

D805.N5 NEW

**The New Zealand prisoner of war
pamphlet: official pamphlet of the
Prisoners of War enquiry office of the Joint
Council of the Order of St. John and the
New Zealand Red Cross Society**

No.3 (May 1942)

Acquarone Salonica (printer)

TĀMAKI PAENGA HIRA AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Note: This document is supplied only to facilitate private research and may not be reproduced without the permission of the Auckland War Memorial Museum Library, Private Bag 92018, Auckland, New Zealand.

library@aucklandmuseum.com



D805
NZPES
(set 2)

Pamphlet No. 3, May, 1942

Prisoners of War Pamphlet

ISSUED BY

The Joint Council of the Order of St. John and The New Zealand
Red Cross Society

SICK AND WOUNDED FUND

Hon. Assistant Editor—Mrs. J. W. JACK.

Hon. Editor—Mr. J. ABEL

All the official information supplied is taken from the monthly bulletin issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva.

Next-of-kin are invited to send copies of letters to any of the below mentioned offices. It is intended to publish as many as possible, but naturally we cannot guarantee to publish all those that are received. Please do not send any letters posted from Prisoner of War Camps, dated earlier than February, 1942. Also make sure that the date of the letter is given, also Camp when known.

Relatives are requested to send pictures of any large groups of prisoners for reproduction in this pamphlet.

All information forwarded in the International Red Cross Review from Geneva is printed in French. The Joint Council is greatly indebted to Mrs. J. W. Jack, of Wellington, who not only selects and translates all Review articles, but types the copy ready for the printer.

The Editor.

HEADQUARTERS AND WELLINGTON:

63 Dixon Street, Wellington.
P.O. Box 139, Te Aro Wellington.
Telegraphic Address: "JOINTCIL."

AUCKLAND PROVINCE:

Bank of New Zealand Chambers,
Swanson Street, Auckland.
P.O. Box 247, Auckland.

CANTERBURY & WESTLAND PROVINCES:

105A Cashel Street, Christchurch.
P.O. Box 1098, Christchurch.

OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND PROVINCES:

2nd Floor, Queen's Buildings, Princes St., Dunedin
P.O. Box 456, Dunedin.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS REVIEW, NOVEMBER, 1941.

Intellectual Help for Prisoners of War.

There is no doubt that books are of great and supreme interest; thanks to them the prisoner can find confidence again in his own individuality, and losing himself in them forget his isolation and misery. The absorption of a man in a book helps him to rediscover the sense of an inner life. The attribute of the book in a prison camp is to prevent weakening of thought and will.

"When I think of the companions of my captivity" wrote an officer, recently repatriated from an Oflag in Pomerania, "I find consolation in the thought that in their long patient waiting they at least have one refuge—their library. It is not large: imagine a room about 12 feet square; it used to be less than that because for a long time the librarian slept there, now he occupies an adjoining room. It is not large, nor is it a library of

easy chairs,' but all the same it contains 2,000 volumes.

"Now that isn't bad, is it, for a camp which housed to begin with 5,000 officers, but which, because of various changes, has now only a total of 3,000 in the various blocks separated by barbed wire (blocks which were strictly isolated at first but which can communicate with one another to-day). It isn't at all bad, if one mentions too that each officer has his own small personal library, perhaps an average of a dozen volumes, his assortment of special and technical books, science, law, etc. It isn't so bad when one considers the rapidity with which this library has been formed in spite of material difficulties.

"Personally owned books, and the collective parcels from the Red Cross — blessings on it — constituted our foundation. The personal consignments have augmented it. From the day our library was begun it has grown and been added to by the prisoners themselves. Books have come from Paris (from Germany also, moreover). These orders have been slow, sometimes one waited weeks or months for books which were not all passed by

the authorities. I must acknowledge the courtesy of these latter, they facilitated all our purchases but the censor is the censor, and all could not pass. In spite of delays in our purchases of books caused by measures necessitated by frequent movements of troops in a military zone we were able to see our stock grow little by little.

"What happiness then to read, whether around the table, which had only eight places for thirty people, or sitting on one's bed. At night it was more difficult, one had only one little lamp for each room, but we got there all the same, with mirrors we drew from the bulb every bit of light it could give to the printed page."

"Thus new tastes were awakened, a renewal of the cult of what Renan calls 'the only necessary thing.' Without doubt many of my comrades seek the acquisition of utilitarian knowledge, preparing as at university, examinations set by competent professors, that they may secure official diplomas. Others make no pretensions to do more than play with stories and imaginative works. Many prefer the books of ideas, rediscovering the classics, drinking again from the springs of French genius, thirsting for history, 'which teaches all,' for poetry 'which has consolation for all.' All seek and find their refuge. That it may be opened still more widely to our prisoners, this free life of the spirit, this life that is better than life, tell people to send books, ever again books, always books"

As one knows the International Red Cross Committee has organised at the Central Agency for Prisoners of War, at Geneva, a Service of Intellectual Help intended to supply reading matter and distractions for Prisoners of War and Interned Civilians.

For many months a "Consulting Committee for Reading Matter for Prisoners of War," presided over by a member of the International Committee, has gathered together representatives of various organisations, which up till then had devoted their energies to the intellectual help, recreation, religion, classical or university education of Prisoners of War, though not in this co-ordinated fashion.

Under these conditions the Service of Intellectual Help gathers all requests for books coming from the authorities, the International Committee Delegates or the prisoners themselves, and can then distribute them among these organisations, thus avoiding omissions and overlapping. Thus, with ever growing enthusiasm, the Young Men's Christian Association, the International Bureau of Education, the Oecumenical Commission for the Spiritual Needs of Prisoners of War, the European Funds for the Help of Students, the International Federation of Associated Librarians, and the Swiss Catholic Mission for Assistance to Prisoners of War second the efforts of the International Committee in this magnificent work for the liberation of the spirit.

Furthermore, the Service of Intellectual Help sees to the despatch and the rational distribution in the camps of books which are supplied by public appeals addressed to citizens by the National Red Cross Societies, as well as by purchases. These consignments, carefully sorted at Geneva, are again examined by the responsible military authorities of the prison camps, who in turn advise which books are not allowed to pass.

The contents of these consignments offer great variety. While some prisoners ask for grammars, dictionaries, scientific and medical works, others desire Bibles, treatises on history or novels. In the camps where they have theatricals, the Service sends a range of comedies. There are a great number of French books, but there are also frequent despatches of works in English, German, Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, Polish, Serbian, Albanian, Greek, Russian and Arabic.

In the camps where universities are organised all the books and material necessary to the courses have been supplied, partly thanks to the help given by the Governments.

The Service of Intellectual Help also busies itself with supplying the Prisoners with scores of classical

music, ancient and modern, and American jazz, records and musical instruments, which are always welcomed joyfully by the choral societies and orchestras in the camps. They also send card games, draughts and chess, ping-pong and footballs.

The Service of Intellectual Help of the Central Agency of Prisoners of War has, of itself alone, sent direct more than 30,000 books out of a total of half a million volumes despatched to date into the internment camps.

REVUE INTERNATIONALE, NOVEMBER, 1941. CAMP AT MONTALBO.

(Greek and British Prisoners of War.)

17th September, 1941.

The camp at Montalbo, visited for the second time by the Delegate of the International Red Cross Committee, has become a mixed camp, containing both Greek and British prisoners. These latter arrived during August and September, having been captured in Africa. The British are housed on the second floor of the chateau; the Greek prisoners are accommodated on the same floor but in another wing. There are two Hindoos and a New Zealander among the British prisoners. Presently the Greeks who are still at Montalbo will be transferred into another camp for Greek prisoners, thus making an end to this system of mixed camps which is not entirely satisfactory. From then on the camp of Montalbo will be exclusively occupied by British prisoners. The housing conditions have changed very little since the last visit. One should mention, however, that the rooms are better furnished, there are now chairs, tables and small wardrobes of painted wood with two compartments allowing sufficient space for the prisoners to arrange their clothes. A wardrobe is now supplied to be shared by each two men. A small room has been set apart for the hairdresser. A Greek tailor has a work-room and presently the British prisoners will be allowed to make use of his services. A big question arises with the approach of winter, fairly severe in this region of Northern Italy, it is that of heating. It is not a simple matter to instal heat in a 14th century chateau, as is Montalbo, and the solution of this problem will not be arrived at easily. An Italian staff officer sent especially from Rome to go into the question of heating for the prison camps is giving this matter close attention. The competent authorities have decided to supply a stove for each two officers. The privates, like the Italian soldiers, do not have heated dormitories, but the common rooms and dining halls are provided with stoves. Some sanitary installations have been completed, without, however, reaching perfection, but the question of water still remains the delicate point in the arrangements of the Montalbo camp. The wells of the village are insufficient. The pumping installation itself presents certain defects. However a great project of canalisation is being studied and the International Committee's Delegate earnestly hopes that it will be carried out because the sanitary conditions of the camp at Montalbo leave a good deal to be desired, owing to the lack of water. The well equipped hospital had, on the day of the Delegate's visit, only two British patients, both suffering from minor ailments. The privates, conforming to the Geneva Convention are outfitted by the detaining power. The officers must pay for their uniforms themselves, the Camp Commandant, however, arranged for a representative of the "Unione Militare," a big outfitting establishment, to wait on them. He took the orders of the officers who will thus have the opportunity of getting their uniforms made to measure. There is a Catholic priest in the camp, and the prisoners have recently had the privilege of a visit from the apostolic nuncio, Mgr. Borgoncini Duca. A walk is arranged three times a week and the Greek and British prisoners go alternately. Correspondence is a source of worry to the Greek prisoners at Montalbo. They await their personal parcels sent from Greece, they have been advised of their coming

Donor: Mr Ian Vandrey, 2004.

but have not received them. The prisoners ask for some indoor and outdoor games, and some of the prisoners, the intellectuals, request books for study. A large hall on the first floor, the old library of the chateau, is used as a reading and writing room. Numbers of shelves are ready to accommodate the parcels of books that one hopes will be sent to Montalbo.

The following short extracts from reports of International Committee Delegates give further information about several camps where some of our New Zealanders are held. The editor of the Revue International points out that it is not always possible to print the Delegate's full reports which systematically cover the conditions of housing, food, clothing, hygiene, etc. The number of Delegates is always being augmented, but then also the number of camps to be visited multiplies proportionately. These extracts give summarised but characteristic indications of the conditions of each camp.

It should also be noted that the situation described in camps has often been modified after the Delegates' visits, whether spontaneously by the detaining power because of representations made by the Delegates themselves.

DELEGATES' VISITS IN UNOCCUPIED FRANCE.

Dr. Marti, International Committee Delegate, went through un-occupied France in September to the centres where the British military and civilians were interned. The French authorities accorded him all facilities for the accomplishment of his mission.

CAMP OF SAINT-HIPPOLYTE-DU-FORT. 8th September, 1941.

The British military prisoners are all congregated at Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort, about 25 kilometres from Nîmes (Gard). On the 8th September, the date of Dr. Marti's visit, they numbered 205, of which 5 were officers. Nearly all were escapees from Frontstalags in occupied France. Only a dozen came from camps in Germany.

