

Bob & Rosalie Shepard
6407 Deep Haven Road
Pollock Pines, CA 95726

7-16-07

Dear Jim -

THIS AM I HAD A COPY
OF POW CAMP STALAG LOFT
PICTURES & MAGAZINE
COPIED FOR YOU.

THIS WILL SHOW YOU BETTER
THAN ANYONE CAN TELL YOU
WHAT YOU MISSED!!!
GOOD THING!

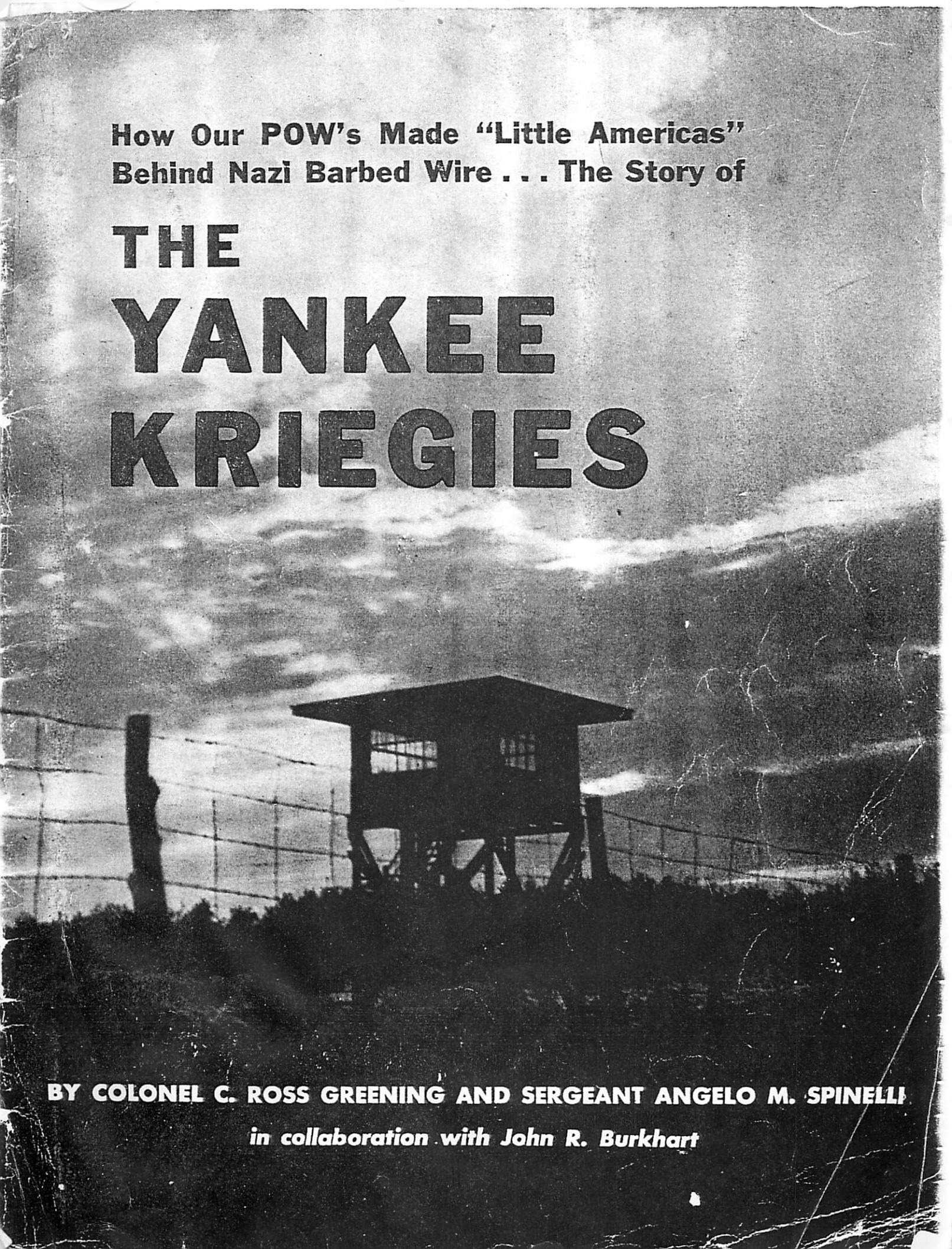
WHEN WE ARRIVED THE
KATIEGERS INSIDE YELLED
IN UNISON "YOU'LL BE SORRY!"
THEY WERE RIGHT BUT AT LEAST
WE WERE ON THE RIGHT
SIDE OF THE GRASS!

Cordially,

Shep

How Our POW's Made "Little Americas"
Behind Nazi Barbed Wire . . . The Story of

THE YANKEE KRIEGIES



BY COLONEL C. ROSS GREENING AND SERGEANT ANGELO M. SPINELLI
in collaboration with John R. Burkhart

THIS IS OUR STORY

This is our story . . .

*The story of the Yankee Kriegies,
the Americans
who lost their freedom
and in losing it learned for the first time
what it meant to be free.*

This is our story . . .

*How we lived, and laughed
and died
behind barbed wire in an alien land
because our country
forgot that to be free you must be strong
and unafraid—
forgot that the pain of far-off millions
is echoed in heart-breaks
in Maine and California.*

This is our story . . .

*Read it, America,
read it with a fierce pride
and burning shame.
Read it, America, and vow
that never again will you grow
soft and smug and fat and complacent
while maggots crawl over the earth
and mock your strength.*

This is our plea . . .

*Stay alert and strong, America,
and remember that the agonies of Buchenwald
and Belsen
and the March of Death
is the price the world has had to pay
for your awakening.*

MUCH has been told of the hardships and privations suffered by American prisoners of war, but the world knows all too little of how the average prisoner, with typical Yankee ingenuity, daily achieved small miracles to ease the unfortunate lot of himself and his comrades.

So that the American people may know more of this, the Y.M.C.A. has asked two Yankee Kriegies (POW slang for the German word, Kriegsgefangenen, meaning prisoner of war) to tell this story. They are Colonel C. Ross Greening, an Army Air Forces officer, and Sergeant Angelo M. Spinelli, a photographer assigned to the Army Ground Forces. The illustrations in "The Yankee Kriegies" were made in captivity by Col. Greening and another prisoner, Lt. Carl Holmstrom. While a prisoner Sgt. Spinelli succeeded in obtaining a camera and at the risk of his life took hundreds of photographs, many of which are reproduced here.

In publishing "The Yankee Kriegies" the Y.M.C.A. hopes it will give you a new appreciation of the fortitude of America's fighting men and at the same time will make you want to do all in your power to work toward that day when men will never again hold other men as prisoners behind barbed wire.

It should be remembered that all of the activities reported by Col. Greening and Sgt. Spinelli were carried on despite cold and drafty barracks, hunger, the annoyances of fleas and lice, stern regulations and in many cases pitifully inadequate supplies. That Yankee Kriegies established little Americas in Nazi Germany in the face of these obstacles says more than anyone can of their bright hope and courage. The spirit that cut the chains from a shackled world could not be fettered even behind barbed wire.



Capture: a crash landing, a futile dash for freedom, then the inevitable, "For you der var ist ofver."

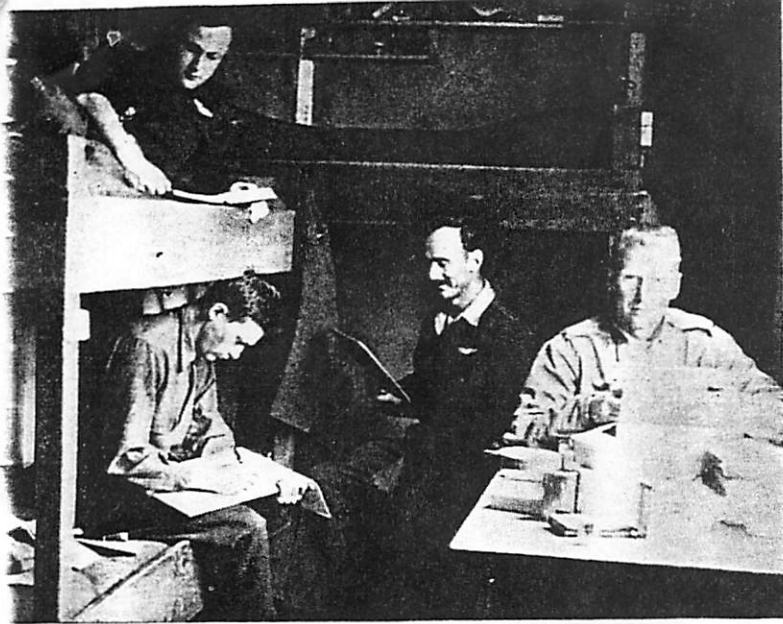
To Become a Yankee Kriegie—You Had to Be

Up Where the Shooting Was

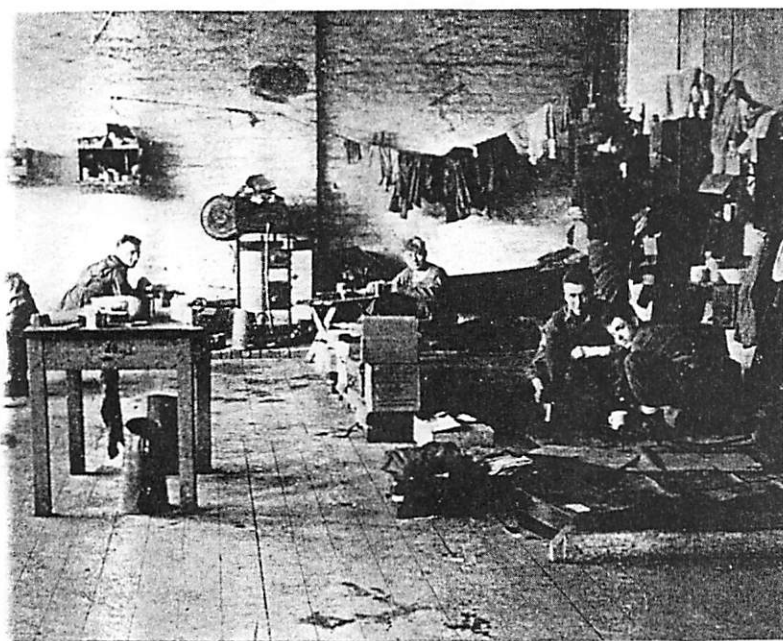
SGT. SPINELLI: I was on a combat photographic mission in the early fighting in North Africa when my film and luck ran out at the same time. I'd used up all my film and was sitting around without much to do when I was ordered to take some German prisoners to the rear. I loaded them into a truck, got a couple of other fellows to go with me, and we started off. We hadn't gone very far before we drove smack into the middle of a tank battle. There weren't supposed to be any German tanks around, but there they were, and giving ours a devil of a pasting. There wasn't time to do anything but stop the truck and dive into a ditch. All of us, German prisoners and American guards, huddled together, forgetting that we were enemies in the common hope that we wouldn't get killed. After a while the shooting stopped, and when we looked out, a German tank had its guns

pointed down into our ditch, and the American tanks were all shot up and on fire. Right then we changed places with our prisoners and became Yankee Kriegies.

