

COPY

WAR DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

Sunday 17 Dec. 1944.

Dear Mr. Carter:

I learned some disturbing news yesterday which while I regret upsetting you, calls for some prompt action.

I talked with Mr. Cotton, A.R.C. Relief to POW and he asked me if I knew of the recent actions of the Germans. This was in answer to my query as to why clothes and food had not been sent to Oflag 64 as promised me.

I told him I did but was not aware of all the details -- whereupon he said a recent order of that "archfiend", Himmler, required all Red Cross food forbidden the Americans.

In some camps the Germans went in and after issuing two or three parcels to each P.O.W. chopped open the other cans so they would spoil! In other camps the Germans confiscated and removed from the camps all the parcels.

My latest information (Sept 28) No private or Red Cross parcels had been received since I left that camp. No clothing either. They were short blankets and 150 overcoats - remember I showed you ~~I showed you~~ the letter I got in response to my requests (in June) that the I.R.C. had no authority to furnish blankets or woolen clothes any more to POW?

The A.R.C. boys our State Dept. has protested thru the Swiss Govt. this latest outrage and further that the I.R.C. had proposed and received agreement from the German Govt. to keep the food parcels outside the camps and issue them weekly to the POW's?

Maybe this is true. However, I know the Germans will not carry out their part. As I fully believe there is only one way to deal with the Germans. Forceful language - broadcast to the world every little violation of the convention just as the Germans do in their press. Tell them Officially that any one guilty of mistreating American Prisoners of War will be tried by a military court and be hanged - this will include each and every individual - the one that issues the orders as well as the soldiers who carry them out.

This is exactly what the Germans would do and is the only language they comprehend. I used that language in dealing with them and they respected me. It was a constant fight but I got results. All the Americans there know this.

The Red Cross says the I.R.C. notified them that 600 overcoats and some blankets were shipped to Oflag 64 the first part of October. I hope that is true. They didn't know the food situation there but promised me to radio Geneva a request for information.

It makes me ill to see the bountiful treatment (eggs, fresh milk by the quart, beefsteak, cake, cigarettes, etc.) given the Nazi prisoners in this country. Plans are laid to give them the extra ration of Turkey dinner for Christmas! Our poor soldiers starving! How many American people will not have Turkey? I defy any one to show me in the Geneva Convention where POW's will be given extra rations for holidays or any other day. (I studied and learned the Convention verbatim)

I received a letter a couple of days ago from Mr. H. Gaither Perry, 1128 Southwest 19th Ave., Miami, Florida, whose son is in Oflag 64, he quotes extracts from recent letters from two officers in Oflag 64 "Lr. Harry Frazee to his wife - My stomach has gone back on me and unless we get out of here soon I don't see how I'll be able to eat enough to keep going". Mr. Carter, in P.O.W. 'censor evading' talk that means the German food is so bad they



can't eat it (making them ill) and there are no Red Cross food parcels!

Lt. Jack Marlowe to his Mother "No food parcels have come from Geneva in three months".

Mr. Perry asked what I thought of the probability of it helping if he "got a few Senators, Congressmen, writers and Commentators stirred up over this." He wrote Secretary Stettinius asking him to see me but nothing has come of it so far.

Of course I couldn't advise him to do that for I would be going against orders. But anyone should understand my attitude.

As a soldier I want to obey orders and keep still, but as a soldier I have a great duty to those splendid young Americans eating their hearts out behind barbed wire.

I know we can't go after the Red Cross too strongly because the Professionals are too strong (the workers are splendid Americans, of course) but if the truth will be furnished and strong protests made along with a real Honest to goodness American in Geneva to supervise the distribution of Red Cross supplies we will solve the problem.

If our men are kept on the German POW fare along with overcrowding and shortage of fuel a great many will die this winter.

How criminal when the solution lies in American hands!

The report given our government, and accepted by them, by the Swiss Government that POW's are given civilian ration fare is a downright lie and I can prove that to any fair minded men.

I do not believe, Mr. Carter, that there is any danger whatever from reprisals against Amon or any other American POW. I think the quiescent attitude, couched in splendid diplomatic language, taken in reference to the barbarous treatment now accorded our men is assumed by the Germans to mean weakness. They are Sadists and enjoy venting their will against the helpless in their power. Only world opinion will cause them to change.

What Larry Allen is saying is the truth thru mature intelligent eyes, but there is a strong under current of villification going on against him. At times it appears a man can't be an honest forthright truthful man without incurring the enmity of his fellow Americans.

I am always at your call to back up any thing you can do (In my small way I'm doing what is in my power) but of necessity must remain anonymous as the source of this information.

Do you think if you contacted Mr. Perry you could join forces in getting food to our men?

I'll keep you informed of any thing coming my way that will throw light on it.

I think I told you my last message (cable from "Y" rep.) from Oflag 64 Nov 28. Cold, snow, rain, schools, etc., just same. A Hare in camp caused great excitement! Over 900 prisoners". With kindest regards, I remain

Sincerely,

(Signed) Thomas D. Drake