Housed in the barracks of the militia, converted in 1936, they are supplied with iron bedsteads, mattresses and two blankets in summer. There are reserves of blankets for the winter.

They have the right to the same nourishment as the French population and have the same total ration. The officers have their own mess, as have also the non-commissioned officers. Four Hindoos do their own cooking.

The canteen is entirely under the control of the British. The corporal in charge of it sometimes goes to Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort, accompanied by a Frenchman to make purchases. Foodstuffs, especially fruit, are sold immediately, so that the canteen should be re-provisioned every day. Any profits made are used by the internees to buy sports goods, footballs, etc.

The United States consul at Marseilles allows a certain sum of money to the internees each month.

A private gets 88 francs a month, a corporal 106 fr., a sergeant 123 fr., while the officers' pay corresponds to their rank.

Correspondence is not restricted. There is no censorship in the camp and the internees are permitted to send telegrams to England and sometimes receive a reply within twenty-four hours.

As for parcels, none have yet arrived from England. By the intermediary of the International Committee, 41 cases were received on three occasions.

At the Hospital Doumergue, at Nîmes, the wounded and sick interned British military of Saint-Hippolyte-du-Fort are cared for. It is a very modern hospital. All the wounded and sick, numbering seven the day of International Committee Delegate's visit were well treated and they were receiving sufficient nourishment.

To sum up—the camp is good and well administered.

A Medical Commission consisting of a Swiss, representing the German interests, an American doctor representing British interests and a French doctor meet once a month. Men considered eligible for repatriation are sent through Spain to Portugal.

BRITISH CIVILIANS IN UNOCCUPIED FRANCE.

The British civilians in unoccupied France can be divided into four categories:

(1) In the camps of Argeles, Vernet, etc., about twenty Maltese, Palestinians, etc., who will be visited at the same time as the other foreigners detained in those camps.

(2) About thirty British in "residence assignee" at Sault (Vaucluse) at the foot of Mont-Ventoux.

(3) 400 English who were on the Cote d'Azur, and who had to make up their minds in 24 hours what place of residence they would choose within stated districts. Almost all chose Grenoble or its neighbourhood (La Tronche, Uriage). The only persons who were allowed to remain on the Riviera were the aged or sick, or those having ties with French families.

(4) British of French origin or having French relations are absolutely free.

Dr. Marti went to Grenoble on the 17th September to get in touch with some of the British in "proscribed removal" (category 3). They are confined within the bounds of the grounds of their residences. All receive food and clothing coupons in the same ratio as the French. Some are helped financially by the United States consul at Lyon or by their compatriots.

To sum up, most of the British in the Grenoble neighbourhood are quite well placed. It was the first time that a member of a humanitarian organisation had come to enquire after their welfare and they were deeply touched by such solicitude.

DELEGATES TO ITALY.

On the 29th October, M. Pierre Lambert visited the new camp of Vincigliato, near Florence, to which the English Generals have been transferred from Sulmona. It is a chateau of the middle ages which is beautifully situated. The rooms are furnished in stately fashion and will be heated, beginning from the 10th December.

M. Lambert also visited a transit camp where several hundred British Prisoners of War lived in tents.

The officers and privates (most of them British and several Yugoslaves) who were at the Hospital of Caserta were well cared for.

PRISONERS OF WAR AND INTERNED CIVILIANS.

On the 9th October the High Command of the German Army sent the International Committee the following information:

As one knows the prisoners of war have ample opportunity to busy themselves with artistic work and handicrafts.

It has also been arranged that the articles manufactured, and which are not required for presents, can be sold. One does not know of a case where these articles have been offered for sale and have not sold. The prisoners can also send the money so earned to their families. The sending of these articles into Switzerland or other territories outside Germany cannot be permitted, moreover, it is not necessary. However, an exception to this rule has been willingly conceded, in the authorisation of the export of about 1,100 articles to Paris for an exhibition organised there by the Ambassador Scapini.

Sales will be made for the benefit of necessitous families of prisoners of war.

CAMP NEWSPAPER

The sixth edition (1-15th September, 1941) of l'Ephemere, the bi-monthly newspaper of Stalag IX A was received at the Agency several days ago.

L'Ephemere defines its programme in a sub-heading: Liaison Organ between the Camp and the Work Squads bringing you the reflections of our thoughts in the midst of the vast community of Prisoners of War.

Stories, poems and items of immediate interest for the prisoners of the camp alternate throughout the ten printed pages that make up this number. These articles have for titles, the work and the days, the round of the

hours, agricultural chronicle, arts, letters and sciences, the life of the camp. L'Ephemere also tells its readers of the recent visit of the Delegate of the Scapini Mission to Stalag IX and what decisions were obtained through him.

The intellectual side of life is not forgotten; L'Ephemere quotes information on the possibility of being subscribers to newspapers and on the services of books; it also states that during the period from 26th July to the 25th August the Services of the Red Cross have sent Stalag IX A 64.5 tons of goods (biscuits, sardines, soap, tobacco and cigarettes). These have been distributed between 259 Work Squads comprising about 12,817 prisoners.

L'Ephemere is published at the special printing office of Stalag IX A and the editor of J. Delattre.

The homme de confiance (appointed men's camp leader) of Stalag VI F has a regular article in the monthly paper of Stalag VI F "Le Pass Temps," of which a copy, dated 8th October, 1941, has just arrived at the Agency. In his article he propounds practical advice and gives information to the prisoners.

Thus in the October number the homme de confiance of Stalag VI F advises that, thanks to the understanding of the colonel, commandant of the camp, and officer in charge of the German Government's Missions with regard to the work detachments, he has been able to begin a visit through the work detachments making contact with the hommes de confiance who are delegated there, thus helping to solve many problems.

The homme de confiance recalls, furthermore, for the benefit of his comrades in the work detachments, the text of Article 43 of the Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of Prisoners of War which directs the nomination of the hommes de confiance; it supplies some definition of the role incumbent on them and their duties and responsibilities.

In the "Nouvelliste," dated 15th October, and published with the authority and on the initiative of the commandant of Stalag VI J information supplied by the hommes de confiance also occupy an important place. These leaflets which circulate from one work detachment to another constitute an excellent organ of liaison for communicating to the prisoners advice and information which will be useful to them.

By this means an article drawn up for the benefit of the hommes de confiance of the work detachments devotes itself to defining exactly the duties and responsibilities devolving on them.

The "Nouvelliste" advises that it will shortly publish the Articles of the Geneva Convention.

MARRIAGES BY PROXY.

Since the beginning of hostilities, the Agency has undertaken to send forward to their destinations documents or dossiers relative to marriages by proxy of Prisoners of War.

By the end of October the total of these transmissions was 882 although it had only reached 142 in May, 1941.

There is little defection on the part of the prisoners and the negative replies hardly average one per cent.

FOOD FOR PRISONERS IN GERMANY.

ENSURING A HEALTHY DIET.

The Ministry of Food, with research and advice, is helping to ensure that good food reaches our prisoners of war in Germany, or, as Lord Woolton expressed it "food fit for heroes to live on."

Great care has been taken to make certain that the food parcels sent out contain what will supply the calories, protein, calcium, and vitamins A and B1 found to be missing in the camp diets; and lately the proportions of dried milk and tinned vegetables have been increased. The

supplementary rations have been tried out on troops here under working conditions.

Another urgent need was disclosed in a letter received by the British Red Cross and St. John Prisoners of War Department from Lieutenant-Colonel Guy German, who wrote that what the prisoners really wanted was a cookery book which would tell them what to do with the food sent. From another camp in Germany Lance-Corporal John Low wrote asking advice on how to cook the food "Mr. Low," said Lord Woolton yesterday, "has a sense of humour, and he told us how he did it. 'What you do first is break up a packet of biscuit with an empty beer bottle . . .' (I gather it is very important that it should be a beer bottle) 'and then you mix water with the powder until you get a stiff paste. I add sugar, raisins, and margarine, put it into a greased basin, and cook in the cookhouse oven. It turns out a very nice colour.' There is no mention of the taste."

USEFUL HINTS.

It was decided to meet this need of cooking hints, and, since the men do not get flour, other ingredients and seasoning are lacking, and cooking facilities vary, something special had to be evolved. The cooks in the Ministry's experimental kitchen, one of whom has a friend who is a prisoner in Germany, went to work with a will, and produced a useful collection of hints, many copies of which have already been sent to Germany. It tells how to make a grater by punching holes in the tins in which food arrives, how to measure out ounces of jam though only a tablespoon is available, how to prepare simple but appetizing dishes, of the advantages of group cooking, and so on.

Commenting on the fact that officers who are prisoners of war are not required to work, and so have plenty of time to learn cooking if they so wish, Lord Woolton said that if men came back knowing all about cooking it might raise an interesting problem. The women would have to look to it.

MEMORANDUM.

LONDON, January 21st, 1942.

(1) As the Swiss Government is aware, His Majesty's Governments in the United Kingdom and in the Dominions attach great importance to visits by representatives of the protecting power to camps and hospitals in which Imperial prisoners of war are detained. In the hope that it will be of assistance to the Swiss Legations in Berlin and in Rome, by whose representatives visits of this kind will now be paid, it is suggested that the following observations, which represent the views of the British authorities in the light of more than two years' experience, might, if the Swiss Government see no objection, usefully be brought to their notice.

(2) It is most desirable that, if circumstances allow, camps should be visited at least once every six weeks, and even, if this is materially possible, once a month: experience has shown that conditions in camps which remain unvisited for longer periods undoubtedly tend to deteriorate to a marked extent.

(3) Occasionally it has been found desirable owing to special conditions to re-visit a camp after quite a short interval, even if this necessitates the postponement of visits to other camps where conditions are believed to be reasonable.

(4) While it is realised that regular visits to all the work detachments in Germany are impossible because they are very numerous, it is hoped that every opportunity will be taken to visit work detachments if this can be done without a disproportionate expenditure of time.

(5) Regular visits to hospitals are naturally as important as visits to camps, and in some cases at least may be considered as being more important. As hos-

pitals that vi in the

(6) protect ions in not des tecting

Majesty terial 1 war th

their th represe

The cour) o an exte

"clearin To des Sec

between by Delc those t

Ov employe free po

large r succor crease

the can to procu

parcels to be th operati

the cam The simple

principle way ad

The letters ing for

Question

The states t

Expedit base kit

divided first gr

into stor articles

ventorie Wellingt

against with the

Wh soldier about hi

been rec the Dir

from the have be

In of Atto next-of-f

Attorney The

will be

pitals are often in the proximity of camps it is hoped that visits to them may be combined with visits to camps in the same area.

(6) It is realised that the representatives of the protecting power may be limited by material considerations in arranging their visits of inspection, and it is not desired in any way to limit the discretion of the protecting power's representatives. If in any way His Majesty's Government can assist in facilitating the material arrangements for visiting Imperial prisoners of war they will be glad to be so informed, and will do their utmost to render the task of the protecting power's representatives as easy as possible.

AT THE FREE PORT OF GENEVA.

The Service des Secours (service to aid and succour) of the International Committee has grown to such an extent that it can be considered to be one of the largest "clearing houses" for the despatch of merchandise.

