

WAR PRISONERS AID NEWS

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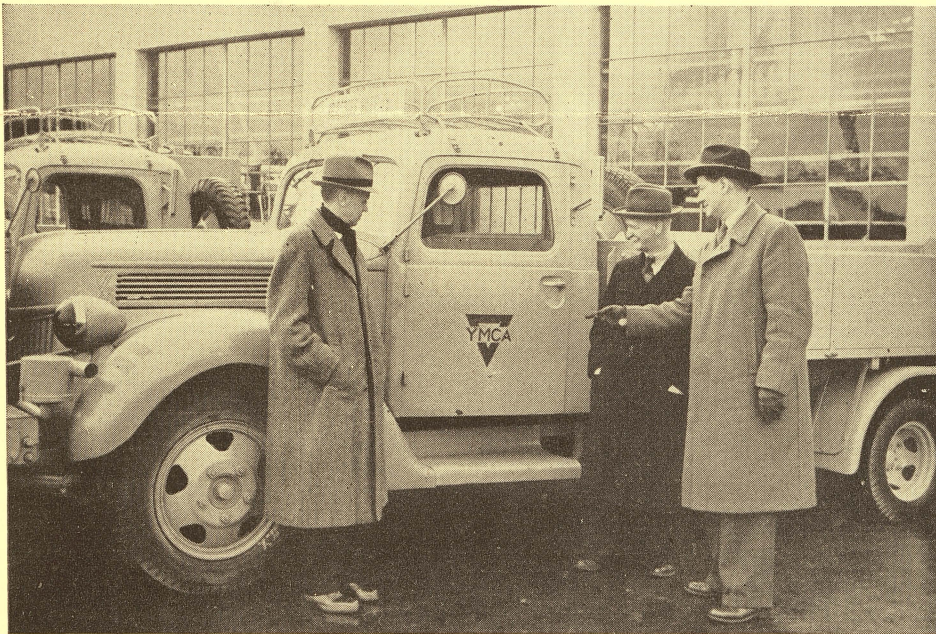
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No. 3

Y.M.C.A. Increases Aid to Prisoners in Germany:

Truck Fleet Carries Supplies; Workers Defy Bombers



Y.M.C.A. TRUCKS AID PRISONERS IN GERMANY: In the photo above Hugo Cedergren (left), the associate general secretary of War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A., is shown with two other "Y" officials in Stockholm as they took delivery of the fleet of Swedish-built Ford trucks and trailers now being used in an effort to overcome the disrupted German transportation system. The trucks carry badly needed supplies into the camps and in addition have been aiding in the evacuation of men and materials from those camps in the paths of the Allied armies. The trucks have become a "sanity life-line" to the men, for without them, the "Y" would be seriously handicapped in its efforts to aid the prisoners.

LONDON—A new fleet of Swedish-built trucks and trailers is being used by War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. in an endeavor to overcome disrupted German transportation facilities and get badly needed supplies to war prisoners in the Reich.

The trucks, charcoal-burning Fords, also are being used to move men and materials from camps being evacuated from the battle zones. Drivers for the fleet, which has become a "sanity life-line" for the prisoners, have been provided by the German authorities. To facilitate their passage, all the trucks are clearly marked in German, "War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A." with the "Y's" Red Triangle insignia also prominently displayed.

Service Being Increased

Service to American prisoners in Germany is being increased in order to help ease the hardships being brought on by over-crowding in the camps, Dr. Tracy Strong, general secretary of the World's Committee of the Y.M.C.A., under which War Prisoners Aid operates, declared. Neutral workers of the "Y" are continuing to visit the prison camps, many times at great personal risk, he said.

Many Y.M.C.A. representatives have had narrow escapes from death as the roads along which they were traveling were attacked by Allied war planes. The constant stream of refugees along the highways adds to their difficulties, forcing them to drive their automobiles at a snail's pace. The snows and rain that have hampered military operations also have turned the roads to the prison camps into quagmires, presenting another obstacle that must be overcome before the prisoners are reached.

Headquarters Moved

Headquarters of War Prisoners Aid in Germany have been moved from Sagan to Meissen, near Dresden, the London offices of the organization announced. Sagan, and Stalag Luft III which is located near it, have been over-run by the Russians, but not before the prisoners were moved to other camps.

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Yanks Win Sports Badges While at Stalag Luft VI

Six Americans were among the Canadian, Jamaican, South African, Australian and British prisoners of war in Germany awarded Y.M.C.A. badges for sportsmanship in athletics while at Stalag Luft VI.

