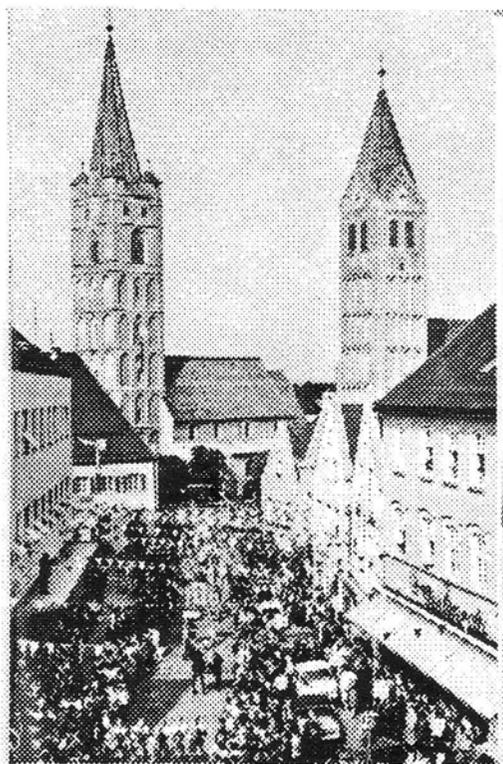


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THE CITY

& THE CAMP



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Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

STALAG VII A

1939 - 1945

MOOSBURG
ON THE ISAR
RIVER

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

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Editor Herbert FRANZ

Contributors

A. Alckens
R. Doyscher
F. Heilmann
L. Weh
E. Neumaier
A. Engelsberger
Dr. Reindl
H. Mieadl

Photos City Archive of Moosburg

**Drawings Made by French prisoners of war in
Stalag VIIA**

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Island Chapter, American Ex-Prisoners of War**

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

Herbert Franz
Bürgermeister
Town of Moosburg



It is certainly unconventional that the establishment of the Prisoner of War camp, Stalag VII A, is one of the important events in the history of the Town of Moosburg.

This has historical importance in that:

- The Town of Moosburg received little damage during World War II, due to location of Stalag VII A.
- The buildings after liberation of the prisoners, gave thousands of Germans who were displaced from their homes adequate accommodations.
- The camp was predominantly settled by refugees so an important foundation stone for the development of the new Town of Moosburg was placed.

In view of this opportunity a memorial was established on the former camp area in 1963, which was created by French artists, during their imprisonment in the camp.

Never the less, the town council decided, at the suggestion of the former Catholic priest of the camp, Prof. Dr. Zieglers, to put a memorial cross on the cemetery of the camp.

With it, not only the deaths of the dead of Stalag VII A should be honored, but the dead of all wars. The memorial, a constant demand that peace between the nations of the world should be established.

The people of the Town of Moosburg, support the town council in their hope that this demand for peace in the world will be heard.

History
of the City of
Moosburg
on the Isar River

A short history of the town

Translation to English by Frau Louise Steiner, of München

Vestiges of former population in this district can be traced back to the Neolithic period (about 5000 B. C.). The discovery of one late Hellenic bronze basin in the northern region of the town and of a second dating from the middle of the Roman imperial epoch in its southern region is not sufficient to prove the town to be of Roman origin, especially as the main arterial roads of the Roman empire were passing at a rather great distance. However, considering the excellent location of the chain of hills which seems to form a natural rampart, it must be taken for sure that the actual city area of Moosburg was populated already at that time.

Nevertheless it was only in the middle of the 8th century A. D. that Moosburg came into the light of history. The year 753 dates the first mentioning of a Benedictine monastery, the founder of which is supposed to be a certain Count Thiemo of Tulbach. But the fact that still for a long time the cemenary church of St. Michael's served as parish church, would indicate that it might be older. Whether at that time, next to the monastery, existed also a citadel, seat of the counts of the Sundgau who had been invested during the reign of the emperor Charlemagne, cannot be proved by this time. However, it is a fact that the abbot Reginperth of the Moosburg monastery was present at the great synod of Dingolfing in the year 772, and that in the year 817, the Carolingian Louis called the monastery a royal abbey.

At that time occurred the removal of the bones of the martyr St. Castulus from Rome, this giving rise to the erection of a new church, probably on the site of the actual minster. At the synod of Aix-la-Chapelle the monastery was mentioned as a third class monastery on the line of Metten and Wessobrunn, thus not belonging to the rich religious settlements bound to pay taxes and to furnish soldiers. At the end of the 9th century the count of Sempt is the superior of the monastery which later is conveyed to the bishop of Freising by the Emperor Arnulf.

Nothing we know about the fate of the settlement and the monastery during the invasions of the Hungarians. But it is proved that already during the first decades of the 11th century there existed a bridge across the river Isar, that Moosburg belonged to the county of Ebersberg, and that nobles of Moosburg were bailiffs at Moosburg and Isen. There are reports of a great fire, the transformation of the monastery into a canons' convent in the 5th decade of the 11th century, and of the nobles von Asch who, to the west of the hill settlement, erected their seat of unknown extent.

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Probably at the same time in the year 1171 the Duke Henry convoked a diet at Moosburg, the foundation-stone of the new Romanic Castulus Church must have been laid. The year 1207 is the first reliable date to prove the erection of the church. In the adjacent castle of the counts of Moosburg a fire broke out which extended to the sacral building. The counts erected their new castle on the southern periphery of the settlement, the damages to the church were repaired within five years. On October 21st, 1212, the inaugural ceremony was performed by the bishops of Freising and Eichstätt; they consecrated the large three-naved basilica without transept which throughout the centuries has been preserved up to our days.

By a land partition in the year 1255 by the two sons of Duke Otto the Noble, Moosburg became a part of the newly established duchy of Lower Bavaria.

Count Conrad IV, the last of his race who died in the year 1283, was buried in St. Leonhard's Chapel (now St. Ursula's Chapel) where his tomb-plate can still be seen. The family's coat-of-arms which adorns as key-stone the Gothic vault of the chapel, has become later the city-arms by an act of grace of the emperor Louis the Bavarian.

The early 14th century was an exciting but glorious epoch for the Moosburg people: the Duke Louis, who as emperor was given the surname "the Bavarian", had fallen into dispute with the Austrian duke Frederic the Handsome because of his reigning as a guardian for the minor heirs of the Lower-Bavarian lineage, this matter having to be decided by arms. Moosburg, Landshut, Ingolstadt, Straubing and Munich supported the endeavors of Louis to execute the will of the deceased Lower Bavarian duke. On November 9th, 1313, the decisive battle near Gammelsdorf was fought, up to the evening. Frederic, defeated, had to sound the retreat which degenerated into a hasty flight across the rivers Isar and Inn. The victor gathered much booty. Still in times of the occupation by the king of Sweden Gustave Adolph arms and banners out of this booty were to be found before the high altar of St. Castulus' Church.

The emperor's reward to the loyal Moosburg burghers was the granting of the city-arms: the three roses on a white-red divided shield, and the concession of a charter allowing them far-reaching rights, amongst them the right to fortify the town by ramparts, moats and gate-towers which, though modified several times, existed up to the 19th century.

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The construction of the new St. John's Church in the year 1347 to replace the old St. Michael's Church as parish church, bears witness of the growing of the town; its tower, a Gothic tally of the tower of the convent church, impersonates the citizens pride. The townscape shows the two towers forming a couple of perfect shape.

This was also the period when Moosburg reached its zenith on the field of cultural life. The convent school was known everywhere as a center cultivating the Latin language, and the choral songs proceeding from here cannot be imagined as absent in the history of Old Bavaria. The "Moosburger Graduale", adapted by Genzmer, experienced a new revival.

During the 15th century, when Moosburg in consideration of its privileges, was called to the sessions of the provincial diet, the town developed into a rich economic center; the fairs, weekly markets and cattle-markets still held in our times, reach back to the said epoch.

A milestone in the history of art is the year 1468, when the foundation-stone of the Gothic choir of St. Castulus Church was laid by duke Henry the Rich of Lower Bavaria. The completion of the altar room and the erection of the large shrine altar created by the Landshut master Hans Leinberger in early 16th century demonstrate that on the field of art the canons would not allow to be put in the shade by the former ducal capital.

Regarding Hans Leinberger very few authentic records are existing. We have no authentic dates as to his birth, apprenticeship and death; we know only the works he created during the period from 1513 to 1530. He lived and worked at Landshut, where in St. Martin's and other churches we find works of his own hand. Moosburg possesses, in addition to the high altar of St. Castulus, two crucifixes and an epitaph of the canon Mornauer, called the plague votive relief. In the neighboring Feldkirchen we find in the village church a sitting Madonna with the Child, and in the parish church of Erding a bigger than life-size choir arch crucifixus. The decade the famous wood-carver worked at Moosburg has become a glorious period for this town and the Old Bavarian art of the latest Gothic.

Regarding the development of the constitution of the town the year 1491 was of particular importance. At this time Duke George the Rich of Lower-Bavaria-Landshut made out "der Stat ordnung zu Mospupg".

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In the year 1503, after extinction of the Landshut ducal lineage and the termination of the bloody war of succession, the town came again to the united Bavarian duchy, then ruled by Albrecht IV.

By new privileges the dukes protected the interests of the town which was loaded with considerable debts because of floods and continuous river channel improvements; but it was a hard blow for Moosburg when in the year 1591 duke William V and the prince bishop Ernest of Freising decided to remove the convent and the relics of St. Castulus to Landshut, intention which finally was realized in the year 1599. By ducal order the minster became the parish church, the population offering opposition to that decision through two centuries.

The year 1601 brought the end of long debates between the Landshut government and the town council concerning the new fixation of precincts; 23 main marking columns were erected to determine the enlarged city area.

The horrors of the Thirty Years' War began to approach. During the night to May 5th, 1632, the Swedish general Gustave Horn entered Moosburg via the castle of Isareck; the most important river crossing was in hands of the Swedes. King Gustave a short attack intended to occupy Landshut, the entire corps of the margrave of Baden-Durlach had stopped at Moosburg. After Adolph, the "winter king" Frederic V of the Palatinate, and General Horn consisting of about 15,000 men had gathered on May 15th at the Moosburg camp, having to be maintained at the expense of the citizens. Against payment of high contributions the latter were redeemed from pillage and arson, and finally the Swedish units continued their march via Freising to the elector's residence Munich.

Two years later - 1634 - Moosburg was again occupied by hostile military forces which under the duke Bernhard of Saxe-Weimar and the Swedish field-marshal Horn passed the town on their way from Freising to Regensburg, furnishing proofs of the cruel warfare of that time. In addition the great plague raged terribly in the country.

Again in March 1648, the last year of the war, Moosburg had to lodge within its walls troops under the generals Wrangel and Turenne, which for want of provisions soon continued their march straight on to Dachau and Donauwbrth, taking with them abundant contribution sums and booties dating from the battle near Gammelsdorf.

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Equally during the Spanish War of Succession the town had to suffer the horrors of war. Already during the second year -1702 - Austrian troops had entered the town and remained there in garrison for ten years.

During the short period of peace the elector Charles Albrecht, the later emperor Charles VII, granted the town a last charter and fixed the precincts which at that time comprised 14,978 steps.

Again during the Austrian War of Succession Moosburg had to suffer the quartering of foreign soldiers, when after a short armistice the Bavarian army units and their allies were defeated (1745.)

A new period of peace was just healing the sores left by the past war, when in the last decade of the 18th century again hostile troops appeared before the town.

In the year 1796 the troops of the allies and the armies of the French revolution met for the first time on German territory. After the battle of Geisenfeld which turned out in disfavor of the allies, French spy corps had forced their way onward to Moosburg, but retired finally in view of the defeats in Franconia and the Upper Palatinate.

It was only in the year 1800 when stronger French army units under the chief general Moreau advanced against Bavaria. By virtue of the Parsberg armistice terms the French had the right to cantonments near the rivers Isar and Inn, and so they left a small garrison also at Moosburg. After the fall of the Ulm fortress in the year 1805 the troops of Murat advanced via Freising towards Landshut, garrisoning at Moosburg several divisions. On December 30th, a few days after ratification of the Bratislava treaty of peace, the emperor Napoleon I, on his way back to Paris, passed Moosburg, staying there for a short time.

In the year 1809 the Bavarian division Deroy, at the beginning of the hostilities between Frenchmen and Austrians, set out from Freising via Moosburg to Landshut, leaving a company with a gun to protect the Isar bridge. After Napoleon's victory near Abensberg with the assistance of the main contingent of the Bavarian troops, and after recovery of the Moosburg bridge, there were no further war events for more than a century.

Moosburg began its economic development.

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The construction of the railway-line between Munich and Landshut made the town accessible to economic life, so that already during the period prior to world war I modest efforts of industrialization could be undertaken.

The history of Moosburg reports of many fires; still during the past century two big fires have been registered, that of the year 1865 having destroyed nearly the whole medieval townscape except a few Gothic and baroque houses, so that to-day the city seems to date from the 19th century. The epoch between the two world wars brought about the establishment of the first industrial enterprises which meanwhile have become the backbone of economic life at Moosburg.