To the goods despatched from Geneva by the Service des Secours one must add the maritime traffic, established between Lisbon and Marseilles, and controlled and directed by Delegates of the International Committee in each of those two cities.

Over and above the office of administration forty employees are occupied daily in handling goods at the free port of Geneva. These are necessary to handle the large number of parcels which arrive at Geneva as succour for Prisoners of War and because of the increase of prisoners and the variation of the personnel in the camps. It is often very difficult, if not impossible to proceed with the despatch after a simple tally of the parcels; also goods must be discharged at the free port to be there verified and sorted and it is only after these operations have been completed that they can leave for the camps for which they are intended.

The Service des Secours has thus ceased to be a simple supervisor of goods in transit; its task consists principally of despatching in a regular fashion and in a way adapted to the needs of the various camps, the succour which is sent to it by foreign organisations.

PRISONERS' KITS.

The Prisoners of War Enquiry Office has had many letters regarding Prisoner's kits and publish the following for the guidance of Next of Kin.

6th May, 1942.
Question:—What action is taken by the Military Authorities concerning the personal effects of a Prisoner of War?

The Director, Base Records, Wellington, New Zealand, states that when a member of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force is listed as a prisoner of war his base kit is opened under supervision and the contents divided into Public Property and Personal Effects. The first group comprises articles of kit which are taken into store and the soldier's clothing card credited. The articles in the second group (personal effects) are inventoried and returned to the Director, Base Records, Wellington, New Zealand who holds the articles in trust against the soldier's return or disposed of in accordance with the soldier's written directions if received or known. Where next-of-kin have produced a letter from a soldier prisoner of war wherein he expresses concern about his personal belongings and the hope that they have been recovered and that the next-of-kin will receive same, the Director, Base Records, accepts this as a direction from the soldier and hands over the effects provided they have been received.

In other cases where the next-of-kin holds a Power of Attorney executed by a soldier in favour of the next-of-kin, the personal effects are passed over to the Attorney provided they have been received.

The personal effects are slowly coming to hand. It will be understood that owing to the war situation, it is

not possible to secure shipping space and for regular consignments to arrive here.

The Director, Base Records, will be pleased to receive from soldier prisoners of war specific directions as to the disposal of personal effects and suggests that next-of-kin in their next letter to a soldier will mention the matter. If he gives a direction and it is contained in a letter received by the next-of-kin, the actual letter must be forwarded to the Director, Base Records, for perusal and return.

No doubt next-of-kin will be anxious to know whether the personal effects of the particular soldier have been received. While the Director, Base Records, is willing at all times to give the fullest information concerning prisoners of war, he requests next-of-kin to refrain meanwhile from writing to him concerning personal effects, because only a comparatively small number of parcels have so far come to hand.

BRITISH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the War Organisation was held on Wednesday, 21st January. Sir Philip Chetwode was in the chair. A grant of £750,000 for prisoners of war services was approved. In addition, a grant of £22,500 was also approved on the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee for the Educational Books Section of the Prisoners of War Department. The greater part of the grant will be used to provide a reserve of educational books at Geneva, from which the camps will be enabled to draw to meet their needs. Other expenditure to be met from the grant will cover books to be supplied direct to the camps, the provision of study courses and expenses incurred in respect of examination.

ROUEN PRISON CAMP.

LETTER FROM SENIOR BRITISH OFFICER.

In view of recent references to conditions at the Convalescent Camp at Rouen, to which men destined for repatriation were removed when the arrangements fell through, the following letter, which has been received by the War Organisation from Colonel Duncan Harvey, the Senior British Officer, will be of particular interest. He says: "The German Commandant has permitted me to write and let you know direct what the International Red Cross has done for us since this Hellig was opened at the beginning of October when repatriation was held up. There are 893 'grand blesses' and 415 others here; most of the latter are stretcher bearers and R.A.M.C., as well as padres and medical officers. The camp is on the racecourse and was originally a British reinforcement camp. The majority are in Nissen huts, some officers being in a brick hospital building, part of which is also used as a camp hospital.

PARCELS RECEIVED.

"Conditions." Colonel Duncan Harvey continues, "are now fairly good, and the health of the prisoners of war as good as could be expected. When repatriation was held up, I sent a wire to the International Red Cross at Geneva, asking for clothing, food, invalid comforts, tobacco, books, soap, cards and games. Up to 30th November, we have received the following Red Cross parcels from Geneva:—Food, etc., 5,998 food and invalid comfort parcels, 500 hospital stores parcels, 50 tobacco parcels" (a tobacco parcel contains 1,500 cigarettes or the equivalent in tobacco), "and 5 vitamin tablet parcels. We also received in October from a Stalag in Germany 2,895 food and invalid comforts parcels, and in November 1,350 food parcels from the British Internment Camp, St. Denis. Clothing: Greatcoats 659, blouses 120, towels 2,148, socks 696 pairs, pyjamas 1,643, shirts 1,999, pants 1,766, vests 1,987, handkerchiefs 698, pullovers 2,188, soap 1,180 pieces, blankets 2,200, trousers 10 pairs."

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS PARCELS.

The letter goes on to say: "With what we have received so far we have enough food parcels in hand to ensure one per prisoner of war per week up to New Year's Day, and everyone will get a special Christmas parcel on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. We have also a fair supply of cigarettes. I have asked Geneva to let us have enough for 75 per week for every prisoner of war. One food parcel each per week is quite sufficient, as the rations are quite good and better than most of us received in Germany."

We have a band, and lectures, talks, games and entertainments are steadily increasing in numbers. Boots and battle dress are wanted, and I have notified Geneva."

Since the dispatch of the letter, which is dated 13th December, 1941, information has been cabled from the International Red Cross Committee to the effect that most of the prisoners have been transferred elsewhere, and that only about 300 men were left at the Camp.

BRITISH RED CROSS AND ST. JOHN WAR ORGANISATION.

RECREATION IN THE CAMPS.

Below is given a brief account of the activities of the Indoor Recreations Section of the Prisoners of War Department during the 15 months to the end of 1941. Of the value of its services in providing facilities for recreation and amusement for British prisoners of war, and in helping to lessen the tedium of life in a prisoners of war camp, there is no doubt.

Libraries in the Camps.

The latest reports from Camp Captains and from delegates of the International Red Cross Committee show that there is a well-stocked library in almost every prisoners of war camp in Germany, Italy and Occupied France. Further evidence is contained in a letter from a sergeant who is a prisoner of war in Germany. To his next-of-kin he writes:—"I am still well and spend a lot of time reading. We have a most excellent library, a gift from the Red Cross." He adds: "What life would be like without the care of that kindly Society, I can't imagine," and concludes: "Speaking for myself, and I am sure I echo the sentiments of us all, I say that we owe a debt to the Red Cross which we can never forget."

Thousands of Books Dispatched.

During the 15 months to December, 1941, the Indoor Recreations Section dispatched 71,000 volumes to camps in Germany, Italy and Occupied France, and, in addition, built up a considerable reserve of books at Geneva. Considerable care has been taken in the selection of books, which has been on the widest possible basis. Fiction, from early classics to present-day novels, historical biographies, books on travel, art, music, literature and English country life, have all been supplied. More than 3,000 volumes of plays suitable for amateur performance, monologues and sketches, have also been provided. In addition, the Section has met more than 850 individual requests.

15,000 Packs of Playing Cards.

Not every British prisoner of war naturally wishes to devote all his leisure time to reading—indeed, there may be some prisoners who seldom, if ever, read. To meet their needs, the Section has dispatched large quantities of indoor games. Card games are the most popular form of indoor recreation, and some 15,000 packs have been sent. More than 2,000 chess sets and 8,000 sets each of draughts, halma and dominoes have also been distributed, as well as racing and football games, shove-halfpenny boards, table tennis, deck quoits, poker dice, ludo, monopoly and lexicon.

For the Musically-Minded.

The requirements of the musically-minded prisoner have not been overlooked. To the end of 1941, eight complete orchestras, each consisting of 14 instruments,

had been sent to the larger camps. In addition, the Section has supplied 2,500 mouth-organs, 2,000 Tipperary flutes, 750 ukeleles, and 24 sets of bagpipes and practice chanters to the camps requiring them. Instruments of all kinds have also been sent in response to individual requests.

And with the instruments has gone a wide selection of "music"—over 3,000 dance scores, 3,500 community song books, and a large quantity of choral music, oratorios, vocal scores of operas and operettas, small orchestral arrangements—from classical to musical comedy, music for string quartets, trios and for violin and piano.

PARCELS PACKED.

The number of parcels packed at the Packing Centres of the Prisoners of War Department and delivered to the General Post Office during the period from 1st to 15th January, was 154,630. It comprised 132,536 food parcels, 14,800 invalid comforts, 680 tobacco, 5,978 next-of-kin and 63 clothing parcels.

PARCELS AT CAMPS.

During the period from 16th October, 1941, to 15th January, 1942, the Prisoners of War Department has been informed by the International Red Cross Committee at Geneva that it has received signed receipts from prisoners of war camps, acknowledging 941,042 food parcels, including 146,604 from Canada and 45,757 Christmas parcels. Acknowledgments have also been received of the receipt during the same period of 19,112 invalid comforts parcels and 27,909 tobacco parcels.

The International Red Cross Committee also reports that during the period 16th October, 1941, to 15th January, 1942, 1,017,182 parcels were dispatched from Geneva to the camps. They comprised 975,429 food parcels (including 233,013 from Canada, 1,048 from New Zealand and 5,793 from India), 13,529 invalid comforts and 28,224 tobacco parcels.

STALAG VI J (Fichtenhein).

This camp is in the region of the Ruhr, several kilometres from Crefeld, in a forest of birches and pines. It was a country school which has been transformed into a camp. The nourishment is satisfactory, completed by the Red Cross parcels. There is a library in the camp. The post functions well, letters arrive daily and are distributed within five to seven days.

OFLAG X C (Lubeck).

This was a camp for German troops situated several kilometres from the town. It has paved walks, grassy spaces and a vegetable garden. The nourishment is good. Parcels of food and clothing from the Central Agency for Prisoners of War have been received in the camp. There are priests and chaplains who celebrate divine service. Letters and parcels arrive daily.

STALAG VII B (Memmingen).

This camp is situated outside the town in a beautiful country side. It has modern stone barracks where previously a German battalion was quartered. It contains about 14,000 men of whom about 13,000 work in the work detachments. The food is prepared by the prisoners in a splendid kitchen of exemplary cleanliness. The clothing is satisfactory except for the footwear which is not quite up to standard. There is a small library. The mail functions well and quickly. There is a model hospital.

STALAG V B (Villingen, Wurtemberg).

In the Black Forest at an altitude of 800 metres. The camp is entirely new; there are stone barracks for the prisoners permanently in the camp and wooden huts for the prisoners in transit. The clothing and underclothing is in satisfactory quantities. The camp has the use of a magnificent hospital, situated some distance away right in the forest.

STALAG VII A (Moosburg).

Wooden hutments with an exterior and interior coating of "Heraclite," an incombustible mixture. The mail functions well, no accumulation of parcels or letters is tolerated. The work detachments are employed both in agriculture and in industry.

