many prisoners, even the majority of those who were not provided with roommates, were suspicious that listening devices had been planted in their cells and so kept silent.

Solitary airmen, hungry for conversation and unwary of the

⁵⁹Solitary confinement cells were typically 13' by 10' by 6'6". Furnishings in these wooden cells were sparse, consisting of a bed, a radiator, and two blankets. Foy, 54.

⁶⁰Foy, 53.

dangers of hidden listening devices, sometimes communicated with prisoners in nearby cells. These men huddled close to the wall separating their cell from their neighbor's cell and whispered words of encouragement along with the story of their last mission.⁶¹ These whispered conversations provided a degree of companionship for lonely airmen and served as a means of conveying useful information about prison conditions to new inmates.

In contrast to prisoners who refused to speak or spoke only in quiet whispers that were thought undetectable by listening devices, some prisoners enjoyed making loud derogatory speeches about Hitler and the Third Reich. The men who made inflammatory comments about Nazis did so hoping that their remarks were heard and made their listeners uncomfortable. According to Hanns Scharff, a Luftwaffe "master interrogator," little information was gained through the use of hidden microphones because of the suspicions of the men who were lodged in microphone-equipped rooms.⁶²

Another ploy sometimes employed by the Luftwaffe to obtain information from recalcitrant subjects was the placement of a disguised German in a cell without listening devices. The

⁶¹Eugene E. Halmos, Jr., *The Wrong Side of the Fence: A United States Army Air Corps POW in World War II* (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Company, 1996), 15.

⁶²Toliver, 78.

imposter would then try to get his cellmate to talk about his final mission, or to reveal other bits of military information whatsoever. First Lieutenant Ed C. Cury, an airman who was captured and tortured by the Gestapo before being remanded to Luftwaffe custody, was more suspicious of German ploys than most prisoners who arrived at the Dulag Luft. When Cury awoke one morning and found another prisoner in his cell, he was instantly suspicious. Wary of his new cellmate's identity, Cury told his cellmate about an incident that occurred at the Grosvenor House ballroom, a famous flying officer's club in London. During the course of the story, Cury accurately described the ballroom and the men's restroom, while casually slipping in a comment about the beauty of some nonexistent wallpaper. When the bogus RAF pilot agreed with Cury about the beauty of the imaginary wallpaper, Cury's suspicions were validated.⁶³ By the use of judicious questioning, Cury determined that his cellmate was not a genuine prisoner. After realizing that his cellmate was a member of the enemy forces, Cury used the situation to his advantage. When the imposter began asking Cury for information regarding rumors of a second invasion, Cury could not resist the chance to spread misinformation. Curry combined his falsehoods with just enough factual information to make his responses

⁶³Cury, 81-83.

believable.⁶⁴ While this was a dangerous undertaking, Cury managed to reveal nothing of importance while spinning his tales. Due to his quick thinking and inventive storytelling ability, Cury sidestepped the peril of unwittingly providing the enemy with useful information, turning a potentially dangerous situation to his own advantage. This is one round that Luftwaffe personnel lost due to the quick thinking of their adversary.

In addition to the use of subterfuge to obtain information, airmen at Dulag Luft underwent intensive interrogations. Although the Geneva Convention required POWs to give only their Name, Rank and Serial Number to their captors, they were often threatened with violence when they refused to give further information about their final missions or refused to answer further questions.⁶⁵ Part of the interrogation process used at Dulag Luft was the filling out of Casualty Questionnaires. According to the Geneva Convention, prisoners were not required to provide much of the information requested on these Casualty Questionnaires. The Casualty Questionnaires included specific questions about details of the crewmen's final mission and vital information about other members of the crew.⁶⁶ When airmen indicated knowledge of other crew members, they were requested to

⁶⁴Cury, 83, 84.

⁶⁵Foy, 50.

⁶⁶"Casualty Questionnaires," Folder L4 Germany, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

fill out Individual Casualty Questionnaires about the missing airmen's whereabouts and physical condition prior to bailing out. These forms included questions about the rank, position and duties of individual bomber crew members. Persons filling out the forms were also asked to record the last contact they had with the rest of their crew, including the last conversations that took place on the plane prior to bailing out.⁶⁷ German intelligence officers used the information provided by Prisoners of War on these forms in subsequent interrogations and to ascertain the strength of enemy air forces. Additionally, the persons charged with asking enemy crewmen to fill out the casualty forms made notations on the back of the questionnaires about each flier's personal habits and disposition at the time of each interview. These notes aided interrogators in deciding how to approach crewmen during their interrogations. Characteristics that might be noted included "heavy smoker" and "uncooperative."⁶⁸ The support staff at Auswertestelle West made the interrogators' task easier as they provided clues as to how the interrogation should proceed as well as providing vital information that was used as a prod to extract further information from the prisoners.

⁶⁷"Individual Casualty Questionnaires," Folder L4, Germany, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

⁶⁸Toliver, 65.

Prisoners refusing to fill out casualty questionnaires or reveal any information about fellow crew members were sometimes threatened and frequently bribed. Most interrogations took place with few observers, especially observers who were not members of the Luftwaffe. According to World War II lore, Gestapo agents were rarely, if ever, allowed to interrogate Luftwaffe prisoners. The antagonism that existed between the Luftwaffe and the Gestapo generally precluded cooperation between the two organizations in interrogations of prisoners. It was more likely that a Luftwaffe interrogator would threaten to turn an uncooperative prisoner over to the Gestapo than for the event to actually occur. While antagonisms existed between members of the Gestapo and the Luftwaffe, Auswertestelle West did include a section that housed offices for Gestapo agents. These agents rarely interfered in routine Luftwaffe interrogations, only involving themselves in cases where there was question about the actions of air crews who deliberately took action against civilian populations or the actions of escaping prisoners who harmed members of the German military.⁶⁹ An episode of *Hogan's Heroes*, "Reverend Klink,"

⁶⁹ Lt. Cury proved to be one exception to this rule, although there were mitigating circumstances behind his treatment in the Gestapo custody. Cury fell into Gestapo hands in France after unsuccessfully evading capture and causing serious harm to the German soldiers who initially tried to apprehend him. After his subsequent capture and interrogation by the Gestapo, Cury was transported into Germany and remanded into Luftwaffe custody. Cury, 68-81. Another known exception to the separation of Gestapo and Luftwaffe prisoners involved the trial of a bomber

accurately portrays some of the tactics employed by Luftwaffe interrogators to illicit information from reluctant sources.⁷⁰ Although the scene takes place in Commandant Klink's office at Stalag 13, and not at the Auswertestelle West, it is a near recreation of an Airman's introduction to the Luftwaffe prison system. In "Reverend Klink," a Gestapo agent, Major Hochstetter, is allowed to participate in the proceedings, an occurrence that would have been most irregular during the war.

Despite the discrepancy of including a Gestapo agent in interrogation proceedings, in "Reverend Klink," most of the other details appearing in this episode agree with the testimonies of American ex-Prisoners of War. The interrogation of newly captured prisoner, Claude Boucher, a Free French pilot begins with the prisoner being asked his Name, Rank and Serial number. The interrogators quickly progress through the preliminaries and ask Boucher for a piece of specific information--the location of his airbase in England. When the requested information is not given, Gestapo agent Major Hochstetter recites information about

crew accused of deliberately opening fire on a civilian population. In this case, the bomber crew was already at Dulag Luft in the hands of the Luftwaffe. When Gestapo agents demanded their transfer to Gestapo custody for immediate trial, Luftwaffe Interrogator Hanns Scharff painstakingly examined the evidence provided by the crew's flight camera thereby proved their innocence, and thus depriving the Gestapo of the opportunity to execute an American bomber crew. Toliver, 231-243.

⁷⁰"Reverend Klink," *Hogan's Heroes*, (Air Date 3-30-68), Television Program.

Boucher's fighter group and his personal life, including the whereabouts of Boucher's fiancée, Suzanne.⁷¹ The preliminaries of interrogation used in this scene are methods that are typical of the format that interrogator Hanns Scharff used on American fighter pilots in his first interviews with a new prisoner. Scharff often overwhelmed captured fighters with the accuracy of the information he produced from Luftwaffe files on the fighter's family and air force career.⁷² However, Scharff was more subtle in the way he extracted vital information from his prisoners than his fictitious counterpart. Instead of saying what it was that he wanted outright, Scharff steered the conversation towards military affairs, implying that he already knew the information he was after, but was wondering why a procedure was done in a specific matter. Since the flyer thought that Scharff already knew the answer to the question, the prisoner often answered, little knowing that he had just supplied the Luftwaffe with a new piece of military information. While this procedure seems straightforward and easily accomplished, information was rarely obtained in the course of a single interview.

When conducting an interrogation, Scharff used a three-step approach. The first step consisted of prodding a prisoner into talking so that the interrogator could ascertain his subject's

⁷¹"Reverend Klink," *Hogan's Heroes*, (Air Date 3-30-68), Television Program.

⁷²Toliver, 91-103.

personality and temperament. After establishing a rapport with the prisoner, Scharff moved to phase two of his interrogation: coaxing the POW into revealing military secrets. During phase two Scharff directed the conversation towards military affairs. Writing a concise report of the interrogation proceedings for the interrogator's superiors was the third and final phase of any interrogation. This report compiled all new military information gathered from the prisoner for use in the most efficient method possible by the German military.⁷³ Scharff followed this basic three-phase approach in all of his interrogations, although the methods which he used with individual prisoners varied according to his needs. When presented with a prisoner who arrived at the interrogation center without dogtags, Scharff employed a combination of humor and common sense to convince one prisoner, whom he refers to as Lt. Price in his memoirs, as a means of protecting the prisoner's true identity, to begin talking. Scharff presented young Lt. Price a set of phony dogtags which identified Scharff as Col. Bullshit, serial number O-20,000 from Johannesburg, South Africa. The physical evidence of these dogtags persuaded the young airman that appearances were not enough for him to gain Luftwaffe protection as a genuine Prisoner of War.⁷⁴ This ploy, while convincing, was not enough to coax

⁷³Toliver, 82.

⁷⁴Toliver, 89.

the unidentified prisoner to provide Scharff with information for the German registration questionnaire. Thus Scharff stepped up the process, revealing a wealth of information on the young airman's career and personal life gleaned from U.S. newspaper articles and the Luftwaffe intelligence network. Overwhelmed by what Scharff already knew, Lt. Richard Price confirmed the information Scharff filled in on the registration questionnaire. Finally convinced that he was not providing the Germans with any information that they did not already know, Price supplied his parents' address so that they could be notified of his capture.⁷⁵ With phase one safely concluded, Scharff moved on to phase two of his interrogation with Lt. Price, the gathering of military information.

The purpose of this particular interrogation with Lt. Price centered around three questions brought up at an officer's briefing. These questions concerned the shooting of white tracer bullets, orders about strafing ground targets, and the discharge of long-range belly tanks from fighters.⁷⁶ As casually as possible, Scharff interjected comments on all three subjects into the conversation, and just as casually stored that information away for inclusion in his report at the end of his interview with

⁷⁵Toliver, 103.

⁷⁶Toliver, 107.

