

The Oflag 64 Item

All the News That's
Been Geprüft

Nearly Everybody
Reads The Item

"Get Wise — ITEM-ize"

No. 4

Altburgund, Germany — February 1, 1944

Price: 50 Pfg.

Invasion in March, Peace in September, Poll Indicates

US Army Post Fixed To Receive Ex-PoW's

At least one Army post in the States is being prepared as a quarantine station for returning prisoners of war, it was learned recently.

This post, an induction center in the midwest, is famed, among other things, for an excellent mess.

According to officers who have served there, the chow is lavish, abundant, and savory.

Physical rehabilitation, financial readjustment and reassignment are expected to be conducted at this post, as well as a brief quarantine period.

Another letter from the states discloses that 17 American PoW's repatriated from Germany reached America in October. No names were listed.

Meanwhile, promotion of America officer PoW's at the same rate as their classmates is the subject of legislation now before Congress. A similar system is now being used by the Anzaes up to and including the rank of captain.

US-Schubin Mail Speeds Up

December mail featured fast service. Letters making the US-Schubin hop in less than 30 days were received by Lt. Col. John Waters and Lts. Amon Carter and James Shouf.

Lt. Stanley Stetson retained his place as top letter-getter with 240, followed by Lts. Carter, 210; Francis Roy, 197; John Scully, 189; and William Rudel, 187.

Total number of letters received during December was 3128, a drop of 1322 from the November mark. Average transit time was 89 days.

Lts. Robert Wick, Kenneth Goddard and Frank Hancock were high men on the parcel list, each receiving four parcels.

Recent Bag of Officers Low

New arrivals here from the Southern front during December included Lt. Col. Charles Kouns, Salina, Kansas, Capt. Cecil Eubanks, San Antonio, Texas, and Lts. John Truett, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Arthur Dutmers, Davenport, Iowa, Donald Frederick, Minneapolis, Minn., and William Murphy, Brighton, Mass.

January newcomers were: Capts. Philip Foster, Harrisburg, Pa., Donald May, Washington, D. C., Lts. Richard Van Syckle, Seward, N. J., Ted White, San Angelo, Texas, Charles Snider, Cleveland, Ohio, and Alexander Ross, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Cpts. Morris McCarver, Moore, Okla., and Leonard Warren, Coxsackie, N. Y.; Lts. Harry Abrahams, Long Beach, N. Y., Ellis Beesley, Kearney, N. J., William Ellermeyer, Belen, New Mexico, Vido Fiorentino, New York, N. Y., Floyd Leming, Abilene, Tex. and Vincent White, Amarillo, Tex.

Leap Year Bulletin!



Bachelor Kriegies Steadfast; Swear "No Capitulation" To Female Menace

Protected by barbed wire and other ingenious devices, Bachelor Kriegies will be reasonably safe from unscrupulous, scheming creatures — such as the above — this month.

While less fortunate males at home are vainly fighting off Leap Year proposals by taking to the hills and going about armed, lucky Kriegiesgefängeners haven't a care in the world.

"We will never give in; these low, designing females will be kept out of our Oflag at all costs," says Seymour Bolten, president of the Kriegy Anti-Women Committee.

Vice-president Hasson, interviewed on the subject, said, "Ain't we lucky!" This is Leap Year. Remember?

Babel Had Nothing On Us!

All God's chillun are learning new languages these days.

Last week Frank Hancock was strolling down Schubin Boulevard and met three other American officers.

The first said, "Bonjour!"

"Wie geht's?" said the second.

The third greeted him in Russian.

Muttering "Buenos dias," he entered the tin store.

There the German on duty said, "Hello!"

All-Sorts Show Due Soon

"It Will Be Alright on the Night," a one-act play, will highlight an all-sorts show under the management of Howard Holder and Dick Rossbach on February 17 and 18.

Featurettes include seven comedy skits, quartet singing and orchestra music.

Fall of 1945 To See Finish of Jap Fracas

To settle for all time the big question of when the war will end in Europe, THE ITEM last month polled more than 120 representative military brains at Oflag 64.

The composite date: September 30 1944.

"Serious guesses" tabulated ranged from May 1944 to December 1945. Most agreed that the European scrap will end next fall.

Date of the coming invasion of Europe was generally agreed to be in the spring. To be exact, at 0224 on March 12, 1944.

End of the war in the Pacific Theater brought guesses ranging up to 1948. The average was in the last six months of 1945.

The poll also revealed that virtually every officer in camp is a charter member of the Home-by-Christmas Club.

Tabulation of THE ITEM Poll was done by Capt. Charles Dunn and Lt. William Rudel, assisted by THE ITEM's military experts.