STALAG IX B (Weggeheide Bad Orb).

This camp, situated right in the forest of Spessart was once a holiday camp for children from Frankfort on Maine. The food and clothing is sufficient. There is a library in the camp. The mail functions fairly well, letters arriving every second day and being distributed within five or six days.

PRISONERS' LETTERS

STALAG VIII. B.

From Pte. H. McPHERSON, dated 10/12/41.

It is well into December now and we are looking forward to Christmas now, hoping that the following one will find us together again. We are looking forward to our Christmas parcel which is already here and these parcels contain cakes and puddings and chocolate. These parcels are extra issue on top of the ordinary weekly parcel so you can bet your life this lad will be busy. I can put away Nestles sweetened milk with a spoon now—remember when I couldn't take it even in tea? Oh, and 'Ovaltine' is my nightcap now and it is very good. Well, Mother, a letter will be most welcome for my Christmas box and there is a good deal of New Zealand mail in the camp. Hope there is one from you. My watch is still keeping time and my ring you gave me safe and sound.

From Pte. R. D. McKEE, dated 6/12/41.

Well, winter is setting in over here. Had a fairly heavy fall of snow and a few hard frosts. It's a new experience for most of the boys and especially when their feet won't stick on old mother earth and then find themselves measuring their length in the snow. I won't be complaining when I can stretch out on the beach at the cliff again. Red Cross parcels arriving regularly and I would like you to see some of the dishes the boys cook up. Last week my cobbler and I made a cake with Yorkshire pudding mixture—added sugar and raisins, and I can tell you it was the goods—in fact you'd be hard put to beat it. I'm keeping very fit.

From H. K. MAY, dated 14/12/41.

The seasonal run of the factory is almost over now, it is not as big as Chelsea. At present they are making stock food from the beet. It has been quite interesting work watching it go through the different stages until it reaches the final products.

From Signm. T. D. COCHRANE.

Received our first pay on this job yesterday. Quite a big day. Receive a weekly newspaper. Articles in it by prisoners of war. Have Saturday afternoon and Sunday off at this job. It's good healthy work. Will be able to work for Bob Semple when I come home. I am prematurely bald. We had our hair close clipped before coming to this job. Weather is colder here than Crete. Receive a Red Cross parcel per man each week. They are wonderful parcels.

Dated 2/11/41. Yesterday brought forth the first mail since we have been prisoners. Three New Zealanders received letters.

From Sgt. W. R. KEOGH.

Dated 9/11/41. Quite a few chaps here have received letters from New Zealand, so of course I am all attention when the names are called out. We got an extra blanket the other day, also a jersey, sox and towel

from the Red Cross. I now have new boots, sox, battle dress, underclothes, overcoat and wooden clogs. We still get our Red Cross parcel each week. To-night for tea I have tinned sausages, potatoes (German issue) tinned peas and a fruit pudding. Our barracks are heated with big ovens so you see we are quite comfortable.

Dated 30/11/41. Still O.K. but patiently waiting for news from home. Now stationed in another part of Germany—quite a tourist. Plenty to eat, plenty clothes.

Both our sons are prisoners of war, Athol at Stalag XVIII and Laurie at Stalag VIII B. They very much appreciate the Red Cross parcels, both say what a wonderful help they are. Both are longing for home mail and say the New Zealand mail is beginning to arrive. Both boys are working in quarries.—G.E. Martin.

From C. G. NICOLL, dated 15/12/41.

I am now on a farm with eleven other chaps and we have having a fairly good time, for we are wood-cutting and the work is not hard or heavy and the food is very good, which means the most part of the job; we have our own little billets which are quite comfortable. This is my third work party I have been on and each one is better, but we will be on this for quite some time, most likely all the summer, when the harvest is in full swing.

From Dvr. R. YARDLEY.

Dated 2/12/41. We are able to receive letters and parcels, but, of course, they must not contain any prohibited matter. Letters must be short owing to the rapidity of the censor. Both Snowy Simonsen and his brother are here with me. The Red Cross parcels are looked forward to, and very much appreciated by us all.

Dated 7/12/41. I am working inside with Snowy's brother. We are both feeling cheerful and are quite well. Before coming to this job, we had the pleasure of seeing a concert put on by some of the Dunkirk boys, who are in the best of spirits, and are supreme optimists. I am still on the same job. The first New Zealand mail has arrived, and we are looking forward to receiving our letters from home.

From Capt. R. S. SINCLAIR, dated 27/12/41.

Xmas has come and gone and I know you'll be pleased to hear that I had a good time. Xmas dinner was, of course, a great success. On Xmas Eve we had a concert in the barrack and it was first class. After Xmas dinner Santa Claus paid us a visit in traditional style and distributed presents from a very fine Xmas tree. I received a very nice calendar and soap box. I'm going to have the calendar autographed by the officers here and it should prove a very fine souvenir when the war is over.

From G. G. COLEMAN.

Dated 11/12/41. At last the mail is arriving. I received letter from you yesterday. Date November 5. There's more in camp and I'm living in hopes. We all received Canadian Red Cross parcels last week containing butter and better milk than other parcels and we are quite pleased with ourselves. I made a concoction out of biscuits, jam, raisins, cocoa and sugar and put it in the oven for a few hours and it came out something like a cake but it kept sticking in my mouth so I'll have to try again. We are all getting fat. We moved into a new hut whilst the old one is being cleaned. Everyone to get two Red Cross parcels Xmas week. Our huts are warm, heated with stoves.

Dated 31/12/41. Well Xmas all over and I have just got over the after-effects, we all ate too much. Red Cross Xmas parcels were very good and nearly everyone ill after. Finished runner-up in Xmas bridge tournament and won a few cigaretets at Xmas Day race meeting.

From Pte. M. C. MABBETT, dated 11/1/42.

The commander of our party proved a veritable hero and did everything he could to give us a good time. Actually, if it had not been for the Red Cross (glorious

institution) things wouldn't have been so hot, but with the special Xmas parcel supplied by them we were able to have an excellent dinner. We had our usual Sunday meal with the addition of roast pork, Xmas pudding, cake, etc. We had a break of five days at Xmas and two days at New Year and are now back at regular work.

A PADRE WRITES.

Things are on the up and up; the chaplains are now in our own little den in the chapel barracks and conditions are well improved. We are getting ready for Christmas and are hoping that all our schemes will work out. We are putting on Eugen O'Neill's play "Bound for Cardiff"; I am "Driscoll" the Irish sailor and having a grand time. Have just had a hot tub so feel hot and glowing. I had three of the M.O.'s round for tea to-day and we had three grand rubbers of contract. We hope to get out round working parties after Christmas, travelling all over the country and ministering to the men. We have to organise as if we were going to be here for ages, it is the only way.

Dated 4/1/42. Here we are in the beginning of a New Year and may it be a new era for all of us. We had a dinner party on 31st—1st, and heralded '42 in no uncertain way. No letters for the last three weeks.

STALAG XVIII. D.

From Gnr. B. H. UMBERS, dated 14/12/41.

I am starting to look on the board every night now for letters. If this Krieg lasts I would like a good pair of working boots. I am doing pretty well as far as food goes and not badly off for clothes. My wristlet watch is still keeping good time and my pipe is in good working order. I don't know if I told you that I draw 20 odd marks a month and the rest of the staff average about 12. There is a canteen in the lager. I was up the town yesterday and seeing a weighing machine in a shop stepped on, going 105½ kilograms. The weather is good although

Many prisoners make reference in their letters to having received parcels from New Zealand House, London. Different parcels are sent consisting of books, games, puzzles, toilet goods and parcels similar to N.O.K. quarterly personal parcels with clothing and woollen comforts. These parcels are paid for out of the Sick and Wounded Funds forwarded to London by the National Patriotic Fund Board.—The Editor.

we are having heavy frosts. Xmas is very near now. The boys are getting up a special concert or play, so that will help us out a bit over that period. Every day is the same except Sunday when most of us have the day off. We get a Red Cross food parcel every week and are getting a second blanket to-morrow, I believe. I have got my washing on the stove at present, but expect to have some potato chips on presently for tea.

In a previous letter Gnr. Umbers mentioned that he had a staff of 225 under him—carpenters, electricians, plumbers, labourers, etc., a secretary and a mate; a room practically to himself, with a stove in it, but had a lot of walking about to do.

From Sgt. R. J. MCGARVIE, dated 25/11/41.

Received letter and list of articles contained in first parcel which I have not received as yet. It will be interesting to see just what does arrive. The Red Cross is certainly looking after us as regards food. Clothing has also been issued but I am fortunately well off for clothes. New Zealanders are receiving a New Zealand Red Cross parcel for Xmas, English packed, I think. We have a canteen now, so we can buy most things that

we want—not that our wants are many. Received five letters from home and just this minute received your first letter via Geneva. It was at Corinth for a few weeks. We cannot receive boot polish, tooth paste, lighters, post-cards or writing paper. I am working with a Yugoslav dentist. We can't tell you very much in our letters. I haven't heard anything of Jack Crook but Doug Blair is around somewhere. Your second letter took six weeks.

From Pte. W. C. BLUCHER, dated 30/11/41.

I received a letter from you written on the 28/9/41. We are limited to one sheet of paper a fortnight. We are working on a farm, twelve of us, and are well treated.

From A. N. GREEN, dated 10/11/41.

I hope you are feeling as comfortable as I am just now. I got my 12th Red Cross parcel on Thursday so for dinner to-day after the issue of soup I had a large tin of boiled beef and vegetables, plus jelly and doings. We are getting the parcels very frequently lately. Our Anzac mail has arrived and I got letters of June 16, August 5 and 16, September, October, and so on. When you write be sure to write one sheet only on two sides as this allows for quick censoring and delivery at this end. I am in the carpenter's shop now and it's much warmer than being outside. I have been at my trade now for over three months and our first month's pay was 10 marks and our next month was 15 marks. I got a 1 lb. tin of dried milk in my parcel so every night I have a drink of milk.

From G. C. IRVINE, dated 27/12/41.

Well we have got our Xmas over and really had a jolly good time. The weather was cold but not wet and the English boys say just like England in December. We had an extra good Xmas dinner, thanks of course to the Red Cross, turtle soup, steak and kidney pie, peas, carrots, plum pudding, custard cafe au lait, all from Red Cross, fresh cabbage, onions and potatoes roasted and boiled. We all do our own cooking. Two cook for four of us who always share—two English lads and two New Zealanders. Also went to Church. It's a carol service on Xmas Day. Boxing Day was also cold. In the evening went to see the camp concert party, putting on a pantomime "Cinderella."

From Pte. C. H. LAWRENCE, dated 26/10/41.

We are on a road job just now. Grand to have a spell, but one has to look on the financial side of the business and as it costs 50 pfennings to send each letter, we go carefully. I believe we will get two a week from now on. Our wages for a full week's work is 4 marks 50 pfennings, and by all accounts we won't get much work in during the winter. I have received three letters so far—one lucky New Zealand boy collected 13 to-day, but I suppose our turn will come. It certainly makes a big difference to get a letter or two. We are receiving Red Cross food parcels regularly, which is a thrill.