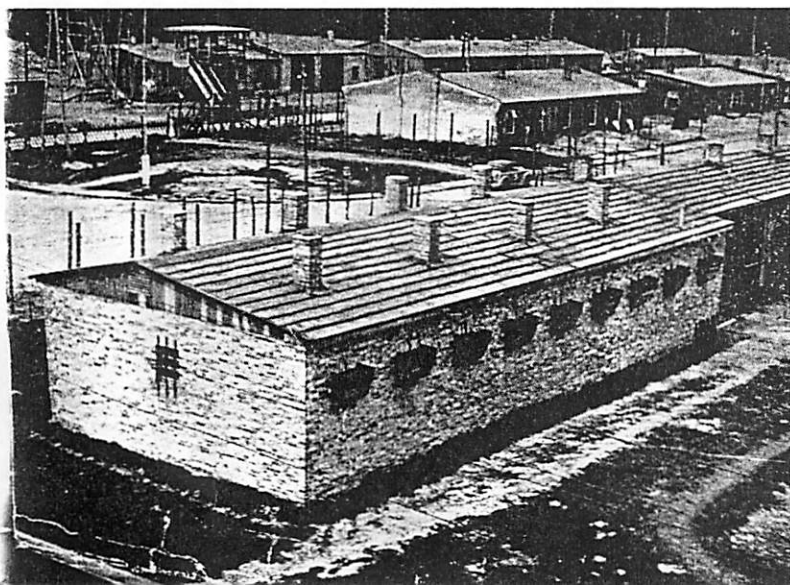
COLONEL GREENING: We were on a bombing mission over Naples when a flock of Jerries ganged up on us. We got some of them, but were forced to bail out when our B-26 caught an 88 mm. shell in the right engine. After my chute opened I looked down and almost passed out. I was heading straight for the crater of Mt. Vesuvius! I yanked on the shrouds and with the help of a friendly wind missed the crater but landed in the midst of a heavily-armed reception committee. There wasn't any use in even thinking about running, but there were many occasions after that when I had reason to wish I hadn't missed Vesuvius!



Here's a typical officers' room in Kriegieland. Sixteen men were jammed into it, but sometimes enlisted men had to sleep on the floor.



Below is "der cooler," the solitary confinement cells into which we were cast for slight or imaginary violations of strict Nazi rules.



SGT. SPINELLI: After we were captured, the Germans we had held as prisoners told an officer we had treated them well, had fed them and returned their personal belongings. That made a good impression, and for the next few days we were treated very respectfully. We were given a swell room in a large house, provided excellent meals, and one of the officers supplied good cigars. Of course, we were questioned, but we wouldn't talk, and the Germans didn't try any rough stuff, then. A German officer warned us that the farther we got from the fighting, and the closer to Germany, the worse we would fare. Brother, he wasn't wrong!

COLONEL GREENING: I was put in a small Italian camp where we only got half a Red Cross food parcel a week, and had to fill up on fresh figs and grapes—not a happy combination. The Italians ruined all the Y.M.C.A. athletic equipment by sawing it up in searching for hidden messages or escape tools. They never found any, but dutifully turned the wreckage over to us. There was a brick wall around the camp so high we couldn't see over it, but some prisoners tunneled under it.

SGT. SPINELLI: Along with a lot of other American prisoners I was loaded onto a boat and taken to Italy. There we were jammed into freight cars, without any sanitary facilities or water, and eventually arrived in Stalag IIIB, a prisoner of war camp in Germany. It was a large camp for Allied ground forces southeast of Berlin. We had everyone in that camp—French, Americans, Poles, Yugoslavs, Russians and even Italians. The Americans had a compound, or camp section, of their own. We were separated by a double row of barbed wire from the other compounds. Watch towers with machine guns and search lights were placed to command the alleys formed by the barbed wire. It was sure death to get caught in that no-man's land.

COLONEL GREENING: While being transferred from one Italian camp to another farther north, I saw a chance to get away, and jumped off the train. For six months I was a free man in Italy, but one day the Krauts heard a sick American was hiding out in a small village. They searched every house from bottom to top until they found four of my English friends who were escaping with me. They were shot. I got away, but was caught three months later in a cave. I ended up in Stalag Luft I, a prison camp



Toward the end of the war our water supply gave out. The Germans blamed it on Allied bombing. We dug wells but found little water.

We tried to run our prison on a business-like basis, and had an office to keep records and operate as much as possible like an Army camp.

for Allied airmen near Barth, on the Baltic Sea in Germany. The usual greeting accorded prisoners there was to slap them into solitary confinement. That was to soften you up for the interrogation by which Germans hoped to get military information. It only made us more "dumb" than ever. The only thing we knew was our name, rank and serial number.

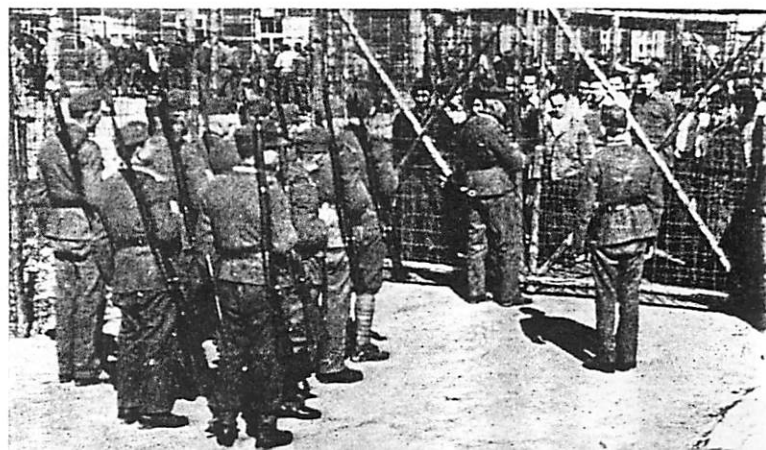
SGT. SPINELLI: The "cooler" or solitary confinement, was familiar to us at Stalag IIIB, also. If you got caught breaking the strict German regulations the usual punishment was 21 days in the cooler. But at that we were better off than some other American prisoners, particularly those captured in the Battle of the Bulge and the closing phases of the war. Some of them never got to regular prisoner of war camps, and we know only too well what happened to them. I suppose we could have lived on the German rations, but we didn't have enough energy to use the Y.M.C.A. athletic equipment until we began to receive Red Cross food parcels regularly. As long as we were getting food parcels we did all right. The usual German ration was ersatz coffee for breakfast, a thin soup with one or two slices of bread and some occasional meat for dinner, and coffee again for supper.

SGT. SPINELLI: The guards in our camp were mostly older men. They all told us they weren't Nazis! We called the guards "goons," and when they came into the camp for inspection, the signal, "goon up," would be passed around. The Germans would have spies in the camps, and we called them "ferrets" from their snooping habits. A ferret's assistant was a "weasel."

This chap is on his way to do his laundry. He is carrying his washing-machine with him: a can on the end of a stick, and a pail of water. He's a Yank dressed like a Russian in another compound.



The changing of the guard. This scene also was enacted when we were taken out of the camp for showers.



COLONEL GREENING: There were spaces under our barracks where the ferrets and weasels would crawl to try to listen in on our conversations. We used to put old razor blades under the barracks, and when we heard the ferrets and weasels swearing after they cut themselves, we'd pour boiling water down on them.

SGT. SPINELLI: The greatest fear of our guards was that they'd be sent to the Russian front. That was the punishment given them if something went wrong in the camp. As a result, we were usually tipped off when the Gestapo was to pay us a visit. That was to give us time to hide things that were verboten, such as radios, cameras, notebooks, weapons and a flock of perfectly innocent objects that the Gestapo might decide to dislike. In return, we tried not to make too much trouble for the guards, figuring that we were in a bad enough way as it was, and there was no use in making things worse. We learned that all Germans were not good, but neither were they all bad.

COLONEL GREENING: We had a different philosophy, I guess, and that was to cause as much trouble as we could. One of our tricks was to get friendly with a guard, get him drunk, and take his gun and uniform away from him. When he was found, he'd either be sent to the Russian front or shot. Either way, it was one less Jerry. We made the liquor from dried fruits and raisins in Red Cross food parcels, and created a still by bending up Y.M.C.A. musical instruments. That was when we had enough food. We lived to see the time when we had to put guards on the garbage dumps to keep our men from rooting through it like animals. We did not want our captors to have the pleasure of seeing American officers so degraded.

SGT. SPINELLI: Because under the Geneva Convention officers and non-commissioned officers couldn't be put to work, we usually stayed in the "sack" until about 6:55 in the morning. Roll call was at 7:00 and we all had to pile out and line up in order to be counted



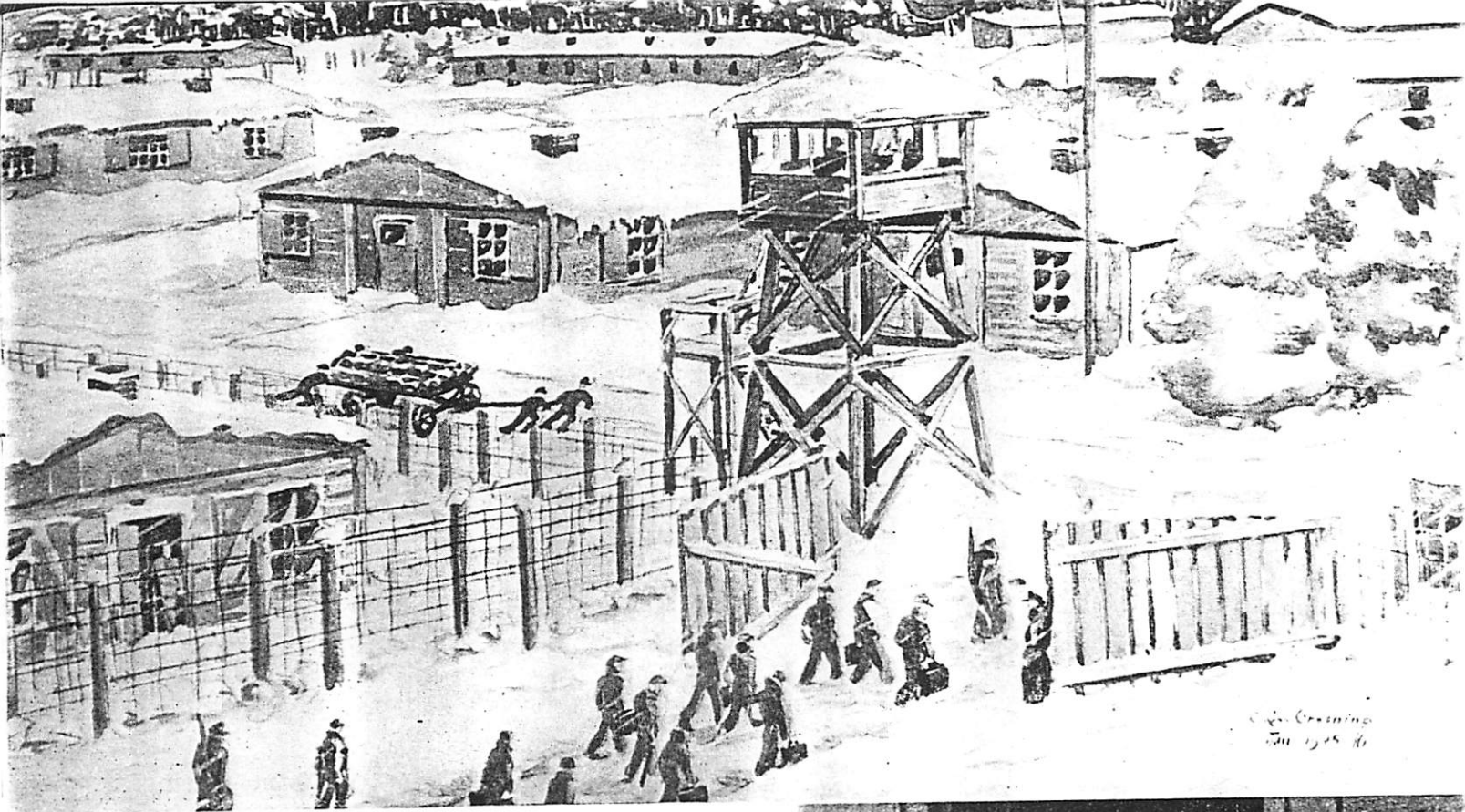
**German
Compound
Commander**

off by the German guards. We had to do this whether it was raining or snowing and we would have to stand there and get soaked or freeze until the Germans arrived at a figure that satisfied them. Three or four men would usually count us and they had a hard time agreeing on the total. After that, we had breakfast, if there was enough to eat. The German ration for breakfast was usually barley or oatmeal and ersatz coffee. When we had food parcels there would be creamed corned beef, spiced ham, fried potatoes and maybe some stewed fruits. After breakfast we would be free to go to classes, play ball or do anything else we wanted to. Lunch was usually our big meal and when we had food parcels we ate well enough. Without them, it was pretty thin pickings. After lunch we were free again until late in the afternoon when there would be another roll call and we'd all have to stand around outdoors and get counted again.