The results are listed below:

Month	Invasion	End European Theatre	
		1944	1945
January	.17%	—	.01%
February	.26 "	—	.01 "
March	.23 "	—	.01 "
April	.23 "	.02%	—
May	.07 "	.03 "	—
June	.01 "	.05 "	.01 "
July	.01 "	.09 "	.01 "
August	.01 "	.14 "	.01 "
September	—	.13 "	—
October	—	.23 "	.01 "
November	—	.16 "	—
December	—	.07 "	.01 "
None	.01 "	—	—

End of Pacific Theatre to nearest 6 months:

Second half	1944	—	.05%
First half	1945	—	.19 "
Second half	1945	—	.43 "
First half	1946	—	.15 "
Second half	1946	—	.13 "
First half	1947	—	.02 "
Second half	1947	—	.02 "
First half	1948	—	.01 "

Broadway Show To Return

Broadway nite-life, featuring a floor show with singing waiters, swing dancers and equatorial music will again bust up Schubin serenity February 24 with the return here of the Bloody Gut Saloon.

Sid Thal, suave operator of the gambling concession, predicts big stakes with big takes.

Table reservations are limited; Bar opens at 7:30; closes when dry.

The Oflag 64 Item

Published monthly by and for American officers temporarily detained in Offizierlager 64, Altburgund (Schubin), Germany.

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1st Lt. Jim Bickers
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2nd Lt. Frank Hancock
Larry Allen, A.P. Correspondent

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FEBRUARY 1, 1944

The People's Choice

Anywhere. Thru the squad room, along the corridors, in the latrine, over smokeless heaters, on the sportplatz.

Anytime. While reading a letter, between mouthfuls, after lights out, when brushing teeth, during showers.

It's been the same old question: "When do you think the war's going to end?"

Once, but perhaps not for all time, THE ITEM thru its news columns brings you the answer.

Let the optimist sulk.

Let the cynic scoff.

The consensus stands — September 30, 1944.

Back in God's Country

News from home to the effect that preparations are already under way to receive returning prisoners of war is sweet music.

And from the results of THE ITEM war poll, these preparations have started none too soon.

A surmise of what awaits us is:

1. Physical check-up and rehabilitation,
2. Adjustment of personal records,
3. Morale program centering chiefly around the mess hall, canteen and theater,
4. Leave,
5. Reassignment.

Lest We Forget

There is but one element of this life that we may cherish in after days: the friendships made.

The Oflag Directory is being published in this and subsequent issues of THE ITEM as a convenience for those who may want to keep in touch with friends after we return home.

Of Mice and Men...



Pay, Allowances March On As PoW's Mark Time

By: Frank Hancock

You may worry about your wife bashing your Class E Allotment, but you don't have to worry about Uncle Sam paying up the rest, says Capt. Harry Carlson, camp finance officer.

United States Army Regulations state that when an officer or soldier becomes a prisoner of the enemy, under honorable circumstances, and in the prosecution of his duty, he shall be entitled to the pay and allowances of his rank at the time of capture, including base pay, longevity, subsistence allowance, 10% overseas pay, and rental allowance. The status of additional allowances such as flying pay is not known.

All allotments in effect at the time of capture will continue.

A bill has been passed by Congress allowing as longevity time served either as an enlisted man or officer in the Reserves, National Guard, Marines, Coast Guard, or Regular Army, excluding only time served as a West Point cadet.

Claims for personal property lost in action may be presented upon return to the States, the validity of the claim and the amount reimbursed being decided by a board appointed for that purpose.

The probable method of paying PoW accounts will be by partial payment at the first U.S. Finance Office reached after liberation, a sufficiently large amount to cover obligations entailed before reaching America, where a special Finance Officer will be appointed to pay all accounts and claims before the man returns to active duty.

Oflag Valentine Verses

By: Larry Phelan

His voice is changing every day;
It groweth deeper, bolder.
You hear him from so far away,
Boomer, lightfoot.....
From sticks of wood and empty cans
He makes things mighty fine.
A cany fellow with his hands,
Lieutenant.....
From turnip greens he'll grow a rose,
From raisin pits a peach;
And Burbank loses by a nose
To greenhouse keeper.....
He eats all things from Liederkrantz
To Philadelphia scrapple,
And when he's full he roars and rants,
Trombone slider.....
He'll privy build or speechify,
Just as the mood will suit him;
That homespun, mountaineering guy,
Redundant Billy.....

Glee Club Sings Feb. 10, 11

As an encore to its well-received Christmas program, the Glee Club will give a concert on February 10 and 11. Russell Ford is director. The program includes such popular selections as: In the Evening by the Moonlight, Oh Susanna, Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes, and John Peel.