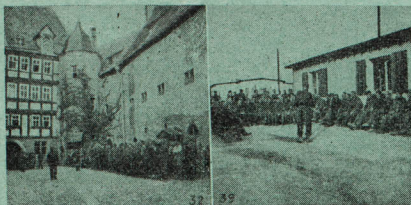
From Pte. N. W. ALLEN, dated 7/12/41.

An Australian of our gang received a parcel this week and it was sent through the Red Cross and was packed on the 25th September.

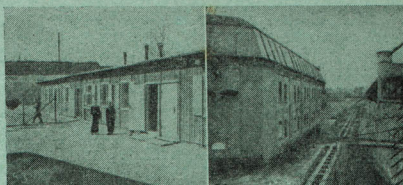
From W.O. II. J. K. WELCH.

Dated 8/12/41. I received your November 2nd letter yesterday. You can imagine how pleased I was. This 3/- airmail seems to be very good, as I have had two letters (October 3rd and November 2nd) just a month after they were posted. I am not working in the office nowadays, as I have a full-time job as No. 1 Company Leader.

Dated 18/12/41. I have been quite busy lately doing backcloths for the Xmas pantomime, which the Concert Party are putting on at Xmas. It was quite a thrill in a way to get back to the old job. I do quite a lot of water-colour drawings, especially of caricatures of different fellows, so I will have some really good souvenirs to bring home with me.



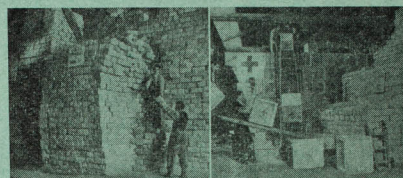
Left—Oflag IX A. English Prisoners of War at Evening Roll Call. Right—Stalag VIII B. English Prisoners of War having a sing-song.



Left—Stacking standard parcels at Geneva forwarded for British prisoners of War. Right—At Geneva. Discharging cases of left wing of the fort.



Left—Stalag I B. A Work Squad. Right—Stalag VII B. General view of the Camp.



Left—Stacking standard parcels at Geneva forwarded for British Prisoners of War. Right—At Geneva. Discharging cases of foodstuffs sent by Canadian Red Cross. These are from the Red Cross International steamer Ze Manel.



Christmas Post Card, drawn by Prisoner, Stalag XX A.



Parcels sent by the British Red Cross for Prisoners of War. Verification of the contents of the cases at Geneva.

From R. H. BARBOUR, dated 4/1/42.

Am still working on the farm and am getting plenty to eat and plenty of work to do—it helps to pass the time away. We get paid in canteen cheques, 14 marks per month, and strange to say I can save a little of it. They have very strange ways of farming here and they all live very cheaply, as nearly all these farms are self-contained—grow all their own food and make their own bread. Meals are all eaten out of one large bowl placed in the centre of the table, and it is a case of all in. Haven't had any letters from N.Z. for quite a while—makes me wonder if things are O.K. Am looking forward to receiving the parcel as I am getting short of clothing—being winter it is rather cold.

From Pte. W. R. SINCLAIR, dated 18/12/41.

We are not altogether without news of world events as we are provided with a weekly newspaper called "The Camp." Please thank Mum for second parcel. First parcel not here yet, but have now got good Red Cross pull-over; also a scarf. This is quite a good camp and within its confines we really enjoy a lot of freedom. I am with a good crowd of chaps—Aussies, English and New Zealanders, and we are always cheerful.

STALAG XVIII. D.

From M. D. DRAKE, dated 17/1/42.

A lot of parcels are rolling in for the Tommies and an odd one or two for Aussies and Kiwis. We had a very happy Xmas and to top it all off I received your first letter on December 24, it was posted on August 26 and addressed to Geneva. I suppose that by this time you will have my proper address which is on the front of this form. We had a very happy Xmas thanks to the Red Cross who are regularly supplying us with a parcel of food-stuffs a week. As you know our outward mail is limited but there is no limit to the amount of incoming mail we may receive as long as the letters are not too long and plainly written.

From J. CULLEN, dated 8/12/41.

At last I am getting your letters and have had three so far. Yes we get weekly Red Cross parcels and you cannot imagine how welcome they are. I managed to acquire a new and very warm uniform and have good boots and greatcoat. Our greatest need is underwear, pullovers and Sox.

STALAG XVIII. A.

From Gnr. T. EVERITT, dated 16/11/41.

I had a letter, which is my third, dated September 28, so the mail gets here fairly quickly. I have seen Bill Manners and Bill Johnson; they were in the camp when we were first taken. As a matter of fact Bill Johnson was taken at T beach with me. The greatest news of the week is that I received my first parcel on Friday. I felt very proud of you both. I carried it back into the room—it is the only one that has arrived from New Zealand to this camp. It contained everything that I wanted as we have just been issued with new great-coats, battledress and boots, so with these extras I will keep much warmer now that the snow has started. There is very little I require now so you just use your discretion and if it's any thing like this one I'll be quite satisfied.

From Sgt. F. T. FENTON.

Dated 20/9/41. Great jubilation in the camp to-day! We received a batch of Red Cross parcels. Two 10lb. parcels per man, and everyone eating chocolate and jam, etc., and smoking English cigarettes. You can imagine the excitement as we all opened the parcels and found what was in them. Everyone talking at once and nobody listening. It's just like a Christmas party! I got

a lot of good stuff in mine—"Ovaltine," jam, meat, etc., and made a great feast. I shall be a firm supporter of the Red Cross from now on. They have done really well for us. I had a treat on my birthday—a trip in a truck to the local village where we collected some apples and had a look around. The Red Cross is supplying us with some courses to study. I'm taking Law of Contracts and Navigation to keep my mind occupied.

Dated 24/10/41. Just got three letters, dated August 12, June 10, July 20. You've no idea how great it is to receive my first letters from the outside world which had almost ceased to exist for us, but seemed to have become like a dream. These letters bring us back to reality, although they do produce a fresh attack of homesickness.

Dated 16/11/41. I got several letters this week. The last one got here in four weeks—pretty good going!

From R. A. HARDLEY, dated 2/11/41.

Thanks for sending me the parcels but do not send me any more as I am being well provided for by the Red Cross. Glad to know that you received the parcel I sent. I am in good health and spirits.

From Bdr. G. F. PHILLIPS.

We usually get a small packet of tea with our parcels so can always have a boil up at lunch time, out on the job as we always eat away from the camp. In case you don't know, Dad, tea leaves can be brewed very successfully a second time. I do it nearly every day and sometimes the second brew is better than the first. Being a tea expert I know you won't agree but I can assure you it works.

Dated 27/10/41. You can imagine my joy and surprise when I arrived home on October 12 and found your two letters dated August 24 and 29 here for me. One other New Zealand chap received a letter but apart from this these were the first letters any Colonial had received in our camp. Best wishes for the Rotary Club, Dad. I could write more but no room, don't worry if my letters are irregular, not always issued with paper.

Dated 8/11/41. Have now received your earlier letters dated two on August 11 and one each on July 16 and 21 for which many thanks. Hope for better paper for writing next week when I hope to be able to let you have more news.

Both received February 23, 1942 by Mrs. J. P. Phillips, Lower Hutt.

From L/Bdr. J. F. HOOPER, dated 18/12/41.

Just received your first two letters and am allowed to send this letter "Air Mail." We are permitted this privilege on birthdays, death, or births in family. The Maori prisoners are very popular here, especially with the Englishmen. They are great entertainers and very fine chaps. I have not received any parcels from you yet, but a few parcels have arrived from New Zealand for some of the chaps and each occasion calls for great excitement.

From Sgt. E. H. EVERTON.

Dated 15/11/41. Have had two lots of letters this week, ten in all, early August and October 7, which is grand. I'm the luckiest man in camp with mail as I've had more than anyone I know by far. Things go on much as usual, concerts each week, debates—last week "A woman's place is in the home," lectures on everything, cooking from weekly Red Cross food package. Ploughing round the compound outside like a lion in a cage for keeping the old circulatory system in operation. Now have plenty of books to read, letters to write, odd fatigues, such as feeding fellows that can't walk down to the cook house, carting coal, arguments on the Labour question, England's Conservative Government, and lord only knows what else, and much sleeping. That's life in a prison camp after six months of it. It's amazing how fat and well are most of the boys. "Tubby" (English) just received a wonderful parcel from home, but reactions are, after making do with rough clothes for so long, all the stuff is too good to use. Almost too good to be true. We just are luxuriating in his huge block of chocolate.

Dated 18/11/41. Some of the Maori boys playing "Haera Ra" next door—sounds good. We are to receive two parcels Xmas week. Living quite well off one so two will be absolute luxury. Keep fit by walking a lot round the compound. Am reading a great deal and swatting a little German. The day goes quickly enough—just every now and then there's a rotten feeling of homesickness, which under the circumstances is very natural. We have one of the best camps, well organised for concerts, lectures, mail, etc.

Dated 25/11/41. Mail takes a long time to get out of here. Full jazz band established this week and concerts are super. Some parcels getting through from New Zealand and Australia.

From Pte. J. C. WERRY, dated 23/11/41.

At 5.30 a.m. Jerry unlocks the door and shouts, "oust, oust, oust" and one finds oneself awake cursing all Jerries. If one is on coffee or room fatigue, which comes every sixth day one must arise immediately, light the lamps, dress quickly and go to the cookhouse for coffee; if not one lies in bed till Jerry returns and again "oust" us. At 6.30 a.m. the whistle blows and we go forth from our barbed wire enclosure and parade in the cold darkness slightly relieved by my hurricane lamps, to be counted and marched to work. The march to work for all, accompanied by the regular crunch of feet on frozen snow or frozen mud. As we arrive at work dawn is breaking and we spend the day picking and shovelling on our road. On the job we do as little work as the weather and Italian forman permits, talking and joking and taking as many rises out of the Italians as possible and safe. At 5.30 p.m. the whistle again blows and we again assemble and are counted and marched off loaded with firewood, arriving at the camp in darkness. We have tea and spend the evening playing cards and talking till Jerry locks us up at 9 p.m. On Saturday afternoon one does ones washing, and Sunday mending same, playing, etc. So the days and weeks pass each bringing the day of reunion nearer.

From Pte. A. G. MARTIN, dated 23/10/41.

On Wednesday we shifted our camp and are on road work, which is much lighter than quarry work, although we have got a long way to walk to work. I'll be losing my mate, Jim Kennedy, next week, as all corporals are being sent back to Wolfsberg. However I still have plenty of mates among the other lads that were in our room at Malta. Am taking up a course in German to fill in the winter months.

STALAG IX. B.

From Pte. T. J. KAY.

Dated 3/12/41. Now that I am in a settled abode, with a prison and camp number I will be allowed to write regularly. I am still in a hospital. There are 80 of us here from the old crowd. I am still fit and well, and somewhere in Europe. From my address it is fairly obvious where I am. Perhaps I will get mail now that I am settled. I have had none since your first one, in October. I have had a number of Red Cross food parcels and there are more in view. Smokes are the big problem, but I believe the Red Cross are going to make us an allowance. If you send any parcels, do not send clothes, unless socks or gloves, as we have enough now, and I believe will get plenty. Tobacco, papers and a pipe would be very acceptable, otherwise I am O.K. I'm in a country district. The building, a convent school, is well heated; we get plenty of food, and a good bed.

