

Letter to Mrs. Roosevelt from Basil O'Connor, Chairman American
Red Cross for Mrs. Stuart C. Welch
267 Delaware Avenue, Buffalo, New York

January 13, 1945

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I have delayed some days in answering your letter of January 1st because our Prisoners of War Section cabled to Geneva in order to have the exact picture regarding supplies shipped to Oflag 64 during the last quarter of 1944.

The answer to this cable has just come in and I am attaching herewith two tables showing the amount of goods shipped month by month to Oflag 64 during October, November, and December 1944.

As the strength of this camp, according to the last reports, was about one thousand officers, you can see that rather substantial amounts of goods have been shipped. In particular, you will note that 19,420 standard food parcels, of eleven pounds each, were shipped to Oflag 64 during the last quarter of 1944.

The number of our prisoners of war in Europe has recently increased very rapidly. On the other hand, as you know, the Marseille-Rhone Valley-Switzerland railroad line, over which all of our goods previously moved, was cut off for four months this summer during the hostilities in France. Fortunately, we had anticipated and accumulated substantial reserves in Switzerland which enabled our men in the camps in Germany to be served all through the summer months. Actually, except in one or two exceptional instances, and then only briefly, the service of supply to our prisoners in Germany has been continuous. Goods are moving into all the camps now in substantial quantities, both from Switzerland and from Sweden over a new route via Goteborg which was opened last fall.

Few people realize the intricate task of our War Prisoners Section in the American Red Cross. They have not only moved the goods on schedule from here, but far ahead of schedule. Mrs. Holmes has told you recently part of the story. Here is the chain between the American Red Cross and an American prisoner:

- 1) American Red Cross
to
- 2) International Red Cross
to
- 3) German Red Cross
via
- 4) German Railways (under constant bombardment)
to
- 5) American Camp Leader in the German prison camp.

We actually control only the first link in the five above links, in getting aid from this country to a prisoner of war. However, our Prisoners of War Relief Section is constantly on the alert to influence and activate the functioning of the remaining four links. For fifteen months without a break and on the word of Colonel Drake (formerly American Camp Leader in Oflag 64) and of our own statistics, every American in Oflag 64 has received one food parcel a week.

It is to be regretted that there was a temporary break in the food parcel supply to Oflag 64 in November. However, we have definite confirmation now that the men at

this camp are again regularly receiving their packages.

Sincerely yours,

Chairman

Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt
The White House
Washington, D. C.

SHIPMENTS TO OFLAG 64

	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
SFP*		6,388	13,032
Blankets	600	300	600
Bathrobes	45		
Drawers, wool	600		2,100
Gloves, wool, pairs	900		1,200
Mufflers	720		300
Overcoats	150		
Shoe camp repair kits (for 1,000 men)	2		
Shoe repair material (for 1,000 men)	2		
Shoebrushes	864		2,016
Shoe polish, tins	2,016		
Toilet paper rolls	4,200		
Insecticide, tins	768		3,840
Pajamas	100		
Shirts, flannel	400		
Shoes	197		
Slippers	60		
Trousers, wool	800		
Undershirts, wool	1,500		2,100
Safety pins, doz.	120		
Clothes brushes	1,056		
Razor blade sharpeners	2		
Tooth brushes	960		
Tooth powder	1,008		
Matches, booklets	5,000		
Towels, bath			1,000
Capture parcels			720

*Standard food parcels. As of September 20th, the camp had a reserve of 4,550 SFP

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RESUME OF RECENT FOOD SHIPMENTS

TO OFLAG 64

Oct. 1	Oflag 64 had 4,550 food parcels in stock
Nov. 4	" " " 632 " " " "
Nov. 8	2,496 parcels were shipped from Geneva
Nov. 9	3,892 " " " " "

During the month of December 13,032 food packages were shipped to Oflag 64.

The American Red Cross has cabled to the International Red Cross in Geneva asking that a Swiss inspector be sent to visit Oflag 64 and cable a report.