Lt. Price.⁷⁷ Much of the information extracted from Prisoners of War was used against their fighting comrades. It was only in rare instances that the information obtained from POWs worked to their flying comrades' advantage.⁷⁸

Luftwaffe interrogations often took the course of several days in which to produce the information desired. The interrogation scene in *Hogan's Heroes* is indicative of the lengthy process that many interrogations took throughout the course of the war. When Boucher refuses to answer Hochstetter's questions, he is sent back to solitary confinement, to think about his present situation as a prisoner of war. Before Boucher is escorted back to his cell, Hochstetter indicates that revealing the location of his fighter base in England would result in Boucher's receiving better treatment. Interrogators at Auswertestelle West often used this tactic when dealing with recalcitrant prisoners. They would talk to them, find that

⁷⁷The answers to all of these questions were practical in nature: white tracer bullets indicated when an American fighter used the last of its ammunition; fighters dropped their belly tanks as soon as approaching enemy aircraft were spotted; and the official Eighth Air Force doctrine on ground strafing stated that planes destroyed on the ground would be credited as a victory in the same way that a plane destroyed in air-to-air combat was credited. Toliver, 107, 109-110.

⁷⁸One Luftwaffe Kommodore informed Scharff that once he knew the purpose of the white tracer bullets, he broke off combat with an American fighter when he saw them fired. The Kommodore's rationale was that it would be unfair to fire on an unarmed opponent. Toliver, 168-9.

information was not forthcoming, then send them back to solitary confinement for a few days. The rationale behind this action was that after a few days alone, the prisoner would be so eager to talk to another person that he could be tricked into revealing something useful.

When Boucher's returns to the interrogation room, (in this case Kommandant Klink's office), Hochstetter opens the proceedings saying,

Look at your situation realistically, Boucher. You have lost the war, you have lost your fiancée, and now you have lost your liberty. Who can make life better for you? Your friends, the Germans. . . Sooner or later we will find the location of your air base, with or without you. So why not get a little something out of it yourself?⁷⁹

Boucher refuses Hochstetter's request and accuses the good major of wanting the information so that the Luftwaffe can make the fighter base one of its next targets.

Prisoners like Boucher who refused to cooperate with their captors were often transferred to a permanent camp once the interrogator deemed that they were no longer a viable source of information. The prisoners themselves did not know when or why the decision for their transfer was arranged. After a prisoner learned that his transfer was imminent, he received custody of

⁷⁹"Reverend Klink," *Hogan's Heroes*, (Air Date 3-30-68), Television Program.

the personal belongings taken from him when he was captured.⁸⁰ Once in possession of his personal belongings once more, the POW was transferred to the transit camp at Wetzlar. Prior to transfer to Wetzlar, prison complements were required to sign a parole form, ensuring that they would not attempt to escape while in transit.⁸¹

Although the prisoners signed the paroles regarding escape during transfers, it did not prevent them from wreaking havoc with supply trains they passed during their journey. In the film *Stalag 17*, one of the new prisoners, Sergeant McGray, describes how his companion, Lieutenant James Dunbar set a time bomb that blew up a German ammunition train. This act of sabotage, while risky, does not break the prisoner's parole. To many viewers, the idea that a cigarette placed in a match book, the device used as a primitive time bomb in this act of sabotage, is implausible.⁸² Yet former POW Mark Bobich revealed in an

⁸⁰Halmos, 16.

⁸¹See Appendix Four regarding parole form used during transfer of prisoners. Similar forms were used for prisoner transfers between camps. "Personnel: Statement to be signed by POWs in regards to escape." Folder L4 Germany WWII, Wright Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio. Documents of this type were presented to most prisoners in three distinct situations: 1. Train rides to a permanent stalag marking the beginning of their captivity; 2. Marches through towns where the prisoners were put on display before angry citizens; 3. Death marches in the winter of 1945 when the Germans were retreating from the advancing Russians. Doyle, 132.

⁸²*Stalag 17*.

interview how he successfully implemented this same device when he was in transit. Bobich stated,

We used to take their [the guard's] cigarette and put the cigarette in a match cover. We'd open up the match cover and put the cigarette in there and then closed it while the cigarette is burning. And when it hits the match heads, it creates so much BTU's and it takes off. Well as we'd go through a rail yard, if we'd see boxcars or anything that are open, we would just throw this pack of matches with the cigarette into it. And once the cigarette burned down to the match heads, then it started a fire. So we were trying that for a while.⁸³

The use of such devices helped the men contribute to the war effort despite their prisoner status. These simple time bombs could be implemented during any transport, even while en route from the Dulag Luft to the Wetzlar transit camp.

At the Wetzlar transit camp, prisoners filled out more forms, endured yet another search, and received a towel, a razor, and a package of cigarettes. Prisoners remained at the transit camp until enough men passed through the interrogation center to fill a transport of approximately ninety men en route to the same permanent camp.⁸⁴

Prior to transfer, transportees received G.I. issue clothing, and Red Cross packages, and were allowed to bathe for the first time since arrival at Dulag Luft. The packages

⁸³Mark A. Bobich interviewed by Jeffrey Scott Suchanek, April 23, 1981, Youngstown State University. Oral History Program. World War II. P.O.W. Veterans Project. European Theatre. O.H. 197, 19.

⁸⁴Foy, 58, 59.

contained clean underwear, socks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, razor blades, soap and two packs of cigarettes.⁸⁵ Clean, fed, and relatively well-rested, the prisoners were counted and loaded into train compartments for the long journey to their new home.⁸⁶

The prisoners' journey from Dulag Luft to their new camp generally took three to five days, depending on the distance between the transit camp and the transport's final destination. Conditions prisoners encountered during transport were appalling. The men were loaded into "40 and 8 boxcars" that had formerly been used to haul livestock.⁸⁷ Often the floors of these boxcars were covered with filth consisting of manure and black dirt. As the cars were almost always filled beyond capacity, some of the men stood or sat on the filth-encrusted floor out of necessity.⁸⁸ Poor ventilation, lack of drinking water, and the absence of toilet facilities are other conditions which plagued the prisoners while in transit to their permanent camp.⁸⁹

⁸⁵Halmos, 18.

⁸⁶Halmos, 20-1.

⁸⁷The boxcars were known as 40 and 8's because they were designed to carry 40 men or eight horses. Obviously, these boxcars were loaded far beyond capacity for prisoner transports, a condition which made the trip that much more intolerable for the prisoners. Mitchell G. Bard, *Forgotten Victims: The Abandonment of Americans in Hitler's Camps*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 44.

⁸⁸Durand, 72.

⁸⁹Durand, 72.

When the train arrived at the station outside of the camp, the prisoners were lined up three or four abreast, surrounded by their escort and marched to the gates of the camp. This enforced march could last up to several miles, depending on the distance from the railroad station to the camp.⁹⁰ After the enforced hike, the prisoners' first view of their new home was of the guard towers and barbed wire fences that enclosed the camp.⁹¹

⁹⁰Barfield, 16.

⁹¹Barfield, 16.

Chapter Three: Learning to Live in the Stalag Lufts: Daily
Interaction between the Kriegies and their Guards.⁹²

The Prisoner

It's a melancholy state,
You are in the power of the enemy.
You owe your life to his humanity,
Your daily bread to his compassion.
You must obey his orders,
Await his pleasures,
Possess your soul to his patience.

The days are very long,
The hours crawl like paralyzed centipedes,
Moreover, the whole atmosphere of Prison--
is "Odious."

Companions quarrel about trifles and get the
Least possible pleasure from each other's society.
You feel a constant humiliation in being
Fenced in by railings and wire,
Watched by armed men and webbed about by
A triangle of regulation and restrictions.

First Lieutenant John Howard Adams⁹³

Veterans of the Stalag Luft camp system greeted arriving
"purges" of newcomers with shouts as they approached the gates to

⁹²The prisoners referred to themselves almost exclusively as "Kriegies", a shortened version of "Kriegsgefangener," the German term for Prisoners of War. David Westheimer, *Sitting it Out: A World War II Memoir*. (Houston: Rice University Press, 1992), 172. In similar fashion, the Kriegies used the monikers "Goons" and "Ferrets" when referring to their German guards. The prisoners told the guards that "Goon" was an English shorthand for "German Officer or Non-Com." The term "Goon" actually developed from an American cartoon character, "Alice the Goon". Foy, 173. "Ferrets" were German guards assigned to patrol the compounds and barracks in search of tunnels and any material that could be used in an escape attempt." Barfield, 25.

⁹³Art and Lee Beltrone, *A Wartime Log* (Charlottesville, Virginia: Howell Press, Inc., 1994), 77.

the camp.⁹⁴ The "purges" generated a considerable amount of excitement among the established community as they represented a source of information on current events in the outside world.

The newcomers' presence in the camps was welcomed by the current inmates, despite the recurrent problem of overcrowding. The arrival of a new purge brought with it a change in the established monotony of daily life within the camp and provided new stories for men tired of hearing the repeated adventures of their fellow prisoners. The retelling of these tales was often wearing as the listeners had heard them numerous times in the months and years of their enforced incarceration with the same group of men.

Additional members of the Kriegie community were welcomed not only for the news and stories they brought with them, but more importantly, for the diversified skills which they possessed. Some of the most highly appreciated skills included artistic ability of any form (musical, literary, and performance to name a few), construction (mining and carpentry), and professional, including but not limited to teachers, engineers

⁹⁴Incoming prisoner transports were known as "purges" in the camp vernacular. "Gefangenen Gazette." *Special Supplement to Prisoners of War Bulletin*. Washington D.C.: Published by the American National Red Cross for the Relatives of American Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees. September 1944. Folder L4 Germany WWII Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio, 1.

and anyone with the ability to create a believable forgery.⁹⁵ What had been a hobby in the pre-war world often suddenly became a skill essential to ongoing escape activities and more importantly, maintaining and uplifting camp morale.

Before a new purge entered the prisoners' section of a typical camp, the new arrivals showered and were deloused. The men welcomed both activities as they were filthy from the trip.⁹⁶ Following delousing, the transport entered the main camp gates, where the men endured yet another round of searches, fingerprinting, and photographing. While being searched, the prisoners placed their personal effects on a table for a German clerk to look over. Often the prisoners would drop a couple of cigarettes by the clerk's foot, hoping that he would not confiscate some of the extra food items or contraband items such as pocket knives that they brought with them.⁹⁷ Only after the completion of these formalities were the prisoners allowed to enter the inner prison compound. Once in the inner prison compound, the prisoners' acclimation to life in confinement

⁹⁵Gerald Astor, *The Mighty Eighth: The Air War in Europe as Told by the Men Who Fought It* (New York: Donald I. Fine Books, 1997), 246.

⁹⁶Virginia Havard, ed. *Ex-Prisoners of War. . . "By Word of Mouth."* (Lufkin, TX: Lufkin High School, 1991), 18.

⁹⁷Westheimer, 159.

began.⁹⁸

The layout of Luftwaffe-run Prisoner of War camps followed the same basic design with some variations. In general, the larger POW camps covered an average of five square miles, which was divided into smaller compounds.⁹⁹ Most compounds contained similar facilities and were arranged according to the prisoners' nationality, with compounds set up for Russians, French, Serbians and Italians, and British and American prisoners.¹⁰⁰ Each compound contained rows of identical prisoner barracks, or "huts," a library and bulletin board on which the Germans posted their own version of the latest news.¹⁰¹ The prisoner compounds also contained exercise areas, which the prisoners utilized according to their own interests.

The layout of the POW camps in *Stalag 17*, *The Great Escape*, and *Hogan's Heroes* show the similarities and differences which American POWs encountered in wartime Germany. All of these camps were surrounded by high barbed-wire fences patrolled by German

⁹⁸Hubert Zemke, as told to Roger Freeman, *Zemke's Stalag: The Final Days of World War II* (London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 13.

⁹⁹Durand, 258.