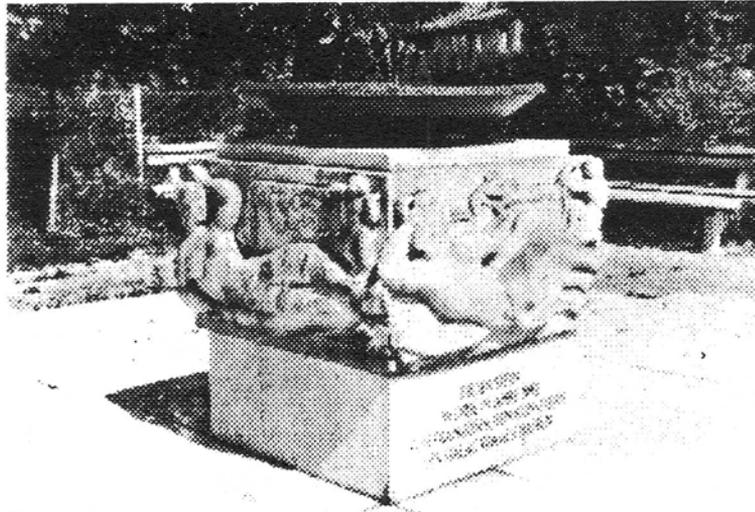
During world war II a camp for prisoners of war (Stalag VII A) was established to the North of the town, where during five years thousands of soldiers of many nations waited for the day of their liberation. On April 29th, 1945, they recovered liberty, the town being occupied that same day by the American army. Hard years of need and reconstruction had to be overcome, leading finally to a new boom.

Moosburg did not forget the hard fate of the prisoners of war. In the year 1963 a memorial stone designed and created during the war by French artists was unveiled on the former camp area. It bears the inscription:

"Stalag VII A 1939-1945

This memorial was created in the year 1942 by French artists of Stalag VII A

*The love for our country helped us to overcome need and grief.
Erected in the year 1963 by the town of Moosburg."*



History of
the Prison Camp
Stalag VII A
(1939-1945)

History of the Prison Camp Stalag VII A (1939-1945)

1. The Beginning of the Camp (From the testimony of Colonel Nepf)

On November 22, 1939, Colonel Nepf inspected with regimental medical officers Dr. Furst and Dr. Schatz according to the instructions from the headquarters of VII Army Corps regarding the construction of Stalag (stands for Stammlager - regular camp) VII A provided for on a tract of land north of the city.

The gentlemen were impressed neither by the poor conditions nor the location. Down the Isar a marshy pasture land, towards the city a fertilizer factory and a dairy, a house and a barn. The chosen place was hardly scenic or healthy enough to support the erection of a camp. But, all the misgivings were of no use. Someone in Munich insisted upon this tract of land for other good reasons. "In 14 days a camp must stand here, a camp for 10,000 prisoners of war," read the orders.

Members of the government labor service, under the command of Master Sergeant Klopfer, began the construction. They set up a temporary delousing station in the great room of the fertilizer factory, under the direction of the Medical Officer Dr. Schatz. This temporary delousing station of Stalag VII A was designated as a model showplace on February 14, 1940 at a conference of the camp doctors in Berlin, although it by no means met the expectations of the camp commanders and the infirmary doctors.

As the next step, 25 tents were set up for the prisoners. The first prisoners came on October 19 at about 6 PM, there were about 200 Poles and 900 Ukrainians. It happened to once again be raining, coming down in fact in torrents, and they were boarded for the night on the train.

On the 20th of October the first delousing began. In 15 hours 1100 Ukrainians and Poles were deloused. Rain streamed down from the heavens. Only 500 prisoners could be accommodated in the covered factory hall. After the empty train was sent away, the other 600 stood in the open air and had to protect themselves as well as they could from the rain. Later the newly arrived Poles were quartered in the so-called 'unclean tents.'

Gradually order came to the camp. Until a barracks, or in some cases two could be supplied, the sick bay was put to use even though it was too small. Also

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on March 14 a new delousing station was ready to open for business.

The camp administration had many worries. Originally the camp was meant for around 10,000 men. This required German staff with an effective strength of 107 officers, civil servants and troops. After the defeat of the western allies in Flanders and France the number of prisoners grew to be nearly an avalanche. For a time, night after night 1000 to 2500 new prisoners of war were taken in. The influx did not diminish, although already over 98,000 troops had traveled through the barracks and the tent city.

In July and August 1940 a colorful mixture of people rolled through the camp: White, yellow, brown and black Frenchmen; blond Flemings and Alsatians; Moroccans; Algerians; Tunisians; Egyptians; Arabs and Jews; Negroes from the Gold and Ivory Coasts; Senegalese and Sudanese Negroes; Madagascans; Indochinese; Malayans; Islanders from Martinique, Guadelupe and Haiti; foreign legionnaires; members of other foreign regiments; Polish legionnaires; Bretons and Normans; Corsicans and Basques; Italians and Spanish communists in French service; Ukrainians and Russians; Romanians, Bulgarians and Yugoslavians; Croatians, Slovenians and Serbians; Dutchmen and Belgians; Armenians; Portuguese and Hungarians; Greeks and Turks; Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians; Cubans; Swedes and Norwegians. Prisoners from 72 nations populated 40 barracks and many tents. In that number were 2000 doctors and orderlies, as well as 170 clergymen in uniform." (From Colonel Nepf)

In spite of that, meager food supplies could be supplied regularly to the prisoners. Daily there was:

8000 kg bread

2000 kg meat

30,000 kg potatoes

300 kg salt and sugar

4600 kg other food, for example, soup makings, cabbage and other vegetables In total therefore about 45,000 kg (900 Zentner) [1 Zentner = 50 kg] were required.

The main camp required a total area of about 3,500,000 square meters. The "Front Camp" was separated from this main camp. There the reception of the prisoners took place.

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Here they were examined, recorded in the files, and received an identification mark. Immediately after that there was the delousing. Only after that were the prisoners placed in the barracks.

For the sick ones three medical centers were available, which 300 to 600 prisoners sought out daily. Four French and two Polish doctors, besides ten French and six Polish orderlies as well as 50 French and Polish assistants, who to a great extent had mastered the German language, all under the supervision of the German doctors, provided for smooth-running medical care.

As many prisoners in need of medical care as possible were examined by the camp medical officer and his three doctors. The diagnoses of the foreign doctors were generally correct. The French doctors were under the supervision of the French Dr. Noreau. The German dentist was assisted by a French colleague named Dr. Casanova.

The main concern from the beginning was the miserable condition of the clothing of the newcomers. An improvement in the situation was achieved through the construction of craft shops in the camp. 62 Frenchmen and 76 Poles worked in a tailor shop. 239 Frenchmen and 76 Poles were employed in a shoe making shop.

At the start of autumn, with the onset of rainy weather, they also had to work at shoe repair on Sunday; on a single Sunday over 700 pairs of shoes were repaired. In addition craft shops were manned by large work parties.

Likewise, there also existed in the camp a carpenter shop, a wheelwright's shop, glassworks, locksmith's shop, forge, paint shop, a clockmaker's workshop, a mechanical workshop for electrical engineering and one for bicycles.

Thus all requirements were provided for. The prompt distribution of this new manpower around the countryside was the most difficult, but significant task. Around 2000 work parties of different sizes were put in place in the region of Defense District VII (excluding Swabia).

For guards the camp command had two battalions at its disposal. The payment of the prisoners in "camp money" happened through a special paymaster's office. Contractors who employed prisoners of war had to settle with the paymaster's office with regard to what OKW appropriated for operations.

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In respect to the appointed prisoners about 900,000 to 1,000,000 RM [Reichsmarks] in compensation were disbursed in a month.

The "camp money" could be accepted by authorized businesses in the workplace. In the city limits of Moosburg there were nine businesses that had settled the issue of "camp money" with the paymaster's office. In December 1940, for example, 540,000 RM in "camp money" was exchanged with the authorized businesses.

The prisoners' postal service as well as their parcel post was governed by the postal inspector. Fifty German officers, noncommissioned officers and troops were used for the inspection of the incoming and outgoing prisoners' mail. They were assisted by one hundred eighty French and Polish helpers.

The interpreters had much work, as on the one hand in a single week about 140,000 letters were taken in, and on the other hand about 70,000 letters from the prisoners and their relatives were sent out. Every letter had to be inspected.

The number of the packages was about 15,000 pieces per week. A true record was achieved by the Christmas packages of 1940. In the time from the 1st to the 19th of December there arrived: 26 railroad cars with 150,000 personal packages as well as 12 railroad cars with gift parcels.

2. Growth of the Camp (From a report by ColoneBurger)

During the course of the war a great scarcity of agricultural workers prevailed. As substitute manpower, the prisoners of war were mobilized for agricultural work. The prisoner was frequently the only male in the house and thus was the guardian of the farm.

The treatment of the prisoners of war seldom differed from that of a member of the family. Relations were similar in the small craft workshops. If the prisoner could not quite replace a foreman who had gone into the armed forces, he was the first journeyman. Most of the prisoners were careful about the maintenance of the businesses and around them they were just as conscientious as if they were in their own businesses.

The accommodation of the prisoners was in the same places, often in spare

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bedrooms.

Not everyone had the good fortune to find a workplace to his liking. There was great difficulty in the case of unpopular assignments.

Every day verified information was taken in by the camp administration from all walks of life of the population, who reported in gratitude on the humanitarian behavior of the prisoners in relation to the German population (for example, the rescue of people, help during air raids, making of Christmas gifts for 5,000 children of bomb victims in Munich, and so on).

The prison camps [Stalags, short for Stammlager], at least officially, remained exempt from the direct exercise of influence by agents of the party. It was seen differently by a number of foreign officials. Here the lives of the prisoners of war were played out in the public eye.

The prisoners were closely involved in the workings of the economic system and because of that were in the permanent view of the party. In spite of that, however, no one achieved influence on the treatment of the prisoners. Punishment orders were not generally given. Special squads were merely normal work parties, which would be charged with prisoners, who for example as a result of repeated attempted escapes (at least three) or other offenses required a strict guard. They also assigned to special squads prisoners who had to be guarded while they worked.

In other respects the conditions of the camp, general treatment, care of mail and gift packages, were similar to those of the work parties. They were naturally known to the international commissions and would be inspected by them.

With concern the camp administration saw the development of a "black market" among the prisoners. They did this through the irregular distribution of packages which were obtained from the International Red Cross in Geneva. These donations were only supposed to be given to needy prisoners of war for the improvement of their living situation.

The inmates of the camp generally received more than, for example, the prisoners who were busy in agricultural work. Those who were ill, for example, received segregated special rations. When prisoners of war bartered away gift parcels in that way, they took them away from the general distribution and by this

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means wronged their own needy comrades.

In the course of time trade or commerce developed. Instead of controlled food distribution, most of all with bread and meat was exchange for articles of clothing or cash payment. For example for 1-3 loaves of bread, 5 and later 10 Marks in cash was required. For a canister of coffee 60-80 Marks, later 100 Marks and more would be paid.

In the circumstances the intolerable condition of the really deplorable state of affairs in the exchange trade had to be accepted until 1943 when it was endeavored to achieve a change through organized measures. This, however, did not entirely succeed, because the established workings of trade were too multifaceted.

The Stalag had towards the end of the war a personnel and guard troop strength of around 2000 persons. In the camp about 80,000 prisoners of war were to be found. Besides that there were about 80,000 prisoners and 8000 guard troops who were distributed on outside details.

In Moosburg at the end of 1944 one could observe a continuous influx of prisoners from all nations. The camp administration was up to the last days anxious to ease the lot of the prisoners. Everyone certainly knew the Red Cross crew from Switzerland bringing gift parcels.

At this time the greater camp area was seen to be full of anxiety. What would happen to the city and its German population at the disbanding of the camp?

Toward the end of the war the military situation came to a crisis with giant strides. The allies already pressed hard on Austria and Silesia. They fought on the Po [River] plain and stood at the Rhine [River].

The problem regarding the lodging of the prisoners in this region became more and more urgent. The sensible decision, to leave them on the spot, would be rejected because the Fuhrer's orders were that no prisoners of war must fall into the hands of the enemy. For this reason they would be evacuated and with the moving back of the front they went ever farther and farther by road and on foot.

In the last stronghold of troops, that is, in Bavaria, the prisoners of war gathered themselves together. Inasmuch as they were not rolled over, they thrust

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aside the pursuing enemy towards the south, and they landed then in Moosburg.

The marching columns of prisoners of war found wonderful support through the Red Cross organization in Geneva. It placed over a hundred trucks at their disposal. British, Canadian, and American drivers from the ranks of the prisoners of war collected these vehicles in Switzerland. Not one of the drivers used this unique opportunity for escape.

These truck crews provided the "campless" prisoners of war with additional food supplies. They drove to central Germany, Saxony, Bohemia, Austria, Württemberg, and so on. Thousands of traveling prisoners of war had their lives saved in that way.

In almost continuous columns thousands of worn out prisoners, exhausted, hungry figures, poured into the Stalag. Laden with bag and baggage, wrapped in blankets, using baby carriages and rollers as luggage carriers they arrived here. Here they all found shelter, food, and medical aid.

Although the camp administration very strongly opposed an influx of prisoners, the miserable march was not to be stopped. For this reason they requisitioned tents for 30,000 men in order to grant the exhausted ones shelter and help. So then the camp resembled an anthill. The camp that was built for only 12,000 prisoners, must now shelter about 80,000 or more.

Enormous enemy aircraft squadrons crossed at this time in majestic flights over the camp. This documented in a convincing manner the might of the allies. The camp inmates were roused, deeply moved by the demonstrated strength. Almost daily this picture repeated itself in the Moosburg skies.

The prisoners had a feeling that in a few weeks they would obtain freedom. They endured, they reconciled themselves to the camp orders, obeyed the safety precautions and with perfect discipline looked forward to the arrival of their liberators.

Until the last moment gifts flowed from the IRC (International Red Cross). Even though special wishes could not be fulfilled, in this way the prisoners were often given things which bordered on a superhuman performance from the camp command.

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was recognized that all precautions only pursued the intention of making the difficult lot of the prisoners tolerable within the bounds of possibility.

Naturally there were also tense moments, brought about through propaganda and gravely deceitful rumors in the camp. Especially objectionable in this was the behavior of individual Germans who misled prisoners into unlawful actions. The danger of camp insurrections and escape attempts was in the air. The prisoners of war owed it only to internal discipline and proper behavior under international law that terrible misfortune was prevented. They refused, as the camp administration only subsequently discovered, every collaboration offered them by the Germans.