DULAG LUFT VII. A.

From Sgt. Pilot W. HAYMAN.

At last I have been moved from hospital to a real prison camp. It is a big place with all nationalities represented, mostly French and a big crowd of English, Australians, with a few New Zealanders all from Crete.

The crowd of us who came here are the first airmen to come to this camp. We are in a barrack full of Englishmen, and a better crowd one could not wish for, they cannot do enough for us. At the moment it is snowing and it is a job to keep warm, especially as I cannot walk fast enough to help in that direction. The medical officer, an Englishman, has decreed a daily massage for my leg, and this is being done by a Frenchman who spent two years in New Zealand as a professional boxer some years ago. We have had several Red Cross parcels, and will have two next week for Christmas, then after that one a week. They are first rate and the best thing in our lives. As a result we are not stinted for food. My old camping training is coming in very handy, as we group together and do all our own cooking on a communal stove.

From Sgt. Pilot K. COMETTI.

Dated 30/12/41. As you can see, I have changed my address and am now amongst Englishmen at last, this being a convalescent home, and it really is a first-class place. We had a damn good Xmas, lacking nothing. We had our Xmas-tree, cake, and pudding—good food and wine, and I think we were all quite happy. Although there are only a few of us here at the moment, one of them happens to be an Aussie I know fairly well, so you can see the world is quite a small place. I'm quite a bridge fiend now, and play a few hours every day. My leg is O.K. now, and with a little treatment should be in first class condition again. The number and address on the back will always find me; further details you can get from the Red Cross.

STALAG XX. A. (5).

Dated January, 1942. Here I am in Stalag XXA (5). Life in camp is quite pleasant. It is cold outside, with plenty of snow, but we have good warm stoves going all day, and plenty of blankets. The rations are quite good very unlucky but it could have been much worse.

STALAG VII. A.

From Bdr. H. C. BARKER, dated 19/12/41.

Just like old times. Sorry no budgets though. Have the news—but!! Well for the second time I will be away for Xmas and for second time so placed can neither cable nor phone. Still I shall be with you and as our time is behind yours I'll have two dinners—mine and one with you. We receive one special Xmas parcel and one American parcel for Xmas. I shall manage an eight course dinner O.K. The Red Cross are marvellous and do wonderful work for us and we would do badly without them. Actually there's but little that I need that I haven't got or can in some way procure. Treatment is surprisingly good.

CAMPO N. 66, ITALY.

From Sgt. E. M. BROSINAN, dated 20/1/42.

I am only allowed this page so it will be a short letter. I am fairly comfortable here but would like you to send me a parcel now and again. Write to the Red Cross and they will tell you what to send. I was taken prisoner outside of Tobruk on 27/10/41 by tanks. Was very unlucky but it could have been much worse. I have quite a few cobbles here so it is not so bad.

From Pte. A. H. TUTBURY, dated 21/1/42.

I was taken prisoner on November 30th. The food is fairly good here, but I miss the small things, such as cigarettes and chocolate, so would you see the Red Cross about sending them. I have seen (censored) and it was a great sight. How is Dad and the cows, do they still milk them the same old way?

From Cpl. J. H. SMITH, dated 17/2/42.

We are allowed to write a bit more now. I help in the sick parade, which helps fill in the day. We had one parcel from the Red Cross, and that lasted about ten days—bacon, beans, 'Ovaltine', sardines, etc. Now we soak

half a loaf of bread in water, put in a few figs and boil, that makes a hot meal. There are some great meals made like that. I have seen Vesuvius, a grand sight with the sun shining on it.

From Pte. T. MOTTRAM, dated 20/1/42.

I was captured on December 1, arriving at Naples on December 30 and then moved a short distance into this camp. This may not be a permanent camp for New Zealanders. I received one Red Cross parcel on New Year's Day and was never so glad to receive anything. There are seven good meals in each parcel and other odds and ends such as milk, cocoa, figs, mustard and so on.

From Pte. W. GRIGG, dated 22/2/42.

I am a prisoner of war in Italy. I was taken on December 1, with a slight wound in the shoulder. Would you send me a parcel as soon as you can. Go straight to the Red Cross and they will tell you how and what to send.

From Sgt. R. WALKER, dated 10/1/42.

It's as cold as blazes here but we have very warm blankets and clothes. January 1 we received a parcel of food and chocolate from the Red Cross. I don't know what the position re sending parcel from home is, but all I would want would be honey or chocolate.

From R. E. OLSON.

Dated 20/1/42. I am keeping in good health here but it has been very cold. We have had a lot of snow and rain for days on end. We keep warm at nights with a good supply of blankets and we get plenty of sleep. The food is reasonably good. We get half a mug of sweetened black coffee at 7.30 a.m.; at mid-day a piece of meat and soup, also two loaves of bread, macaroni or rice, and beans of an evening. We have had one Red Cross parcel containing assorted foodstuffs—a real treat. We have also had a pay and can purchase goods from a canteen. Keep smiling. Kind regards to all. Write as often as possible.

From Dvr. W. F. ANDREWS, dated 21/1/42.

I am quite well. We have good warm clothes and rugs. I still have the balaclava and pullover Rosie made, also the scarf from you, I have been very thankful for them. I also have my watch and the wallet sent to me. I managed to keep some of my photos. We are paid threepence per day. There is a canteen, but it's like trying to get into the back of Ellerslie tote, and may as well not be there! Chocolate is the only thing you can send me and it will be very welcome. The Red Cross will be able to tell you how much you can write and when. We were taken prisoners before we got our Xmas parcel and felt disappointed.

From L/Cpl. W. D. WILLIAMS.

Find out my full address from the local Red Cross and make inquiries re sending mail and parcels. In any case send chocolate, tooth brush and paste, underclothes and sweet and concentrated foods. I was taken prisoner on November 30 after a hectic period of fighting day and night in the Sidi Risegh area. As things turned out I am now better off than a lot of my friends who were killed or wounded, because I did not even get a scratch and we are being very well treated. Above all, don't worry about me because now, if ever, there is no need to worry at all. I just missed seeing Maurice McGregor by a few days. I am with about six of my friends here and average about 15 hours a day in a warm bed; there is no work for us to do. We have made plans to have a yearly re-union when we get out.

From Cpl. B. C. HUNTER, dated 21/1/42.

This is the second instalment of my prisoner of war memoirs, and is being written in ideal circumstances—I am sitting up in bed! Life is quite good and although I would prefer it otherwise, I am afraid it is the old case of beggars not being choosers. Conditions at the beginning

were terrible and for the first five or six weeks we went through some terrible hardships, but now happy to relate living conditions are now restored to normal. The food is nothing startling, the three meals a day consist of coffee for breakfast, soup mid-day and hot macaroni stew at night; this is sufficient to keep body and soul together, but it makes one think of all those fine meals back in New Zealand. To supplement the meals there is an issue of 1 lb. bread a day with occasional issues of oranges, figs and jam; you can see this is not an enormous diet, but fortunately there is no work to do so it suffices. The day is filled in mainly with card playing. The shortage of sweet stuffs, chocolate, etc., and tobacco is about the biggest problem. The mail weekly consists of one of these sheets and a card.

Ospedale Militare Di Caserta, Naples.

From Pte. J. M. SIMONSEN, dated 27/12/41.

I hope you received the cable I was allowed to send. The post card enclosed is a gift from an Australian officer. They supplied us with one each. As there are no New Zealand officers here the Aussies are looking after us. The Red Cross parcel mentioned in my last letter contains lots of nice things to eat—they are lovely. We received another one on Xmas Eve which cheered us up considerably, also our tobacco and cigarette issue. We each received a half bottle of beer with our dinner and a small glass of whisky at tea time so did not go short of much.

From F. E. THOMAS, Dated 16/12/41.

I am in Italy in a hospital just outside Naples. I am not injured except for a few scratches on the legs, other than that I am a box of birds. We are being treated O.K. and have just received a parcel from the Red Cross, also 50 Gold Flake cigarettes, so you see things are not so bad. I have had more experiences in the last three weeks than most people have in a life-time, what with being captured and then being in a shop that was torpedoed, well that's about enough for me.

From Cpl. S. J. WEIR, dated 15/1/42.

I was captured by a Panzer Division near Tobruk on December 1st, and after passing through various transit camps arrived in Italy on New Year's Day, so cannot exactly say I spent a very enjoyable Xmas. On arrival here we were given medical treatment and I was sent to hospital. I am only permitted to write twenty-four lines, so can't say much. Jack Watson was caught the same time as I was and is over here too. He is quite well. When we arrived in hospital we received a parcel from the British Red Cross, and as they were full of things to eat, and we were very hungry, they were appreciated by the boys very much. You will find out from the nearest Red Cross Centre how to write and what you can say. The Red Cross look after us very well, but we had a very thin time till our arrival here.

From Cpl. F. T. AVERY, dated 27/12/41.

Christmas is over and the strangest one I have ever spent, it is a beautiful day here to-day, this morning there was a white frost, so you see it is much the same as our own climate although perhaps colder at night. I have received another Red Cross parcel just as good as the last one so am doing very well; we got them on Christmas Eve. There are six of us in the room I occupy, another New Zealander and myself, an Englishman, a Slav, a Greek and a Norwegian; they are a great crowd—the Slav is learning English from the Englishman, who speaks quite fair Italian, and he is a very apt scholar, picking it up very quickly. I am doing my best with Italian and making fair headway, but it is not easy. We get quite well treated and the food is good although not much variety. At present I am sitting on a verandah about eighty to a hundred feet long; in the distance I can see Mt. Vesuvius, and right in front of me is a line of lemon trees loaded with lemons, also orange trees but the oranges have just finished.

From L. READ, dated 29/12/41.

I am a prisoner but unharmed, though am in the above hospital with dysentery, but am now over the worst of it. We were torpedoed on our way over, but the ship managed to reach shore. I went down a life line ashore, got soaking wet, but safe at last. The result of my wetting was Xmas Day I could not move a joint or muscle for rheumatism, but medicine fixed me up in two days, so am now O.K. We got some extra tit-bits, but rice was a poor substitute for turkey and pudding. We get a Red Cross parcel about once a fortnight, with about 17 articles of food (tinned), and 50 cigarettes, and they really save our lives. We are looked after quite well and have a couple of our own doctors here. A week ago a chap came into our ward (6 beds) and he lives at Chiswick so we have had lots of yarns. We are allowed to write 25 lines once a week. Will you send me a parcel with socks, Red Cross will advise.

Campo P.G. Gruppignano Undine, Italy.

From E. W. H. FORDHAM, dated 19/12/41.

Well, it is only a week from yesterday to Christmas Day and although it will not be the same as usual it will be one Christmas I will always be able to remember. The longest stay I have had anywhere was the three months I was at Capua so you can imagine how quickly the time has passed. We have made an early start and already have our hut decorated; the ideas of it originating from a Maltese. We had a visit this week from a high official of the Catholic Church and each one of us was given a Christmas card especially printed for British prisoners and signed by the Pope. Well we have only been issued with the cards this week and 15 lines is the limit, so chierio.