COLONEL GREENING: After supper, we usually had to stay in our barracks because the rule that prisoners could not be outside after dark was strictly enforced. If you were caught out after dark, you could be shot without warning. Electric lights—when we had them—were turned out at nine or ten o'clock and from there on we had to depend on home made oil lamps using margarine for fuel. The only privacy a prisoner ever got was when he hit the sack for the night and could be alone with his thoughts of home.

SGT. SPINELLI: One of the lighter sides of POW life was the slang that grew up in our camps. Dehydrated vegetable soup was "green death" or "seaweed." A big meal or a party was a "bash," so a Kriegie with an uncontrollable appetite was a "bashomaniac." A prisoner became "brownd-off" or "Kriegie-happy" from being too long in captivity. Anything that was wrong or stupid was "from hunger" because your mind is not sharp when food is scarce. A prisoner "strictly from hunger" was something of a jerk, or sad sack.

COLONEL GREENING: Every camp had secret words for certain topics. Escape was never mentioned. Instead it was known as "toasting" or simply a "project." Tunnels might be named "Harry" or "Bill" so the question, "How's Bill?" would sound to an eavesdropping goon or ferret like a casual inquiry about a sick Kriegie. If a prisoner asked if you had any "tobacco" he was looking for news, not something to smoke.

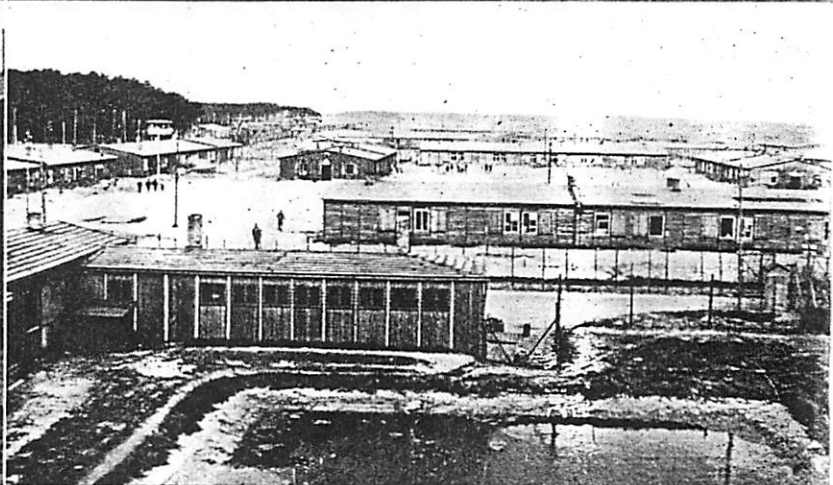
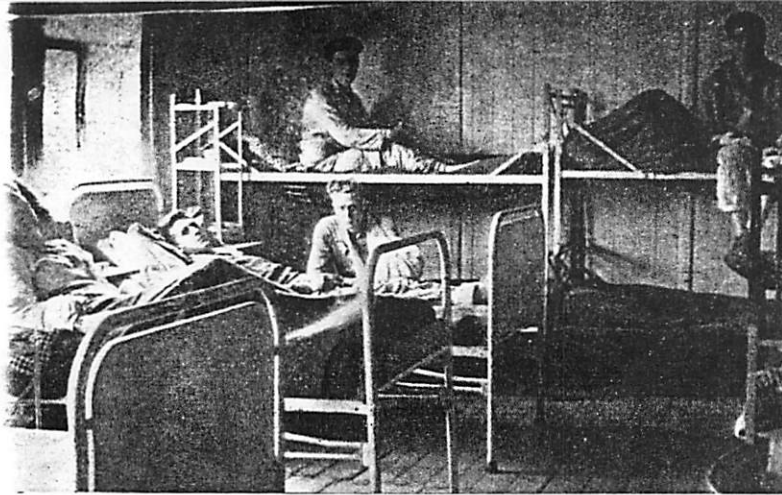


Col. Greening's painting above shows a group of Americans arriving at their prison camp. Some are wounded, at least one is on crutches. All have marched for many miles through the driving snow which has hidden some of the camp's drabness, but that is "cold comfort" to the prisoners.

Hair grew in prison camp as fast as in freedom. Some camps had Kriegie barber shops, in others you sat outside while your buddy clipped your locks. When the Germans decided to shave our heads we put sand in our hair and ruined their tools. Then they passed a law: anyone found with sand in his hair would be thrown in the cooler.

"Through rain or snow or gloom of night," we had to stand to "appell," or roll call. It was a regular daily procedure, but at times we'd be routed out at night with cries of "raus, raus," from the goons who were trying to find out if anyone had escaped, or maybe they were just feeling extra ornery.





We had hospitals (above, left) after a fashion, but most of them were very short on medical supplies. We made surgical instruments from barbed wire, razor blades, and what-not. Above, right, is Sgt. Spinelli's bunk. The books and shoes came from the "Y." We used to sleep on

the ground for fresh air and to get away from the fleas and lice. The picture at the right is a general camp scene showing the stagnant pond used as a water supply in case of fire. We skated on it in winter. Some camps were able to use their ponds for swimming or model boating.



When our mess hall burned down the Germans said we could have the wood for fuel, but after we chopped it up they took it away from us. There was a riot and they threatened to shoot us, but we got the wood back! No camp ever had enough fuel, and we would strip pieces of wood from the barracks, and even from our bunks, trying to keep warm. The Germans gave us a few ersatz coal bricks each day, but the chill was hardly off the room before they were gone. At the bottom, a "goon" watches while a load of bricks is wheeled to the kitchen to burn in the big German army cookers.



FOOD

You Don't Know How Much It Means 'Til You Haven't Got It

COLONEL GREENING: In a prison camp, life gets reduced to its barest essentials, and the most basic of those is eating. Food is a funny thing—when you have it, you take it for granted, but when you haven't got it, nothing else is important. Freedom, patriotism, loyalty to one's friends, all of these are apt to come second when a man must make his choice between them and starvation. It is no wonder that food and cooking occupied such an important place in prison camp life!

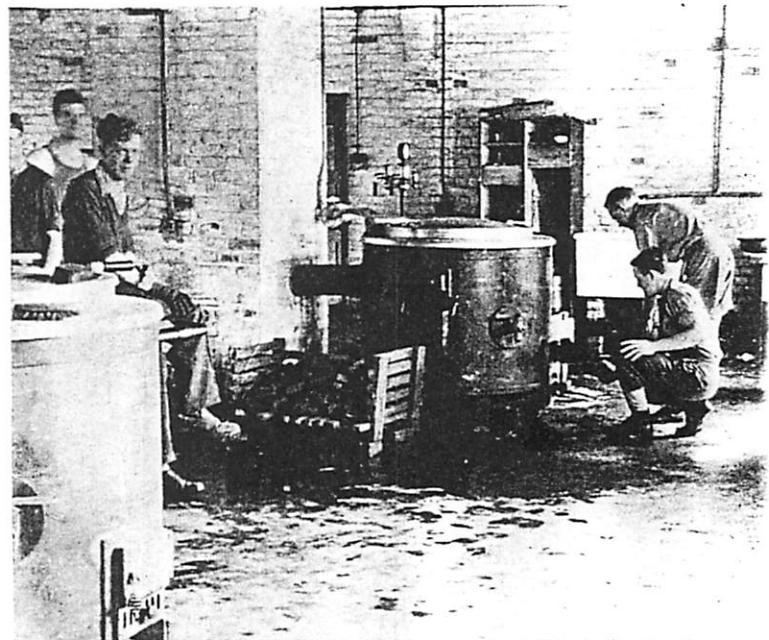
SGT. SPINELLI: I remember the story about the American commanding officer who was worried because his fellow prisoners were spending so much time talking about food when they didn't have much in their camp. He thought it was bad for their morale and suggested they talk about something else, like automobiles. "That's a good idea," said one of the prisoners, "Gosh, how I wish I had a shiny new auto—covered with mashed potatoes and gravy!"

COLONEL GREENING: I think the need for cooking food brought out some of the most ingenious devices invented in prison camps. With nothing but old tin cans and practically no tools, prisoners in my camp fashioned clever high compression blowers to get the last bit of heat from the meager supply of ersatz coal provided by the Germans.

SGT. SPINELLI: We had them in our camp, too, and those blowers would make a hot fire out of anything—wood, paper or coal. We used to cook almost all of our food parcels on them. A group of fellows made a good living by making the blowers for other men in the camp. They were paid off in food, chocolate bars and cigarettes. They were big operators and really lived well.



Here's how we cooked in our rooms. The stove was highly inefficient. Some camps ate in mess halls, pooling their food.



This is one of the big kettles we cooked our soups and stews in. Below, "Red" Morgan, Medal of Honor winner, ladles out hot water.





"I sez it's better to wash yer hands
before yuh does the dishes!"

COLONEL GREENING: Some of our men made very excellent ovens and stoves with walls insulated with sand. Sometimes they used hundreds of tin cans which had to be carefully opened up and flattened out. Even the solder from them was salvaged. Some of the men became so good at working with the tin cans that they could make water-tight cooking utensils without solder or welding.

SGT. SPINELLI: One thing that helped us out were the deals we were able to swing with the German guards. In exchange for cigarettes and chocolate bars, the guards would smuggle food to us. If it hadn't been for that we would have been a lot more hungry. Trading with the guards was such a well established custom in our camp that we had a regular price list to go on. I got my camera and had my films developed through exchanges with the guards.

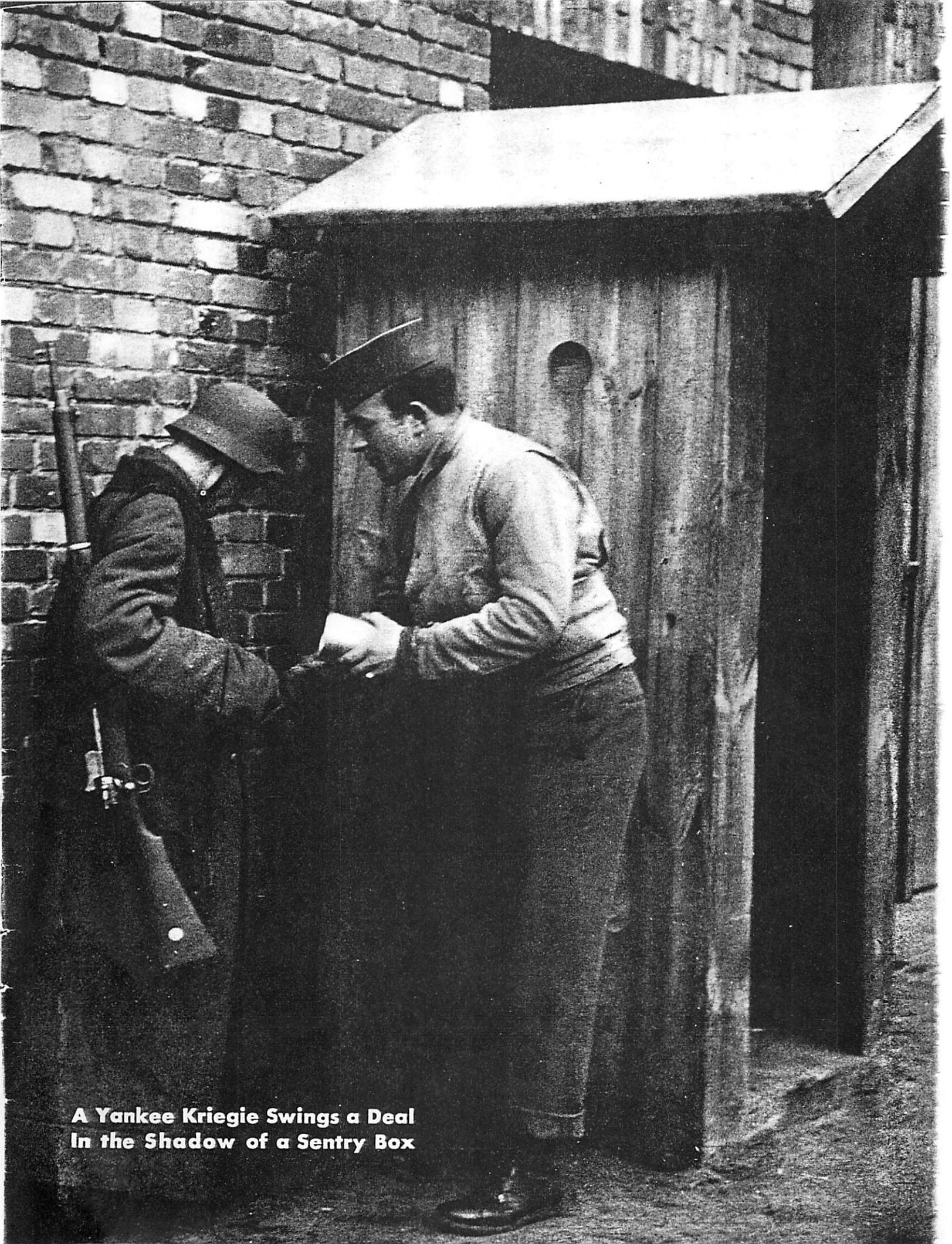
COLONEL GREENING: We did our share of trading, too, but from what I hear, the enlisted men were more successful at it than were the officers. In some officers' camps, the prisoners were forbidden by their superiors to trade with the Germans.