3. Dissolution of the Camp

The closer the end of the war came, the more frequent and numerous were the appearances of enemy air squadrons over the city.

While Landshut, Freising and Erding were bombed, Moosburg continued to be spared. This is above all owing to Colonel Burger. He requested through the Geneva Red Cross to keep bombardment at a distance because of the large number of prisoners. With that promise a strict pledge of secrecy was imposed on the camp commandant.

The fronts moved closer and closer to the city of Moosburg. For the last stage of the war the commandant, Colonel Burger, passed on the following military orders:

Everyone not needed for the direct guard of the prisoners of war, soldiers of the guard troop as well as the Stalag personnel, are to join the fighting troops.

The officers of the prisoners of war are to be evacuated. Colonel Burger knew that the danger to the prisoners of war during a defense of Moosburg or the evacuation of prisoner officers was in flagrant contradiction of the international convention. Consequently, he communicated with command immediately after the receipt of the orders through a neutral party in Moosburg with regard to the prisoners and permission for the prisoner officers to be housed in the camp.

The headquarters of military district VII showed understanding of his proposals. However, as the defensive sector of Moosburg would be taken over during the

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night (the night of April 28) by the SS division "Niebelungen", the commanding officer demanded of him the strict enforcement of the orders. They appeased the SS men with the assurance that they were preparing for the fulfillment of the orders.

However as the SS commander was once again traveling Burger assembled the officers of the prisoners of war (about 8000 American, 4000 British and 3000 Russian officers, among them 200 generals) and notified them in the presence of Major Kollers the chief of the guard troops (national defense battalion 512 with at least 1500 men), that he would not defend Moosburg and also would evacuate no officers, but that he would hand over the camp to the Americans in good order.

But how should this be achieved? Burger developed a brilliant plan. He could persuade the SS commander to go with him under flag of truce with a Swiss delegation, which arrived that morning in the camp, to the American Army about reaching a cease-fire in the Moosburg sector. In that way, not only would his military orders be discharged, because if he did not attack he didn't need to defend, but also international conventions would be complied with.

They departed also with a large white flag in an SS car and a truck with a Swiss delegate and also an American and a British colonel. Burger knew that the SS commanding officer would not come back, because under the Hague Convention commanding officers of the fighting troops who go under flag of truce may be detained as long as military operations continue. About this, however, the SS commander apparently had no suspicion.

About 6 PM the Swiss truck returned. The American headquarters declined the offer. However, they took notice of the surrender offer that Burger had allowed to be conveyed through the American and British colonels and guaranteed the personnel treatment according to international law.

The arrival of the Americans was promised for April 29 at noon. Now, that meant only just the SS division which waited for a message had to be detained.

This was a success. Major Koller fortified the SS through deception about the strength of his battalion, in the belief that along with the declining of the offer the Americans could put up resistance.

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

In the camp, meanwhile, the preparation for surrender began. The German mail service was withdrawn on April 29. After that the details of the surrender were discussed with prisoner of war officers. On April 29 at noon finally the Americans arrived in the Stalag, entirely due to Colonel Burger's plan, without it coming to a military defense.

It is owing to Camp Commandant Colonel Burger alone that Moosburg and the camp were spared a catastrophe. At the risk of his life, with a daring plan, he provided for an orderly transfer of Stalag VII A, Moosburg and thereby prevented great injury.

After the liberation of Stalag VII A it was converted by the American military authorities into a camp for civilian internees. In 1948 the entire camp site was released, and with that the administration passed to the province of Bavaria, and later to the federal government.

The new inhabitants already were maintaining it. They were German refugees, who after difficult years of suffering and abandonment, found a new home in Moosburg.

Thus the prisoner of war camp Stalag VII A formed the nucleus of Moosburg's 'New City'.

Composition of the Prisoners of War by Nationality

DATE	FRANCE	GREAT BRITAIN	BELGIUM	POLAND	SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE	SOVIET UNION	ITALY	U.S.A.	NETHERLANDS	VARIOUS NATIONS	TOTAL	In the Labor Force
1 January 1942	47,951	1,884		934	3,680	4,620					59,169	53,301
1 June 1942	46,608	2,075		929	6,653	9,188					62,453	54,134
1 January 1943	44,240	1,902		848	3,306	15,472					65,771	57,325
1 August 1943	38,591	72	1	926	3,176	16,009	845				59,620	51,013
1 January 1944	40,067	4,472	1	904	4,923	13,101	10,422	200	6		74,096	54,932
1 July 1944	39,173	5,535	1	904	5,999	12,384	11,385	1,584		237	77,202	60,289
1 January 1945	38,156	7,975	1	1,408	5,852	14,300	1,540	5,767		1,163	76,162	
29 April 1945	220,000 prisoners records were found by the liberators											

Stalag VII A

in Words

and Pictures

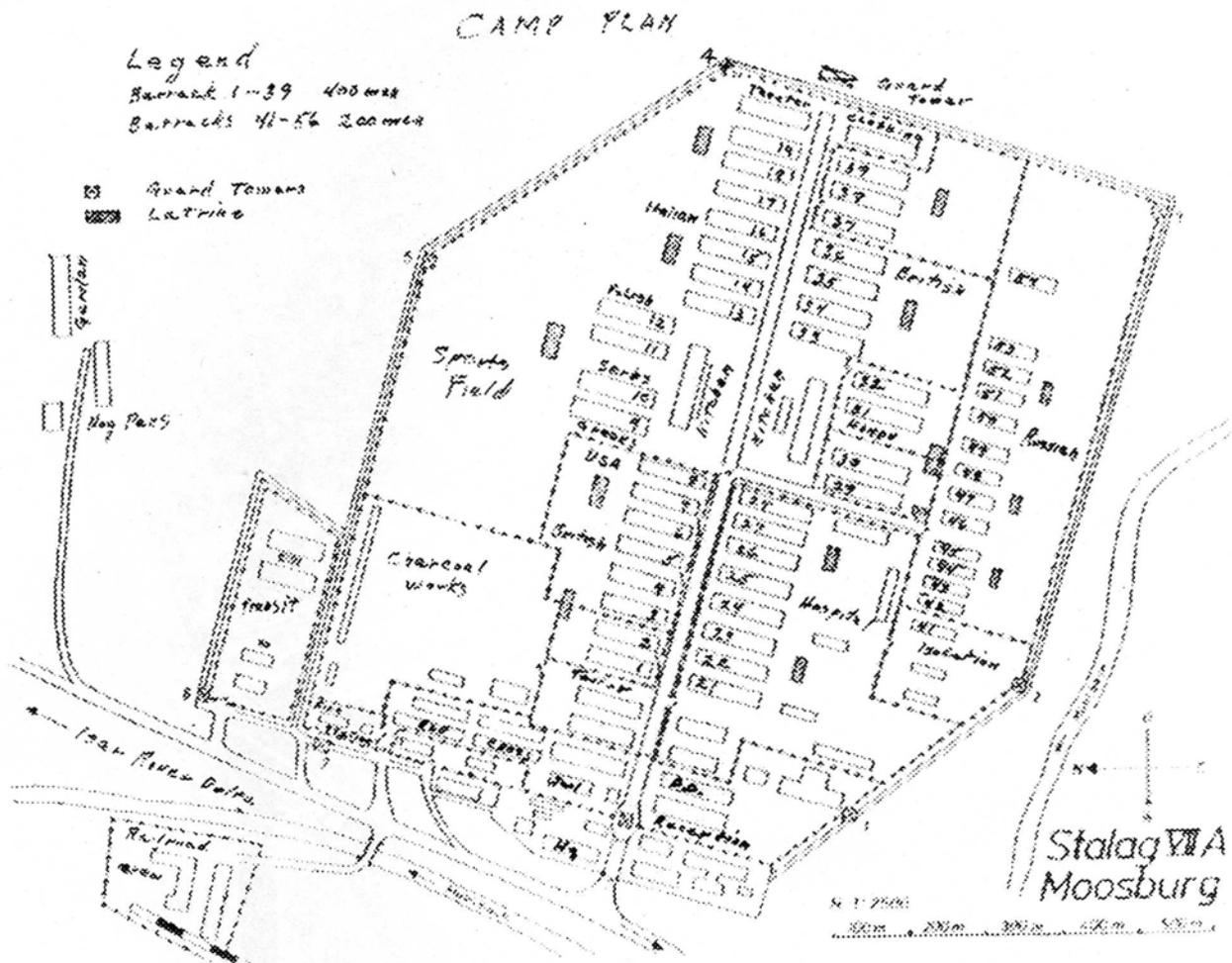
Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

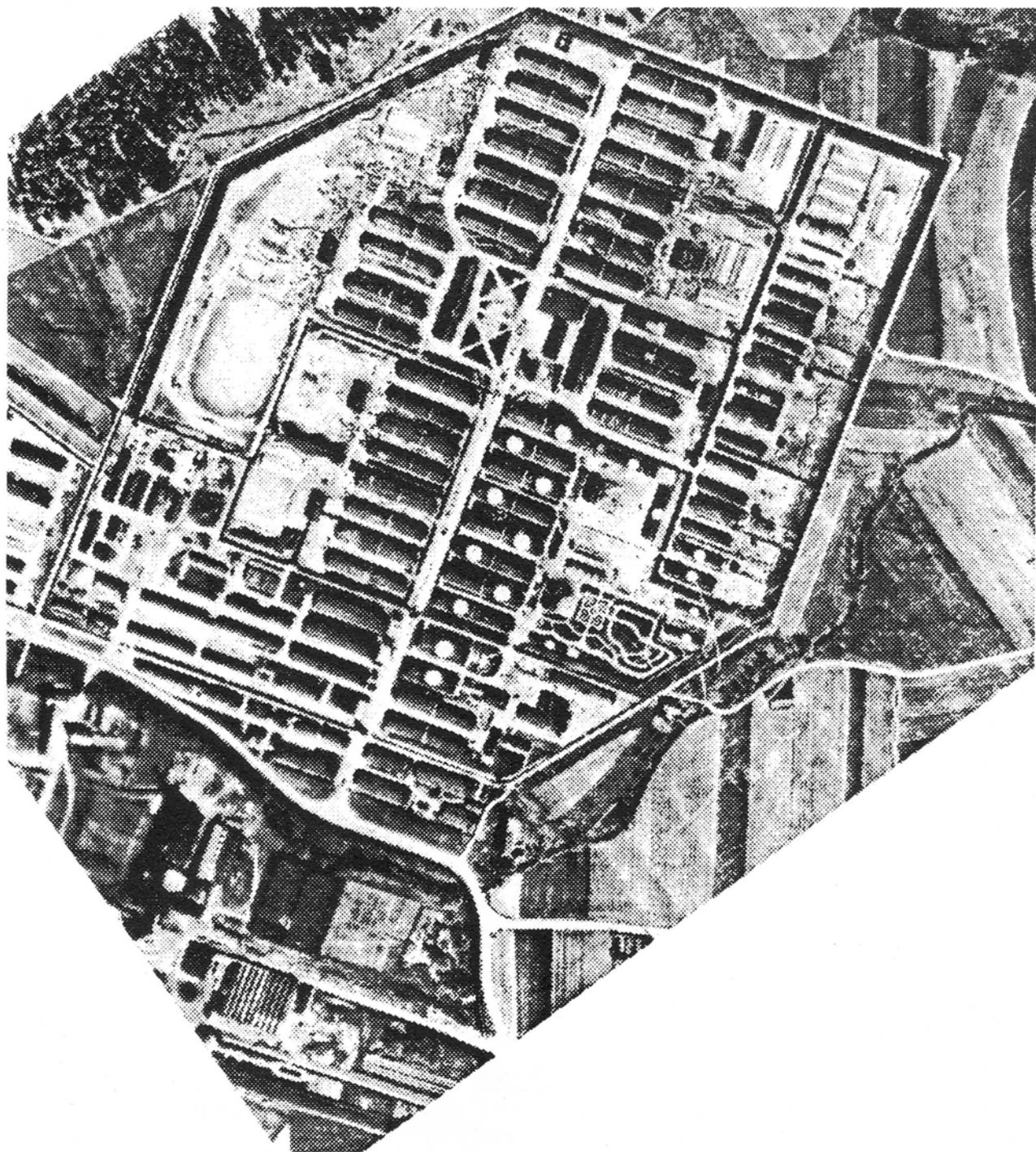


Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

Photo of Stalag 7 A - April 9, 1945



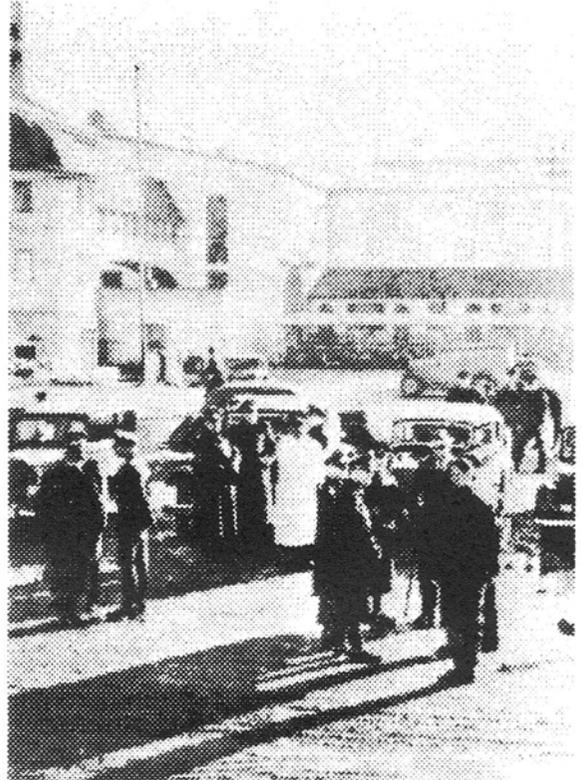
Note tents in areas used for sports fields and appells.