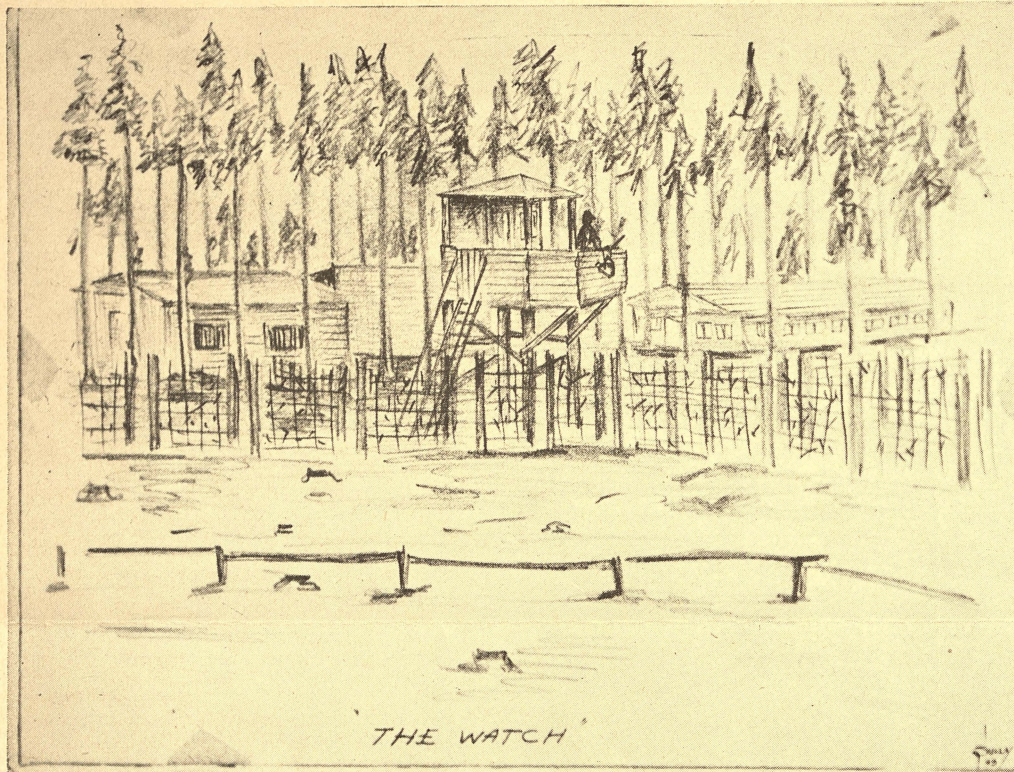
American winners of the awards are: S/Sgt. D. E. Kirby, 1672 South Fourth Street, Columbus, Ohio; T/Sgt. G. A. Houser, 1100 Second Street, Monessen, Pennsylvania; T/Sgt. R. E. Doherty, 483 Linden Street, Fall River, Mass.; S/Sgt. A. J. Donatelli, Box 38, Bakerton, Pennsylvania; V. J. Pesature, Jr., 3030 Heath Avenue, Bronx, New York, and S/Sgt. W. M. Beach, 94 North Fifth Street, Northwood, Iowa.

Red Cross Keeps Prisoners Fed

Many an American "soldier out of luck," a prisoner of war of the Axis nations, becomes an expert cook during his enforced stay behind barbed wire. His skill is born of grim necessity. For often, those who would eat must cook.

Don't let an American lad whose life is bounded by barbed wire feel that he is forgotten because he's a soldier without a gun. Help keep him fed and clothed.

Food and clothing packages reach American prisoners of war through the auspices of the Red Cross. Give now to the 1945 Red Cross War Fund.



THE WATCH



DIARY OF AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR: "A Wartime Log," combination diary and photograph album, is one of the most unusual books to come out of the war. It's the story of the war for the "soldiers out of luck," the human and compelling record of the life of prisoners of war in a German camp. The Log is the moving, day by day story of the slow, dreary life of the constantly shuffling stream of humanity behind barbed wire enclosures. It's typically G.I. in humor, American in slang, and displays unbeatable Yankee ingenuity. "A Wartime Log" is published with blank pages by War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. and furnished to Americans so that they may keep a record of their days of captivity.

Each log is a handsome book, with the Liberty Bell, symbol of precious freedom, printed in red on a tan linen cover. There are 150 pages of fine quality paper suitable for sketches, 40 pages of gray paper for mounting photos, a page of handy cellophane envelopes for inserting stamp collections and similar projects, a pocket flap inside the back cover for holding larger items, a packet of stickers for mounting photos easily, and a lined contents page.