¹⁰⁰Irving Mills. "Prison Camp School." *Echoes* July 195 306th Bombardment Association Vol. 10 No. 3, 4.

¹⁰¹"Welcome to POW Camp Stalag Luft 1, Barth, Germany" Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Folder L4 WWII, Dayton, Ohio, 4.

guards on both sides of the fence. Fifteen to thirty feet within the enclosing fences, warning wires marked the beginning of no-man's-land, which the inmates were forbidden to cross. Those who crossed the warning wire were shot without warning.¹⁰² The inner compounds contained recreation areas where the prisoners engaged in sports, gardening and other daily activities. Buildings depicted in the movies reflect wartime usages with an average of eight to twenty men assigned to each room in the barracks, isolation coolers for punishment, libraries, lavatories, and washrooms for use by the entire camp's complement.¹⁰³

When new prisoners entered the camps, they became aware that these structures made up their environment for the duration of their incarceration. Within the prisoners' compounds, incoming inmates scoured the faces of the established community hoping to see the faces of friends from their former units. If such a connection was established, an older resident could confirm the

¹⁰²Havard, 28, Durand, 103.

¹⁰³Men at Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany, enjoyed the luxury of eight men assigned to each room, while men assigned to quarters at Stalag Luft I, Barth, Germany were assigned to room designed to hold eighteen to twenty-two men. Westheimer, 165, "Welcome to POW Camp Stalag Luft 1," 15. The number of men assigned to each room also varied in *Hogan's Heroes* and *Stalag 17*. Fifteen men are assigned to each room in *Hogan's Heroes*, while well over twenty men inhabited each barracks room at *Stalag 17*. While room assignment differed, all of the other camp structures were similar in nature. *Hogan's Heroes, Stalag 17*.

newcomer's identity and thus ease his way into camp life.¹⁰⁴

Despite the obvious potential contributions that new arrivals presented to the camp leadership, these same arrivals were viewed with suspicion until after they passed a screening process used to identify enemy undercover agents.¹⁰⁵ Occasionally members of the Luftwaffe entered a permanent camp disguised as newly arriving POWs in the hope of gathering further military information or to uncover the center of any number of covert activities taking place throughout the camp.¹⁰⁶ These German spies spoke fluent English and were planted in the POW camps to gather vital military information. One former POW recalled that "some of these Germans, like one I knew, . . . spent a lot of time in New York City. Spoke English like anyone from Brooklyn, knew all the American slang and you would never be able to tell that he wasn't an American."¹⁰⁷ These German spies were rooted out when no one was able to confirm their stories or recognize them as a previous acquaintance.¹⁰⁸ Due to the knowledge culminated during their enforced stay in the prison camp system, hardened British POWs also tipped off the Americans about planted spies

¹⁰⁴Astor, 245.

¹⁰⁵Astor, 245.

¹⁰⁶Barfield, 20.

¹⁰⁷Astor, 245.

¹⁰⁸Astor, 245.

and so this ploy rarely worked.¹⁰⁹

Two prominent examples of the very real threat to camp security that undercover agents posed appear in film images; the first in the pilot episode of *Hogan's Heroes*, "The Informer," the second in *Stalag 17*, the film on which the popular television series was very loosely based. In both of these dramatic portrayals of POW life, a German agent impersonates an American flier. The actions of the impostor create detrimental situations for the prisoners, situations which are only rectified once the spy is removed from the camp's complement.

The true identity of the enemy agent portrayed in "The Informer," a sneaky little man known as Wagner, is discovered almost immediately by the perceptive Colonel Hogan. Hogan engages the newly arrived Wagner in a seemingly casual conversation about the leadership of his fighter unit. Hogan comments about the behavior of a non-existent officer, the infamous Major Campbell. Wagner agrees with Hogan about the shenanigans of Campbell, unwittingly identifying himself as an enemy infiltrator. Once Wagner is identified as a "ringer" by Hogan, word quickly passes through the ranks that no one is to reveal anything about the prisoners' clandestine activities to him. However, just as in life, not everyone is informed about the viper within their midst. Through a comedic twist,

¹⁰⁹Doyle, 182.

Lieutenant Carter, another new arrival, is not briefed, and inadvertently tells Wagner about some of the ongoing escape activities. To counter Carter's mistake, Hogan decides to introduce Wagner to "all aspects" of the camp's underground operations. The setup revealed is unbelievable, including a barbershop, steam room and sauna for overfed prisoners, counterfeit printing presses and a manufacturing center for the production of souvenir cigarette lighters shaped like small pistols. Wagner, being a good Kraut, reports all of his findings to Colonel Klink, the camp Kommandant. In true *Hogan's Heroes* fashion, the misinformation fed to the gullible Wagner eventually benefits the prisoners and results in Wagner's permanent removal from the camp's complement.¹¹⁰

The spy scenario enacted in *Stalag 17* presents a much grimmer picture of the dangers facing prisoners of war if a loyal Nazi infiltrated the higher levels of an escape organization. Price, the German plant in *Stalag 17*, cloaks his actual identity so convincingly that he is named Security Officer of his barracks. This position provides Price with access to all escape plans and activities, information that he passes on to the guards. The queen on one of the prisoners' chess boards serves as the innocuous-seeming post box for conveying information on

¹¹⁰"The Informer" (Pilot), *Hogan's Heroes*, (Air Date 9-17-65), Television Program.

messages sent between the spying Price and the Kommandant's office. Information regarding escape attempts sent by Price to his German compatriots ends in the death of two escaping prisoners in the film's opening scenes. Later, Price provides the Kommandant with enough information to sentence a recently arrived prisoner to death for sabotaging a munitions transport. Price and his nefarious actions are finally unveiled by Septon, a fellow thoroughly disliked by virtue of his dealings as the camp bookie. Throughout the film, Price levels accusations against Septon, making it seem as if Septon is in league with the guards in order to gain preferential treatment. Among his most heinous crimes, Septon is accused of being the security leak that led to the deaths of Manfredy and Johnson, two would-be escapees shot and killed by the guards.¹¹¹ These graphic images about the danger of hidden German agents to the POW community provide viewers with exaggerated situations that faced the established camp hierarchy whenever a new purge entered the camp gates.

Older prisoners, mainly British fliers whose planes were downed early in the air war, helped new arrivals learn how to survive in the camps. The instruction provided was invaluable. One of the most important lessons instilled in the newly transferred prisoners was the correct protocol of behavior between prisoners and their guards. The first of these lessons

¹¹¹*Stalag 17.*

was on proper conduct when in the immediate presence of one of the German officers. When a prisoner approached an officer, he was expected to salute and then wait for the officer to verbally acknowledge him before speaking. Older prisoners insisted that all members of the Kriegie community strictly adhere to this format. Strict adherence to this rule prevented uninformed newcomers from incorrectly approaching a German officer who was hostile towards the prisoner complement.¹¹² Strict codes of behavior existed between the prisoners and their guards, and both sides were expected to obey the letter of the law regarding that code.

Prior to being shot down and becoming captives, Allied fliers were instructed on how to behave towards the enemy. The pamphlet, "If You Should be Captured, These are Your Rights," was issued to all airmen by the War Department, informing them of their duties as a Prisoner of War regarding behavior towards enemy military personnel.¹¹³ The pamphlet also included a list of the prisoner's rights and outlined the responsibilities of their captors towards all Allied personnel. Captured Americans rendered the American Army salute to enemy officers, as per their instructions.¹¹⁴ As captured military personnel, American fliers

¹¹²Barfield, 20.

¹¹³See Appendix Two.

¹¹⁴Occasionally prisoners ignored the Geneva Convention statute regarding saluting. The prisoners based their refusal to

were subject to all laws, regulations and orders enforced by the enemy army. Thus, infractions of rules were punishable by arrest, confinement and disciplinary action equivalent to the punishment imposed on the offender's opposite number in the enemy's ranks. Punishment for unsuccessful escape attempts was limited to a maximum thirty-day disciplinary confinement. Additional punishment for civilian crimes or acts of violence committed during an escape attempt could be imposed. The use of all forms of cruelty in punishment for Prisoners of War was strictly forbidden. Prisoners could only be punished for each escape attempt once. Additional punishment could not be meted out for prisoners who made successive escape attempts, regardless of the number of times they were recaptured.¹¹⁵

German guards were also provided by their army with guide books that outlined their treatment of the prisoners. The German military placed special emphasis upon maintaining a disciplined attitude at all times and strictly forbade the mistreatment of prisoners of war under any circumstances. The German guard was commanded by his army to treat war prisoners under his watch

salute enemy officers on an American military tradition that considered it improper to render a salute outdoors if the soldier was bareheaded. Instead of saluting, the American prisoners acknowledged the presence of German officers by nodding politely. Durand, 210.

¹¹⁵U.S. War Department, "If You Should Be Captured These Are Your Rights," 11.

strictly but fairly.¹¹⁶ Guards were exhorted to keep a diligent eye on all prisoners and to examine their actions carefully. All suspicious activities observed were to be handled or reported to a superior officer immediately. Fraternization with Allied prisoners of war was considered a dereliction of duty and severely punished.¹¹⁷ While the German military officially exhorted its guards to act circumspectly towards prisoners, in practice a wide range of behavior was exhibited. Many German guards and officers behaved admirably toward their charges. These military men upheld the code of ethics espoused by the German army. For the Kommandant of a prison camp, making decisions regarding conduct toward the prisoners was akin to walking on a thin wire--treat them harshly and fall in with the

¹¹⁶Reichsmarschall Hermann Goering issued orders that captured American and British Airmen under Luftwaffe control be treated fairly to ensure that captured Luftwaffe would be protected from abuse. Hasselbring, 7.

¹¹⁷*Der deutsche Soldat in der Kriegsgefangenenbemachung.* Folder L4 Germany WWII, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio, 3-7. See Appendix Six for full details of the German soldier's duties. Throughout the *Hogan's Heroes* television series, the German camp staff was consistently threatened with transfer to the Eastern Front for any disciplinary infraction. There is little documentary evidence to suggest that this threat was actually carried out. The one reported exception to this occurred at Stalag Luft III when a guard named Willie got drunk on some of the Kriegies' home-brewed alcohol, passed out and was found in the he toilet facilities available to the Kriegies, commonly called "aborts," by another guard. This incident, after which Willie was sent packing for the Eastern Front, disturbed the prisoners' relationship with the German authorities and caused other guards who were friendly with the prisoners to behave more circumspectly. Westheimer, 235.

Nazi Party line, or treat them humanely, according to the military codes of chivalry.

Shortly after assuming command of Stalag Luft III in May 1942, Colonel Friedrich-Wilhelm von Lindeiner spelled out his expectations for his staff members regarding treatment of the prisoners.¹¹⁸ Von Lindeiner told his men to use the Geneva Convention as the basis for their behavior toward the prisoners. He claimed that to do otherwise went against the traditions of the German soldier

to violate the precept of law, humaneness, and chivalry even against an enemy. . . As representatives of the detaining power, we have to look upon the POWs as persons who had and still have the duty to fight for their country, as we are doing. The imprisoned enemy is defenseless, to violate his human dignity is contrary to the spirit of chivalry as mentioned before. . . It is absolutely essential that all German personnel employed here are aware of their rights and duties as representatives of the detaining power, and also of the rights and duties of the POWs. . . The basis of our behavior is the correct conduct of the POWs. Violations of individual POWs are to be reported: they will be punished. . . I have personally warned the POWs about the consequences of repeat incidents. It is the right of a POW to rejoin his unit by trying to escape. It is our duty to prevent a successful escape. We shall try our utmost to do our duty with the resources at hand. I shall ask you not to forget one important fact: any war has to end sooner or later, and after a war the nations have to live together again. We cannot ask for the sympathy of the POWs we will release when this is over, but what we want to instill is a feeling of respect. They can say, 'I hate the Germans,' but they must think 'I respect them.'¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸Durand, 124.