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

Pictures of the Manufacturing plant of Souothern Chemical



(October 1939) Where the first prisoners of war and internees would be temporarily housed.



A commission from the high command of the armed forces from Berlin inspected the layout of Stalag VII A while it was under construction.

Development of the Camp

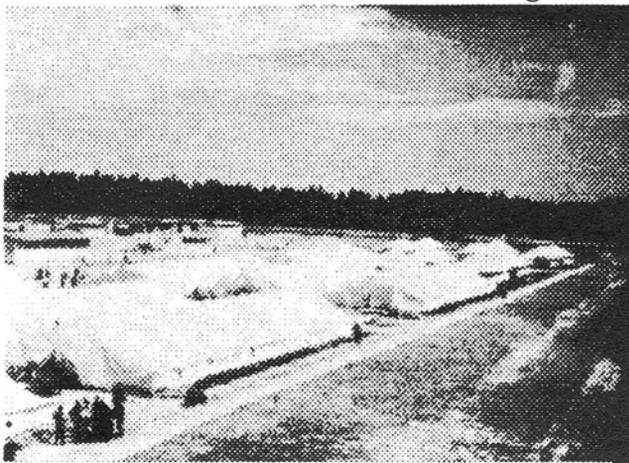


Construction phase "South".

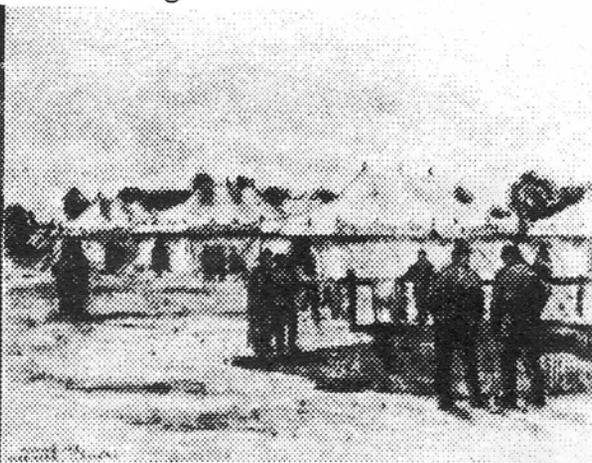


The Main Street of the Camp

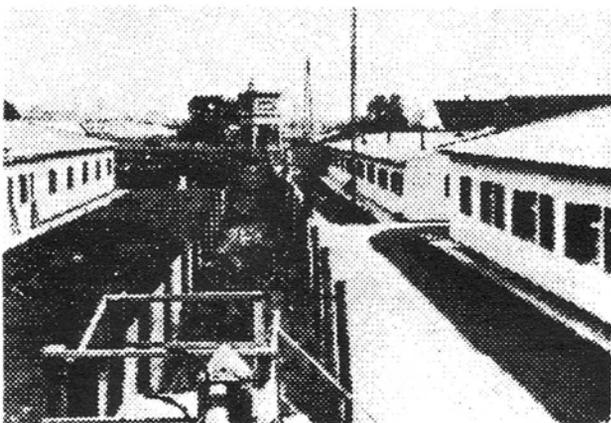
Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



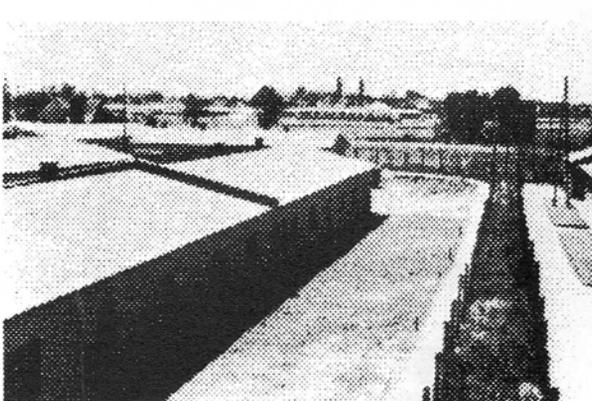
Partial view of the "Tent City South".



As a result of the huge influx of prisoners of war the accommodations in the Southern Chemical factory soon could hold no more. Two tent cities, the "Tent City South" and the "Tent City North", had to be temporarily set up quickly in the large new prison camp grounds, to receive the arriving prisoners of war until the completion of the proper "barracks city".

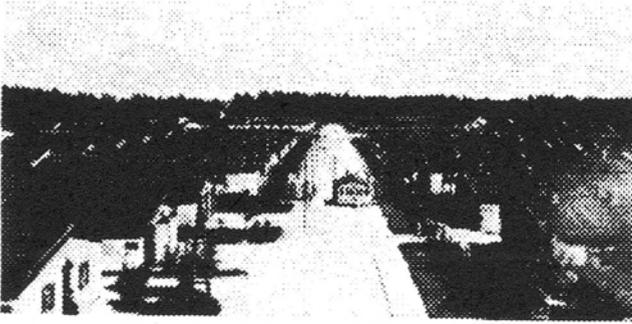


Buildings for the Abwehr [defense forces] and the paymaster's office.

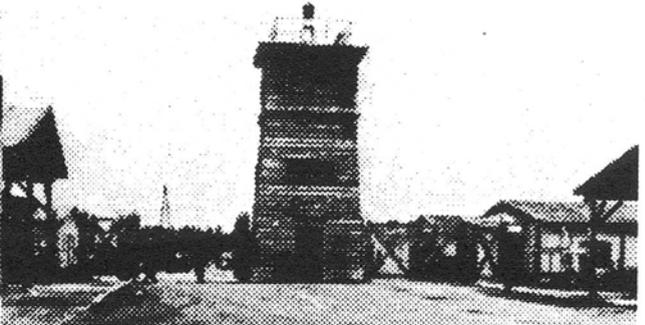


Infirmary buildings.

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



A photograph after the completion of the Stalag. The one kilometer long, paved Main Street in the center of the camp draws ones eye to the edge of the forest.



The crowded "town square" of Stalag VII A was by the main guard tower (the middle guard tower), which had an entrance gate and an exit gate. It was the only entrance and the only approach to the prisoner of war camp.

Prisoners of War - Nationalities



Serbian, Arab, Indian and French prisoners of war (white and black) - like all new arrivals - wait in front of the delousing station for their delousing.



Greek and Albanian guerrillas come into the camp in a large group as internees.



"Colored" man from the Sudan.



"Colored" man from Guinea.

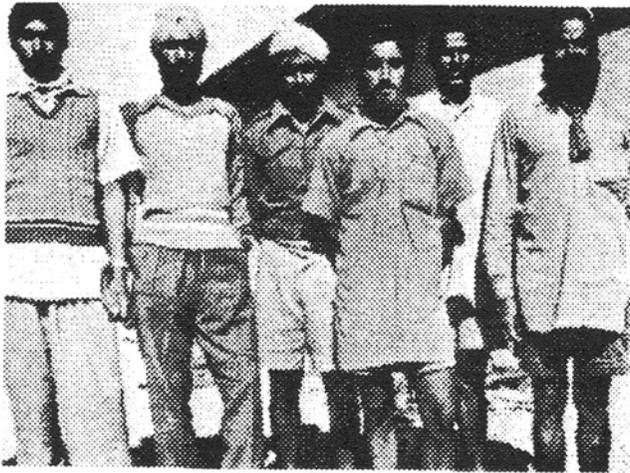


The "colored" transport was popular with the inhabitants of Moosburg, with its often exotic, charmingly picturesque groups of people



Russian prisoners of war who were assigned to the camp.

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



Colonial soldiers of the British army from the East Indies.



British prisoners of war from Australia and New Zealand.



Serbian prisoners of war



Officer of the Serbian War Ministry.

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



**Arabs and people of mixed race
from Asia Minor and North Africa**



**Those who belong to the race of Rus-
sian Turks from central Asia, who
show Mongolian, Chinese and also
European blood.**

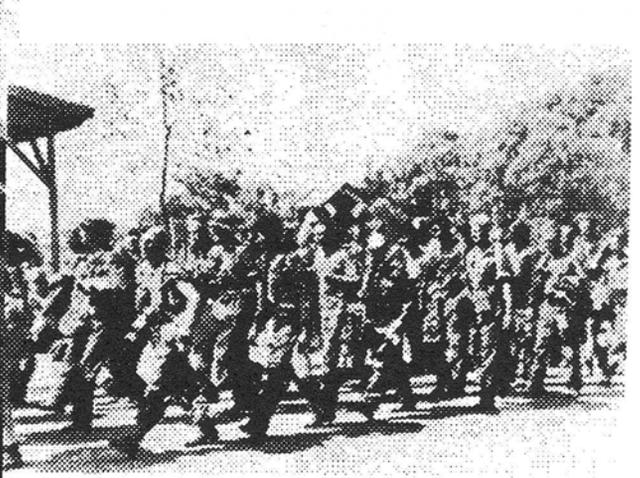


**This memorial was created in 1942 by French artists of
Stalag VII A**

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



British Prisoners of War



French Prisoners of War



American prisoners of war from the USA who were captured in Africa and the Italian theater, and also American fliers, who were shot down in aerial

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



French prisoner of war acting as a policeman, who because of his position carries a walking stick as a symbolic weapon.



In disguise, prisoners of war who escaped and were recaptured.

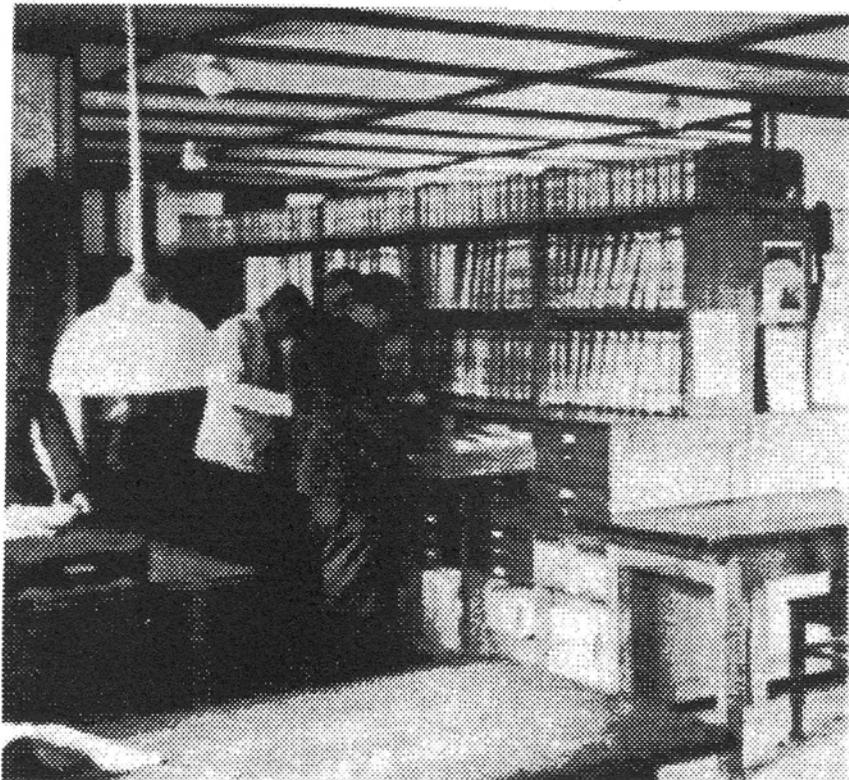


Resistance Fighters (Partisans) from Serbia and Croatia. (July 1944)

Life in the Camp



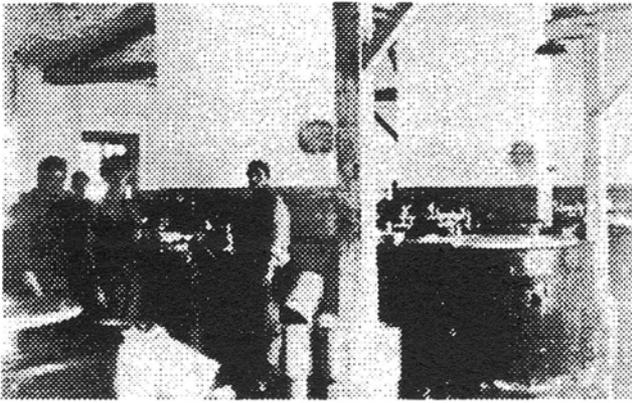
Prisoners of war and co-workers in main records.



Records Office Room - Prisoners Personnel Office

In two large barracks in the administration area of Stalag VII A the prisoners personnel office, with the designation "Prisoners of War Main Records", was housed. Alongside the permanent German core staff were also placed prisoners of war of all nations as interpreters and handwriting experts.

By the end of the war over 220,000 personnel documents of prisoners of war were found in the records office.



The main kitchen of the camp could in from one to two hours feed about 30,000 prisoners of war.

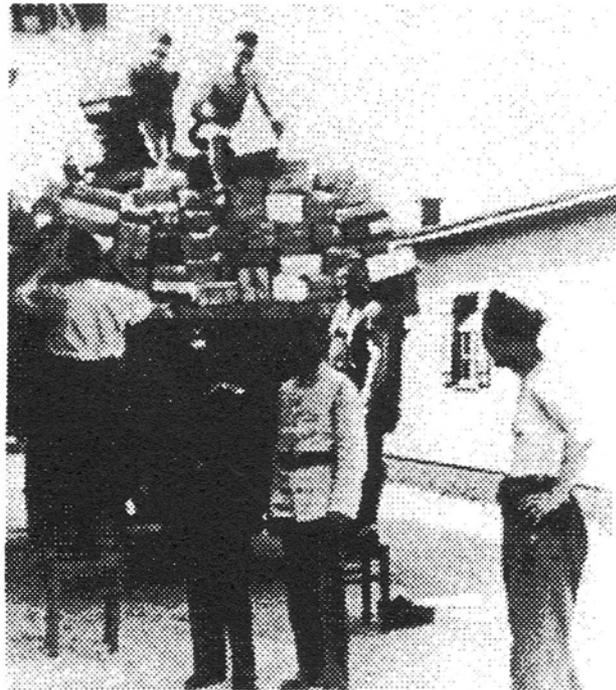


Every day there were three meal-times. As far as was possible their accustomed fare was prepared for the prisoners of war.

