

30 December 1944

Miss Helen Wade Jackson  
Organizing Secretary,  
American POW Relatives Assistance  
12 Colonial Circle  
Buffalo, 13, New York.

Dear Miss Jackson:

Your letter of 27 December received this morning. I then called Mr. Pate about the receipt of food packages by the American POW's and here is what he says: There was some misunderstanding about the issue of a Red Cross food parcel to American POW's each week due to the British attempt in September to get the ARC to go along with their order to cut the issue to one every two weeks.

Mr. Pate refused and the War Department backed his stand. However, due to the warning put out by IRC some American camps reduced their issue and in some camps where British and Americans were together the Americans went on half issue.

Due to 1,500,000 Red Cross food parcels being sent in to the camps in September by way of Goteborg, Sweden, and Lubeck, Germany, the British are now back on 1 parcel weekly issue.

In Oflag 64 their report from Geneva shows 1 October there were 4550 parcels on hand. On 6 November only 632 parcels which would indicate 1000 men had received a parcel each week.

During the period 4-29 November, 8,444 parcels left Geneva for Oflag 64. There is no information that they reached there but he is again asking them to telephone the camp and ask what the food situation is.

Mr. Pate says he will keep me informed and I shall let you know so you may notify the relatives who of course are worried over these reports.

It was unfortunate that Geneva let the camp run out of parcels as on 11 November they had one-half parcel per person. Again of course comes up the question of how many of the above 4,550 were destroyed by the Germans' chopping them open so the food would spoil. There is no report on that extent.

While he was in Geneva Supreme Allied Force Headquarters issued a radio appeal to all Foreign workers in Germany to rise in revolt and sabotage.

Neutrals arriving in Geneva said the order created panic amongst the German High Command responsible for Prisoners-of-war who immediately said the food reserves maintained in the POW camps were there purposely for revolt of POW's. That the next step would be to parachute in arms and then they (the Germans) would be forced with armed arsenals all over the Reich. Whereupon they issued orders to seize or destroy the reserve food and notified Geneva they would allow only a day to day existence.

Mr. Pate then went to France and talked with Major General Barker who called the Chief Propagandist. They took steps to broadcast that of course these appeals did not apply to defenseless men behind barbed wire.

The Germans are now reported to have agreed to keep the food reserve outside of camp and issue from there. There are over 1000 men in Oflag 64.

I'm giving you the data as presented by Mr. Pate and have his promise to keep after the issue of it. I brought up the point that pressure exerted by the Red Cross will be respected by the Germans who would go to great lengths to cause welfare organizations and neutrals to believe that they, the Germans, are decent people.

I shall send you the twenty five copies of the mimeograph Monday morning.

I'm sorry to hear the Christmas parcels did not arrive in time for Christmas. I was afraid of that and started efforts last July to insure their getting there.

In September I personally brought the question up but guess the German-Swiss Combination was too much.

Thank you for your kind wishes, Miss Jackson, and I assure you it is no bother at all for me to go to any lengths to help out the conditions of our prisoners of war.

Please call on me any time you think I may be of help.

Quincey joins me in extending best wishes for the New Year.

Sincerely yours,

THOMAS D. DRAKE  
Colonel, G. S. C.