

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

MORNING

EVENING

SUNDAY

AMON G. CARTER, PRESIDENT

FORT WORTH, TEXAS

February 13, 1945.

Colonel William Westlake,
Public Relations Officer,
Headquarters, Army Air Forces,
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Colonel:

Following my original talk with Colonel Dean, while I was in New York, regarding the repatriated prisoners of war making a visit to Fort Worth in connection with their Texas itinerary, you called me back and stated that they would come to Fort Worth; however, that you would like to have us cooperate in the matter of publicity and to keep you from encountering difficulties with other cities not included in the present itinerary.

You suggested that we might have a luncheon or dinner and I stated that under present conditions a large luncheon or dinner was almost out of the question. You advised there would be sixteen in the official party whereupon I said that I would be glad to give a luncheon or dinner personally for the official party, either before or after the meeting. You further stated we could invite the next-of-kin individually through a list of names supplied by the Red Cross.

Therefore, I was somewhat surprised to receive Captain Ragnar Barhaug's letter of January 29th, copy of which I enclose as well as a copy of my reply. Captain Barhaug states that we are to have no publicity prior to the meeting, which could be handled as you indicated by individual invitations; but, it would be rather inconsistent to expect the newspapers to say nothing about the meeting while at the same time the Dallas papers would be carrying a full story. Although, I am the publisher of one of the newspapers in Fort Worth, I would not assume the responsibility of asking the other paper not to give information of this nature to its readers. As a matter of fact, I feel this would be a rather severe restriction. I see no reason why we could not go ahead with the meeting as discussed with you, extend the invitations through the Red Cross to the individual next-of-kin, pro-

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vided we could get a list of those in the territory West of Fort Worth. The list covering Tarrant County, in which Fort Worth is the County seat, consists of 236 which would make, counting two members of each family, 472 and if we had the list of various counties covered in the Star-Telegram's territory we would probably have several hundred more with many more being added each day.

The Star-Telegram has a circulation of 190,000 daily with about 130,000 outside of Fort Worth, covering North and West Texas more thoroughly than any other publication, and these readers should be entitled to this information. If any other city should complain about the fact that Fort Worth was added to the list you have an excellent answer to the effect that it did not prolong, delay or change your schedule - they merely ran over to Fort Worth on part of the time allotted to Dallas. I notice in the itinerary with Captain Barhaug's letter they are scheduled in Dallas for the War Production Rally and War Bond Rally while we merely ask for a meeting for the next-of-kin.

It will be necessary for the Red Cross Chapter in Fort Worth to be provided with the next-of-kin list covering our territory in West Texas so those people would not have to travel through Fort Worth to Dallas to be able to get the benefit of information disclosed regarding the treatment of prisoners of war in the German and Japan prisoners of war camps. While we are on this subject, Colonel, we certainly hope that these boys will be permitted to tell us all the full truth on conditions as they actually exist in these camps. I have read some stories in Washington that have evidently been censored to the point that it was difficult to recognize them from the original facts. I have been hearing continuously from my son, who has been a prisoner of war two years the 23rd of this month. I also keep in touch with many other families who have relatives in the same camp as well as other camps and I sincerely hope the information they give us will not be censored to the point of depriving us of the benefit of the actual information regarding the conditions that exist in the camps.

I can realize it may not be necessary

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to go into some of the atrocities they have perpetrated on our boys but they should be able to know, for example in Oflag 64, that they did not have an International Red Cross representative visit this camp for more than five months; that they did not receive Red Cross food parcels for over two months (early October until Middle December); that some of the boys (about 300) did not have overcoats, pants, blankets and many necessities up until the middle of December. This same condition prevailed in the previous year. I discussed this matter in detail with General Arnold the last night he spent in Fort Worth, showed him letters verifying the details and asked him why the next-of-kin should not receive full detailed information concerning all of the conditions existing in the prison camps as well as the treatment accorded our American prisoners of war. If they do not give this information there are going to be a lot of next-of-kin extremely unhappy when the actual facts are disclosed.

One prisoner of war wrote a letter to the effect it was too bad that Larry Allen was not still in the camp; that he could write a marvelous story but that the people would not believe it. What the next-of-kin are interested in is not how many packages and shipments have been made to the various camps but how many have been RECEIVED. A recent letter received by one next-of-kin from a son in one of these camps, dated November 21st, stated: "We were all excited today when a box car arrived from Sweden; however, it turned out to be a car load of lumber from the YMCA instead of food parcels from the Red Cross." Of course this makes the prisoners as well as the next-of-kin wonder how the YMCA could get a car load of lumber into the camp when the Red Cross cannot get food parcels to them. I realize the Red Cross is operating under difficult conditions, still if a car load of lumber can go through why not a car load of food parcels which they have needed far more than lumber?

In conclusion, we appreciate tremendously your cooperation in making it possible for the next-of-kin in Fort Worth and West Texas to have an opportunity to hear in Fort Worth the story direct from these boys who have been confined in different camps of Japan and Germany. We will lend every cooperation

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possible and trust you will permit the newspapers to carry a story regarding the facts disclosed after the meeting is over as no doubt a number of next-of-kin will be unable to attend the meeting due to limited transportation facilities and distant places, some of them being several hundred miles North and West of Fort Worth.

Thanking you for your interest in the matter, I am

Sincerely,

A. G. Carter

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