Prisoners Post Office



Drinking water (filtered water) and wash water stations are also outside the residential barracks at the disposal of the prisoners of war.



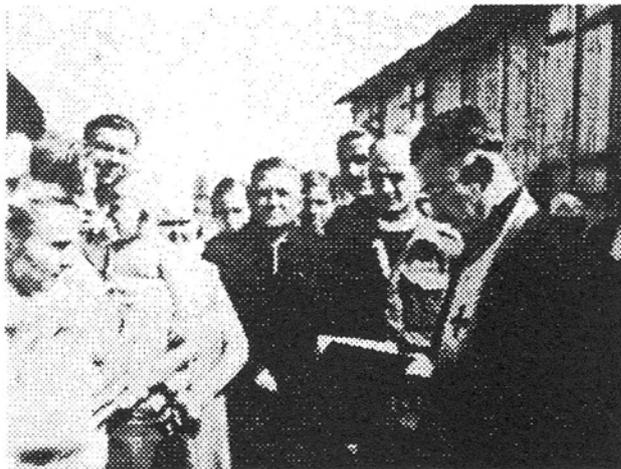
Religion in Camp



The Catholic prisoners of war - mainly French - organized yearly, with the approval of the Camp Commanders and to the delight of the Catholic clergy, a festive Corpus Christi procession.



Three chaplains (British, French and American).



Baptism in the north camp of the stalag.

The camp also took in families from the Russian, Ukrainian, Bosnian and Serbian territories.



The families had been evacuated from Germany. Births within the camp were considered a rarity. Newborn babies and small children could be baptized by the rituals of their faith.

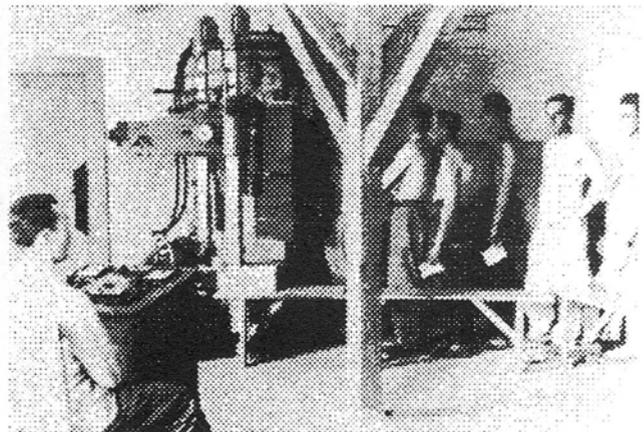
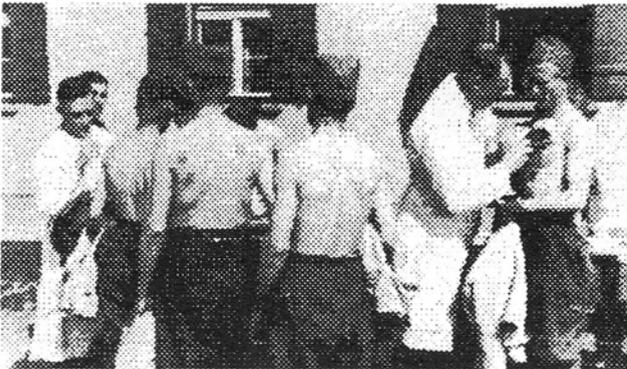


Praying Hindus.
One was not allowed to enter their praying place, which was laid out facing east, while wearing shoes.



Cremation of a dead Hindu
In December 1944 a Hindu died in the stalag. It was the wish of all the Hindus present in the camp that the deceased should be cremated according to their religious rituals.

Medical Treatment

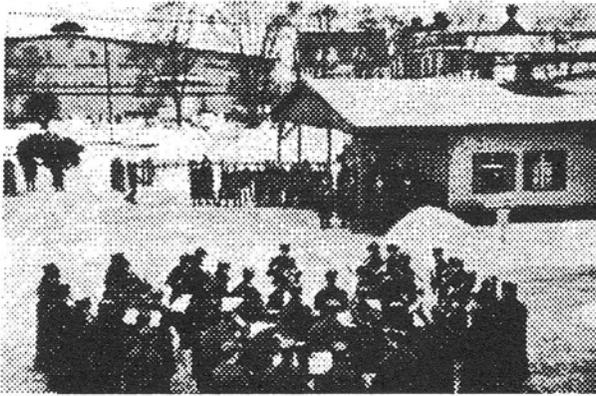


The residential camp had attached to it a large prison hospital with over 1000 beds, including the quarantine [contagious disease] barracks.

Outfitted with modern X-ray machines and other medical equipment it could, with its international medical staff and their assistants, combat all epidemics and treat difficult medical and surgical cases.

Numerous infirmaries (for every nation its own infirmary) took care of the small cases to take the burden off the hospital.

Music and Theater



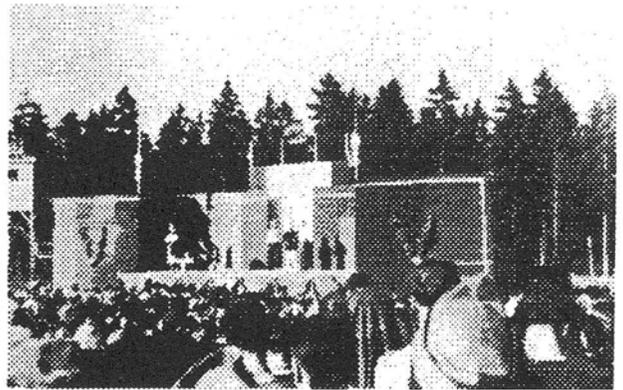
Prisoners of War Concert Band



British Orchestra



String Quartet



Open-air theater of Stalag VII A
French prisoners of war (September
1942)



Yugoslavian ensemble at a Carnival
[Shrovetide or Mardi Gras]
celebration (January 1945).

Library



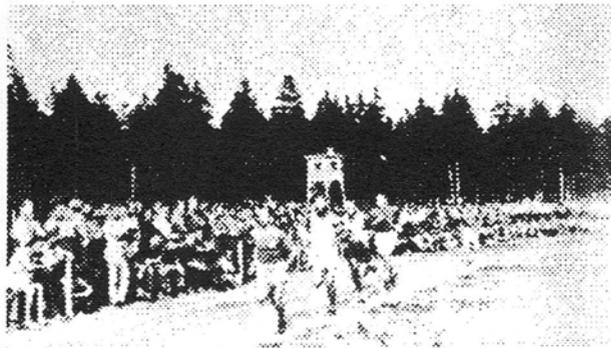
Free Time - Sports



Games of chance were everywhere



Russian prisoner
makes straw shoes.

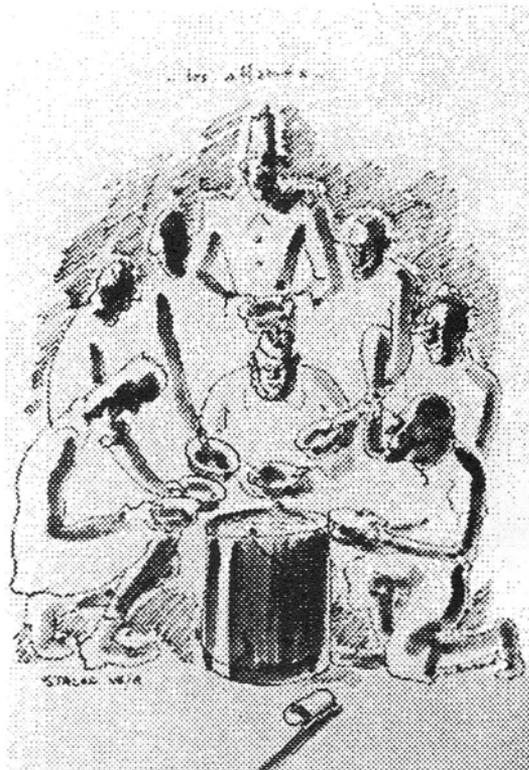




Costume?
(Written in French)



The Letters
(Written in French)



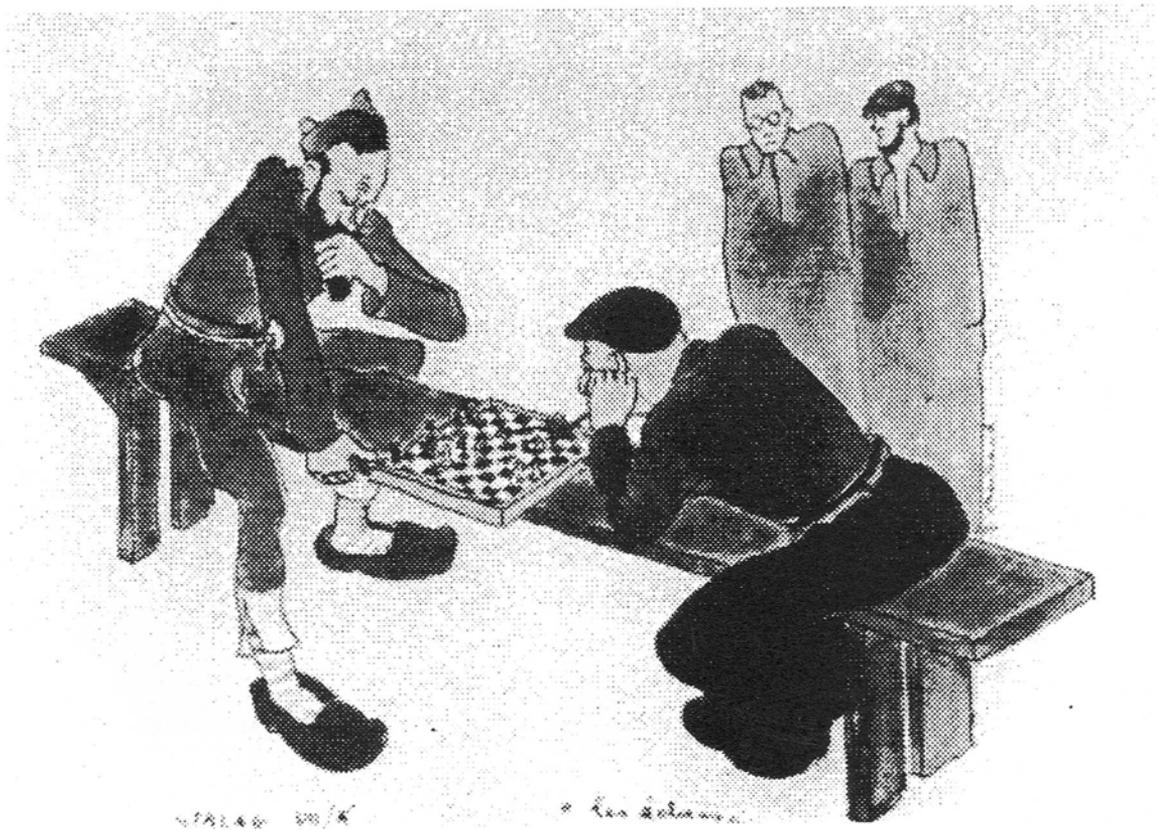
The Starving Ones
(written in French)