¹¹⁹Durand, 307-308.

Von Lindeiner's attitudes toward the prisoners was an aberration in the Nazi regime. In violation of Von Lindeiner's dicta about the manner in which guards were to interact with the prisoners, some guards fraternized with the Allied prisoners, and supplied them with requested goods and information. Still other guards behaved abominably toward the POWs whose lives depended upon their captors' good will.¹²⁰ Contrary to von Lindeiner's benign attitude toward the prisoners, some German staff members considered inflicting vengeful injuries on innocent persons as an acceptable method of making life miserable for the prisoner's under their control¹²¹. The behavior of German guards in the movies about World War II prison camps varies much as did their real life counterparts.'

Perhaps the reason for some of the erratic behavior exhibited by guards towards their charges can be traced to the difficult predicament they found themselves in. Members of German camp staffs found it nigh on impossible to fulfill the requirements of three different groups to whom they were

¹²⁰During the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials, (14 November 1945-1 October 1946), a number of crimes committed by the German military against prisoners of war were uncovered. Throughout the course of these trials, the murder of captured airmen and the murder of prisoners of war who had escaped and been recaptured as a result of direct orders issued through the highest official channels were highly profiled. Szymon Datner, *Crimes Against POWs: Responsibility of the Wehrmacht* (Warszawa: Zachodnia Agencja Prasowa, 1964), XVII.

¹²¹Doyle, 177.

responsible. These three groups--the prisoners, their own superiors, and other German citizens, often had conflicting interests, making it difficult for the guards to decide which course of action was the correct one to follow. Prison camp staffs were threatened by numerous decrees, rigorous war-laws and orders. Because of Goebbels' propaganda campaign against the Luftgangsters, many staff members were regarded as traitors by the German population when they treated their charges correctly and with a modicum of human dignity.¹²² Major Gustav Simoleit described the plight of German staff as

Two sided duties to our own country and to the prisoners, the permanent pressure from both sides. . . the apprehension and anxiety that some catastrophe could occur every day, made our lives very unpleasant. . . In discussions about what our future life would be after the war I used to say, "My future is very clear and simple. Either the Germans will shoot me dead for treason or the Allies will hang me after the war because I was a jailer for prisoners."¹²³

Despite the pressures placed upon him by the three groups to whom he was responsible, Von Lindeiner watched over the prisoners and considered them his wards, to be watched over and cared for.¹²⁴ In accordance with his view that the prisoners needed to be watched and cared for while at the same time prevented from escaping, Von Lindeiner asked the prisoners to "resign

¹²²Durand, 306.

¹²³Durand, 307.

¹²⁴Durand, 304.

themselves honorably and quietly to their unfortunate position and behave accordingly."¹²⁵ Additionally he told them that he planned to treat all prisoners as he wished to be treated if he were a prisoner of war. However, the prisoners told von Lindeiner that it was their duty as well as their right to try to escape. From this discussion von Lindeiner and the prisoners reached an equitable solution. In accordance with this solution came the agreement that,

the armed war is over for the POWs in this camp. They recognize the international laws and camp rules; however, they maintain the right to rejoin their units through escape. In the place of a war of weapons, they are now in a 'war of brains.' Absolute fairness is to be observed in all actions.¹²⁶

Like his real life counterpart, von Luger, the Kommandant portrayed in the *Great Escape*, follows proper procedures at all time with regard to him prisoners. The guards under his command are likewise portrayed as efficient soldiers who neither abuse nor cater to their charges. However, one guard, Werner, does show that even militarily correct guards could inadvertently fraternize with the prisoners during the course of their compound/barrack inspections. Werner is later blackmailed by the

¹²⁵Durand, 308.

¹²⁶Durand, 308.

prisoners to supply them with materials they use in their escape preparations. In *Stalag 17*, the Kommandant, Colonel von Schirbach and his henchmen treat the prisoners strictly, veering into cruel behavior at certain points in the film. Finally, throughout the *Hogan's Heroes* television series, Kommandant Klink and Sergeant Schultz are portrayed as bumbling imbeciles who are led a merry chase by the prisoners. While it is true that the prisoners in most POW camps adeptly concealed the breadth of their clandestine activities from the Germans surrounding them, the men in charge of the camps were by no means that gullible.¹²⁷ Whatever the individual quirks of the German staff camp complement, the Allied prisoners of war fully realized that the 'men with the guns' held the power of life and death over them, and thus determined the amount of ease or discomfort in which they lived.

Therefore, the prisoners developed a set of regulations that governed interactions between members of the camp staff and themselves. Tracing the movements of all Germans within prisoner compounds was of the foremost importance. Most camps set up an elaborate surveillance system to keep tabs on those who did not belong on their side of the barbed wire fence. Surveillance began whenever a German entered the compound and continued

¹²⁷All characters mentioned can be observed in *The Great Escape, Stalag 17, Hogan's Heroes*.

without break until he left.

Under the auspices of the "X Committee" the duty pilot system evolved to monitor the movements of all Goons in the prison compound.¹²⁸ British prisoners developed the duty pilot system, a system whose use became widespread by Allied prisoners in most of the German Prisoner of War camps. Persons who kept track of Goon comings and goings were known as D.P.s--a British shorthand for duty pilots.¹²⁹ Each duty pilot sat a one hour shift during which he remained alert to the comings and goings of his prey. The duty pilot system began early each morning when the barracks were unlocked and continued without interruption until the end of the day when all prisoners were locked into their barracks for the night. Duty pilots kept track of all Germans entering or leaving the compound in a special log which kept a running tab of which guards came and went and how many were within the compound at any given moment during the course of the day. The duty pilot on duty was assisted in his task of identifying individual guards as they entered the compound by a set of specially prepared thumbnail sketches of all members of the German camp staff that were clearly labeled with each guard's name.¹³⁰

¹²⁸Kimball, 18. The duty pilot system was first developed and perfected at Stalag Luft 1 in Barth, Germany. Durand, 272.

¹²⁹Kimball, 18.

¹³⁰Durand, 83.

The Germans in charge of each camp were aware of the duty pilot system. Some of them, such as Sergeant Major Hermann Glemnitz at Stalag Luft III responded to the situation humorously. Once Glemnitz walked up to the man responsible for keeping track of who entered and left the compound, telling him, "I'm in. Mark me down."¹³¹ Then, out of curiosity, Glemnitz consulted the duty log and discovered that the two other guards who were supposed to be on duty until later that day had already been logged out of the compound. Knowing the reliability of the prisoner's log book, Glemnitz tracked down the two men who were supposed to be on duty. When Glemnitz found that the two men had been neglecting their duties, as noted in the log book, he reported their behavior to their superior and the men were duly punished.¹³² Thus the statistical information compiled in the Kriegies' duty log served to keep the Germans up to date on the movement of their own guards along with its primary function of keeping the prisoner's alert as to who was afoot in the compound.

In addition to simply compiling statistical information about German whereabouts, duty pilots sounded the alarm to men actively engaged in escape activities when it was not safe to continue working.¹³³ Utilizing a silent system of communication,

¹³¹Durand, 272.

¹³²Durand, 272-3.

¹³³Kimball, 18.

members of the duty pilot system known as stooges were scattered throughout the compound to watch for patrolling Goons and roving Ferrets. Stooges used a mixture of verbal and non-verbal signals to communicate with those engaged in escape activities. Kriegie stooges counteracted the snooping Germans by developing a complex nonverbal communication system based largely on shuffles, knocks, hand signals, whistles, songs and body movements.¹³⁴ Most of the messages sent using this non-verbal system alerted the other men throughout the camp about the presence of an approaching goon. David Westheimer, a Kriegie at Stalag Luft III who worked as a stooge, often called out "Tally ho," or "Goon on the block," when he saw an approaching goon. When it was not safe to call out the whereabouts of a goon, Westheimer would hold up a handkerchief to signal the halt of undercover operations. This signal, in turn, was passed on by one of the other observers scattered throughout the compound until it reached the men whose work was threatened.¹³⁵ Another one of the signals used to signify the presence of Ferrets in danger areas was the raising and lowering of prearranged "abort" windows.¹³⁶ When signaled, the men working on escape routes ceased all activity until the number of Ferrets in the area decreased to an acceptable level, or they moved away

¹³⁴Doyle, 184.

¹³⁵Westheimer, 204.

¹³⁶Kimball, 18.

from a "danger area." All of these devices and more were employed by the cast in *The Great Escape*. The effectiveness and the variety of signals employed without obvious detection by the guards throughout the movie demonstrates the ingenuity of the prisoners whom they emulated.¹³⁷

If one of the guards came too close to an on-going project before the workers were able to conceal it properly, nearby prisoners would create a distraction. The purpose of this diversion was to give the "cloak and dagger boys" working on the project time to hide any condemning evidence.¹³⁸ Creating distractions went hand-in-glove with one of the prisoner's favorite pastimes--"Goonbaiting." During this activity, a prisoner or group of prisoners teased their guards, treated them with contempt and tested their patience in general.¹³⁹ A skilled goon-baiter knew when to back off or make friendly overtures toward the guard he was teasing before he ended up in the "Cooler" (solitary confinement) for berating the guard.¹⁴⁰ During

¹³⁷*The Great Escape*.

¹³⁸Members of the Escape (X) Committee were also known as "the cloak and dagger boys" by the camp's complement. Most members of the camp population were ignorant of the identity of most of the members of the X Committee out of necessity. Due to the sensitive nature of the organization's activities, the fewer people who knew its secrets, the less likely its movements would make their way to guards' ears. Kimball, 18.

¹³⁹Doyle, 184.

¹⁴⁰Doyle, 184.

one particularly tense moment, the Kriegies demonstrated their ability to judge the line separating playfulness and insolence exhibited toward their captors. The incident took place when an SS lieutenant general came to investigate breaches of security at Stalag Luft III. As the SS officer

walked through the camp, two Americans chased after an errant baseball, collided with the officer and the trio fell to the ground. The captives apologized profusely, and dusted off the general who continued his stroll. As he was about to leave the lager, another American approached him. 'This is not a hostile gesture,' he announced to the SS general. He then reached inside his clothing and handed to the officer a pistol artfully removed from the man's holster during that seemingly innocent encounter with the baseball players.¹⁴¹

The fact that the Kriegie trio came out of this encounter alive and unscathed proves the success of the balancing act they developed into an art form when it came to manipulating the guards. Pranks at the expense of the German camp staff were an on-going activity and good for camp morale when they proved successful.¹⁴²

Sometimes the Kriegies pulled pranks on the guards simply to have a good laugh. Once the men in the sick bay at Stalag Luft I in Barth, Germany convinced a friendly German guard that their Red Cross vitamin tablets were actually a form of medication that allowed them to see in the dark. The situation occurred when one

¹⁴¹Astor, 246.

¹⁴²Roger A. Freeman, *The American Airman in Europe* (Osceola, WI: Motorbooks International, 1991), 139.

of the patients opened a small packet of vitamin C pills. When the guard asked what the pills were for, the patient told him that the pills allowed the prisoners to see in the dark.