SGT. SPINELLI: Although I hope I never have to eat them again, some of the dishes we cooked up would make Oscar of the Waldorf green with envy. I'll bet Oscar never used tooth powder in the place of baking powder, nor made whipped cream out of powdered milk and margarine, and I'll bet he never thought of making ice cream out of snow, powdered milk and jam.

COLONEL GREENING: No, and he never had to make a potato masher out of barbed wire, a skillet from the side of a stove, or a rotary egg beater made from our old friend, the tin can.

SGT. SPINELLI: Maybe he'd like to try out this recipe for Kriegie pie a la mode. Take a dozen C Ration crackers from the Red Cross food parcels, grind them up with a tin can grater and roll them into flour with a table leg rolling pin. Add two tablespoons of margarine, a tablespoon of powdered milk, eight tablespoons of water to form an excellent pie crust batter. Using one of the tin can pie tins, bake for four minutes in a tin can oven at what you hope is a moderate temperature. Boil the contents of either raisins or prunes from a food parcel and pour into pie crust. Bake this for another four minutes. Remove and cool and then take powdered milk and mixing a very thick paste, spread over top, cut into eight pieces and serve as Kriegie pie a la mode. (These ingredients were a normal two weeks' supply of crackers and dried fruits.)

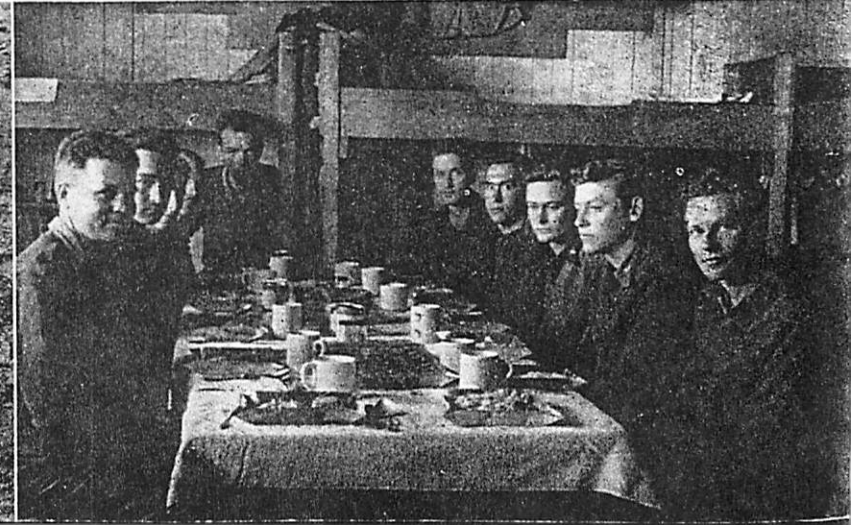
Sgt. Spinelli took his life in his hands to get this picture showing a long-coated "goon" exchanging a loaf of bread for a can of margarine. The coats of the guards were very handy for hiding food, films and other goods to trade with the Americans. These were the world's most risky business ventures, with death the "silent partner" in all transactions.



**A Yankee Kriegie Swings a Deal
In the Shadow of a Sentry Box**



See that tub? It contains a thin stew for 120 men. When it had to feed more we just added water! At top left is one of the small gardens the men made trying to raise vegetables. The guards messed them up looking for tunnels or hidden escape tools. The cart contains the German ration of bread. The men along the wall are cooking their meals on high compression blowers, one of which is shown at the bottom of the page. Below you can see how we ate on festive occasions. Note, please, our dishes made from tin cans. Gee, you'd be surprised what you can make from an old tin can. Generally we ate in groups, by rooms, or "combines," but there were occasional lone wolves who preferred to eat by themselves, perhaps so they would not have to share their food. We gave them the "silent treatment," and it nearly always brought them around.



THIS EDITION IS TO BE READ SILENTLY, QUICKLY, IN GROUPS OF THREE

POWWOW

Volume III, Number 14

Stalag Luft I

June 6, 1944

INVASION!

YANKS-BRITISH LAND IN EUROPE!!!

THE INVASION OF NORTH-WEST EUROPE HAS BEGUN. Since pre-dawn this morning, Allied shock-troops have been landing on a 95-mile front between Cherbourg and le Havre on the north coast of France. The greatest military operation in history -- the blow to free Europe from Nazism-- has at last been struck.



B-U-L-L-E-T-I-N-S

German Radio, late this afternoon reported a major naval battle off the coast of Belgium.

Nazi Communique of June 5: "Despite German offer to exclude Rome from the battle area, American armored formations penetrated to the center of the city in the morning of June 4. Bitter fighting continued

A terse statement from the Nazi High Command, at 2pm today, announced

"The long-expected and long prepared invasion of the north coast of France started about Midnight, after a heavy air bombardment of the coastal defenses.

"Air-borne troops landed at several places between le Havre and Cherbourg followed by landing craft, supported by light and heavy naval bombardment.

"Our defenses were not surprised. There was bitter fighting in the sectors attacked.

"The air-borne troops were engaged before landing. The paratroopers for the most part, captured

"In spite of the fire of our naval units, our troops held up their fire

"The action

D-DAY SCOOP!

All day fighting on the coast resulted in a major victory for the Allies.

Twenty minutes before New York had news of the invasion of France by Allied troops on D-Day, June 6, 1944, the "POWWOW," secret camp newspaper at Stalag Luft I in Germany, had brought out an extra, "to be read silently, quickly, in groups of three," then folded up again and passed along to other eagerly waiting Kriegie readers. Just how this bit of journalistic enterprise was accomplished under the very noses of the guards must still remain an untold secret of the Kriegies.



Digging tunnels was a never-ending occupation of Kriegies. This model shows one way it was done. While a Kriegie watched outside, the men burrowed under their room, and hid excavated material under the roof. The figures are carved from soap, a favored medium of art.

ESCAPE

Day and Night It Was Always in
Our Minds, But Few Really Did It

SGT. SPINELLI: Next to food, I think Kriegies thought more of escape than anything else. Every prisoner dreamed of making a successful break for freedom, but although many tried, only a few succeeded.

COLONEL GREENING: I guess that was true in all camps. In my camp we dug over a hundred tunnels, but the Germans found all of them sooner or later and marked them with wooden crosses. For the tunnels we made ventilating systems out of tin cans and a home made bellows. One tunnel was so big it had a miniature railway system in it to haul out the dirt.



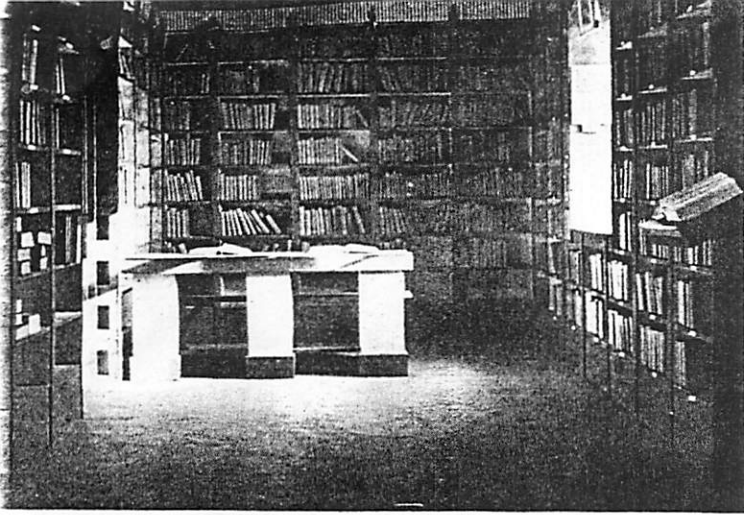


Some of us brought back these escape mementos. The crosses marked the death of tunnels, but didn't discourage us. Wire cutters—said by the Germans to be better than theirs—were made from stove handles. The Nazi uniform was one of our better efforts in tailoring! We used to joke about having a tunnel emerge through the German commandant's office, and drew cartoons of it happening in War Time Log Books sent by the "Y."

COLONEL GREENING: We made fake guns, pistols and even made German uniforms to help us escape, but trying to escape was a dangerous business and cost the life of many a good man. Several tunnels were discovered when German dogs heard the scratching going on beneath the surface and apparently thinking some one was trying to steal a buried bone, started to dig down. The Germans would then rush into the barracks to try to find the tunnel entrance. On one occasion, a guard found a tunnel opening and sat on it so the men in the tunnel couldn't escape. He whistled for help, but the men clawed their way to the surface and disappeared into the crowd of Kriegies who beat the other German guards to the spot. When the guards arrived, they drew their guns and dove into the tunnel only to find their quarry gone! Boy, did their commandant chew them up!

SGT. SPINELLI: If any Kriegies got caught in a tunnel they were given thirty days solitary confinement, if they weren't shot by the trigger-happy guards. But there was one time the Kriegies got even by pouring water down a tunnel and nearly drowning the Krauts who were worming their way through it.





The library at Stalag Luft I contained 15,000 volumes.

SGT. SPINELLI: The real escape of most prisoners was in reading books and going to educational classes.

COLONEL GREENING: Some camps had better organized educational activities than others. At some camps they had almost any subject you would find in a college. In our camp, space for classes was quite a problem. We held them in our rooms, outdoors when the weather was good, in the hallways and even in the latrines! We would hold three or four classes at one time in the mess hall with the result that each instructor had to talk louder than the other. Our camp was so crowded that when the mess hall burnt down early in 1945 it put a stop to educational work, theatricals, and even burnt up all our musical instruments. That was the end of "the good old days" and the beginning of a really dismal life. Since I have returned to the United States I have learned that some former Kriegies have obtained college credit and even their de-

Kriegie students enjoyed one class so much they feted their instructors. French POW's made the cakes.

ALMA MATER

Barbed Wire Replaced Ivy, But
Our Classes Helped Keep Us Sane

grees for the studying they did while prisoners in Germany.

SGT. SPINELLI: Classes were taught by men who were experts in that field in civilian life. One of the most popular courses in my camp was in salesmanship. The men liked the course so well that they gave a party for their instructors at the end of it.

COLONEL GREENING: We kept careful records of the books the men read and the progress they made in their courses. We had exams and everything else just like in a regular school. Of course, we had our troubles too, because the Germans wouldn't let us receive lots of textbooks, especially those concerned with technical subjects. They were afraid we would make radio sets or gunpowder, but we made them anyhow.