The Artist

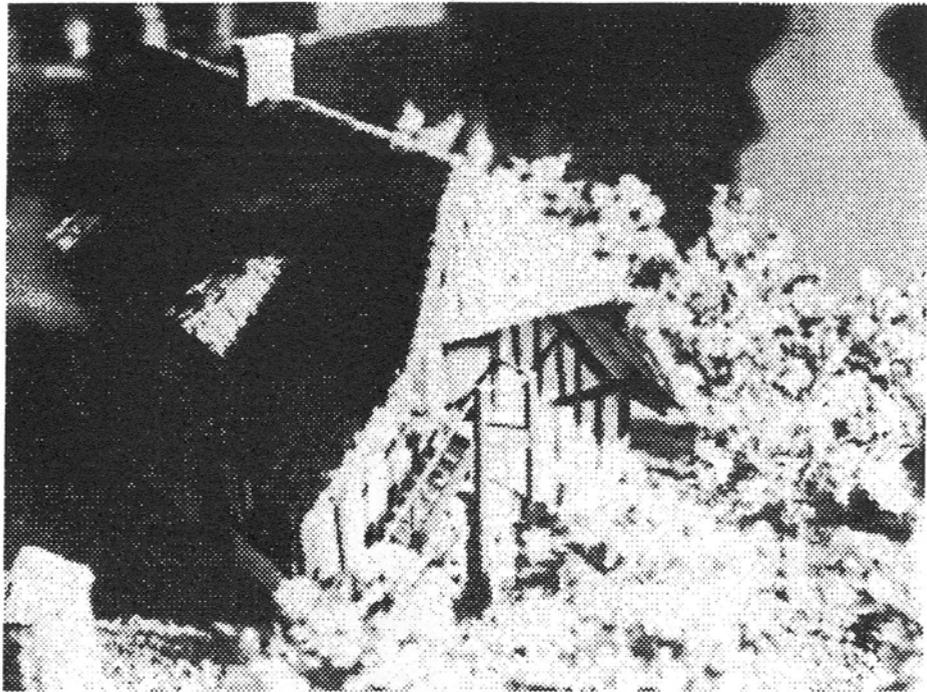


Trading of Possessions

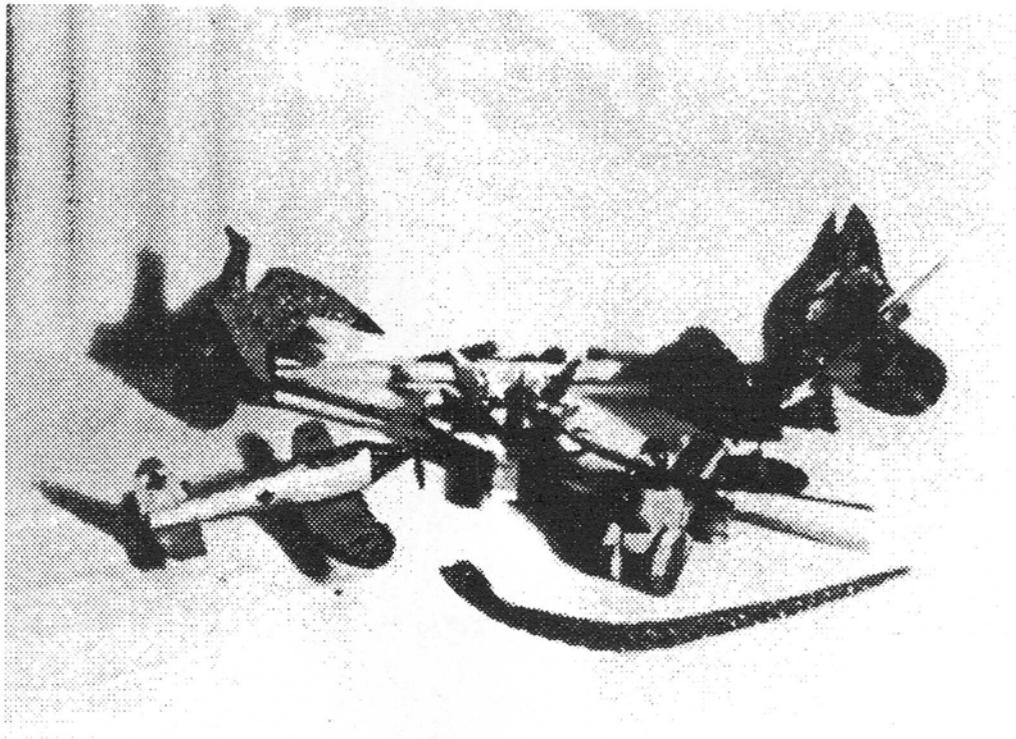


Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

Handicraft of the Prisoners of War



A Farm from Normandy



Russian Prisoners of War Carved Wooden Toys



Black market and exchange existed in the stalag, although they were not permitted. Bottom Picture: Traded were tobacco products, provisions from home and Red Cross packages and household goods, as well as jewelry, gold and silver coins.

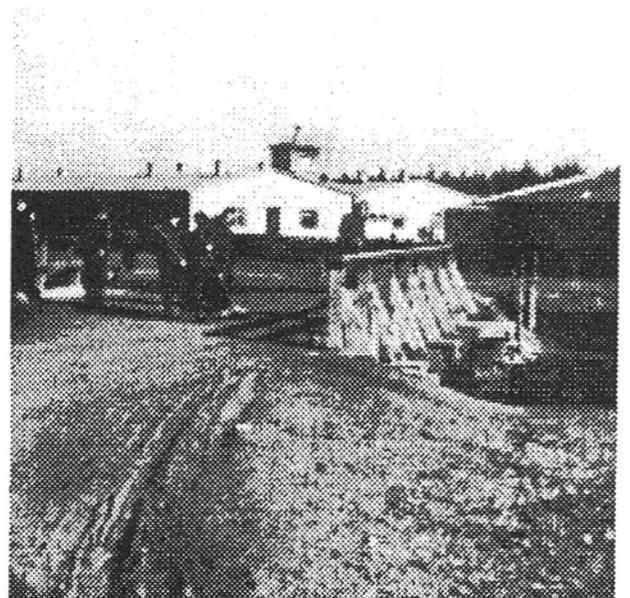
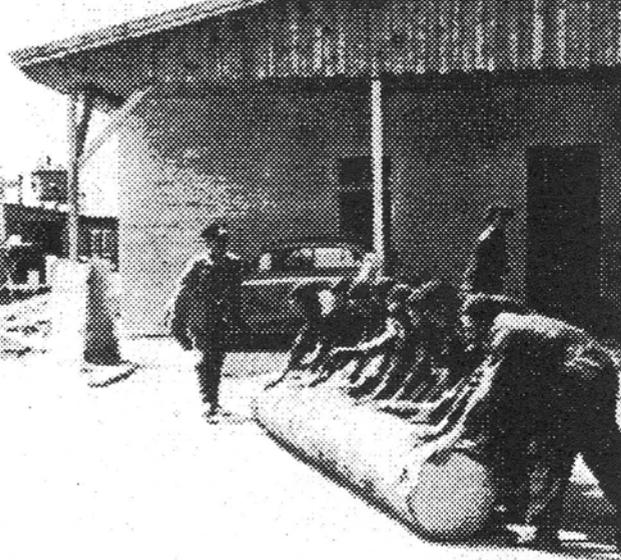
Food parcels from the IRC [International Red Cross] and from relatives in their homelands gave many prisoners of war the ability to further enrich themselves with their accustomed foods. Cooking was done with skill and diligence on primitive but cleverly crafted makeshift fireplaces, some even with forced air and covered with great care.



Prisoners as Workers



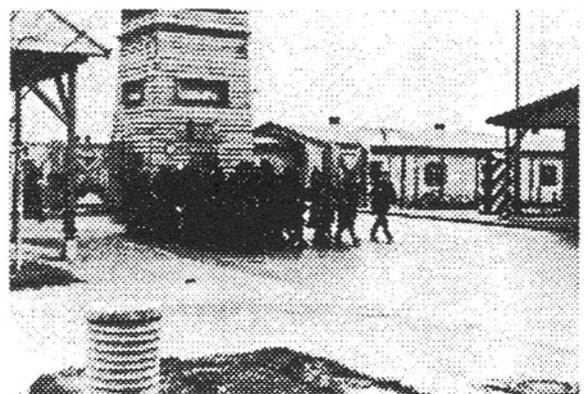
Work in the camp.



Prisoners of war building a bridge.



Groups of prisoners of war at punishment stance. The punishment consisted of standing for several hours in a guarded place, during which time conversation with other prisoners of war was not allowed.



A group of Serbs leave the camp under guard for outside work.

Stalag

7 A

Prisoners

Information

Pictures

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

AMERICAN PRISONER OF WAR IN GERMAN
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE WAR DEPARTMENT
STALAG VIIA 1 November 1995
(Ground Force Enlisted Men & Air Force Officer Evacuees)

LOCATION

Stalag 7A was in Bavaria 35 kilometers northeast of Munich and one kilometer north of Moosburg (48°27' North Latitude, 11°57' East Longitude).

STRENGTH

This installation served several purposes: It was the camp for NCO's of the U.S. Air Force until 13 Oct. 1943 when all 1900 were transferred to Stalag 17B. It was the transit camp from which officers and men of the ground forces captured in Africa and Italy were routed to permanent camps. It was headquarters for working parties of ground forces privates who numbered 270 in Sept. 1943, dropped to nil the following month and rose to 1100 in July 1944. As Germany collapsed in the spring of 1945, it became the final gathering place for no fewer than 7948 officers and 6944 enlisted men moved from other PW camps.

DESCRIPTION

Situated in a flat area surrounded by hills, the camp was roughly a square divided into 3 main compounds which in turn were subdivided into small stockades. The NORDLAGER held newly arrived PW 2 days while they were searched, medically examined and deloused. The SUEDLAGER held only Russians. The HAUPTLAGER housed PW of other nationalities - French, Polish, Yugoslav (Serb), British and American. Although nationalities were segregated by compounds, intercommunication existed. No effort was made to keep transient American PW from the permanent inmates. Several guard towers and the usual double barbed wire fences formed the camps perimeter.

Barracks were rectangular wooden buildings divided into 2 sections, A and B, by a central room used for washing and eating. In it were a water faucet, and water pump and some tables. The barracks chief and assistant had a small corner room to themselves. PW slept on triple-deck wooden bunks and gunny-sack mattresses filled with excelsior. Gradually the number of men per barracks increased from 180 to 400. Men slept on tables, floors and the ground.

U.S. PERSONNEL

Because of the camp's shifting population, leaders were changed frequently.

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

mong them were: (MOC = men of confidence- person who dealt with the Germans)

MOC Capt. Charles Daramus	Feb 1943
MOC S/Sgt. Earl Benson	March 1943
MOC S/Sgt. Clyde M. Bennett	March 1943
MOC S/Sgt. Kenneth J. Kurtenbach	July-Oct 1943
MOC M/Sgt. John M. McMahan	June-Sept 1943
MOC S/Sgt. James P. Caparel	Oct. 1943 - Feb. 1944
MOC T/Sgt. Philip M. Beeman	Feb. 1944 - April 1945
(SAO=senior American officer)	
SOA Col. A.Y. Smith (AAF)	Feb. - Mar. 1945
SAO Col. Paul R. Goode	April 1945

Chaplain 1st Lt. Eugene L. Daniel Feb 1944 - April 1945

Maj. Fred H. Beaumont, Medical Corps	Capt. Gordan Keppel, Medical Corp
Capt. Louis Salerno, Medical Corps	1st Lt. James Godfrey, Medical Corp
Capt. Garrold H. Nungester, Medical Corp	

GERMAN PERSONNEL

The guard was drawn from the Fourth Company of the 512th Landeschuetzen Battalion. Four officers and 200 men were employed on general duties. Ten sonderfuehrers with the rank of officers acted as interpreters. Twenty civilian men and 20 civilian women were employed as clerks in the camp. This complement was increased in April 1945 with the arrival of the entire camp staff and guard personnel of Stalag Luft 3, Nurnberg. Control of the camp, however remained in the hands of the regular Stalag 7A staff:

Commandant	-	Oberst Burger
Asst. Commandant	-	Oaberstleutnant Wehler
Security Officer	-	Hauptman Baumler
Doctor	-	Oberfeldarzt Dr. Zeitzler
Lager officer	-	Hauptman Malheum
Parcel officer	-	Sonderfuehrer Kluge

It has been reported by some PW that Berger, Malheum and Kluge, a fanatic of the worst sort, were shot 3 days after the camp's liberation.

TREATMENT

German treatment was barely correct. In addition to harsh living conditions caused by extreme overcrowding, instances of mistreatment occasionally cropped

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

up. This, at one time the Germans tried to segregate all Jews among U.S. PW calling them in from work detachments and allotting them a separate barrack. The MOC lodged a protest with the Protecting Power immediately. When questioned, camp authorities stated that the action was taken for the Jews' own protection against possible civilian acts of violence. Eventually, the attempt at segregation failed and Jews were not distinguished from other Americans PW.

At the Munich kommando, guards jabbed PW with bayonets and hit them with rifle butts. In the base camp an NCO reported being kicked, then being mistaken for a Frenchman and choked during an argument and later handcuffed after an escape attempt. Once an American, using a hole in the fence instead of the open gate to go from one compound to another, was shot at but not hit. In April 1943 a Russian was shot on the compound wire and left hanging there wounded. An Englishman went to lift him off the wire and was shot but recovered. The Russian died.

In July 1943, 500 Americans without overcoats were forced to stand in formation for 5 hours in a heavy rain. The reasons, said the Germans, was that the Americans had not been falling out at exactly 0800. During the first 2 weeks of August, the camp discipline officer had the PW fall out for roll call at 2100, 2400, and 0300. They were punished thus because many Americans had been escaping. PW showed no annoyance and displayed such good morale that the Germans discontinued the practice, especially since both sides knew that the PW could sleep all day but the guards could not.

Sonderfuehrer Kluge once marched 1100 PW for a whole day without food through Nurnberg so they could see the devastation wrought by Allied bombing.

In Sept. 1943 when PW ventured out of the barracks to watch the bombing of Munich, Germans came into the compound with dogs, one of which jumped into a window and was stabbed by a retreating American. During the Regensburg raid when PW were again outside their barracks contrary to orders, a German night fighter flying over the camp reported that someone in the American compound was signaling with a mirror. After that PW were notified that anyone outside the barracks during an air raid would be shot. One night a JU 88 with lights on made 2 runs over the camp and dropped cement blocks. Germans than started propagandizing to the effect the allies were bombing their own PW camps.

FOOD

Here too PW depended on Red Cross food for sustenance and nourishment. Until Sept. 1944, each PW drew his full parcel per week, and a 2 months' reserve was

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

kept on hand in camp. Then the ration was cut to half a parcel per man per week and the reserve not allowed to exceed one month's supply. With the influx of PW in the beginning of 1945, stocks fell to an all time low. PW feared a complete collapse in the delivery of red Cross food. Fortunately, this fear never materialized.

In July 1943, the MOC persuaded the Germans to issue each man a spoon and crockery plate. Cooking utensils were improvised from what ever materials could be found. Fifteen or 20 men formed mess groups, pooled their Red Cross rations and took turns in preparing them. They cooked over the small barrack's stove. Each barrack had 2 men on the chow detail, and the space around each stove was therefore quite crowded. At 0630 the detail brought hot water from the compound kitchen. Breakfast usually consisted of coffee and a few biscuits only. At 1130 they brought the German dinner ration - usually potatoes boiled in their jackets - from the kitchen. Sometimes spinach type greens or barley soup were added. Five men divided one loaf of German issue bread. For supper at 1700, PW drew more potatoes. On Sundays they received greens with morsels of meat. Twice a week they had a small piece of margarine. At first, French cooks prepared the food in the compound kitchen, but since Americans thought some of the ictuals disappeared in the process, they later installed their own cooks.

