

All Play, No Work, Plenty of Food, So Nazi Officers at Mexia Prison Camp Get Fat

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MEXIA, July 23.—All play and no work, plus three big meals a day, are adding materially to the weight of the Nazi army officers who are now prisoners of war at the Mexia Internment Camp.

Here in the heart of Texas, the Germans breakfast, on a typical day, on scrambled eggs, toast, marmalade, coffee and milk, then exercise and lounge in the ample sunshine around their living quarters until time for dinner, as the noonday meal is designated.

This, on the day we were there, consisted of liver fried in onions, potatoes, green peas, carrots, bread, coffee and apple pie. (Identically the same menu was served in the American officers' mess that day, not only at Mexia, but at many another army camp in the country.)

Gains Not Surprising.

After dinner the officers read newspapers and books, write letters and nap until mid-afternoon, when they go out for a game of volley ball and a cool shower bath before supper. For this meal vegetable soup, baked ham, bread, coffee and milk were being prepared.

Under such a day in and day out routine, it was not surprising to find that the officers have gained from five to eight pounds each, and in at least one instance 15 pounds, in the short time they have been here.

One of the German mess officers, a refined, intelligent-looking chap who spoke perfect English, told the camp commander that the captives were getting all that they wanted to eat, and that they were "very contented."

The food is furnished to the officers without cost to them by the Army. (American officers pay for their own mess). The food is prepared by German cooks assigned to the officers' mess from the nearby compounds for enlisted prisoners of war.

Other enlisted men are assigned to the officers as orderlies: one for every six company officers, one for every three field officers, and one each of the general officers. The orderlies are paid for their services by the German officers.

We watched a truck load of food being unloaded at one of the mess halls in the officers' compound. It consisted of dressed lamb, squash, celery, cabbage, potatoes, onions, lettuce, apples, fresh cherries, lemons, bananas (the first we had seen in months), fresh pineapples, fresh Cloverbloom eggs, lard, butter, bread, fresh milk, coffee and yeast.

Some of Foodstuff.

In the pantry of the spotlessly clean mess hall we noted a supply of sugar, jelly, apple butter, apricot and cherry preserves, oatmeal, Quaker wheat flakes, Kellogg's bran flakes, seedless raisins, noodles, crackers, canned corn, cherries, tomatoes, bean and peas; Heinz ketchup and chili sauce, Brer Rabbitt molasses, dried peaches, rice, fresh corn on the cob, baking powder, mayonnaise, mustard and pepper sauce.

In the walk-in type refrigerator of this mess hall there were more fresh eggs, fruits and vegetables, dressed lamb, a side of bacon, hams, fresh creamery butter and cheese.

To obtain many of these items, such as meat, butter, sugar and canned fruits and vegetables, American housewives have to give up some of their ration stamps.

The Germans are issued the same food rations as are provided American soldiers, which includes steaks and roast beef, chicken and turkey.

Since Americans are the best fed soldiers in the world, Germans who are held prisoners of war by the United States have a distinct advantage over American officers who are held by the Nazis. Letters from Americans over there indicate that they get but two meals a day, and at least part of them have lost, instead of gaining, weight during their confinement.

Under an agreement between the United States and Germany, made at the outbreak of hostilities in accordance with the Geneva Convention, the Nazi officers receive monthly pay allowances.

For lieutenants this is \$20 a month; for captains \$30; and for majors and all others of higher rank it is \$40. These amounts are not paid by the American Govern-

ment, but are merely advanced to the officers and are to be refunded by Germany when the war is over. Likewise, the United States is to reimburse Germany for similar allowances it pays to American officers held by that country.

Coupons Are Currency.

The payments are made in canteen coupons, and coupons not spent are redeemable for cash when the prisoners are repatriated.

There is a wide assortment of merchandise in the canteen which the officers may buy with the coupons. Since it is not operated for profit, the sale price of most of the items is below that which Americans pay for the same kind of goods.

On the canteen counter there was a large pile of lemons. In the shelves, neatly arranged and displayed, were knit shirts for 45 cents, khaki shorts for 95 cents, Prophylactic Nylon tooth brushes and a wide variety of standard brands of tooth paste for 22 cents.

