

Holiday Greetings From Nazi Prison Camps Bring Cheer to Texas Families

Among the most heart-warming holiday greetings received in Texas this week came from boys in German prison camps. They weren't printed on fancy paper nor decorated with holly leaves and candles but were simple communications sent out according to postal regulations imposed by German authorities.

At least 22 Texas families have had word from American soldiers who are held at Offlag 64, a German camp in Poland located about 100 miles south of Danzig.

Some New Arrivals.

Texans placed in the camp during the past several weeks include: Capt. Joe J. Emerson, Itasca; Warrant Officer Roger Cannon, Waco; Capt. Newton Lantron, Borger; Lt. Ivan Carlisle, Taylor; Lt. Col. Gaines Barron, Waco; Capt. Clarence Ferguson, Groesbeck; Capt. Richard Torrence, Waco; Lt. Carmen Williamson, Malone; Capt. James D. Bond, Waco; Capt. Randolph Robinson, Eureka; Lt. Dalton Medlen, Bonham; Lt. Floyd Vaden, Dallas; Maj. Roy Irvin, Snyder; Lt. Teddy Roggen, Houston, and Lieutenant Colonel Yardley of Dublin.

Boys from Texas already in the camp before the recent additions include: Lt. John T. Jones Jr., Houston, son of John T. Jones of Fort Worth and Houston and nephew of Secretary of Commerce Jesse Jones; Lt. Edward Batte, Waxahachie; Lt. Roy J. Chappell, Grand Prairie; Lt. George Beazley, Ennis; Lt. Chester Warren, Lampasas; Lt. Ralph E. Crawford, Dallas and one Fort Worth boy—Lt. Amon Carter Jr.

Spirits Are High.

Through telephone messages between The Star-Telegram and families of the boys, it was learned that they are in good health and good spirits. None of them indicated just how they expected to observe Christmas but if past holidays are any pattern it will be by a song service.

Lieutenant Carter, who has been held prisoner by the Germans since last February, described the Fourth of July celebration in a recent letter.

"They wouldn't let us sing the national anthem but we are permitted to sing 'God Bless America' and the state songs. You should have heard the Texas boys let go with 'Deep in the Heart of Texas' and other songs we sing at home."

One thing that they can be sure of is that they will have a white Christmas. One letter, dated Oct. 2, stated: "We expect snow right away and are really glad that we got two extra blankets from the Red Cross, which incidentally is doing a fine job here." In a letter written in July, it was stated that they were sleeping under blankets and hoping that the Winter wouldn't be too rough.

Like Packages From Home.

Communications from the boys indicate that the letters and packages from home are their chief interests. Besides clothing and blankets, their most frequent requests are for cigars, cigarets, sugar, cocoa, baking powder, oatmeal, saccharine, coffee, razor blades and magazines. One of them wanted som okra seed.

Lieutenant Carter was badly in need of clothing when he arrived at camp, having met with misfortune behind the German lines in Central Tunisia. He had served as artillery observer on top of Mt. Lassouda (Feb. 14) during the fighting at Faid Pass. After the Germans surrounded the mountain, he started through their lines.

"I walked 55 miles through German lines and was in sight of our own troops at Kassarine Pass on the 23rd when about 30 Arabs

jumped on Private Truitt and me. They hurt him pretty badly but they didn't do too much damage to me. After beating us and binding us hand and foot, they turned us over to the Germans.

"I was wearing a pair of coveralls when I was captured," the Fort Worth boy said, "but they weren't worth much when the Arabs got through with me. We had only cactus to eat for 10 days."

Restless for Action.

Other excerpts from letters indicate that the boys don't stay there contentedly while the war goes on:

"I wish I were back in my outfit. We are keeping in good health and good spirits but the temperature is low (dated Nov. 8) and we may have more snow. I appreciate the wool and fur gloves and the warm pants.

"Our time is always occupied usually by study. We can choose from Spanish, art, Italian, law, German and mathematics. It is a good chance to learn the languages of different countries.

"We have been playing some baseball" (excerpt from a Summer letter) and the British prisoners here haven't the slightest idea what it is all about, but we are the same when they play cricket.

"News from home trickles in by newcomers into the camp. On Sept. 15, Lieutenant Colonel Yardley, a parachutist was brought in from Italy. He gave them the latest news of war activities. Each addition had his bit to add which, all put together, caught them up on the war's progress."

Seeks News of Wounded.

Nine men at the camp from Carter's outfit—the 91st Field Artillery, 1st Armored Division—have been seeking news of their wounded comrades who were taken by the Germans. "We think they are in Italy, judging by the things we hear from some of the boys coming in from there," one letter stated.

The early American prisoners in the German camps have been there long enough to learn to read the language. In a July letter, it was stated that the American coal miners strike had been reported in German papers.

"The officers here are pretty mad about it and all of us would gladly change places with them. They at least have three meals a day—we have only two. We had oatmeal for breakfast on July 4th and it was a treat as lunch is our first meal every day.

This is in contrast to the rations in the United States prison camps where German officers are held. Their three meals a day are banquets by comparisons.

Try to Cheer Parents.

That the boys are not unmindful of the anxiety of the folks back home is indicated by messages to parents of men who only lately have entered the camp. Young Carter sent a list of 15 names with the request that the families of the men be notified of their location and informed that the boys were safe. He asked that the Texas people be advised of the regulations governing letters and packages to be sent to the war prisoners in Germany.

The late arrivals in the camp were from Italy. "They are Texans," the correspondent wrote, "so you can tell what outfit they are in," indicating to the people at home that the boys were from the 36th Division.

"We can't send regular Christmas cards home but do wish everybody a merry Christmas for us. It is good you have heard that our morale is high because it is. We only hope that we will be home this time next year."