HEALTH

Health was good. Several American doctors, captured early in the African and Italian campaigns accompanied PW to Stalag 7A and were able to remain with them until their transfer to permanent camps. The camp also had some British doctors and som French. Men reported to the dispensary and if deemed ill enough for hospitalization were kept in the compound infirmary which could accommodate 120 patients in 10 rooms. More serious cases went to the German camp lazaret outside the compound. This installation consisted of 8 barracks type buildings, 2 of which were equipped for surgical operations.

Allied doctors complained of a serious shortage of medical supplies, At first they used German drugs and such equipment as they could get. Later the Red Cross sent supplies which alleviated the shortage but did not satisfy the doctors' demands.

Despite delousing, lice and fleas troubled PW a great deal. Americans, however, unlike the Russians never contracted typhus. For a time they suffered from skin diseases brought about by uncleanliness; washing facilities were completely unsatisfactory and a man was extremely lucky to take a shower every 15 days.

Latrines were always a source of contention between PW and camp authori-

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

ties. Complaint was constantly made that the pits were emptied only when they threatened to overflow and that there was no chloride of lime to neutralize the odor which permeated the surrounding area.

Emergency dental treatment could be obtained in the German lazaret.

CLOTHING

Since the Germans issued practically no clothing and the flow of needy transients through camp was heavy, the clothing shortage was always acute. From Feb. 1943 on, the reports of the Protecting power repeatedly carried such paragraphs as the following: The general condition of clothing is very bad. The American Red Cross should send out clothing in sufficient quantities as the cold season is approaching. Great coats and whole uniforms are badly wanted. The supply of uniforms issued by the Detaining Power is mainly of French or British uniforms in a state of mending which leaves not hope for long wear.

Clothing from the Red Cross did arrive, but not in sufficient quantity to provide for equipping newly captured PW who were wearing only the clothes in which they were captured and sometimes not even those. It was observed by a Man of Confidence that 4 warehouses in camp contained many new English overcoats and battle dress outfits as well as many articles of American clothing taken from PW as they entered the camp or left it. These included aviators' leather jackets, American coveralls, combat jackets, pants, shoes, hats, and shirts. It was believed by the Man of Confidence that the clothing in storage was more than enough to alleviate the suffering of both American and British PW, yet all pleas and efforts to have the Germans ameliorate the situation were to no avail.

WORK

The original group of airforce PW - comprised almost exclusively of NCO's - was not ordered to work, never the less, before going to Stalag 17B many volunteered for kommando duty merely to get on the other side of the compounds barbed wire and have more liberty. On the other hand, Germans insisted that ground force privates be assigned to labor details. Camp authorities tried to have PW volunteer for duties a practice which the MOC advised against except in the case of farm work, which was less unpleasant than other kommando duty.

Attached to the camp were as many as 83 work detachments ranging in size from 4 men, (usually sent out to farms) to 900 men. The 3 main kommandos were situated in Munich, Augsburg and Landshutt. After the heavy bombing of Munich on Oct. 1, 1944, a work detachment of some 1400 PW was formed. This party

Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A

consisted of 60% American and 40% British. It left the Stalag at 0500 and returned at 2000. PW traveled in cattle cars from Moosburg station, standing up all the way to Munich and back. The time spent in the train going to and returning from work was 3 ½ hours. During their 8 working hours a day, PW cleaned debris, filled bomb craters, and dismantled damaged rails. Men received 2 meals at Munich and their regular ration at the camp. In the event of air attacks, adequate shelter was provided. There was instances of Germans pricking with bayonets and hitting with rifle butts to make them work faster and harder.

A model farm kommando was described as follows: Twenty PW live in a farmhouse of 5 rooms, including a room with a stove for the cooking of Red Cross food. They sleep in 3 of the rooms in double tier beds with straw mattresses and eider downs. Bathing and toilet facilities were primitive but similar to those used by their employer. The men sometimes eat with the farmer for whom they work and their diet, supplemented with Red Cross food, is good. Medical supplies for minor injuries were on hand and a civilian doctor takes sick parades twice a week. PW each possess 2 work uniforms, a dress uniform and 2 pairs of shoes. Fourteen of the men are free on Sundays; the others do the essential farm work, mainly feeding cattle, and cleaning stables. Razor blades, beer and matches were available. PW have neither time nor facilities for sports. The mail situation is satisfactory except for the pilfering of parcels en route from the stalag to the detachment.

On Only 3 occasions was the Man of Confidence permitted to visit kommando camps for inspection. Although he turned in complaints, no improvement in conditions resulted.

PAY

In March 1943, it was reported that the matter of paying officers had not yet been settled between PW and camp authorities. In the same month, an American enlisted man on kommando was paid the equivalent of \$13.00 a month. Another worker revealed that the way rate of .70 Reichmarks a day. In July this was increased to .90 Reichmarks a day.

In April 1944, an advance of 50 Reichmarks was made to officer PW of the Allies, but in April 1945, the Senior British officer stated that officers were not being paid and that they had not received any pay statements for 7 months. Similarly, the 1400 man kommando working daily in the debris of Munich was not paid because the labor performed by them was considered by the Germans to be "emergency" labor to which anyone resident in the Reich was subject without pay.

In Oct. 1944 it was announced that PW pay, which up to that time had been

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in camp money of "Lagergeld" would henceforth be in Reichmarks.

Mail

During their stay in camp, transient PW were allowed to send 1 postcard, usually their first, in which they informed next-of-kin of their German PW number and address. PW permanently at 7A drew 2 postcards and 2 letter forms per month. Incoming mail, censored at camp, was unlimited in quantity but sporadic in arrival, especially at kommandos, which received no incoming mail for months at a time. Both outgoing and incoming letters took 4 months in transit, as did personal parcels. The flow of such parcels was light.

ON 10 Nov. 1944, 4 French PW were employed to unload coal into a bunker of the German barracks situated in the vicinity of the camp. They found that a large number of both official and private letters and cards were scattered in the coal. They picked up several loose letters as well as bunches tied together in small packages. Part of the latter included official letters addressed to the spokesmen of the different nationalities represented in the camp, coming from the Red Cross, the YMCA and other organizations. The next morning the French, British and American spokesmen went to the Commandant's office to protest and demand explanations as well as the restitution of the mail after inspection of the bunker in question. The following day, the camp commandant made it known that he would take charge of the affair personally. After a hasty censorship, a considerable number of letters (2 sacks weighing 88 pounds apiece) were delivered to PW. These letters dated from the months of May, June, and July 1944. It was impossible to say how long they had been in the coal. The commandant stated that an error had been made and that punishment would be inflicted, but that no letters had been burned.

The assistant American MOC was under the impression that mail - including outgoing letters - definitely had been burned. This impression was strengthened after the incident when the Germans issued additional new letter forms.

MORALE

Initially morale was high. Air force NCO's repeatedly made breaks from camp, and before their transfer to stalag 17B showed their hostility toward the Germans by often refusing to salute, by failing to come to attention when a German officer entered the barracks and by their careless, slouching, hands-in-pocket walk.

After their sojourn in camps in Italy, ground force PW captured in 1942-43 were pleasantly surprised by the treatment accorded them in Stalag 7A

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which had been a model camp for several years.

In spite of a succession of able camp leaders, morale slumped when the camp grew so crowded that PW had neither decent living quarters, nor satisfactory sanitary facilities nor sufficient clothing. Early in 1944 the MOC reported that stealing among PW was common and that fights were inevitable. However, except for a period of 3 weeks in Dec. 1944 the strongest morale factor - food - was available. In the spring of 1945, although the camp was more crowded than ever, morale did not slump. Red Cross food kept coming through, and the arrival of officers with strong, experienced SAO's did much to prevent the spirit of PW from disintegrating.

A representative of the Protecting Power made a routine visit to the camp every 6 months. In addition he would make a special trip whenever summoned. MOC's were permitted to talk to him privately, but despite oral and written protests about both veneral and specific affairs of the camp, very little improvement was ever effected. The representatives repeatedly said that his hands were tied and there was nothing he could do about it. One MOC felt that the representatives were characterized by indifference, and inertia until arrival of American officers in the camp. Subsequently, their attitude changed for the better.

PW were indebted to the Red Cross for almost all their food, clothing and medical supplies. While food parcels arrived regularly and in sufficient quantity most of the time, the camp suffered a constant clothing shortage since the stocks shipped from Geneva were not enough to equip the many thousands of transient PW who passed through the camp every few months.

The first group of PW arriving in camp reported the presence of recreational and athletic equipment which had come from the YMCA. Later, however, as the stalag evolved into a transit camp and work camp, need for such equipment was less evident and little was received.

RELIGION

In 1943-44, camp chaplain was 1st Lt. Eugene L. Daniel who won the admiration of both American and British. He had complete liberty to look after PW in the stalag, and once a month went to visit the 2 work detachments near Munich. He also received permission to visit the Wehrkreis PW hospital. In addition to Chaplain Daniel, Capt. Arkell of the Church of England held services for Protestants.

Roman Catholics were permitted to attend weekly masses celebrated by French priests.

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Jews were for a time segregated in separate barracks. Otherwise they were not discriminated against. Nor were they offered any religious services.

Conditions on kommandos varied. A few were visited by PW chaplains or attended local services, but most had no opportunity for religious observances.

RECREATION

Before their transfer to 17A, the air force NCO's main diversions were baseball and bridge. They also played a good deal of volley ball. For a time they had a basketball court, but tore down the backboards for fuel. They also played horseshoes. A camp baseball league had many games between the "POW's", "Wildcats", "Bomber Aces", "Luftgangsters" and so on. At first they were allowed to use the soccer field behind their compound, a privilege later denied them. PW lacked sufficient space for recreation, especially toward the end when the compound was so completely overcrowded that Italians were sleeping in tents on the baseball diamond.

The original study program included classes in Spanish, German, French, auto mechanics, economics, bookkeeping, accounting, and mathematics. The YMCA furnished the books for these courses.

A theater kept its 1943 participants interested and its audience amused. Plays were given in a room between 2 barracks, and because of the limited accommodations, a show could have quite an extended run. The program was well arranged to provide continued and varied entertainment. One of the plays was "Our Town". Another was one written by the director of the group and called, "Uncle Sam Wants You". The German censor cut some of the jokes from this piece, but he did not understand most of them. The camp commandant attended one performance. There were also a minstrel show and some singing performances. When the camp became so crowded during the fall of 1943, a group of men used to go from barracks to barracks to sing each night. The band was short of instruments.

In 1944 and 1945, conditions deteriorated. Ground force enlisted men indulged in little or no sports or recreation, either because there was too little equipment for the transients or because as regular members of Kommandos they were too tired after the day's work to play.

INFLUX

On 2 Feb. 2000 officers of the South Compound, Stalag Luft 3, reached Stalag 7A, followed on a 7 Feb, by 2000 more from the Center Compound. They were placed in the Nordlager from which small groups were taken to be searched, deloused and sent to the main camp. No facilities were provided for washing,

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sanitation, cooking and only straw spread over the floors of the barracks served as bedding. In somewhat less than a week, all personnel had moved to the main camp, where conditions were little better.

Over 300 men were housed in barracks normally holding fewer than 200 men. In order to provide bunks for this number in each building, the Germans arranged three decker in groups of 4, thus accommodating 12 PW per unit. The barracks had no heat and as a result were damp, cold and unhealthy. The German administration was unprepared for the influx of new personnel and seemed completely disorganized. German rations were unbelievably poor; no inside sanitary facilities existed and there was no hot water. The 2000 PW of the Center Compound were quartered in 2 adjacent but separate stockades some distance from the enclosure holding their mates from the South Compound. At the rear of the barracks in each of the 2 stockades, a small open areas - barely large enough to hold the various units for counting - was available for exercise. Aside from this, no facilities were provided for physical training or athletics. Nor was there any recreational material other than books in a traveling library provided by the MCA.

In March the Germans provided boilers and fuel enough to allow each man to draw a pint of hot water twice daily. In order to improve the quantity and quality of German rations issued to Americans, Col. Archibald Y. Smith, SAO, made a continuous effort to place an American officer and several enlisted men in the German kitchen. This was finally accomplished 24 March and henceforward rations improved steadily. The German administration also consented to allow groups of 50 men under guard to gather small quantities of firewood in the area adjacent to the camp. These improvements, although falling far short of the provisions of the Geneva Convention, helped a great deal to improve the mental and physical state of all the PW. During all of this period Red Cross food, initially on a half parcel basis, was increased to full parcels and the health of the PW remained remarkable good. By this time, too, news of the Allied advances acted as a tonic on the men.

The first of April saw many PW from other camps throughout Germany evacuated to the vicinity of Stalag 7A to prevent their recapture by Allied forces pressing toward the center of the Reich. This influx brought about a state of unbelievable overcrowding and confusion. Members of the former South Compound were moved enmasse into the enclosure occupied by the Center Compound. Thus 4000 PW lived in an area which had been unable to support 2000 satisfactorily. Large tents were erected in what ever space was available: straw was provided as bedding. It was not uncommon to see men sleeping on blankets in foxholes. Co.

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Paul R. Goode became SAO upon the arrival of officers from Oflag 64 in mid April. Air force officers from Nurnberg arrived on 19 April. During the last 10 days of April it was felt that all PW would be left in camps, following the agreement between the German Government and the Allies, and preparations were made accordingly. However fear that the Germans would move PW to the Salzburg redoub and hold them a hostages was never absent.