Now this same guard was responsible for switching off the lights in sick bay each night and. . . delighted in never giving any time to tidy up and put away any projects or games. . . . That particular night the guard came round as usual and abruptly switched off the lights and walked away. But the talking and laughter continued just as if nothing had happened. So he turned back, listened for a bit, then opened the door and abruptly switched on the lights. There everyone was, still doing just as they had been, playing chess, writing letters, reading and whatever, as if nothing had happened. The guard was shocked and went off to get his officer to tell him about the secret pills he had discovered. Naturally, when he returned with the officer, everyone was fast asleep.¹⁴³

Pranks of this sort provided the entire camp with a good laugh once the story got around. Perhaps the best part about pulling off a prank of this nature was that it did not have the risk factor attached to it that most goon-baiting activities did. The men devised this prank solely for their own enjoyment, and did not have to worry that the covert activities of others would be discovered if the diversion did not work.

German guards combated Kriegie attempts to cover up clandestine escape activities by clever ruses of their own. The guards erected surveillance stations outside the camps to counteract the prisoners' elaborate duty pilot system. In this fashion, they kept track of the prisoners' movements around the

¹⁴³Freeman, *the American Airman in Europe*, 139.

compound. The guards kept a log of prisoner movements in and out of the various barracks, thereby making it possible to pinpoint buildings that conceivably housed underground activities.¹⁴⁴ A building marked by an unusual number of frequent visitors would often be searched for forbidden items, such as radios and escape tools. While they searched for these forbidden items, the Ferrets also looked for traces of sand in the building, a sign that a tunnel was under construction somewhere in the near-by area.¹⁴⁵ Goons and Ferrets both tried to stop Kriegie tunneling efforts and hunted out stashes of hidden contraband.¹⁴⁶ The guards commonly conducted extensive block-by-block searches during the morning Appell (roll call) in their efforts to uncover the X committee's activities. Appell was a favored time for conducting searches as that was a time when the barracks were guaranteed to be empty of Kriegies. During a barrack's search, the guards effectively dismantled the block interior in much the same manner as seen in an episode of *Hogan's Heroes*.¹⁴⁷ In "Sergeant Schultz Meets Mata Hari," Ferrets move bunks and rip open mattresses during their search for contraband items. The prisoners' personal belongings are also rifled through as the Ferrets

¹⁴⁴Durand, 258.

¹⁴⁵Durand, 258.

¹⁴⁶Doyle, 184.

¹⁴⁷Westheimer, 206-7.

fruitlessly endeavor to find a hidden radio.¹⁴⁸ While the Ferrets' efforts went unrewarded during this particular search, real-life Kriegies often lost valuable items such as maps and handmade tools in similar scenarios. The discovery of these items attests to the thoroughness of the guards' searches, as the prisoners kept such items in fairly safe hiding places.¹⁴⁹

Many of the guards at Stalag Luft III looked on the antics of their charges in the same manner as their Kommandant Colonel von Lindeiner did. Sergeants Gallatowitz and Glemnitz regarded the prisoners' subversive ways as part of the ongoing battle of wits between the prisoners and guards. According to David Westheimer, one of the inmates at Stalag Luft III, there were no hard feelings between the prisoners and either one of these two guards. Glemnitz simply put a stop to any illegal activities he discovered while Gallatowicz put an end to them and then joked with the prisoners about their misdoings. Gallatowicz's sense of humor concerning the prisoners' subversive activities was revealed when he discovered some missing table knives during a surprise inspection. After finding them, Gallatowicz wagged his finger at the prisoners saying, "yess zehntelmens, so you zay zey

¹⁴⁸"Sergeant Schultz Meets Mata Hari," (Air Date 9-30-67). *Hogan's Heroes* Television series.

¹⁴⁹One of the prisoner's most secure hiding places for clandestine materials was behind the beaverboard paneling of the barracks' walls. Westheimer, 207.

are lost. You cannot fool me. You make zaws out of zem."¹⁵⁰ Not all guards were as highly esteemed by the prisoners as Glemnitz and Galltowicz. Most of the Ferrets were regarded as ordinary men trying to do their jobs, and as such they were regarded as potential threats to illegal activities. Two of the notable exceptions to this "live and let live" were Corporal Hohendahl and a Polish guard known simply as Schnozz. The Kriegies suspected Hohendahl of being attached to a Nazi unit because of the degree of authority he had for a mere corporal. Schnozz was treated with disdain by the prisoners because he snooped through the Kriegies' rooms while most of his fellow Ferrets were content with prowling outside of the prisoners' blocks except when conducting a block by block search or when looking specifically for tunnels.¹⁵¹

Just as the Kriegies became more adept at hiding their activities, the Ferrets counteracted these measures by stepping up their own security measures. No matter how highly motivated the guards were to keep their prisoners under lock and key, escape attempts persisted. As one hardened Kriegie noted, "No soldier has ever had so strong an incentive to keep prisoners in as prisoners have to get out. If a prisoner of war devoted all his time and energy to making his plans he was likely to find a

¹⁵⁰The knives probably ended up on display in the guards' museum of escape tools. Westheimer, 233.

¹⁵¹Westheimer, 234.

way out in the end. That did not mean that he reached home, but to some prisoners of war a few days of freedom were worth the effort of years."¹⁵²

A delicate system of checks and balances existed within the specified codes of conduct that ruled relations between Allied captives and their German guards. This system was fluid as each group learned from the actions by the other group. The prisoners' top priority was to escape.¹⁵³ In turn, the guards' objective was to contain the prisoners within their assigned compounds. The German camp administrators and guards worked hard to keep the prisoners from escaping or engaging in undercover activities. These men learned from each encounter and applied the knowledge gained from these experiences to enforce stricter security measures. The German staff at Stalag Luft III developed a museum to assist Luftwaffe personnel in battling the subterfuge techniques devised by their prisoners. The museum contained many of the items confiscated from the prisoners during routine barrack searches. Guards were expected to study the materials in the museum so that they could detect clandestine activities more readily. Whenever possible, Luftwaffe personnel remained at the

¹⁵²Durand, 259.

¹⁵³The extent to which this operational mission was implemented varied from camp to camp. The escape and espionage measures taken by the prisoners at Stalag Luft III went beyond the limits of the law and for this, were often punished more severely than their counterparts in other POW camps. Durand, 362.

same duty so that over time their experiences with the prisoners could be fully utilized.¹⁵⁴ As Durand concludes, "both prisoners and their guards exercised considerable ingenuity and imagination in the pursuit of their respective goals."¹⁵⁵

Due to the international makeup of POW camps, German camp staffs dealt with prisoners on a nationality-by-nationality basis because of the many variations in mentality of each of these groups. These variations included national traditions, accomplishments, habits, characteristics, fears, desires, strengths, and shortcomings.¹⁵⁶ Among the variations noted between the different groups of prisoners was the British prisoners' refusal to accept materials for camp improvement projects and insistence that German workers complete the projects since if they (British prisoners) completed the work, it would free German workers for the war effort. Americans, however, worked to make their quarters more livable at every available opportunity. British, Australians, and the Dutch were extremely defensive against the Germans. South Africans and Canadians and New Zealanders were considered pleasant on the whole, perhaps due to their nations' geographical placement relatively free from the interference of envious neighbors. The Poles were noted to be

¹⁵⁴Durand, 255.

¹⁵⁵Durand, 255.

¹⁵⁶Durand, 303.

"preoccupied with a deep worry about the future of their homeland regardless of the outcome of the war."¹⁵⁷ Regardless of their origins, prisoners of all nationalities in the German prison camps engaged in escape activities. While prisoners of all nationalities engaged in escape activities, those actively involved made up a small percentage of the camps' complement. According to the calculations of the RAF Wing Commander Harry Melville Arbuthnot Day (Wings Day), the Senior British Officer at Stalag Luft I, and later at Stalag Luft III, approximately twenty-five percent of the prisoner population ventured to escape, with only five percent of that group being dedicated to escape at any cost. According to the same set of calculations, fully fifty percent of almost any camps' complement was willing to assist the escapers in their endeavors.¹⁵⁸ Those who were not avidly pursuing the time-honored art of escape lived according to the camp's daily routines.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷Durand, 304.

¹⁵⁸Durand, 80-1.

¹⁵⁹Due to the length restrictions of this paper, in-depth discussions of escape techniques and activities will be limited to their undertaking in tandem with routine camp activities.

Chapter 4. The Days Go By: Camp Routines and Entertainment.

The Fate We Share as Prisoners

The Fate we share as prisoners
is drab and often grim,
Existing on such scant fare
As Reich-bread, spuds and kilm.

Beds and books and little else
To fill Time's flapping sail,
She makes or loses headway all
Depending on the mail.

Oh! Drab the days and slow to pass
Within this barbed-wire fence,
When all the joys of living are
Still in Future tense.

So here's to happy days ahead
When you and I are free,
To look back on this interlude
And call it history.¹⁶⁰

Joe Boyle

Much of the prisoners' day ran according to a rigid schedule enforced by their German wardens. The procedure at Stalag 17B, Krems, Austria, began at seven a.m. with morning roll call, followed by breakfast, when each man was issued one cup of hot water. The next scheduled event was the midday meal at eleven a.m. when the men received a cup of soup from the German kitchen. At five p.m. three boiled potatoes were issued to each prisoner. Finally, at five-thirty p.m., the last roll call was held.¹⁶¹ The last item of business for the day took place at ten

¹⁶⁰Durand, 363.

¹⁶¹Mills, 4.

p.m. when the prisoners were locked into their barracks for the night.

The German guards locked the Kriegies into their block at nine p.m. each night. Lights were allowed to remain on until midnight. After midnight the guards shot at any light on through any open shutters.¹⁶² "No one was permitted outside after we were locked in. Guards and dogs patrolled all night and search lights were on. There was a light on top of the outside door in case of sickness or as an emergency signal."¹⁶³

Every morning at six a.m. one of the guards unlocked the barrack doors. Appell was held at seven a.m. Prisoners reluctant to leave their barracks were forced to attend roll call by guards who shot the ceilings and unleashed the dogs to urge the prisoners outside.¹⁶⁴ Appell provided the prisoners with a perfect opportunity to pull pranks. At Stalag Luft I in Barth, Germany, the prisoners delighted in throwing off the Germans' count by moving about in the ranks. Once this was accomplished, the Guard had to begin the count all over. Due to the confusion caused by this tactic, Appell sometimes lasted for hours if the number of men present did not agree with the number who were

¹⁶²Barfield, 24.

¹⁶³Barfield, 24.

¹⁶⁴Havard, 46.

supposed to be in the camp.¹⁶⁵ Throughout the winter months, the guards retaliated by purposely losing count during Appell so that the poorly clad prisoners had to remain in the cold for hours.¹⁶⁶ Prisoners were required to stand at Appell until all men were accounted for. Procedures for evening Appell were identical to those followed during morning Appell.¹⁶⁷

Discipline at Stalag 17B Krems, Austria, was severe when the guards suspected that someone was missing. If the Appell proved inconclusive, the guards would undertake a "picture check" of all the prisoners. During a "picture check" the guards compared prisoners with photos of them taken when they were first interned. The final step in this arduous process was an inspection of the prisoners' dogtags. The prisoners were not allowed to return to the shelter of their buildings until it had been ascertained that no one was missing.¹⁶⁸

The Germans occasionally conducted surprise Appells in addition to the two regularly scheduled Appells in the hopes of catching the prisoners off-guard. The implementation of surprise or nuisance roll calls is one way in which the guards put a damper on escape activities. As many as eight nuisance roll

¹⁶⁵Barfield, 25.