SGT. SPINELLI: When men completed a course they were given a certificate of completion and records were kept to be sent to their school when the war ended, but unfortunately almost all educational records were lost when the camps were evacuated in the last desperate days of the war. Everything wasn't lost, however, because many Kriegies had learned the rudiments of different trades which were taught in the camp.

Stalag Luft III's library was a busy place. Reading takes on a new importance when you are a war prisoner.

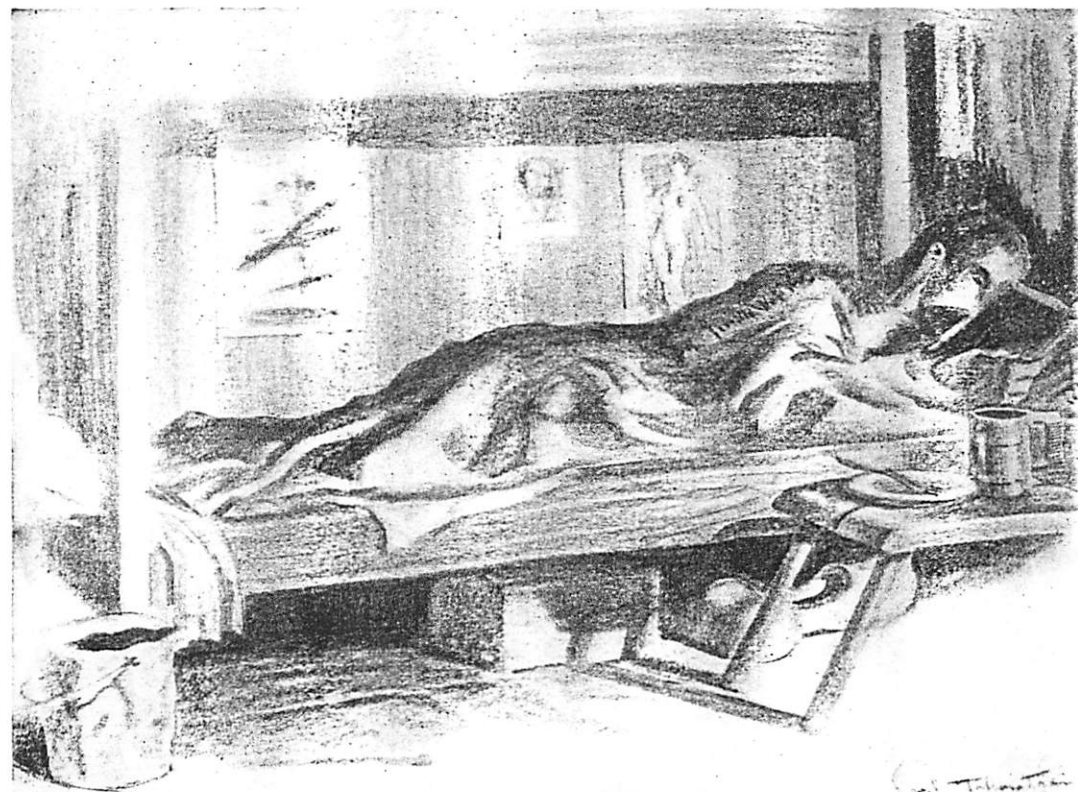


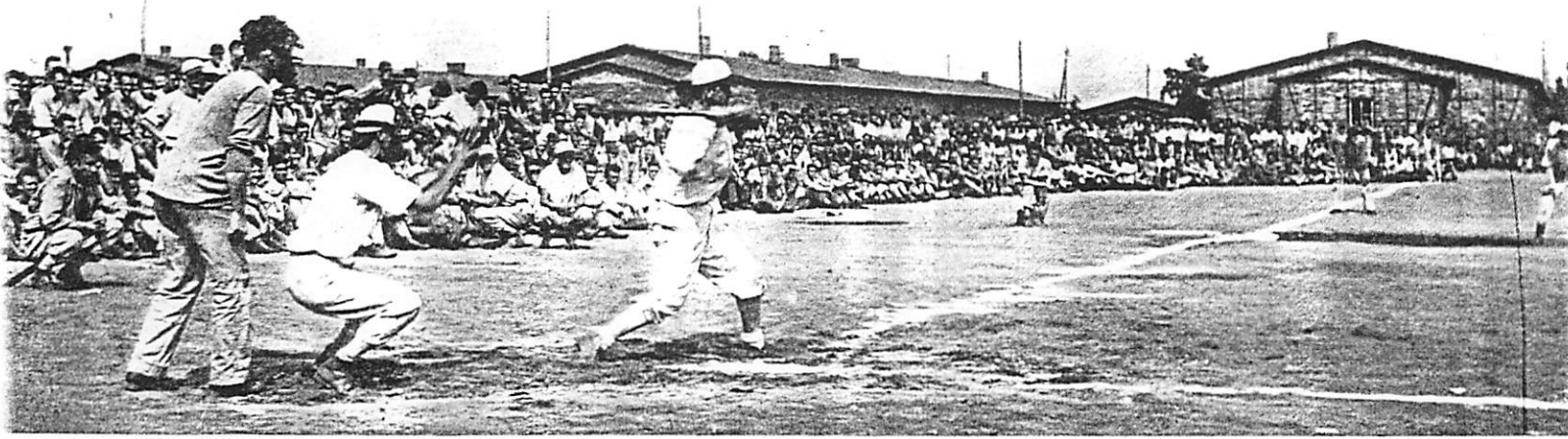


Our classrooms may have doubled in brass as mess halls or theaters, but the students were as attentive as any in ivy-covered halls. This class is in salesmanship at Stalag III B, a camp for American enlisted men. Practical subjects, which

could be of help in civilian life, drew the steadiest attendance, but there were classes in almost any high school or college course you could name. We got our books and educational supplies from the Y.M.C.A. Some of us read hundreds of books.

"In the Sack," could be the title of this picture. It shows how many Kriegies did their reading. You stayed warmer and didn't use up so much precious food energy. Some Kriegies ate in bed, too, figuring they got the most out of their food by not getting up.





We Played Baseball Under Machine Guns, But

We Had Some Hot Games

COLONEL GREENING: The American boy's love of athletics wasn't forgotten while he was a prisoner. We organized regular athletic leagues in all sports and the competition between the different teams not only gave us exercise but something to talk about as well.

SGT. SPINELLI: We had some former professional ball players in our camp and some of our teams were plenty hot. We had real uniforms for the teams, but we generally used them only for the championship games so they wouldn't wear out so fast.

COLONEL GREENING: Sometimes we had to make our own sports equipment by making baseball bats out of bedposts and making balls from the uppers of old shoes. That was before the "Y" got its supplies to us.

SGT. SPINELLI: The German guards became so interested in watching us play baseball that we got them to move the barbed wire fences back so we would have more room to play.

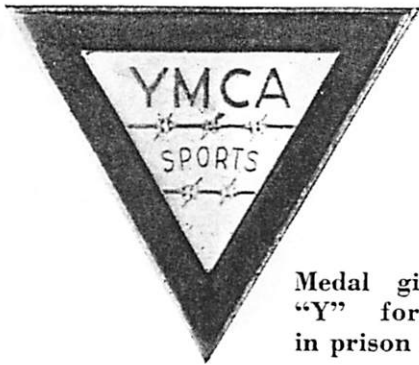
COLONEL GREENING: Over the fence was really out in our camp! We had arrangements with the guards whereby a man carrying a special flag could go out and retrieve balls knocked over the fence. As long as he was carrying the flag the guards wouldn't shoot at him.

SGT. SPINELLI: Barbed wires were rough on athletic equipment for we had a hard time keeping the air in soccer balls and basketballs. We had ice skates but the German commandant wouldn't let us have skis because he was afraid we'd be more adept on them than the guards.



You could always tell how the food situation was in camp by a look at the sports program. If there were lots of sports, then the food must be arriving regularly through the Red Cross. No food, no sports—that's how it went. Boxing got a good turnout.

If you think the activities shown on these pages looks like we were having a pretty good time, just remember that they were carried on beneath the snouts of machine guns manned by itchy-fingered guards. Under those conditions, pal, nothing is fun. The "Y" supplied us with all kinds of athletic equipment and gave medals for sports leadership. The chap on skates behind the cross mark is "Montana Bill" Burghardt, winter sports director at Oflag 64. Most camps had required periods of exercise so that the men would stay in as good condition as possible. Competitive games, such as volley ball, baseball and basketball were preferred to calisthenics, but not everybody could take part in them. On rare occasions the Germans would take small numbers of Kriegies outside the camp for a hike through the countryside as a change from the constant pacing inside the barbed wire.



Medal given by the "Y" for leadership in prison camp sports.



The Prayers of Lonely Men

COLONEL GREENING: There were very few atheists in air force prisoner of war camps. Men whose lives had been suspended by a thread on their last combat mission were drawn very close to God. Consequently religious services were taken very seriously. British padres captured after Dunkirk were sent to most of the camps and were heartily welcomed.

SGT. SPINELLI: The same was true in my camp. Using scraps of wood, broken glass and almost anything else we could find, we built a chapel and held services at it regularly for all faiths with religious articles sent by the Y.M.C.A.

COLONEL GREENING: Every prisoner returned to America with a strengthened love for his country and I think the majority of them were also closer to God.

SGT. SPINELLI: I think the best statement of how we felt about religion is in a poem by Pvt. Frank Stebbins, a prisoner in our camp. He said:

*There was no temple for our Lord
When we were banished to this place
Of soldier-exile. Yet, we saw
Within the barbs His lonely face.*

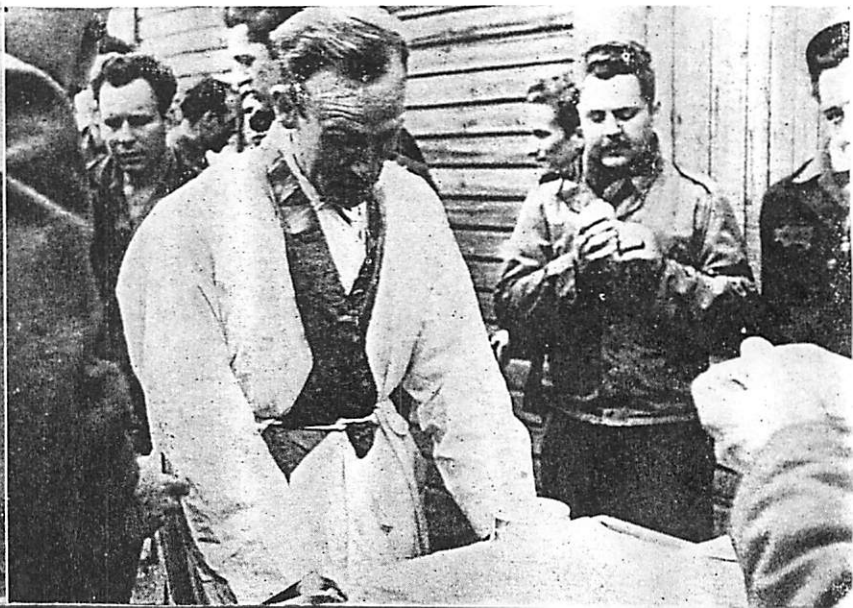
*So we saved up the precious wood
Of crates from home, and scraps of tin,
And built on sands of solitude
A House where God might enter in.*

*And wealthy men on golden hills,
And men despoiled by luxury's kiss
Have never a temple for their Lord
As beautiful and true as this.*

*God loves the wealth of barren spots,
And we are none the less His own
Because when Jesus enters in
We seat Him on a humble throne.*

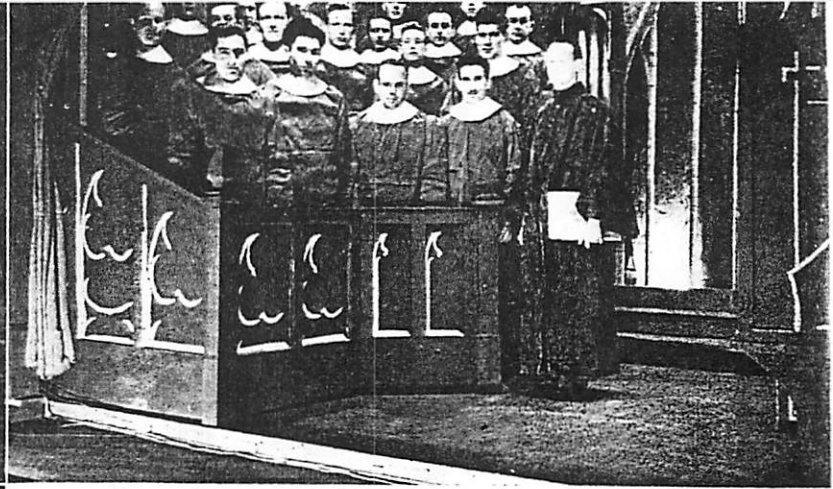
*For He, impatient when His ear
Has caught the plea of princely sin,
Whispers: "Wait! While first I hear
The honest prayer of lonely men!"*

Some camps went all through the war without a chaplain for their religious leader. Then a Kriegie who may have been a theological student before the war, or some other "amateur" acted as a lay leader for us. Here is shown Rev. Michael Charlton, beloved padre of Stalag Luft I giving Holy Communion.