Dated 27/12/41. We celebrated Xmas here; the choir gave us carols before we were out of bed and at ten o'clock we had a very good service which was well attended. There is a harmonium in the camp really for the Roman Catholic services but we had the loan of it. Later in the day most of the Australian units represented here held reunions. Every man received an apple, a mandarine and a piece of nougat from the Pope, and Xmas Eve we had our Red Cross parcel issue.

From Pte. M. SULLINGS, dated 4/1/42.

I am a prisoner of the Italians and being treated wonderfully, so please don't worry about me. I was wounded in the arm, but it has completely healed. The camp here is a great place, we are living in huts with fires, good beds, plenty of blankets and even sheets. As it is the middle of winter, it's very cold, but we have a fair issue of warm clothing. The Red Cross send us a 10 lb. parcel of foodstuffs every week and believe me it's great. The parcels are absolutely wonderful.

CAMPO P.G. 57 POST MILITARE, ITALY.

From Sigm. K. C. McLIESH.

Dated 11/1/42. This is a fine camp. Sheets on bed, good food, weekly Red Cross parcels. You will get advise from them shortly. Left Libya December. I have good clothes and comforts. Got a few Xmas parcels and may get rest sent on. You can write; sent 5 lbs. of block chocolate—should take three months to get here. Have wonderful pals; sharing camp with Aussies. Very good Italian officers in charge. Travelled whole length of Italy. Snowclad Alps in our background. Bracing climate here like New Zealand.

Dated 31/1/42. Getting abundance of food, clothes, toilets from Red Cross, St. John. Grand parcels every week (tea, butter, jam, milk, etc. in 1 lb. tins each man) 15 articles. Don't send anything but write per Clipper Mail through Red Cross often. Have fine choir under Bert Farrell (late J. C. Williamson's opera). Plenty books, games and concerts. Two parades for roll call.

Italians fine officers. Aussies control our huts. Also fine towards us.

Dated 7/2/42. Continuing studies. Books and classes in camp. All trades and professions taught here. Taking new studies also; have fine library here. Write Clipper Mail.

From Pte. F. M. HOWELL, dated 6/2/42.

Here I am able to write to you once again. Last time I heard any farm news the ewes were lambing, now I'm wondering how many fat lambs you got away. Did you get the letter I wrote on 30/11/41? The enemy rounded up a few hundred of us that night, yet it just seems yesterday.

From G. and O. WILLIAMS, dated 31/1/42.

We hope that by now you will have received the first letter we wrote to you on the 11/1/42. Since writing last we have become more or less acquainted with our new surroundings and have made things as comfortable as possible. There is a good library supplied by the Red Cross, and apart from novels there is a wonderful selection of educational books. I am polishing up on accountancy as I have plenty of time to do so, and I wish that I could have all the books from home. The climate and surroundings are very much the same as Central. You could send us socks, handkerchiefs and jersey. We are well treated and do not worry mother, as we are definitely safe and well. Could you also send two XL dental brushes. The old boys are receiving parcels safely.

Campo Prigionteri Di Guerra, Italy.

From JACK ELLIOTT, dated 21/1/42.

I am getting more used to being a prisoner now and find that the time passes better now than it did at first. It is pretty cold here and there was some snow on the hills just behind our camp. Good food is a thing of the past and of the future and also a popular subject for discussion here. We have had one parcel from the Red Cross and expect another soon. They are quite big parcels and contain mostly tins of jam, margarine, fish pastes and meat spreads, which help to make our dry bread more enjoyable. We have had a blanket from the Red Cross—a thick one, worth two ordinary blankets, and it is most welcome these cold nights. We go to bed at dark, about 6 p.m., and get up at about 11 a.m. next morning. We are paid 1 lira and 5 cigarettes per day and have a small canteen in the camp, but about all they stock are figs, cigarettes and a few packets of biscuits. The figs are 5 lira and the biscuits 21 lira per packet, so our wages don't go very far. We don't get any news of how things are going on in other parts of the world.

Campo Concentramento P.G. (Udine) Italy.

from B. FORDHAM.

Dated 12/12/41. We understand that we will have snow in the camp later on but with the clothing we have now and a stove in each hut I don't think we will worry much provided we have a good supply of firewood. We are all housed in huts here, each hut holding eighty men and a stove in the centre so it is really as near as we can expect to be to home comforts, considering that we have electric light on as well. The food here so far has been very good, 100 per cent. better than when we left Capua and to date this camp has had the Red Cross parcel per week, so we hope it will continue. This is a camp for Colonials and in our hut we have the League of Nations, Kivis, South Africans, Australians, Maltese, Canadians and one or two other oddments. The New Zealanders are ones who have been rounded up since the Italians have been in occupation of Greece. There is a new idea here of marking the outside of the letter Air Mail so you might receive this a little quicker. Quite a lot of clothing has come to hand lately from the Red Cross and I have been very fortunate in drawing a singlet and underpants and a pullover.

P.O.W. CAMP, ATHENS.

From Sgt. J. E. ROWLAND.

Dated 26/11/41. I have been a Prisoner of War in Athens since October 8. Life is rather dull but not insupportable. The weather is not very cold yet, and we get all the sun and air possible. We are in touch with the Red Cross and have received two parcels from them and quite a lot of clothing. I am fairly well off-fitted now, and the rations are good—much better than I expected. Athens is not the main camp and I expect we shall be moved to Salonika soon.

OFLAG VI. B.

OFLAG VI B.

From 2/Lt. H. K. NGATA.

Dated 18/12/41. I've had lots of letters from you lately, six in all, latest being September 15. Will you acknowledge for me and tell Dad not to worry as we get Red Cross parcels weekly. These contain 2 tins meat, 1 tin vegetables, 1 lb. chocolate, 1 tin milk powder, 1 packet biscuits, dried fruit, packet of tea or cocoa, soap, sometimes fish instead of meat, so you see, with our ordinary rations, things aren't so bad. We're all quite well off for clothes now, as we've had parcels from England. Reading matter is plentiful, and apart from fiction, an educational library was opened the other day, and as there are a number of psychology books, I'm gradually getting down to some work. Entertainments keep us going too. The last one was particularly good, and, as a matter of fact, had two professional London actors. The dance bands I've told you about, and the symphony orchestra, though scratched together, is excellent. The New Zealanders here are running a weekly news-service, bits of news being collected from letters. It's a good idea and more or less keeps us informed of goings on at home. Your letters are coming in regularly. We are looking forward to Christmas for which we've saved things from our parcels. Maoris are in different huts, G. Bennett and I in this, but we've arranged dinner for Boxing Day. Carol-singing party now outside our window.

Dated 28/12/41. Xmas has now come and gone, and thanks to the Red Cross and also by dint of saving for the past two months, we managed to put on an Xmas dinner that would have done justice to any table on the Continent. On Boxing Day, all the Maori boys had lunch together. The people here also managed to organise a "race meeting" (large scale affair worked with dice, and held in dining-room) where I won 30 marks. Also a pantomime.

The Society can never be praised too highly for the merciful work it has done and is doing for our prisoners of war. My sincere thanks for everything.

From Lieut. D. BRICKELL, dated 26/12/41.

Here is how I spent Xmas.—7.45, cold bath and cuppa, 8.30 Holy Communion—tremendous crowd, so was unable to partake owing to parade at 9.15. Then cooked breakfast (first time since April!) of sausages and liver, then a round of Xmas visits to New Zealanders while cooks worked. We had constructed a stove oven from bricks, and Ken Simmonds had made Xmas cake (which I iced and decorated) and plum puddings. Xmas dinner at 1.30—tomato cocktail, hors d'oeuvres of sardines, diced carrot, potato mayonnaise, peas, etc. Fish—herrings in tomato sauce; viand of stew, roast potato, carrots, peas. Sweets—plum pudding, jelly and sauce. Cheese savoury, dates and raisins and black coffee. Instead of three separate messes the whole 12 of us ate together. The table looked beautiful, with hand painted menus, etc. We rested for some hours after. Capt. Finlay and I went to a Carol Festival at 6.15—9 lessons from Adam and Eve up to the visit of the Wise Men, and a number of carols from the choir and congregation. The hall was decorated and altar and Xmas trees lighted with candles. Had some

snow outside for atmosphere. High tea of meat roll, jelly and blanc mange and the Xmas cake, a bit soggy but good. Afterwards we were entertained for 1½ hours by "Webby" with stories and recits. Couldn't do this often but results were well worth the sacrifice of part of our Red Cross parcels over the last few months.

From Capt. C. D. BRYSON.

A letter just received from Capt. Bryson, dated 21st December, states that the parcel which was sent through the High Commissioner's Office on 27th November, 1941, had arrived.

From a PRISONER OF WAR.

Dated 9/1/42.

We now get our Red Cross food parcels with each tin and packet opened.

Dated 4/1/42.

The fuel ration is fair, our best issue, and clothing adequate (in my case anyhow), so that we are comfortable. The camp will not be so good when a thaw comes, unless a good deal is done before then, no doubt something will be done if only to satisfy the M.O.s. Made a surprisingly good job of Christmas Day. Much saving and contriving. Results: 1 oven, 1 baking dish from tins, and 1 Christmas cake, 6 Christmas puddings, and a Red Cross dinner cooked in oven and on stove top (1 burner). In all a full and satisfying dinner for 12. The oven is brick and mud, built on to the stove (room heating) and very useful indeed. Kept back three puddings for New Year's Day. Are on half Red Cross parcels this week, supplies are low. Hope further supplies of parcels or bulk turn up. Received one Book of Year yesterday, source unknown, presume part of a book parcel in process of censoring.

From G. J. RUSTON, dated 4/1/42.

The Xmas pantomime was indeed the highlight. Titled "Citronella," it had a similar theme to the old fairy story of similar name. Without a doubt it was the best panto. I've seen. The humour was first class, and the ballet "girls" were superb. We had a heavy frost, 29 degrees below freezing at 8 a.m. This, I can tell you, is very cold. Unfortunately there has been a thaw, so you can imagine the mess now. Xmas week we had an indoor race meeting complete with bookmakers, tote. The course about 60ft, long and horses moved by dice throws. It proved most successful. For myself I had a lot of fun, but made no money. Betting was done in camp marks, which is the currency paid by the Germans. It was amusing to see some of the chaps preparing for bed the other evening, for many garbed themselves in pyjamas, balaclavas, pullovers, gloves and Sox. I haven't found it that cold myself. I have three blankets and my great coat is in reserve for when it is below zero. I have been doing a great deal of reading of late for there is little else to do, and am getting through nearly a book a day. We have an excellent library thank goodness. Portuguese parcels still arriving weekly.

Still getting supplies of Red Cross food parcels. The skating is in full swing, and four of us were able to buy a pair of skates from another fellow. We take turns of about an hour daily and I am improving rapidly each day. Started to learn Maori but gave it up for skating as the times clashed. Exercise will do me more good. You asked if I get pay? Yes, it is in special notes only for use in the camp. I don't need much so should have a good balance when I get back. I reckon to be saving about £19 clear monthly with the German pay of £5 deducted. Last night I attended a three-act comedy "The Black Eye" and was absolutely enthralled with it. Some of the talent we have is amazing. Remember the song "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square?" We have its composer here and he takes a good female part and composes many of our songs.