¹⁶⁶Havard, 28.

¹⁶⁷Barfield, 25.

¹⁶⁸Havard, 46.

calls could be scheduled in one day to thwart escape activities. However, the onset of these nuisance calls was not always a surprise to the prisoners due to the efficiency of the camp grapevine. In anticipation of such days, regularly scheduled Kriegie activities, such as the holding of classes and work on tunnels, were put on hold.¹⁶⁹

The prisoner's penchant for employing "ghosts" added to the guard's confusion when it came to roll calls. The escape organizations at many camps employed the use of "ghosts." This system consisted of select prisoners going into hiding in the camp directly after an escape attempt. In this manner the ghost would remain hidden in the camp, leaving the Germans uncertain of the exact number of men involved in the escape attempt. The ghost remained in hiding in the camp until another escape attempt was made. While the guards were busy elsewhere, the ghost rejoined the camp complement, effectively disguising the fact that another bird had flown the coop.

Stalag 13 had its own ghost, a prisoner named Olsen, who left the camp's confines when new prisoners entered the "Traveler's Aid Society" run by Col. Hogan. New prisoners entered Stalag 13 after escaping from other camps while en route to freedom. When the new man left Stalag 13, Olsen returned. While this type of way station did not exist in Luftwaffe prison

¹⁶⁹Mills, 6.

camps, the episode accurately portrays the way that a ghost could enter camp life to conceal a man's absence from the camp's population for a brief period.¹⁷⁰ By keeping the Germans unsure of the exact number of men in the camps, escapers had a better chance of getting further from camp before their absence was noticed.

Prisoners who took on the role of ghosts had to be prepared for the considerable mental and physical strain that the role entailed. The role required that the ghost remain hidden in such unlikely places as cupboards, tunnels under construction, and barrack attics. They also needed to be prepared for long stints in solitude. The ghosts were completely dependent on their fellow prisoners for food and basic necessities such as toilet arrangements and the occasional luxury of movement around the camp. When discovered, ghosts anticipated another stint of solitary living--this time in the "cooler" for breaking camp regulations.¹⁷¹

Outside of their appearances at regularly scheduled events time weighed heavily upon the prisoners as their term of incarceration had no definite end date. These men filled the periods between mandatory appearances at roll calls and mealtimes with a variety of daily activities. These activities helped

¹⁷⁰"The Informer" (Air Date 9-19-65). *Hogan's Heroes* Television program.

¹⁷¹Durand, 82-83.

stave off the boredom inherent in life behind barbed wire. Activities included gardening, taking classes, playing sports and putting on theatrical productions. Work of any type served a dual purpose. The first of these two functions provided the men with an outlet for their excess energy, as few of them were accustomed to remaining idle. Keeping busy helped prevent the onset of insanity, or as the prisoners called it, "going round the bend."¹⁷² The second function of the busy work which the prisoners engaged in served as a means of disguising escape attempts.

Gardens provided a valuable source of food for the prisoners as well as a dumping ground for soil removed from tunnels. The rations provided by the Germans were often insufficient, motivating the men to spend long hard hours coaxing small seedlings to life in the soil.¹⁷³ The Red Cross provided onion, radish, tomato and lettuce seeds for the gardens.¹⁷⁴ A scene in the *Great Escape* shows how the prisoners transferred dirt from the tunnels to the camp garden plots. The prisoners filled long tubes of cloth sewn into their trouser pockets with dirt from the tunnels. The ends of these curious pockets were folded and

¹⁷²*Behind the Wire.*

¹⁷³See Appendix Six for list of rations provided to the prisoners.

¹⁷⁴Westheimer, 236.

secured at the bottom with a nail stuck through to keep the dirt from flowing out of the pocket until the proper time. After collecting their payload of dirt, the prisoners left the collection sight and headed toward a garden or path where they could safely release the soil. The guards would see prisoners "waddling down the perimeter paths like bears. They knew we [the prisoners] were carrying sand in our pantlegs, but they couldn't figure out where it was coming from. We'd get on the path and let the sand slide down our pantlegs, then we would go back and get another load."¹⁷⁵ If a dirt-carrying prisoner decided to deposit his soil in a garden, it was raked into the lighter colored top soil by another prisoner. This simple ploy is skillfully reenacted in the *Great Escape* where the actors demonstrate how the pockets worked and the various means by which the prisoners spread tunnel soil throughout the compound.¹⁷⁶

Putting on theatrical productions was another popular pastime throughout the camp system. The prisoners created lavish sets and designed elaborate costumes with goods sent to them by the YMCA. Some of the men dressed as believable women for the roles, wearing brassieres, wigs and dresses sent through that

¹⁷⁵Havard, 31.

¹⁷⁶In a series of scenes, prisoners in the *Great Escape* rid themselves of excess tunnel dirt by adding it to camp gardens, releasing it while marching in formation throughout the camp, and by hiding it in the rafters of their barracks. *Great Escape*, film.

benevolent organization's auspices.¹⁷⁷ Other evenings, the camp band played, using instruments supplied by benevolent organizations such as the International Red Cross and the Young Man's Christian Association (YMCA). One camp even made repeated requests for an accordion and a set of bagpipes, to be provided courtesy of the YMCA.¹⁷⁸

Theatrical and musical offerings in the POW theatres presented a mix of original Kriegie offerings along with reproductions of American and British plays and scores. Theatrical offerings included: "Strictly From Hunger," a musical variety show, "The Man Who Came To Dinner," and the Broadway hit, "You Can't Take it With You." Some of the musical renditions heard by eager audiences were: "Buddy Can You Spare a Dime," "Oh Susannah," "Deep River," "Summertime," "Honeywagon Blues" and "Dear Lieutenant."¹⁷⁹ In addition to the prisoner-produced theatrical and musical nights, men in some camps were able to see American films such as "Dixie Dougan," "Orchestra Wives," and

¹⁷⁷Odd Supplies From the War Prisoners Aid of the YMCA . "Miscellaneous Stories as Told to YMCA Representatives" Folder L4 WWII, Wright-Patterson Museum, Dayton, Ohio, 2; Westheimer, 255; Havard, 47.

¹⁷⁸"Items ordered by Henry Soederberg on his last visit that haven't arrived in camp yet" 10 November 1943, Folder L4 Germany WWII, Oflag 64, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio.

¹⁷⁹*Gefangenen Gazette: Special Supplement to Prisoners of War Bulletin.* Washington D.C.: American Prisoners of War and Civilian Internees, September 1944. Folder L4 Germany WWII, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio, 15; Kimball, 95-6; Westheimer, 222, 225.

"The Corsican Brothers." These films went through the hands of a German censor before they were shown, and so tended to break during screenings. Despite the technical difficulties involved during a showing the men enjoyed the break from routine life.¹⁸⁰

The gang in *Hogan's Heroes* also had a band and put on theater shows. In "Reverend Klink," the fellows put on a play so that they can shore up the resistance of recently captured Free French pilot, Claude Boucher.¹⁸¹ In another episode, "Look at All the Pretty Snowflakes," the prisoners use the unexpected presence of a selection of musical instruments to kill time while they are incarcerated at the Hofbrau House during a break from their snow shoveling detail.¹⁸² This musical interlude provides the audience with a look at some of the talent and types of instruments available in the camps for entertainment purposes.

All the noise and activity that preparation for theatrical and musical events entailed provided effective cover for any noise created by men working on escape tunnels or escape related projects. The actors in *the Great Escape* do a wonderful job of incorporating ways of using camp activity-generated noise to mask the doings of the escapers. Prisoners hammer pipes in the yard

¹⁸⁰Barfield, 29-30.

¹⁸¹"Reverend Klink", *Hogan's Heroes*, (Air Date 3-03-67), television program.

¹⁸²"Look At All the Pretty Snowflakes," *Hogan's Heroes*, (Air Date 3-21-71), television program.

to mask the noise created when Danny, the "Tunnel King," chips cement when beginning construction a new tunnel entrance. When singing Christmas carols, the prisoners drown out the sound of prisoners working on the ventilation system for one of the tunnels inside the barracks. Classroom lessons on bird watching served as a cover for forgery activities.¹⁸³

Many of the men who engaged in the various forms of entertainment throughout the camp did so out of personal interest. In many cases, these men were completely unaware of the secondary function which these activities concealed from their German captors. Such was the case with Peter Neft, the co-pilot of a B-17 bomber that went down January 29, 1944 near Frankfurt, Germany. Neft recalled an incident that occurred in his barracks at Stalag Luft 1, Barth, Germany that illustrates the extent to which men not directly involved in escape plans were ignorant of their undertaking until after they took place. One night when Neft entered his barrack, he found the room crowded with majors and lieutenant colonels wearing bulky sweaters under their jackets. These ungainly dressed officers ripped up some of the floorboards to reveal a completed tunnel that most of the rooms' occupants, including Neft, had been completely unaware of.¹⁸⁴ Reports of incidents such as this

¹⁸³*The Great Escape*, film.

¹⁸⁴Bird, 95-6.

reveal the efficiency and level of secrecy in which the Escape Organizations at the various camps operated.

For those men not intimately involved in escape activities, a variety of classes were offered by men who possessed a wealth of knowledge in a specific subject area. Classes offered in the camps varied according to the interest and availability of books and knowledgeable men in those areas. Teachers were recruited for the schools on three basic premises: "that they possess a clear understanding of the subject matter that they were to teach, that they be willing to work. . . hard in the absence of material compensation, and that they be willing to take suggestions and instruction on methods of subject presentation and other factors in the teaching-learning process."¹⁸⁵ Once the roster of teachers was completed and the camp received books and supplies for its classes, Stalag 17B opened its school for the first time in January 1944 with almost 800 men registered for instruction in two or more subject areas.¹⁸⁶ The school listed thirty-five scheduled classes ranging from Algebra, the most popular subject, to Commercial Geography, one of the least popular subjects. Some of the other subjects offered were: Auto

¹⁸⁵Mills, 5.

¹⁸⁶Supplies for the school were contributed by the European Society of Student Relief, the War Prisoners Aid of the YMCA and the International Bureau of Education. Mills, 5. The International Red Cross supplied prisoners with books for pleasure reading as well as for scholarly pursuits. Astor, 240.

Mechanics, Spanish, German, French, Music, American History, Photography, Shorthand, Business Law, and English. The school schedule, which began at nine a.m. and ended at eight ten p.m. each day, was designed with breaks that accommodate other daily activities such as roll calls and meal times.¹⁸⁷

In addition to the round of classes offered to occupy the Kriegies, many of the men engaged in sports. Prisoners in the *Hogan's Heroes* television series mirrored the diverse athletic competitions engaged in by their real-life counterparts. Cast members of the popular series participated in volleyball, basketball and baseball games.¹⁸⁸ Men in the various camps engaged in all of these activities as well as many others. Kriegies at Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany, for example, engaged in bouts of touch football, fencing, weight lifting, swimming in the fire pool and ice hockey using equipment provided by the International Red Cross.¹⁸⁹ For some of the Kriegies, these endless rounds of exercise provided a way to keep in shape along with serving as a diversionary measure against the time that weighed heavily on

¹⁸⁷Mills, 5.

¹⁸⁸A few of the episodes where the prisoners can be seen engaging in sports activities are: "What Time Does the Balloon Go Up?" (Air Date 2-17-68), "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to London," (Air Date 10-07-67), "Return of Major Bonacelli," (Air Date 3-15-69), and "Sergeant Schultz Meets Mata Hari," (Air Date 9-30-67), *Hogan's Heroes* Television Program.

