

AMERICAN RED CROSS
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

FORM 222

To: Mr. Richard F. Allen
Vice Chairman

Date: October 20, 1943.

From: Mr. Pate

Subject:

Referring to Mr. Carter's letter of October 9th, we have made a careful study, point by point, and give the following information:

1. Certain difficulties have been experienced in getting supplies to Oflag 64, which is one of 70 camps where Americans are detained in Europe. These difficulties, in part, are due to disruption of transport through bombing. We know that a shipment of supplies was dispatched immediately from Geneva when our representative there learned of the transfer of American officers from Oflag IX A/Z to Oflag 64. We also know that something happened to interfere with the arrival of this shipment at the camp. However, on August 20th, a receipt from the Senior Officer, dated August 5th, acknowledged the arrival of 800 Standard Food Parcels, 800 soap parcels, 40 comfort parcels and 40 milk parcels. We have also been advised that 1,800 Standard Food Parcels were forwarded to Oflag 64 in August, and that on July 20th clothing, including sweaters, towels, underwear, shirts, coats, handkerchiefs, socks and comfort articles, such as toilet kits and razors, were dispatched.
2. We have recently been advised by our representative in Geneva that the International Red Cross Committee is now forwarding sufficient supplies so that a 2-month advance reserve can be established in all camps in which United States prisoners are held.
3. As for the sending of a cable to the International Red Cross Committee, asking to have a Red Cross representative visit Oflag 64, you will recall that we asked by cable for such an inspection immediately we found American prisoners were held at this camp. A visit was made by a representative of the International Committee on July 5th, and undoubtedly subsequent visits have been made.
4. It was possible to include tobacco in next of kin parcels until the plan was developed by the American Red Cross and various governmental departments whereby next of kin were given the opportunity of sending separately substantial quantities of tobacco at cost and free of Revenue Taxes. The Standard Food Parcels which we are preparing contain 5 packages of cigarettes each. These packages should now be reaching the prisoners. These cigarettes, in addition to the 600 cigarettes, or 100 cigars, which next of kin may send monthly, provide an adequate supply of tobacco for each prisoner. From Lt. Carter's letter of August 30th, we gather that the tobacco parcels, for which labels were sent separately to his father, had been received, since he mentions having gotten the cigars. The list of items provided Mr. Carter, Sr. by the Office of the Provost Marshal General, from which he selects the items to be sent his son, does not contain tobacco. It was therefore mandatory upon the Censor to remove and return the tobacco which it was not proper to forward in a next of kin parcel.

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5. There is, of course, a great deal of variation in the contents of the packages which are sent. It is entirely possible that one relative sent as much chocolate as was possible, while another sent none. Again, no chocolate could be included in prisoners' packages before February 15th. Perhaps some packages, mailed before that date, were seen by Lt. Carter. Unless chocolate was sent prior to February 15th, there is no reason for the belief that the United States Censor removed chocolate from the packages which contained it.

6. We do not know why some prisoners receive parcels twice as large as those dispatched by Mr. Carter, since his were of the maximum size. We know, however, that our postal authorities will not accept packages which are larger than the maximum stated in Mr. Carter's letter. The size of such packages was not regulated by the United States Post Office Department, but was agreed upon at an international postal convention.

7. Next of kin might have been advised that the package to which the July or September label was affixed should be a Christmas package, in view of the time that is necessary for such packages to reach prisoners. However, it was assumed by all here that relatives were aware of the necessity of planning their packages with this time factor in mind. Mr. Carter will be glad to know that the American Red Cross has prepared and shipped approximately 10,000 special packages which are to be distributed in the prison camps Christmas week to United States prisoners. This Christmas parcel contains such items as a pound of fruit cake, eight ounce fruit bars, a pound of assorted preserves and assorted candies.

Maurice Pate

Director
Relief to Prisoners of War