LIBERATION

On 27 April, 2 representatives of the Protecting Power arrived at Moosburg to attend and facilitate the transfer of the PW camp from German to American Authority. On the 28th it was learned from Oberst Burger, the Commandant, that order was to be assured by assigning PW officers to various PW groups. Moreover, Oberst Burger kept the entire German administrative staff in camp, as well as the complete guard staff. Oberst Burger had not yet received from the German military authorities a reply to his question concerning the avoidance of fighting in the vicinity of the camp. The commandant asked the 2 Swiss to act as intermediaries between himself and the Men of Confidence.

After a conference with the Men of Confidence, the 2 Swiss were recalled to the commandant. It appeared that the unexpectedly rapid advance of the American forces in the region necessitated an immediate conference between the camp authorities, represented by Oberst Braune, and the local German Army corps commandant in order to propose the exclusion of fighting from the Moosburg region. The proposal, made by Oberst Braune, and the Swiss representative, was accepted in view of Article 7 of the Geneva Convention. Appropriate instructions were given to the commander of the division in the sector in question, and the proposal was formulated for presentation to the advancing Americans. According to this proposal, an area of a few kilometers around Moosburg would have to be declared a neutral zone.

At dawn on the 29th, the American and British Men of Confidence, the Swiss representative and an officer from the SS fighting division in the region drove in a white Red Cross car to the American lines. They were stopped by 2 tanks commanded by a colonel who drove them to the commanding general. After a long discussion with the German spokesman the general declared the proposal unfavorable and unacceptable. The German returned to his divisional headquarters and the Swiss then drove to camp with the Men of Confidence.

At 1000, immediately after their arrival, the battle started. The ensuing fight lasted some 2 1/2 hours, during which a shell hit one of the camp barracks injuring

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12 of the guards and killing one. PW remained calm although tank shots, machine guns and small arms fire could be heard. Half an hour after the fighting abated, Combat Team A of the 14th Armored Division appeared at the camp entrance. The guards, unresisting, were disarmed. PW burst out rejoicing but did not try to leave camp. The supervision of the camp automatically went to the Men of Confidence, and an official transfer did not take place.

By instruction of the American military commander, part of the German administrative personnel remained at their posts. The remainder, including the guards, were taken as PW. The Swiss reported that treatment of German camp authorities and guards by American troops was correct.

"SOURCE MATERIAL FOR THIS REPORT CONSISTED OF INTERROGATIONS OF FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR MADE BY CPM BRANCH, MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, AND REPORTS OF THE PROTECTING POWER AND INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS RECEIVED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT (Special War Problems Division)". Taken from the general introduction to camps.

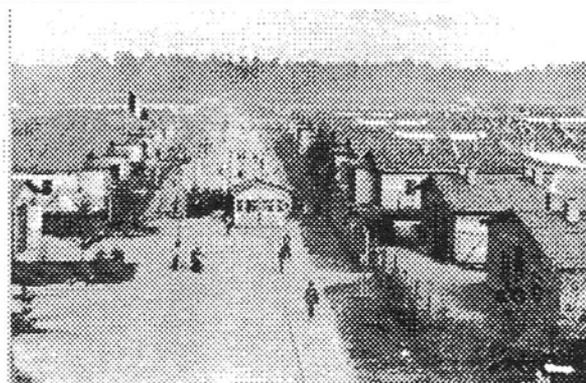
Behind the Wire



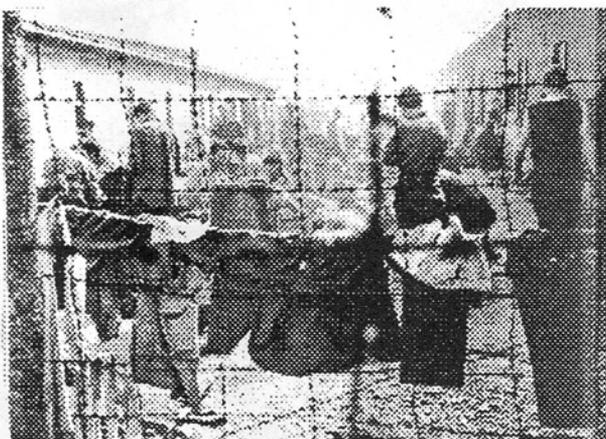
Camp Reception process



Another Day



Main Street



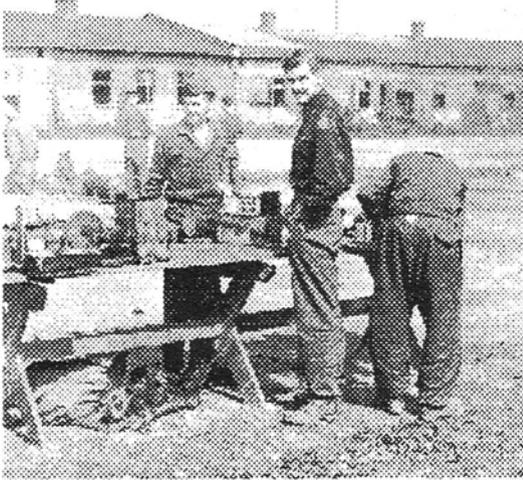
Carving on Front Guard Tower



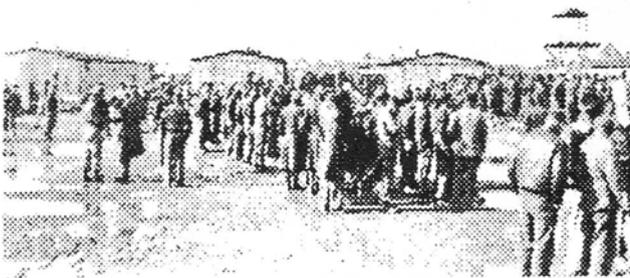
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Chef at work



Red Cross Trucks
Red Cross Parcels



Appell (Count of Prisoners)



Moosburg on the Isar Stalag 7 A



Washroom



Clothing Repair



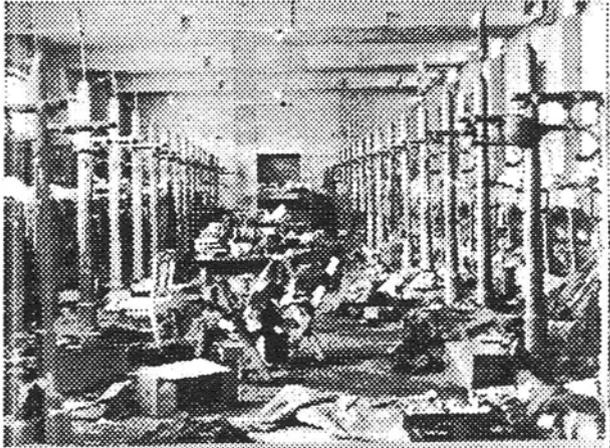
Abort (Latrine)



Tent Living



Across the Wire



Gone

Liberation



Sr. Camp Officer great Liberators



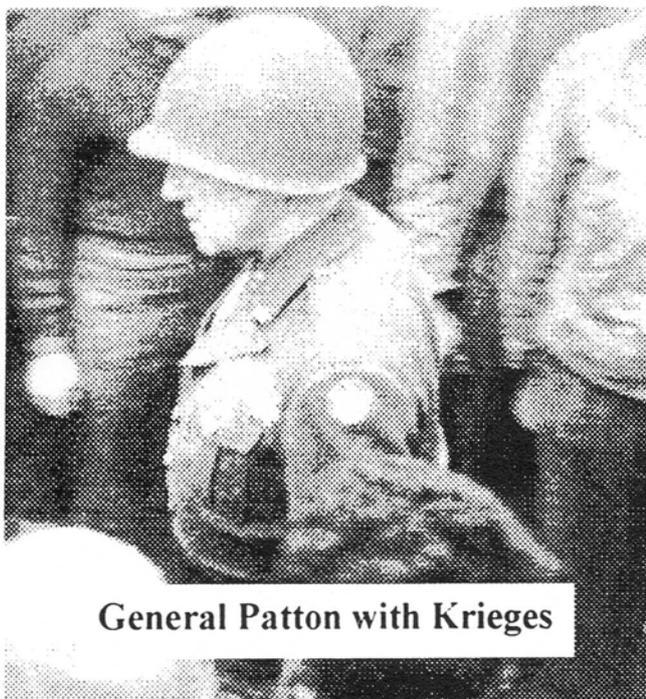
Prisoners surround Tanks



With Liberators



End of Mission Donuts



General Patton with Krieges



German Guards Removed to Prison Camp



Goodby - Lice & Stalag 7A

The German prisoner of war regulations translated in this volume were located by a member of the Provost Marshal General's Office shortly after the termination of hostilities in Europe.

They have been translated and issued through the efforts of the Liaison and Research Branch of the American Prisoners of War Information Bureau.

B.M. BRYAN

Brigadier General

The Provost Marshal General

ABBREVIATIONS OF GERMAN MILITARY TERMS

Abbreviations

Translation

Abw	Counter Intelligence
Ag.E.H.	Section for Replacement Training and 'ArmyMatters
AHA	General Army Office
Arb.Ndo.	Work detail
AWA	Section for General Armed Forces Armed Forces Matters
B.d.E.	Commander of the Replacement Training Army
Bkl.	Clothing
Ch. H. Ruest	Chief of Army Equipment
Dulag	Transit camp for prisoners of war
Gen.D.Pi.	General of the engineers
Gen. Qu.	Quartermaster General
Genst.D.H.	Army General Staff
GVF	Fit for garrison duty in the field
GVH	Fit for garrison duty in the interior
H.D.St.O.	Army Disciplinary Regulations
H.Dv.	Army Service Regulations
H.P.A.	Army Personnel Office
HV	Army Administration
H.V.Bl.	Army bulletin

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In.Fest.	Inspectorate of fortresses
Kriegsgef.	Prisoner of War Department
Kv.Pris	Fit for war service
Oflag	Officers' prisoner of war camp
Ob.d.L.	Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force
O.K.H.	Army Supreme Command
O.K.M.	Navy Supreme Command
O.K.W.	Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht (Armed Forces)
P.A.	Personnel Office'
P.U.	Mail censorship
R.d.L.	Reich Minister of Aviation
S.D.	Security Service
SS	Elite Guard of the National Socialist Party
Stalag	PW camp for enlisted men
VA	Army Administration Office
VO	Decree
Wam.	Guard detail
W.A.St.	Information Bureau of the Wehrmacht
W.F.St.	Armed Forces Operations Staff
W.Pr.	Wehrmacht Propaganda
W.V.	Army administration

Supreme Command of the Wehrmacht

I. Chief group

Berlin-Schoeneber, 16 June 1941

1. Prisoners of war of alien nationalities in enemy armies.

Accordingly, Polish prisoners of war captured in French uniforms will be considered Frenchmen, while Poles captured in Polish uniforms will be considered Poles.

2. The title "camp officer" instead of "camp leader".

The title "camp leader" is not accepted in any of the regulations. It is therefore no longer to be used, and is to be replaced by: "first camp Officer" and "second camp officer."

3. Reward for the recapture of escaped prisoners of war.

The OKW has requested the German newspapers to publish the following:

In view of the increase in the number of escape attempts by prisoners of war commonly occurring in the spring, the military and police services will welcome the cooperation of the general public. Persons offering effective aid in apprehending escaped prisoners of war may be granted financial awards, applications for which must be directed to the respective prisoner of war camp.

The reward herewith provided for are to be paid out of Reich funds... The reward of one individual shall not exceed 30 marks even when several prisoners of war are apprehended. The amount is fixed by the Commander of Prisoners of War having jurisdiction respective prisoner of war camp.

Group I.

4. Personal contact of prisoners of war with women.

Certain inquiries addressed to the OKW make it necessary to point out the following:

The prohibition of 10 Jan 1940 applies only to association of prisoners of war with German women.

It is therefore not necessary to submit a detailed report in cases of illicit traffic of prisoners with women of foreign nationality, unless certain circumstances make it a penal offense (rape, intercourse with minors, etc.).

The question as to the prisoner's liability to disciplinary punishment is left to the discretion of the disciplinary superior officer. The inquiry of the Army District Command V of 29 April 1941 I 3330 is thereby settled.

5. Questionnaires for French officers.

The French Armistice Commission had some time ago requested, in connection with the reconstitution of the French army, that newly arrived French prisoner of war officers in all the camps fill out questionnaires. Since the work is now

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finished, the questionnaires need not be filled out any longer.

6. Transfers to officers' camp IV C Colditz.

Several officers' camps frequently transfer to officers' camp IV C prisoner of war officers who have not yet completed disciplinary sentences pending against them.

As the few guardhouse cells in officers' camp IV C are currently occupied by prisoner of war officers serving sentences imposed by the headquarters of the camp, the transfer of officers to officer's camp IV C may be undertaken only after they have completed their previously imposed disciplinary sentences.

7. Jews in the French Army.

A transfer of the Jews to special camps is not intended; they must, however, be separated from the other prisoners of war and, in case of enlisted men, must be assigned to work in closed groups outside the camp.

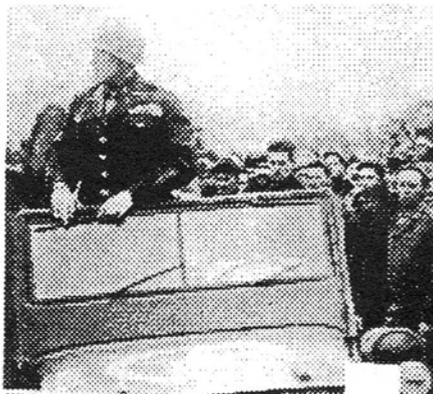
Jews are not to be specially marked.

8. Punishment of prisoners of war by the suspension of mail service.

Several cases have been recently reported where camp commandants have suspended prisoner of war mail service as a disciplinary measure.

Attention is called to Art. 36, sec. 1 of the Geneva Convention of 1929 prohibiting the stoppage or confiscation of incoming or outgoing mail of prisoners of war.

**The
End**



**April
29
1945
General
Patton**