HEILAG, ROUEN, FRANCE.

From Pte. C. E. BARWELL, dated 12/12/41.

I received your letters written on July 15 last week and I was very pleased to get them as they were the first mail from New Zealand. I am quite fit and well treated. Things were rather tough the first few months after I was captured but were quite good after we arrived at a permanent camp in Germany. We have some mistletoe, but unfortunately no girls. We can buy some things in the canteen. We receive a parcel from the British Red Cross once a week and are going to get an extra Xmas parcel on the 24th. . . . We are in our new camp. Repatriation seems to be held up just now but we still have hopes of it coming off soon. I am going into the camp hospital to-morrow as dispenser. The medical officer in charge originally came from Wellington. I miss my camera here very much. I have seen some very pretty scenery the last few months.

From Pte. G. TIPPETT, dated 12/12/41.

Private Gordon Tippett was taken prisoner in Greece while serving in the Mobile Dental Unit. Until October he was in XVIII A but was then sent to Heilag, Rouen, for repatriation.

Last Friday I received nine letters from you all. The weather here is becoming a trifle colder but thanks to the Red Cross we are fairly well prepared as we have just been issued with pullovers, socks and pyjamas. The Red Cross food parcels are wonderful. We have been paid since we have been here and I have bought a ukelele to help pass the time. We are all in the best of spirits and health.

LAZARETT, ATHENS, GREECE.

From Dvr. H. NELSON.

Dated 12/10/41. I am still getting someone to write this for me but hope to be able to write my own next time. I have been through the operation all right and am feeling pretty good. I am being "fed up" with plenty of good food and am eating it with good appetite. For example for breakfast I had this morning two poached eggs, two pieces of toast and fried tomato. I have had Red Cross parcels containing honey and jam, margerine, fruit salad, chocolate and many other items. I have been in a nice little special room with an orderly in attendance all the time doing their very utmost to make me well also to attend to all my little whims. This treatment has, of course, given me a great opportunity of recovering from the operation.

Dated 9/11/41. I received your letter of Sept. 28 on Friday and was very glad to get it. Mum's letter by the same Clipper reached me the previous Friday. Only one other letter this week, an August one. I've only had 11 letters so far, most of them being sent by Clipper. I'm afraid it is expensive writing to me that way but I certainly appreciate it. I've travelled thousands of miles and seen nothing—except sea. I may write via New Zealand House one of these days, but I don't get many letters to write. I received two books, Edward's Integral Calculus, 2 vols. this week and a notice that other textbooks were coming. They were immediately pounced upon by the three of us. No pass-ball or other games now. Mum is always asking whether Peter Allan and Mac Dowling are with me. Yes, we are all in the same barrack-room—about 150 of us. Three of us are in the same combine, i.e., we share a Red Cross parcel four times a week, cook, etc., together. It won't be any trouble for me to get my dinner when I get home—but it will all have to come out of tins (perhaps!).

Dated 16/11/41. I had three parcels on Tuesday. One contained textbooks—Hund's High Frequency Measurements, Edwards' Differential Calculus and Modern Physics by Richtmyer. I received Edwards' Integral Calculus the previous week. So now we have plenty of textbooks. They were extremely welcome. The others consisted of a parcel of cards and games (jigsaws, etc.), from New Zealand House and one of books from the same place. They sent me "Goodbye, Mr. Chips," a book by Dorothy Sayers, and one by Edgar Wallace. New Zealand House has made a big difference to us with the parcels they have sent. Letters get through quicker if they are correctly and clearly addressed.

TRANSIT CAMP, DULAG 183 F.P.

From L/Cpl. C. F. JOHNSON, dated 8/11/41.

We have been getting a Red Cross parcel every week for a while now and aren't they a help! The sweet stuff and sugar and chocolate in them is darned welcome. And yet at home I never used to bother much about sweet stuff and never ate chocolate from one month's end to another. If you are able to send personal parcels (I don't know if you can) please put in razor blades, cigarette papers and tobacco, any old sort, not expensive stuff because I have been away from decent tobacco so long that it would be wasted on me.

ITALY.

From Major G. B. THOMAS, dated 18/12/41.

I am now a prisoner of war in Italy and am very fit and well. The Italians are treating us quite well and we are receiving fresh fruit daily, which is very good, as an addition to our diet.

Italy dated 7/1/42.

From Lieut. Colonel J. M. TWHIGG, N.Z.M.C.

We are now in Italy, but so far have not reached a permanent camp, so I cannot supply an address. To date we have been allowed two notifications (official wording) and one letter. Please do not concern yourself about me as I am fit and well. We are all a bit hungry and we feel the cold, but are being well cared for in the circumstances and I can put up with things as they are quite easily. Re parcels and letters to me—follow instructions of International Red Cross. Immediate wants are food, chocolate, soap and scarf.

Campo 41 Posta Militare 3200, Italy.

From Capt. M. J. MASON, dated 10/12/41.

The story of how I was captured is a simple one. We were left behind in the car by the C.O. and the unit and couldn't manage to overtake them. In trying to catch up we had a pretty hectic time. We had three brushes with German tanks, and in the last of these the driver and I were captured. This all happened on Sunday November 23rd between 5.30 and 8.30 a.m., about 30 miles west of Fort Capuzzo inside the Libyan frontier. The Germans treated us very well, handed us over to the Italians, who also did their best for us. Eventually we were brought to Italy. At present I am keeping quite well. The food is a little unusual, but the Italians are very good-hearted people and make the best of things. We get a cup of black coffee for breakfast, a plate of macaroni and a small roll for dinner, and a plate of soup and sometimes a second course for supper, with which, however, we always get another small roll which we usually keep to have with the coffee next day. You can readily see that we are keen to go on old rations again. The weather is a bit on the cold side, being much like Wellington in the winter without so much rain. Unfortunately we have no fires so have to keep warm by walking. They have given us lots of bedding, however, so we sleep well. When I was

captured I was wearing shorts, shirt and pullover, consequently I nearly died of cold the first few nights; but soon after we got here I was able to buy some clothes. We learnt yesterday that Japan and America are now in the war too. How I wish we could listen in to the news and find out what is happening. This camp, I believe, is only a transit camp, and we leave here for our permanent home later on. Where this will be I don't know; however, if they are as helpful and try as much there as they do here it will be O.K.

From Capt. D. A. BALLANTYNE, dated 20/11/41.

Have been here some two months; had interesting trip through Balkans and Central Europe. Most of New Zealand doctors captured in Greece and Crete here. Weather cold but I have been issued with warm clothes and we are comfortably housed with warm beds, stoves and ovens. Red Cross parcels good and we are paid and can purchase tobacco.—Stammlager VIII. B.

STALAG XXI E.

We are informed by the British Red Cross that a letter has been received from the British senior officer in Stalag XXI E.—written on or about Christmas Day.

1. Plenty of all kinds of Red Cross parcels immediately available.
2. Plenty of fuel available.
3. German authorities anxious to do all possible to improve conditions.
4. Camp visited by Swiss authorities.
5. Christmas concerts, carol services, etc., organised.

From 2/Lt. G. A. McRAE.

Sent to Col. B. Meyers, C.M.G., M.D., Commissioner of N.Z. Red Cross and St. John, London.

Dated 14/12/41. With the exception of a few names all New Zealand officers who were formerly at Oflag V B have received their clothes parcels from the New Zealand War Services Association and nearly all have received their first cigarette parcels. These lucky people have all expressed their pleasure not only for the contents of the parcel, but also for the choice of articles contained therein. The kitbag especially is invaluable to us here.

From Sgt. T. M. ELLISON.

To Miss Ramsay, DUNEDIN RED CROSS.

Dated 1/12/41. May it interest you to know of the highly appreciated work done by the Red Cross. Thousands of boys from different parts of the world have been living in luxury through the Society. As an "Old Boy" from Otago, kindly accept my best wishes for the future when this crisis has ended and we return. With kind regards to Dunedin. I am a thankful soldier.

From A. T. COE, dated 1/12/41 and 10/12/41.

He has received fourteen letters and says he receives a beautiful Red Cross parcel each week and he remarks that the Red Cross is wonderful to them all. He said how thrilled he was to be put into the medical work once again. He works with eight of his pals from the First General Hospital and shares a cosy hut with them. He ends his letter with this: "Wear a smile and carry on and we will see each other before long."

From Pte. M. J. SOUTHERN.

Dated 9/11/41. I have not had any mails so far although quite a lot has come though from New Zealand. We are getting our Red Cross parcels and fifty cigarettes every week. We get a little English news through the camp paper. The officer in charge of our camp is trying to organise a church service. It is pay-day to-day and we are paid every Sunday. The time does not drag as we play cards quite a lot. This afternoon I am stewing apples and trying sausages from the Red Cross parcels for tea.

Dated 23/11/41. We have been issued with a few books. The last Red Cross parcel we received was from Canada. It contained ½ lb. cheese, ½ lb. chocolate, packet tea, sugar, dates, raisins, salt, biscuits, a pound tin of butter, tin of jam, tin of corned beef, luncheon meat, sardines, salmon and milk powder also fifty cigarettes.

From Pte. K. W. S. ADAMS, dated 20/1/42.

I hope you receive this letter in quick time, then you will know that Bob and I are together and are all well. You will see our address and will be able to write. We sent cards about 10 days ago. It is great in the tent just now, 18 chaps trying to write at once; the trouble is a shortage of pens. We were paid to-day but the only thing we bought is a tin of nuggit between the four of us. We have just had a shave, hair cut, and a hot shower and cleaned our boots and have our battle dress so look no different to when we were home. We received a Red Cross parcel each and it was a great thrill.

Pte. E. C. ROLSTON, dated 14/12/41.

Well, old pals, at last I've copped it, pretty badly too, I'm afraid; but if they keep treating me as well as they have since I arrived in Italy, I think I have a good chance of becoming something of the man I was a month or so ago. I collected about six bullets and the same number of bits of small shrapnel, the worst being a machine gun burst through the left side of my face, which knocked most of my teeth out and cut my tongue and roof of my mouth and side of my left cheek to ribbons. I was left for dead when they picked up the first batch of wounded but recovered consciousness and recognised a stretcher-bearer just going past and threw my revolver at him, and he came and took me to the field ambulance which was captured later. The Italian doctors are very clever, and I think they will patch me up pretty well, as in the last three days they have fixed my mouth so that I can even get soft food such as soup and coffee down my throat.



Camp of Saint-hippolyte-du-Fort. The Courtyard.

MEDICAL COMMISSIONS.

By the intermediary of the Swiss Federal Authorities the interested powers have given their assent to the constitution of a permanent Medical Commission which will visit British and French Prisoners of War in Germany. This Commission includes Col. Th. Brunner and Lieut.-Col. A. d'Arlach, who, as our readers know, have already been Members of Medical Commissions which worked in Germany during June, 1940, and January, 1941; five other Swiss officers, doctors of medicine, have been attached to them as assistants.

—Taken from London "Times," January, 1942.