The books are used not only as diaries, photograph albums, and sketch books, but for short story writing, and to hold the letters home that can't be mailed now because of wartime restrictions of censorship and space. Each book is an invaluable morale builder for its

owner, for it is not only a reminder that he is not forgotten by those at home, it is a tangible evidence of that one great freedom still left to a prisoner of war: freedom of thought. (But perhaps not of expression if German censors see some of the Logs!)

Some 25,000 copies of the book have already been distributed to prisoners through the American and a special Canadian edition, and an order for 40,000 more books has recently been placed. The Canadian edition substitutes the Maple Leaf for the Liberty Bell. There also is an edition for British prisoners.

When the boys come home, the one momento of prison life which they usually wish to carry back with them is the Log Book, for it has been a constant com-

panion to their days of imprisonment, many valuable hours have gone into its making, and it contains names and addresses of fellow prisoners.

Pictured above are drawings of camp life at Stalag Luft III, preserved in the Log Book of Lt. Stewart Cooper, of Cedar Grove, New Jersey, during his 11 months there before repatriation. At left is a general camp scene, showing the pine forest in which the camp was located, the center drawing depicts the plight of two prisoners whose escape tunnel came out in the German commandant's office, while a band with Y.M.C.A.-supplied instruments is at the right. Inset is a ticket for the American Theater at the camp. The "Y" provides many materials for prison camp shows.

Hard Working Britons Get Rest From Labors at "Holiday" Camp

Stalag III D, Special Kommando 517, is known among British prisoners of war as a "Holiday Camp." Those who have been in captivity the longest, and who have been doing the heaviest work have precedence, and are allowed to rest there for six weeks, according to a letter received from John H. O. Brown, British Camp Leader. The men come from war prison camps throughout Germany, and are comparatively free of restrictions at the "Holiday Camp," which has a capacity for about 400 prisoners. They are not compelled to do physical work of any kind.

"We expect a new party here in a few days," said Mr. Brown, "and I plan to have a full school program in operation with classes in English, German, mathematics, history, geography, psychology, theology, Diesel

engineering and musical appreciation. We also anticipate the arrival of a well-known prisoner of war military band, and a comprehensive entertainment program of gramophone recitals, whist drives and table tennis tournaments is contemplated.

"In addition we are planning a series of lectures by competent speakers on such subjects as medical research, scientific advancement and other non-political matters."

The camp library was reported by Mr. Brown as "fast assuming satisfactory proportions, for we have been fortunate in obtaining a number of good books, both classical and fiction. There is still room for improvement, but we can at least say that progress has been made, thanks to the Y.M.C.A."

There is a very active interest in sports at this camp, which has a foot-

ball field and two handball courts available. The men are given sports outfits such as tennis shoes, slacks, football shoes and other athletic equipment.

United Church services conducted each Sunday by laymen are attended regularly by both Protestants and Roman Catholics. Church candles, hymn books, theological books and other religious articles have been supplied by the Y.M.C.A.

"It is to the Y.M.C.A. that I would give my deepest thanks," the letter continued, "for it is through them that this camp has become possible. Freely have they given us all that we have asked for, and nothing seems to be too great for them. It is truly gratifying to find that the Y.M.C.A. is increasing, rather than diminishing its wonderful work."

Stalag III D, situated not far from Berlin, is located in the midst of a pine forest. The camp is reported to be clean and airy with a large open space in the center, used as a playing field.

"Great to Be Alive," Reports "Y" Worker

From Gosta Lundin, director of War Prisoners Aid services in Germany, comes this message:

"It is great to be alive. The 'dangerous life' has always had its attraction for me, and now I am beginning to understand that there are terrible realities behind that charming phrase. But it is a great thing to be alive, to stay in a work which has as its object to get the force of goodness to function against the larger and smaller devils of evil which are warping and destroying the possibilities of human life.

"If what man calls the worst should happen and I should be taken away by death in the final terrible phase of this war, that is by far not the worst. To leave the stage of life on this earth is something that has to be done sooner or later. If only you have the

grace not to be 'overtaken by evil' you can meet death without fear.

"I pray to God that he will by His grace let me be and remain a good man, serving Him and His cause unto the last and testifying of 'one world' which is not yet."

Phonograph and Records Bring Smiles to P. O.W.'s

A phonograph and records which reached them together with books and Christmas tree trimmings from the "Y" just before the holiday, brought joy to six American prisoners hospitalized at Sandbostel Reserve Hospital.