STAS
 ENTATION
ORATORIAL
 LIFE OF CHRIST
 Sung by the CHORUS
 SOLOS BY: HARRY SMITH-WALTER SPRACKLIN-WADE NYQUIST
 SCRIPTURE NARRATED BY ROBERT ROYSTER
 CATHEDRAL SETTING BY CHARLES FOSTER
 ARRANGEMENT BY-
 RUSSELL HEHR



Maybe it was because we were in a jam, or maybe because we had time enough to think things out, but religion was very much a part of our lives as Kriegies. We learned that we could be tough he-men with hair on our chests and still go to church without becoming sissies. Prison camp religion had a practical quality about it that appealed to us. Perhaps that was because it really was part of us—if we wanted religious services they had to come from within ourselves, and if there was to be a chapel, we had to build it with our hands.

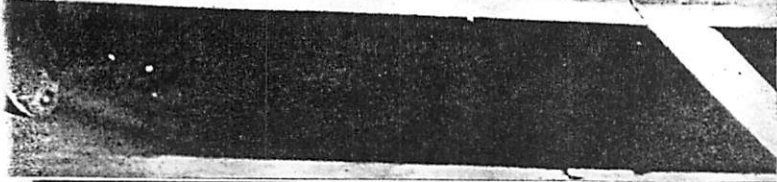
There were times, like Easter or Christmas, when we did something a little extra in the religious way. We presented the "Oratorial," had Christmas and Easter pageants, and our musical groups offered appropriate programs. Christmas was a tough day to be a prisoner, but we tried to make the best of it by having a tree and as much Christmas atmosphere as possible. We needed the consolation of religion when we had to bury one of our comrades. The "Y" helped us by supplying the religious articles of all faiths for services.

LEST WE FORGET

*They came to prove no theories;
 No shibboleths rang in their ears.
 Theirs was the act—not the word.*

*They would deny the glory of their deeds.
 They died. But in their dying they demand
 It was not done in vain.*

Lt. John M. Coppinger



PRISON CAMP REVERIE

THREE YEARS FROM HOME

By Lt. Henry G. Lee

*The right or wrong we cannot judge or know,
We only see that here a few must pay
A bitter penance, living day to day
And watching years unfold unused and slow.
We only feel our hungers wax and wane
To suit the whim that guides our captor's hate.
We only see the palsied hand of fate
Grope blindly in the tangled threads of pain
And leave this man untouched and that man dead.
We only feel the dream fade at the test,
The spirit quenched, the youth starved in the breast,
The heart grown calloused and the once-proud head
Bowed low beneath the captor's iron hand.
We only know our candle gleam of hope
Glows in a darkness where our minds must grope,
Lost and forsaken, through a strange gray land.
My country—oh, my country—well we know,
Each one a soldier trained, that sacrifice
Is war itself, and some must pay a price
To cultivate the fields where victories grow.
And we were sacrificed—perhaps to gain
That little time that warded off defeat
In those first awful months of swift retreat.
If that be true, dare we begrudge our pain?
And yet we walk in fear, for we can see,
Clear-eyed across the path the years have flown,
Your failings and your sins which were our own,
Your selfishness, your smug complacency,
Your foolish bickering, your selfish lusts
To gain your end while others pay the price,
The cautious hand that will not throw the dice
Til they are loaded, and the foolish trust
In each new demigod who takes your mind
And shapes it to his own false dream of gain.*

*Your inability to see the pain,
The bitterness, the suffering you find
In your own life is only magnified
In other lives around the wailing earth.
You who regard the accident of birth
Not humbly, but with boastful pride.
And still we have our faith—faith in your might,
Slow to arouse and still more slowly cooled.
If faith moves mountains, then our faith is tooled
In each bright weapon in the far-flung fight;
Our faith is echoed in the smudge-dark sky
That clouds your roaring cities; in the grains
Of each ripe golden shock of prairie wheat;
Our faith is in the blood of weary men
Who take the coral beaches back again.
For we have seen their brothers in defeat,
For we have seen their brothers meet their end,
Unsuccored on a jungled foreign shore;
Nor did they question if their lives meant more
Than that small plot of ground they must defend.
My country—oh, my country—well we know
That final victory will be your part,
But bitterness claws at the waiting heart,
And still the years go by unused and slow.*

Prisoners of war are much the same, the world over, as this poem by Lt. Henry G. Lee, son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas R. Lee of South Pasadena, Cal., attests. Lt. Lee, a gallant hero of the desperate fighting for Bataan, lost his life when a Japanese prison ship was bombed off Formosa in January, 1945. Previously he had buried his poems beneath a hut in his Philippine prison camp. The poems, written in a sweat-stained note book wrapped in rotting canvas, were found when Lt. Col. Henry Mucci led the 6th Ranger Infantry Battalion in a daring raid to liberate American prisoners of war from Camp Cabanatuan. This poem, and others of Lt. Lee, were first published by the Saturday Evening Post whose editors believe Lt. Lee's poetry to be among the most gifted produced by World War II. Two of his poems are reprinted in "The Yankee Kriegies" by special permission of the Saturday Evening Post. Copyright 1945 by the Curtis Publishing Company. Our thanks to the Post.



Well, It Wasn't Broadway, But

Our Theaters Helped Speed Long and Lonely Hours

COLONEL GREENING: There probably is no greater demonstration of the ingenuity of the Yankee Kriegie than in the way he built a dramatic workshop in his prison camp. Using the most unlikely materials, the actors in our camp put on plays of really professional quality.

SGT. SPINELLI: Some of the stage sets were amazing. In our camp the men even built a revolving stage! For a play in which a television broadcast was portrayed they made a stage built in sections on rollers so one scene after another could be shown on the "television screen."

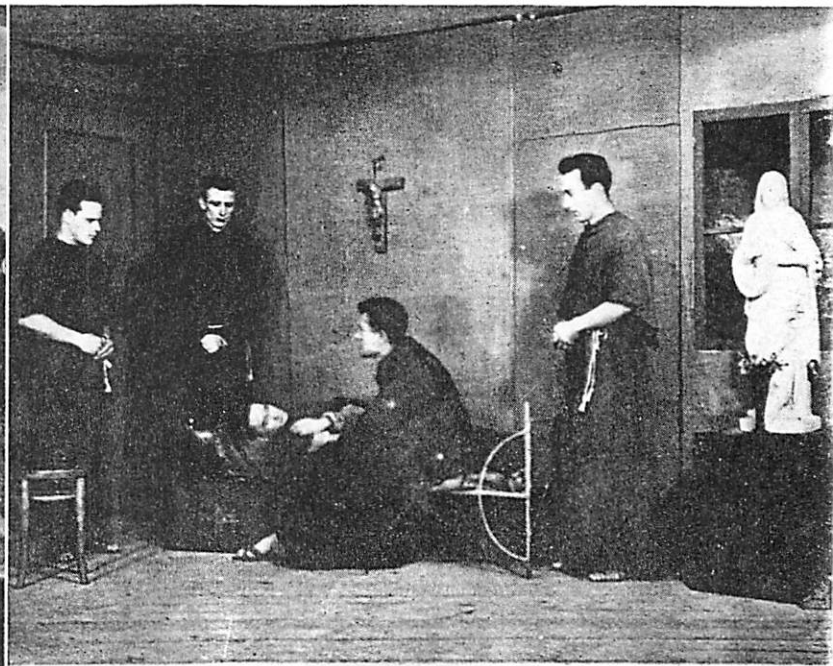
COLONEL GREENING: We used our mess hall for a theater and for a stage put all the tables together. Of course, this made walking around on the stage more than a little hazardous because the tables were of all different heights. We made our blankets do double duty as curtains for the stage. We would pin them together with barbed wire and then when the show was over, they were put back on our bunks.

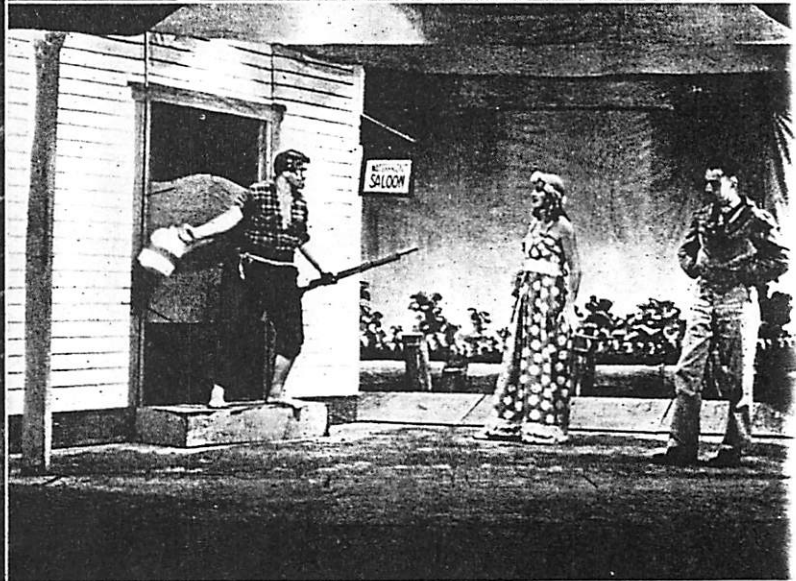
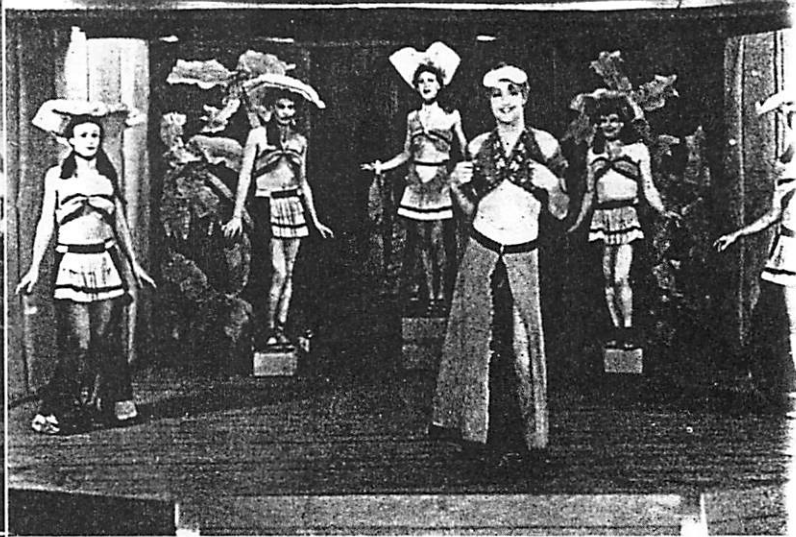
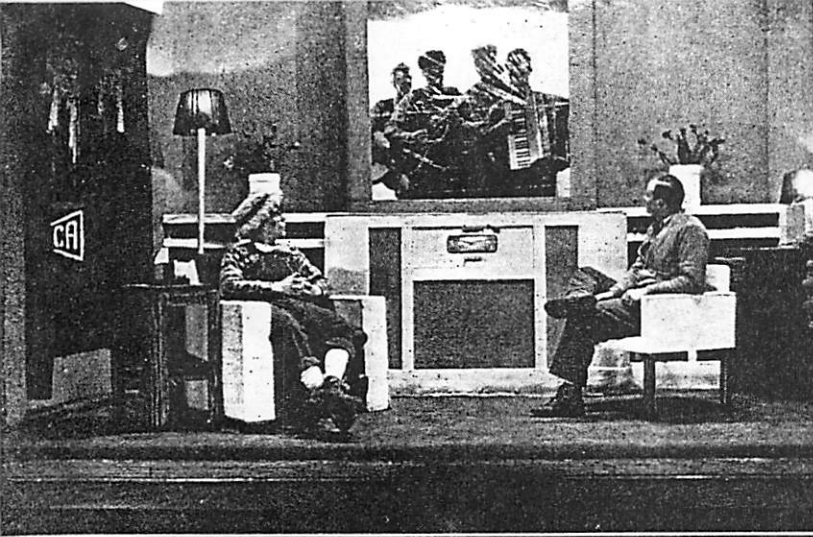
SGT. SPINELLI: Our wigs, costumes and tools and other things needed for our plays were

held by the Germans and given to us on parole. That meant that we could have them long enough to put on the play or build a stage set but had to turn them all back in every day. There was never a time but what the German count didn't show something was missing and then we'd have to go all over everything with them to prove it was all there. Otherwise, we'd never get any equipment on parole again.