There also were stocks of Palmolive, Lifebuoy, Lux and Swan toilet soaps at five cents a bar, and such well-advertised products as Vicks' Vaporub, Colgate's shaving soap, Fitch shampoo and Super Suds.

In the tobacco section there were Frank Medico pipes, Prince Albert and Granger smoking tobacco, all of the popular brands of American-made cigarets, several brands of cigars and cigaret-rolling machines.

Confections on sale included a peanut candy bar and salted soybeans. The canteen inventory also includes sun glasses, shoe laces, billfolds, combs, mouth washes and antiseptics, shaving creams, face lotions, pens, ink and pencils, and daily newspapers.

Radios and beer will be made available in the canteen when obtainable, officers in charge of the camp said.

The German officers live in the same kind of buildings provided for American soldiers in Army training camps. Each of the buildings is divided into five apartments, with a private entrance for each.

The apartments consist of a reception room, furnished with a gas

heating stove, table and chairs; and two double bedrooms. The bedrooms have built-in single beds equipped with springs, mattresses and pillows, clean sheets and pillow cases. Face and bath towels are issued to all officers, and each has his own clothes closet.

This arrangement, with four officers to each apartment, affords them much more privacy than the enlisted men and non-commissioned officers who are prisoners. These sleep on canvass cots in dormitories, 36 men to the building.

Sanitary toilets and shower baths with hot and cold running water and laundry facilities are provided in separate buildings. These structures have smooth concrete floors which are easily cleaned.

The sick and injured are cared for in a station hospital, an exact duplicate in both construction and equipment, of those at our Army training camps. A German medical officer was assisting the American doctors and nurses in looking after hospitalized Germans in the surgery ward. At the end of this ward there was a sun room where a group of convalescents were putting a jigsaw puzzle together.

Engineers who designed the buildings were lavish with electric lights in one designated as a company orderly room. Although rarely used at night it was furnished with 10 large ceiling fixtures. In striking contrast, the much larger surgery ward in the hospital had but three fluorescent ceiling lights.

The prisoners of war may receive as much mail as it sent to them, and are permitted to write two personal and one business letters a week, plus one postcard, a total of 16 messages a month. American prisoners in Germany also may receive all mail addressed to them, but are permitted to write only three letters and one postcard a month.

Guest House Provided.

A guest house is provided just inside the main gate to their stockade, where they are permitted to receive visitors. Since none of them has had a caller so far, this building also is used as a post office.

The officer-prisoners designate their own leaders and spokesmen

who are their official contacts with American officers. Although an American officer is assigned to each company, the prisoners are permitted wide latitude in the handling of their own affairs.

In addition to the wide, flat spaces between the buildings in the officers' stockade, a special recreation area is being prepared for them. It is to be fitted with tennis courts and a track for foot races, and the prisoners have requested that a swimming pool be provided. The recreation area is enclosed in a single fence of barbed wire, while the compound proper has a double fence.

Several of the officers were wearing wrist watches, military decorations and campaign ribbons. One of the captains who served as an interpreter wore ribbons indicating that he had been awarded the Iron Cross of the first and second classes, and had seen service in the Russian Winter campaign, and had been wounded twice. One of the Americans said he was a member of the German nobility.

Commander From Plainview.

Col. Thomas A. Bay, a Plainview farmer in civil life, has recently been assigned as commanding officer of the Mexia camp. His stockade officer is Capt. Claude Wild of Austin, and his intelligence officer is Capt. E. G. McCurtain.

The compound in which the Nazi officers are held is on a tract of about 160 acres, providing ample room for the one-story buildings grounds for calisthenics and athletic contests.

The officers' compound is separated from the three compounds occupied by enlisted men and non-commissioned officers by the camp headquarters and barracks for American Army officers and military police escort companies.

Mrs. R. W. Mays Buried

DENISON, July 23. — Funeral services were held here Friday morning for Mrs. R. W. Mays, 79, a resident of Denison 59 years, who died Wednesday.

A native of Tennessee, her family settled at Roanoke, Texas, when she was a child.

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