¹⁸⁹Westheimer, 199.

their hands. For other Kriegies, regular exercise helped to keep them fit for escape attempts in case an opportunity to leave the prison confines presented itself.¹⁹⁰

Less athletically inclined Kriegies took long walks around the compound. Other prisoners spent portions of their time reading or engaged in endless bull sessions. Rounds of chess, poker and bridge tournaments went on at all hours, accompanied by the drinking of endless cups of coffee.¹⁹¹ Various cast members of *Hogan's Heroes* participated in some or all of these activities in the many episodes aired between 1965 and 1971.¹⁹²

One especially inventive game not shown in episodes of *Hogan's Heroes* that the Kriegies devised was "Bay Meadows." Bay Meadows was a board game with complicated rules designed by the prisoners to consume large amounts of time. The game was played on a specifically marked board using wooden playing pieces that represented the "horses" of individual players. Pieces were moved according to the value of cards dealt to each player by the "track judge." Players bet cigarettes on the success of their horse, with the contents of the pot going to the winner at the

¹⁹⁰Westheimer, 200.

¹⁹¹Staff Sergeant Harry A. Hall, *A Wartime Log Book: A Rememberence From Home Through the American YMCA*, Folder L4 Germany WWII, Wright-Patterson Air Force Research Center, Dayton, Ohio, 21, 41, 46.

¹⁹²*Hogan's Heroes*, television program, 1965-1971.

end of the game.¹⁹³ Games such as Bay Meadows that consumed a large amount of time were prized. In game playing, as in most of their tasks, the prisoners paid close attention to details as the extra effort involved ensured that the task took longer.¹⁹⁴

The various activities in which the Kriegies participated served as diversions from their primary obsession: food. Given the insufficient amounts of food available and the monotony of their diet, it is little wonder that the prisoners were obsessed with food. As one prisoner said, "We were always hungry. We couldn't keep food off our minds."¹⁹⁵ Kriegies were supposed to each receive one Red Cross Food Parcel per week to supplement the meager rations provided by their German hosts. (See Appendix Six for Contents of Red Cross Parcels and Rations provided by the Germans) Despite the intentions of the Red Cross to provide each prisoner with a weekly individual food parcel, the parcels did not always arrive on time or in sufficient quantities. When the Red Cross parcels were available, their contents were issued sparingly.¹⁹⁶ Added to the difficulty of maintaining an adequate food supply, the Germans opened the cans in the Red Cross food

¹⁹³"Inside a Prison Camp," by Sgt. Benjamin Spring as told to Gene Lowall. True November 1944. Folder L4 Germany WWII, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, 58.

¹⁹⁴Westheimer, 212.

¹⁹⁵Havard, 48.

¹⁹⁶Havard, 48.

parcels when they arrived so that they could not be taken on escape attempts.¹⁹⁷ When the cans were emptied, the Kriegies created serviceable objects for use around the camp. Some of the cans were turned into bowls, cups, and silverware for use at mealtimes.¹⁹⁸

Turning the available food into palatable meals required skill and ingenuity. Recipes for various dishes were exchanged throughout the camp. Some of the more successful recipes appeared in the *Gefangenen Gazette*.¹⁹⁹ One delicacy created by Kriegie cooks was a cake made from finely ground crackers and Red Cross tooth powder. The tooth powder contained salt and bicarbonate of soda which was used as a leavening agent.²⁰⁰ Cooking was a duty that every member of the camp participated in. Each week a different man was assigned to cook that week's meals for his room.²⁰¹ The difficulty of cooking an edible meal was exacerbated by the limited cooking materials available. Cooks were each allotted thirty minutes for meal preparation in the barracks' communal kitchen.²⁰² Due the dearth of Reich-provided

¹⁹⁷"Welcome to POW Camp Stalag Luft I, Barth Germany." Folder L4 WWII Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, 33.

¹⁹⁸Barfield, 21.

¹⁹⁹Gefangenen Gazette, 3, 5.

²⁰⁰Beltrone, 103.

²⁰¹Kimball, 57.

²⁰²Barfield, 21.

cookware, meals were cooked in pans and pots carefully crafted from Red Cross tins.²⁰³ Cooking was an arduous process for all involved due to the amount of time and energy expended in its preparation.

Learning to live in the care of the Luftwaffe was similar to learning to cook in the camps. Both processes required a period of acclimation during which the men became familiar with the rules. American airmen who were captured and sent to the Dulag Luft for interrogation and processing received a crash course in living under protective custody. These men had many of their personal belongings taken away, had their identities questioned and faced interrogators who were relentless in their quest for information. Once they were thoroughly drained of useful information, they were sent to a permanent Prisoner of War camp. Once in the camps, Prisoners of War, better known as Kriegies, received instructions from older inmates. These instructions enabled them to survive in the harsh environment in which they were placed. Cooking instructions, of course, were at a premium, as food preparation consumed the better part of a day for men who served as their rooms' cook. Ingenuity was essential for survival in the camps. Creative thinking served to improve the quality of life for the men and helped keep their minds active during their incarceration. The invention of cookware and

²⁰³Kimball, 46.

utensils simplified cooking, while the invention of new card and board games helped prisoners spend the seeming eternal stretch of time which lay in front of them.

Movies such as *Stalag 17* and *The Great Escape* present snapshots of what daily life was like in the camps. Many of the events that take place in these films are taken directly from incidents that occurred in actual German Prisoner of War camps. The television series, *Hogan's Heroes*, also includes many real-life incidents within the comedic plot lines. Images of Prisoners of War in films and media presentations often gloss over the harsh conditions which the prisoners endured for years. The realities which existed for these men created a strong bond between them which will never be forgotten. Corky Cockrell, a former *Stalag Luft 17* survivor, credited the "mixture of pain and suffering endured, of pride in one's contribution and of patriotism," for the strength of the ties that still exist among ex-POWs.²⁰⁴ The strength of this bond can be seen within the movies. Men in both *Stalag 17*, and the *Great Escape* took care of fellow prisoners who went round the bend. Joey in *Stalag 17* and Ives in *The Great Escape* are carefully watched over and cared for by other members of the camp community. Scenes of this nature bring the harsh realities of imprisonment to life for the

²⁰⁴"*Stalag 17: Two Men Remember.*" Folder L4 Germany WWII *Stalag Luft 17*, Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio, 8.

audience.²⁰⁵ Ex-Prisoners of War interviewed in the video recording *Behind the Wire* confirm the great mental strain that developed from the uncertainty of not knowing what was going to happen. In the camps, prisoners tried to shore up the mental stability of their fellow inmates. Sometimes the strain of living under armed guard became too much for a man and he ran for the wire, just as Ives did in the *Great Escape*. The killing of Ives by tower guards when he ran for the barbed wire fence mirrors the reality faced by prisoners in the camps.²⁰⁶ The support network that existed within the camp community helped the individual members survive a horrific experience. What is shown in the movies is only the tip of the iceberg. While many Americans erroneously believe that life in the POW camps was fun and games, it was serious business and could be deadly for those so unfortunate as to be imprisoned during World War II.

²⁰⁵*Stalag 17, The Great Escape.*

²⁰⁶*The Great Escape, Behind the Wire.*

Appendix One. To All Prisoners of War!

The escape from prison camps is no longer a sport!

Germany has always kept to the Hague Convention and only punished recaptured prisoners of war with minor disciplinary punishment.

Germany will still maintain these principles of international law.

But England has besides fighting at the front in an honest manner instituted an illegal warfare in non combat zones in the form of gangster commandos, terror bandits and sabotage troops even up to the frontiers of Germany.

They say in a captured secret and confidential English military pamphlet,

The Handbook of Modern Irregular Warfare:

". . .the days when we could practice the rules of sportsmanship are over. For the time being, every soldier must be a potential gangster and must be prepared to adopt their methods whenever necessary."

"The sphere of operations should always include the enemy's own country, any occupied territory, and in certain circumstances, such neutral countries as he is using as a source of supply."

England has with these instructions opened up a non military form of gangster war!

Germany is determined to safeguard her homeland, especially her war industry and provisional centres for the fighting fronts. Therefore, it has become necessary to create strictly forbidden zones, called death zones, in which all unauthorized trespassers will be immediately shot on sight.

Escaping prisoners of war, entering such death zones, will certainly lose their lives. They are therefore in constant danger of being mistaken for enemy agents or sabotage groups.

Urgent warning is given against making future escapes!

In plain English: Stay in a camp where you will be safe! Breaking out of it is now a damned dangerous act.

The chances of preserving your life are almost nil!

All police and military guards have been given the most strict orders to shoot on sight all suspected persons.

Escaping from prison camps has ceased to be a sport!

Folder L4 Germany WWII. Wright Patterson Air Force Museum Research Center, Dayton Ohio.

Appendix Two. List of Objects to be Taken from Prisoners of War

"List of Objects to be taken from the Prisoners of War"
-All means of escape: wire cutters, pincers, saws, files, shovels, ropes, wire, and similar tools.
-Civilian clothing of those Prisoners of War wearing uniform. Underwear only if it can also be worn as exterior civil clothing.
-Money (German and foreign currency) which must immediately be handed over to the competent official of the group
-weapons and objects similar to weapons
-Ammunition and explosive equipment
-larger pocket knives and scissors
-Cameras, films and flashlights
-Alcoholic fluids and medicines the nature and harmlessness of which cannot incontestably be proved at once.
-Lighters, gasoline, candles
-All books, printed matters, and writings being not yet censored, personal documents (also envelopes) excepted
-All further objects appearing dangerous and suspicious, the confiscation of which depends on the decision of the leading officer only."

(Declassified per Executive Order 12356 Section 3.3 NND903670 by RB/VSW NARA Date 1-30-91. A Chronicle of Stalag XVII B Krems/Gneisendorf, Austria. Compiled by Luther Victory (Commander 1990-1991) 600 E Pearche Street. Baytown, Texas 77520. From records obtained from the National Archives by Les Jackson, Archivist. Printed August 1991 by Corporate Sponsor Marathon Oil Company of Houston, Texas and Jo Anne Salisbury, Crosly, Texas) (Wright Patterson Air Force Museum. Folder L4 Germany WWII Stalag Luft 17B.)

Appendix Three.

If You Should Be Captured, These are Your Rights

From the moment you are captured you have certain rights. Even before you are taken to a prisoner-of-war camp, these rights are in effect.

Stand up for your rights, but do it with military courtesy and firmness at all times. The enemy will respect you for it.

You must be humanely treated at all times.

Reprisals against you are not permitted. You cannot be punished for what someone else has done.

You must be protected against insult or acts of violence by enemy military or civilians.

If you are wounded or sick, you are entitled to the same medical care as a member of the enemy's Army.

The enemy must clothe, feed and shelter you.

You are a prisoner of war, not a criminal.

When you are questioned, by no matter what enemy authority, you must give only your name, rank and serial number. Beyond that, there is no information which the enemy can legally force from you.

Do not discuss military matters of any sort with anyone.

An "Allied" soldier may be an enemy intelligence agent.

Forget all you ever knew about your own Army. If anyone wants to discuss it with you, even its insignificant details, say nothing.

You must surrender to the enemy all military equipment except your helmet and gas mask. However, the enemy must not take from you your personal belongings, such as your identification, insignia of rank, personal papers, wallet or photographs (unless of military value)

Money in your possession can be taken away from you only upon the order of an officer and after the amount has been determined. For this you must be given a receipt. Demand a receipt. It is your right.

Any money taken from you must be entered to your account and returned to you when you are freed.