Because these prisoners are particularly isolated, the phonograph and records were more than usually appreciated, the visiting Y.M.C.A. worker reported, adding that the wounded men were in good spirits and their health improving rapidly.

Truck Fleet Helps Americans in Reich

(Continued from page 1)

With the jamming of prison camps as a result of men being moved from battle areas, the need for educational, recreational and religious supplies to help the captives forget their surroundings is becoming greater daily, according to Dr. Strong.

"Even experienced 'Y' workers are surprised by the constant use the men make of our supplies," he said. "There are no seasons in a prison camp, and our workers report football being played every day of the year!

"Lately, in addition to requests for regular 'Y' supplies of athletic equipment, musical instruments, books, religious articles and other leisure time materials, the prisoners are asking for and receiving items like toothbrushes, razor blades, hairclippers and cups."

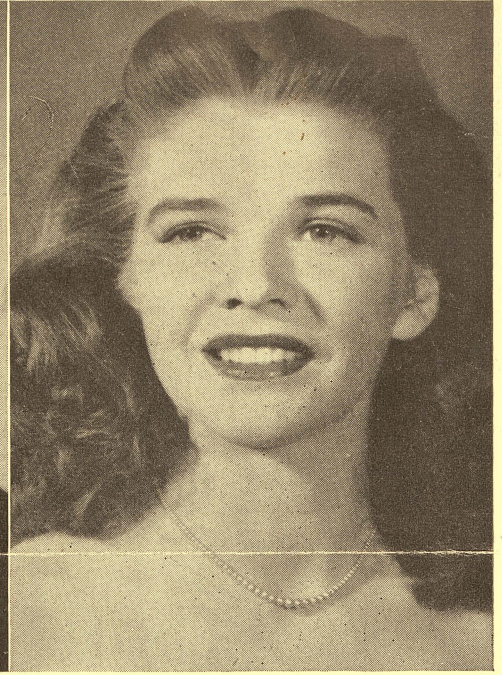
They Win Beauty Votes of Imprisoned Americans



Nancy Reid



Marie Benzel



Clare Van Syckle

It takes more than barbed wire to stop the good old American custom of holding beauty contests, as the three pretty girls above can tell you. They were the winners in a picture beauty contest held at Oflag 64 before that camp was over-run by the Russians.

The winner, Nancy Reid of Evanston, Ill. (left), was entered by Lt. John Glendenning of New York. Second

prize went to Marie Benzel of Lincoln, Neb. (center), while Clare Van Syckle of Ft. Lee, N. J., proved that motherhood was no bar to rating in a beauty contest by taking third prize. Mrs. Van Syckle is the mother of two children. The story of the contest was brought out of the camp by a visiting Y.M.C.A. worker.

Zulu and Xosa Songs, Ankle Bells, Feature Orders from Prisoners

Among the never ending mountain of requests received by the Geneva Y.M.C.A. War Prisoners Aid office in one day are such varied items as vocal music in Sessuto, Zulu and Xosa, high school textbooks in Afrikaans, copies of "Cours de Litterature Arabe," religious literature in Hindustani and Gurmukhi, Korans, German ABC's, New Testaments in Swahili, ankle bells, stage pistols, and English/Urdu/English dictionaries.

These particular items were sent to East African, South African, and Indian prisoners of war interned by Germany.

Camps Are Changed As Allies Advance

Due to the rapid advances of Allied Armies, war prison camps in Germany are at present undergoing constant shifts in location.

Latest word as the News goes to press indicates a change or probable change of location for: Stalag 357, Stalag XX-A, Oflag 64, Stalag VIII-B, Stalag 344, B.A.B. 20, B.A.B. 21, Stalag Luft VII, Stalag Luft IV, Stalag 344, and Stalag Luft III.

Until next of kin are advised by the Office of the Provost Marshal General of a change of address, they should continue to use the old address.

Action in Stalag IIIB Little Theater



"UNHAND THAT GAL": That might be the command given by the gent brandishing the tommy gun as he draws a bead on the two sailors in a play presented by Thespians at Stalag III B. The picture was brought to this country by Cpl. Edward J. Zayd of Cleveland who spent a year in the camp following his capture at Salerno where he suffered 150 shrapnel wounds. Cpl. Zayd said the dramatic activities at Stalag III B, many of which were made possible by materials supplied by the Y.M.C.A., went a long way towards relieving the monotony of life behind barbed wire.