COLONEL GREENING: Many times just in the midst of a play—and always in the most dramatic spot, the Germans would turn out the lights. Then we had to scurry around with the Kriegie lamps burning margarine and using a belt for a wick. This didn't give much light and as a result comedies sometimes were carried on in the atmosphere of a mystery play.

SGT. SPINELLI: Because the plays were so popular, we had to issue tickets so that everyone would get a chance to see a play in its five performances. However, some boys were such great theater fans that they became adept at counterfeiting our tickets—usually made from the tops of cheese boxes—and would see the same play five days in a row!





The theatrical bug bit more than one Kriegie, and the experience gained on stage of prison camps changed the whole course of their lives. The theater was a double-barrelled form of entertainment because the players, stage hands, designers and writers had fun putting on the show, and the audience got a kick out of watch-

ing it. When you consider that the sets and costumes shown here were made in a prison camp, they don't look so bad, at least not to us! The show at top left is the "television" broadcast. The "Y" sent us costumes, make-up kits and scripts. We also put on original plays. Some former Kriegies are in Broadway hits now.

Mail Meant the World to Us

We lived for it, and just about the worst punishment we could receive was for our captors to withhold our mail. Mostly it brought us good news, but not always. Some men received hundreds of letters; others spent years with no word from home, and when it came it sometimes didn't matter any more. Usually the folks back in the States were understanding and sympathetic, but every little while one of us would get a letter that really set us back on our heels, like the Kriegie's father who wrote, "I hope you are able to get in plenty of golf, and don't drink too much of that good German beer, it is very fattening." Then there was the girl friend who broke it gently: "You were missing for a month so I married your father," and signed it, "Love, Mother." Or the aunt who said, "I'm so glad that you got shot down before flying became dangerous," and the lady who replied, when a Kriegie thanked her for a sweater received through a relief organization, "I'm sorry you got it. I wish it had gone to some one on active duty." We tried to laugh them off and put them up on the bulletin board where our friends could laugh with us, or maybe at us, and it helped.

Mail Incident

*He clutched the precious letter in the hand,
Unopened and unread, and in his eyes
The nearest saw and could not understand
The weary, listless look of one who dies
Replace the eager, glad, expectant glow;
And then, with neither anger nor in hate,
He tore it into bits, precise and slow.
The nearest heard him whisper, "Late—too
late,"
And watched him—with a strange, untroubled
mask,
Watch till the tiny pieces ceased to blow,
And then resume some trivial daily task.*

Lt. Henry G. Lee

I Am Not Alone

*Your hand reached out across the miles and
touched
Mine for a little while tonight; your laughter
Echoed and re-echoed down the vaulted
Arches of my memory's hall of dreams,
And for a little while the room was bright:
It sparkled with your smile. But now the
Loneliness comes rushing in again to drown
My dreams and stifle all the hope your words
arouse.*

*And I am not alone; there are
The others here with me, so closely packed
Our souls have hardly elbow room to move
Around,—yet each apart from one another
In his self-consuming misery.
The unused, empty days crawling slowly
By each leave a question burning in
The mind: How long? A little while? For what?
But stabbing at us, underneath them all:
The price we're paying, is it worth it all?*

Lt. John M. Coppinger



PRISONER'S SONG

Home Wasn't So Distant
When Barbed Wire Faded
Before Music We Loved

An action portrait by Col. Greening of Capt. Harry Korger, Eau Claire, Wis., bombardier on Col. "Killer" Kane's plane on the first Ploesti raid. Capt. Korger was leader of the Glee Club at Stalag Luft I.

COLONEL GREENING: All we needed in our camp to have a dance were the girls to dance with! We had the orchestra, and a plenty hot swing band it was, too. We not only had dance bands, but a symphony orchestra as well.

SGT. SPINELLI: We put on such good shows that the German guards used to come in and watch them. Some of our musical comedies sounded fine but the chorus line of Yankee Kriegies was not quite the equal of one composed of beautiful American girls.

COLONEL GREENING: At that, some of the "girls" in our musical shows got a lot of wolf calls!

SGT. SPINELLI: We had regular symphony concerts in our camp and it surely made you forget the barbed wire to sit there and hear that good music. The bands and orchestras were composed of talented musicians. Many of them were professionals in civilian life.

COLONEL GREENING: It's surprising what an interest in music a fellow takes when he's a prisoner of war. It seems to me that almost everyone was playing a tune on a harmonica or ocarina. Men who never before had given a thought to music found it a sure way to forget their troubles. With our limited number of phonographs, we assigned one to a different barracks each night. The boys would have the concerts in the barracks, beginning at eight o'clock in the evening and would not quit until nine o'clock the next morning when the phonograph was to be sent to the next barracks. Weather permitting, we had concerts outside. We had music at our athletic contests, especially our little World Series and our Barley Bowl football game on New Year's Day to give typical American atmosphere to our sporting events. The musical accompaniment at our shows sounded as good as Broadway to us!

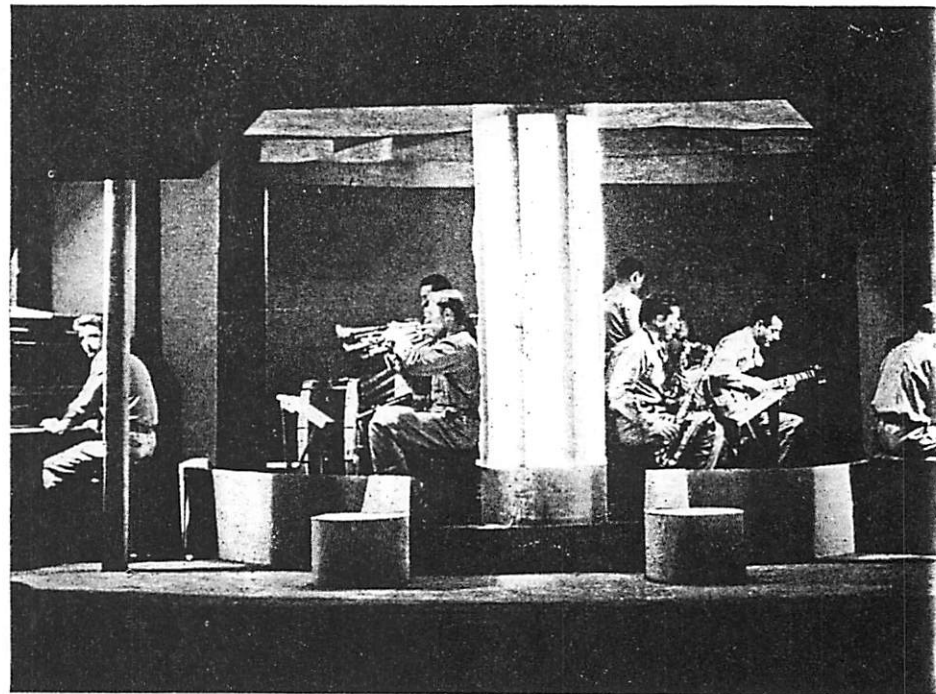


The band played at the opening of the baseball season, and the Senior Officer threw out the traditional first ball.

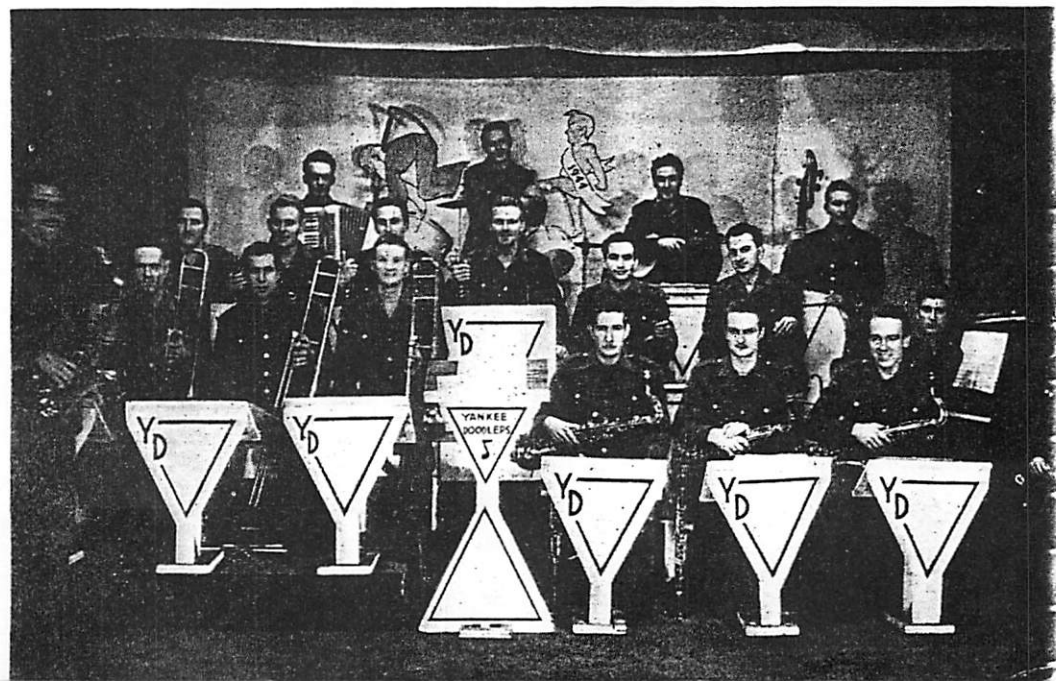


There were symphony orchestras as well as swing bands, with the musical instruments being supplied by the Y.M.C.A.

Sgt. Spinelli took this picture to show how the revolving stage built at his camp appeared in the middle of a turn. It could accommodate two bands, or two stage settings. There also were stages that could be raised and lowered while the bands played on them. But the stages were not as important as the music, and many a Kriegie wrote home: "They played 'our' song tonight, dear, and as the melody of 'Deep Purple' filled the room, the barbed wire seemed to melt away, and I was back again in those happier days with you." For prisoners who just liked something simple, the "Y" sent thousands of mouth organs and ocarinas. The noise, you couldn't call it music, was terrific, but it kept our minds busy.



The "Yankee Doodlers," famous throughout Kriegie-land for their rhythms, at a New Year's celebration in their camp. The time: 1944.