If you are an enlisted prisoner of war, you must salute all enemy officers. If you are an officer prisoner of war, you salute only enemy officers of equal rank or higher. You render your own salute, not the salute as executed by the enemy.

Where other matters of military courtesy and discipline are concerned, you have the same rights and duties as your opposite number in the enemy army.

You are subject to all laws, regulations and orders enforced in the enemy army. You may be tried and found guilty, punished for infractions of enemy regulations. However, no form of

cruelty may be used in your punishment. Generally speaking, arrest, confinement and disciplinary punishment may be imposed upon you in the same manner as the enemy's own personnel of equivalent rank.

If you attempt to escape and are recaptured, you are liable only to disciplinary confinement not to exceed 30 days. But if you use violence, you may be punished for that violence quite apart from the 30 days imposed for the attempt to escape. If you commit any civilian crime, you become subject to punishments under enemy law and by enemy courts.

Having been punished for an attempted escape, that attempt may not be held against you if you try to escape again and are recaptured.

One of the most important guarantees in the Geneva Convention is that prisoners of war have the right to elect a fellow-prisoner as their spokesman to represent them in any dealings with the prisoner-of-war camp authorities or with the Protecting Power. However, the spokesman must be approved by the camp authorities. All protests or complaints which you have to make must be made through your camp spokesman.

The Protecting Power is a neutral country which acts as a go-between for settling complaints and grievances between you and the enemy.

The Protecting Power for the United States is Switzerland.

When a representative of the Swiss Government visits the camp where you are held, you have a right to talk to him in private if you wish.

You must work in a labor party as ordered if you are a private or private first class.

If you are a noncom, you may be used only in a supervisory capacity.

If you are an officer, you may not be assigned to any work, except at your own request.

You must not be required to work that is either dangerous or unhealthful.

You must not be employed in any job which has a direct relation to war operations. For example--you must not be used in manufacturing or transporting arms or munitions of any kind or for transporting any materials intended for fighting units. If you are ordered to do this kind of work, you are entitled to protest through your spokesman, but in the meantime must continue to do the work.

Here are a few of the rights *guaranteed* to you under the Geneva Convention:

1. You may receive letters and packages from home.
2. You may write a stipulated number of letters monthly.
3. You may advise your family of your capture.

4. You may receive books.
5. You may worship in your own way.

As a prisoner of war you are in a tough spot, but--
The Army hasn't forgotten you-
The Red Cross and the Protecting Power do all that they can
for you
Your family and friends know where you are and will keep in
touch with you-
Your own pride as a soldier will see you through.

U.S. War Department. "If You Should be Captured These are Your Rights." *War Department Pamphlet No. 21-7* Issued 16 May 1944. Held at Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum Archives, Wright-Patterson, Ohio.

Appendix Four.

Parole signed by Prisoners of War During Transport.

We give our word of honor as American and British Officers and Non commissioned Offices that we shall not
make any attempt to escape
nor get into touch with the Civilian population
nor make any preparations for future escape
during our trip from this place to the point of our destination,
i.e. the camp in Wetzlar. This is a distance which covers about
65 kilometers. (40,4 miles).
It is to be understood that the parole is only valid for the
duration of this transport.
Any prisoner breaking his word of honour will be court martialed.
Furthermore every guard accompanying the transport has the
strictest order to shoot without any previous warning should
there be the slightest attempt to escape.
This is signed by one of us for all prisoners of war who take
part in this trip.
Oberursel,

(Rank and signature)

Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum Research Center Folder L4
Germany WWII Personnel: Statement to by signed by POWs in regard
to escape.

Appendix Five.

The German Soldier on Prisoner of War Guard Duty.

16 January 1943

I. The Prisoner of War

The prisoner of war is a part of a hostile army. He is of an age fit for military service and thereby counts as the most valuable and most energetic part of a hostile people.

According to the international agreement on the treatment of prisoners of war, of 27/7/29, Germany has the right to use prisoners of war: soldiers as workers, and non-commissioned officers as superintendents. The prisoner of war, according to this international agreement, can be forced to work. Moreover the prisoner of war N.C.O. and officer is allowed to take up volunteer work. Prisoners of war are a working force of the German nation, who must be utilized for the German economy during the whole war.

The prisoner of war has to work as long as required of a German fellow-countryman established in similar work. Work performance and work rate likewise have to correspond to those of the German fellow-countryman.

The work-energy of prisoners of war must be maintained for the benefit of the German people. To this end, they require suitable shelter, sufficient food, proper and correct treatment and--as far as this is permissible--a monetary reward for the prisoner's production. Furthermore the war prisoner requires a fixed amount of relaxation to recover his work capacity, and to keep his clothes and lodging in good repair. He has however no claim to be treated better than those German fellow-countrymen engaged in similar work. A determination of the obligation or the right of a war prisoner must always proceed from this, that he is a part of a hostile army.

II. The Guard

The German soldier has earned for himself through his behavior, discipline, courage and deeds in combat, a reputation as one of the most distinguished and first rate soldiers in the world. This obliges the guard to be typical in soldierly manner and performance of duty. For the prisoner of war he is the representative of the victorious German army. Therefore the German nation expects from the guard that he, through his behavior and his appearance, produce this impression on the war prisoner. As leader of a prisoner of war work detail, he is very often the sole representative of the army at a certain spot. Therefore the guard must be incorruptible, must perform his tasks by himself, must hold the war prisoners to productiveness and

orderliness. And then, when the situation permits, or the esteem of the army will not be prejudiced, he himself must prepare the work and thereby set an example.

The guard also has three important duties. He has

1. To watch the prisoners of war,
2. Keep them at work and
3. Protect the German people from harm.

III. The Guard and the Prisoner of War

The Guard on duty is the master of the war prisoners, no matter what their rank.

Strict but just treatment of prisoners of war is the first command. Obedience must necessarily be enforced by arms; insubordinate conduct of war prisoners may in no event be endured.

The leader of a work detail and the guard there-upon must see that the prisoner of war uses all his work energy. Where the war prisoner tries to evade this, the guard must act immediately and decisively with full severity.

At all times and at all places the guard must watch his distance from the war prisoners. Fraternization is a forbidden practice, and blind confidence leads to neglect of official duty. Both are derelictions of duty and are punishable.

The guard must be aware of the risk of sabotage and diminution of German war power. It becomes a threat to German war power. It becomes a threat to the safety of the people.

If a prisoner of war escapes,
if he can enter into association with foreign civil workers
and
if German fellow-countrymen cultivate acquaintances with war prisoners,

The German soldier must therefore remain on constant watch, face to face with the war prisoner, observe the war prisoner suspiciously, and either report his suspicions immediately or treat them independently.

In spite of this urgency it is not compatible with the character of the German soldier to mistreat or let others mistreat, the prisoner of war.

IV. The Guard and the Relation of the Population to the Prisoner of War.

The prisoner of war has become, in the course of time, a

commonplace phenomenon in the German establishment. Facing him thus threatens through habit to blunt necessary defense preparations. The German soldier dares not forget that he must avoid the risk that lies in the work pledge of the war prisoner, and with it, in contact with German men. Through sharing the work, the prisoner of war comes to a great extent into contact with our German fellow-countrymen. However he never becomes a member of the German fellowship thereby. The war prisoner remains a part of a hostile army. Intercourse with him in this way by the German population is allowed, to a necessary extent, only through the practice of compulsory or conscripted military service or through working conditions. All relations over and beyond that are forbidden, since this is not only incongruous with the honor and pride of the German, but also because the danger of espionage is a serious thing in war, and also because our fellow countrymen can be injured by subversive political propaganda. Fellow countrymen who intentionally violate this prohibition, or who unscrupulously foster the habit of acquaintance with a war prisoner, injure our wholesome morale and are punished by being sent to prison or the penitentiary.

In the contact of German fellow-countrymen with prisoners of war lies the necessity for discreet defense against great perils.

For the prisoner of war there is always the possibility of employing political disintegration as a combat weapon of the foe. Already the appearance of too great an intimacy between war prisoners and the German population conceals in itself the germ of the possibility of political disintegration. Therefore it is vital to see to it that conversation between war prisoners and our fellow countrymen is limited to that required by the work.

Too much kind-heartedness by the German population leads too often to treating war prisoners too well. This goes over and beyond the proper attitude, and thus engenders ill humor among others of our fellow-countrymen; all of this enfeebles our genuine compactness and our striking power.

Our German fellow-countrymen, in particular German women, must understand the danger in which they place themselves through wanton acquaintance with prisoners of war. For the German people sexual union between prisoners of war and German women is unwelcome, as this promotes the avowed and the subversive purposes of our foe.

V. The Guard, the War Prisoner and the Foreign Civilian Worker

A liaison between prisoners of war and foreign civilian workers must be prevented. Very often this is the best means for enemy propaganda, espionage and sabotage. As long as the guard is not present at the place of work, he has additionally involved the first-aid people and the contractor in this danger.

VI. The Guard and His Relation to the Foreman, Mayor, Title Holder, Farm Leader, etc.

The guard exercises his mandate in relation to the command of his superior military authority. Therefore he has to accept orders only from his superiors.

Moreover, the guard knows that the Wehrmacht, the party and the nation, as well as the national Socialist administration and agriculture, have a common objective, the winning of the war. From this common objective it follows that the competent authorities of the Wehrmacht, the party and the nation must cooperate closely with each other. Therefore the guard knows that he and his commanding officer, in the performance of their entrusted duties, with the aid of burgomasters. Local branch leaders, farm directors, factory leaders, and so forth, can always rely on their pledges. Misunderstandings or obscurities must be reported immediately to duly qualified superiors through the prescribed channels, so they can be settled at once, thus assuring the continuance of the necessary close cooperation.

Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum. Dayton, Ohio. Folder L4
Germany WWII. Der deutsche Soldat in der
Kriegsgefangenenbemachung. 3-7.

Appendix Six German Food Rations provided to the Prisoners of War

Bread (Black)	1 Loaf each week
Margarine or cooking fat	1 lb each 2.6 weeks
Sugar	1 lb each 2.6 weeks
Jam (made of beets)	1 lb each 3.2 weeks
Potatoes (including frozen and spoiled)	7.6 lbs each week
Cheese (usually rancid)	1 lb block each 14 weeks
Ersatz Coffee	1 lb each 22.6 weeks
Horse Meat (including bones)	1 lb each 3.7 weeks
Blood Sausage	1 lb each 5 weeks

Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum. Dayton, Ohio. Folder L4
Germany WWII

Red Cross Food Parcels
One Per Week Per Man

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

Reich Issue Weekly Ration

Army Bread- 1 loaf	2100 grams	Soup-Oatmeal, Barley or Pea	3 times
Vegetables-Potatoes	400 grams	Cheese	46 grams
Other Seasonal	?	Sugar	175 grams
Jam	175 grams	Marg.	215 grams
Meat		Salt	
Flour---on occasion			

R.W. Kimball, *Clipped Wings* narrated by O. M. Chiesl. 1948.62-1
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Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio--Sources

Folder L4 Germany, Rockheath Memories

Folder L4 Germany, WWII, Stalag Luft I

Folder L4 Germany WWII (Photographs)

Folder L4 Germany, WWII Oflag 64

Folder L4 WWII

Folder L4 WWII, Poetry and Songs

Folder L4 WWII, Stalag Luft 17

Folder L4 WWII, Stalag Luft 17B

Kimball Collection 62-D1

Welcome to POW Camp Stalag Luft I, Barth Germany. Lithographed in the United State of America. Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Company, year lost.

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