HOBBIES


You'd Be Surprised What You
Can Make If It Must Be Made

SGT. SPINELLI: A man never knows what he can do until he has to do it. To keep from losing his mind, many a Yankee Kriegie became proficient in building model airplanes, making water colors or oil paintings, or even making a clock from tin cans.


COLONEL GREENING: What's really unusual about it is that these things were made not in a well equipped workshop, but with such crude tools as an old razor blade, a broken pocket knife or a piece of glass.

SGT. SPINELLI: Some handicrafts had a very practical turn about them. Men became experts in repairing shoes because someone had to repair them. And then the work of fixing the shoes kept their minds and hands busy. Other men became tailors and repaired uniforms and made stage costumes. Others became bookbinders and gave new life to our well used volumes. Still other men took up watch repairing and did themselves and their fellow prisoners a good turn by keeping our watches fixed up.

COLONEL GREENING: The outstanding piece of handicraft I saw was a beautiful violin made by a prisoner from bed boards, a packing case, the back of an old chair and pieces of barbed wire. It took the prisoner two months to make the violin—two months in which he might otherwise have sat around and brooded. Mice were a big problem in camp and as a result some ingenious mousetraps were devised. Kriegies developed a love for sportsmanship and even in their mousetraps gave the mouse a chance for freedom. One mousetrap made in our camp was a six-way gadget giving the mouse a chance to get out if he survived guillotining, poisoning, crushing, being impaled by spikes, hanging from a noose or solitary confinement! Another mousetrap had eight swastikas painted on it commemorating its Nazi rodent victims.



Kriegie tailor shops kept the patches fresh on our clothing, and made theatrical costumes. The busy tailors above were in Stalag Luft I.

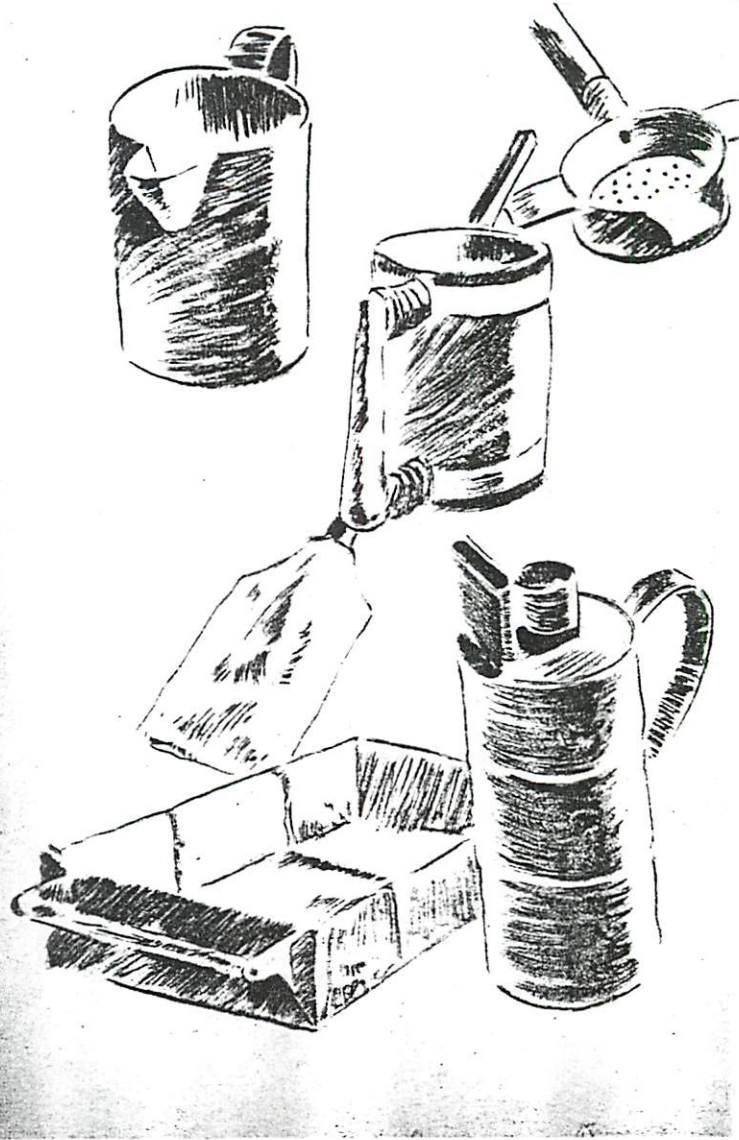


Books wore out fast, and so did our shoes. The "Y" supplied sewing machines, book, shoe and watch repair outfits and Kriegies did the work.





Can you guess what those Allied air insignia are made from? Well, you wouldn't in a million years, so we'll tell you: the lead foil from thousands of packages of cigarettes! Models were carved from wood, sand molds made, the foil melted and poured into the molds, and the finished product polished like silver. Most of



our dishes and cooking utensils were made from tin cans. They looked weird, but were mighty useful. Below, some Kriegies are busy repairing their fellow prisoners' watches (for some reason we Kriegies thought it necessary to always know the exact time) while some other men construct a tin can clock. It kept good time.





Could you build a model aeroplane, complete to instruments and bombs, or a violin, or a model sailing ship with a pocket knife and a piece of glass? The Kriegies did, as you can see here. The violin is probably the outstanding example of prison camp handcraft. Made from parts of a bed, chair and packing case, it has a clear, mellow tone and a beautiful satin finish.



KRIEGIE HUMOR

It saved us when the going got tough



1. "You jump first, Joe, I don't want to be a hero."

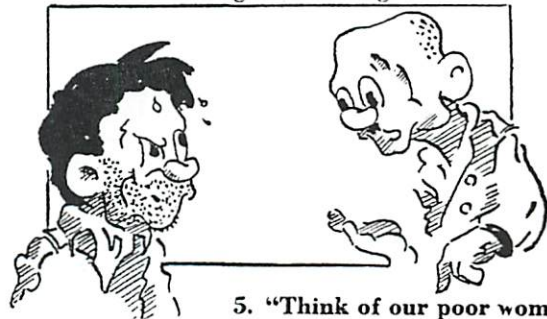
2. "Yow! This can't happen to me." (That's what every Kriegie thought.)



3. "Hope they didn't see me. Now all I got to do is cross Germany, France and the Channel and I'll be back in good old England."



4. "For you der var ist ovfer."



5. "Think of our poor women and children." (That was supposed to soften us up.)



6. "Aw, have a heart, stomach, this is my day to think about women!"

7. "... and when good Kriegies die, they go to heaven, where there is an easy chair, slippers, plenty of smokes, a radio, and apple pie and milk."



A MEMORANDUM

By American Prisoners Held In German Camps

WAR DEPARTMENT
HEADQUARTERS OF THE
ARMY AIR FORCES
WASHINGTON, D. C.

21 June 1945

Subject: Work Performed by the YMCA for
Prisoners of War in Germany.

To: Commanding General, Army Air Forces.

1. We, the undersigned senior officers of the various American AAF prisoners of war compounds in Germany desire to bring to your attention the extraordinarily fine work done by the American YMCA and the War Prisoners Aid Committee, YMCA, for the AAF prisoners of war in Germany.

2. It was largely through the efforts of the YMCA that the mental attitude of the prisoners of war remained so fine throughout their incarceration in Germany.

3. Almost all of the religious, recreational, and educational facilities which we enjoyed were furnished by this organization.

a. Along the religious line we were furnished testaments, hymn books, tracts, religious plays, and all necessary equipment for communion service and for conducting religious activities within the camp.

b. Our recreational programs were most complete. They included equipment for football, basketball, badminton, table tennis, volley ball, indoor baseball, soccer, fencing, boxing, hockey, horseshoes, and various other sports. Much clothing for these sports was also furnished. In the entertainment part of the recreational programs we were furnished with plays, theater equipment to include all electrical fixtures for a complete stage, stage settings, costumes, makeup, and wigs. Enough musical instruments were furnished each compound to make up a complete popular orchestra and in some of the older compounds enough classical instruments to equip a symphony orchestra.

c. Along the educational line, the YMCA furnished many hundreds of fine technical and reference books and several thousand fiction books to each compound. The YMCA furnished each compound with all the necessary school equipment such as paper, pencils, protractors, chalk, blackboards, etc., to run a complete school. They made available text books and teachers' guides for these schools, which included high school courses and college courses. They made it possible for the



Henry Soederberg, a Swedish Y.M.C.A. worker, talks things over with an American prisoner of war in Germany.

prisoners to conduct an extensive and comprehensive program, which included examinations and certificates of proficiency which many of the colleges and universities in this country have signified their intention of recognizing.

4. The YMCA representative was a most frequent visitor to all camps, bringing with him messages from next of kin and taking out messages from the prisoners to be sent to next of kin. Wherever it was possible for a representative to perform personal services for the prisoners of war and permission could be gained from the German authorities, this was done. At no time, so far as we know, while we were prisoners of war, did any YMCA representative in Germany, by act or deed, do anything which was contrary to the Geneva Convention, but scrupulously held to the high ideals and principles always demonstrated by this fine organization.

5. Especially do we wish to commend the efforts of Mr. Henry Soderberg of Stalag Luft III, Mr. Berg of Stalag Luft VII-A, and Mr. Christiansen of Stalag Luft I, who frequently risked their lives in order to bring to the prisoners of war the equipment mentioned above. These people were especially active during the long treks of the prisoners of war from January 1945 until the end of the war. They used every means available at hand to furnish shoes and other necessities to the prisoners on the march.

6. We cannot commend and praise the YMCA too much for the magnificent work they performed for the prisoners of war and we hold that it was largely through their efforts that the officers of the AAF prisoners of war returned to the United States in such fine mental and physical condition.

Signed: Brig. Gen. Arthur W. Vanaman, Col. Darr H. Alkire, Delmar T. Spivey, Jean R. Byerly, A. Y. Smith, Charles G. Goodrich, Daniel W. Jenkins, and Einar A. Malmstrom, and Lt. Col. Francis S. Gabreski.

. . . And So It Ended

*Well, that's that! It's done with and
the days of waiting are over.*

*The fence is down, gashed and torn with a hole
big enough to drive a truck through.*

*Now what? The expectations and the dreams have flattened
like a pancake; they've gone up in smoke.*

*It's the end of the Seventh day and the resting
time is finished.*

*We begin the new day of a new week of a new life; we're
out of the womb of stagnancy; we're out of
the tomb of exile; we're free!*

*And time takes on a sharper cadence;
the seconds and the minutes are shining
with a newness that stuns the eyes*

*But the shoulders are hunched and the steps are slow;
it takes a little while to get re-acquainted with
Miss Freedom
when you haven't seen her for a long time.*

Lt. John M. Coppinger





Colonel Greening, after graduating from Washington State College in 1936, entered the Army as a second lieutenant in the Infantry. He transferred to the Army Air Forces and took part in the Doolittle raid on Tokio. He is an Army career man.



Sgt. Spinelli is once more a civilian and has forsaken photography to conduct a manufacturing jeweler's business, the Spinel Manufacturing Jeweler, 27 Eldridge Street, New York, where he produces a line of mountings and special jewel attachments.

The Y.M.C.A. has been serving prisoners of war since the American Civil War. During the first and second World Wars, through the administration of its World's Committee, a neutral organization with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, it has provided an international, inter-faith service of educational, recreational and religious activities for both sides of the conflict. With funds donated by the American people largely through the National War Fund, the "Y" sent these major supplies to prisoners in Europe during World War II: Sports Articles — 1,754,254, Musical Articles — 244,232, Books — 1,280,146. In addition, there were large quantities of handicraft materials, theatrical supplies, sewing machines, typewriters, motion picture projectors, films, games, religious articles, and many others. All told, some 650 different kinds of articles were sent from the United States.

The Y.M.C.A. calls attention to the splendid work of the American and International Red Cross Societies. Without the efforts of these organizations in getting food, clothing and medical supplies to American war prisoners, many of them would not have survived their captivity.

National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations

347 Madison Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

Eugene E. Barnett, General Secretary