In Memoriam

Captain Richard H. Torrence, Jr., 2nd Bn. 143rd Infantry, died of a heart attack here January 10, 1944. He is survived by his father of 2211 Bernard Ave., Waco, Texas. He was born July 6, 1918, graduated from Waco High School and attended Texas A. & M. College two years, after which he resigned to enter the Army in 1940 as a sergeant in the Texas National Guard. Captain Torrence fought with distinction in Italy, has received the Purple Heart and has been recommended for valor. Services were held in the camp chapel. He was buried in the Altburgund cemetery.

We have lost a cheerful companion, the army a courageous soldier, and his country a faithful servant.

Kriegy Sketches

MAJOR MERLE MEACHAM

By: Larry Allen

Every prisoner of war camp has an Adjutant, and Oflag 64 has a good one.

He is Major Merle Meacham.

His job is to keep tab on the official pulse. He records and publishes its actions with speed, precision and terseness.

This is nothing new to this ruddy-faced, forty-one year old officer of the United States Army. He's been doing it almost continuously since joining the Iowa National Guard in 1928.

He went into that outfit after graduating from the Council Bluffs High School.

Commissioned as a second-lieutenant in 1933, he was promoted to a first lieutenant in 1940.

Entering the regular army in February, 1941, he served as personnel adjutant for the 168th Infantry, receiving a captaincy seven months later.

More duties as adjutant came with being sent overseas on February 18, 1942, to Ireland, and later to Scotland.

Major Meacham was one of the "hardy pioneers" who penetrated the wilderness of North Africa with American troops in the invasion on November 8, 1943. He was captured February 17, 1943, in the now famous struggle around Sidi Bou Sid in Tunisia, and finally landed in Germany.

Being an adjutant is like being a super-executive administrative secretary. His duties closely dovetail with those of the executive officer — the publishing and execution of orders, assignment of officers to various tasks and a multitude of other camp administration details.

The major handles his job with machine-like precision.

Being an "official secretary" automatically carries with it a lot of fun-poking from other officers. The major meets this repartee with a merry twinkle in his gray eyes and a quick smile.

A native of Deadwood, South Dakota, his home is in Glenwood, Iowa. He is married and has two daughters.



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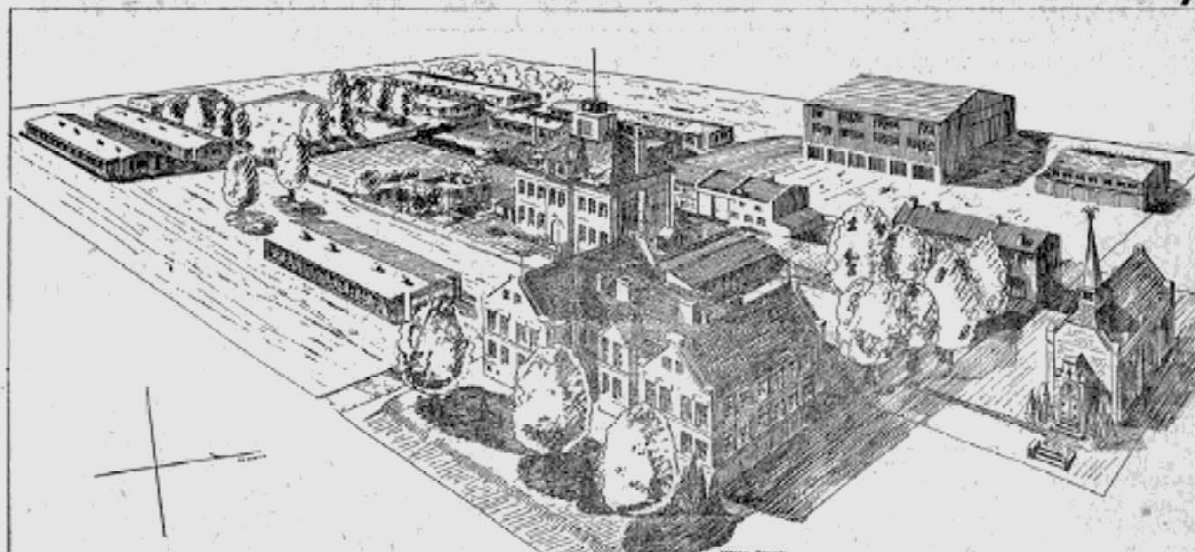
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(Continued Next Issue)

Luftwaffe View of American Settlement in Germany



Oflag 64 Once Housed French, RAF Before Coming of Yanks

Schubin Story Dates Back to Roman Days

Oflag 64, temporary home of American ground force officers in Germany, is just eight months old this week.

But its setting in Altburgund has been making history for nine centuries.

Origin of the present camp is vague. British RAF officers were here in 1942-43. A plaque in the chapel indicates that French officer prisoners used the camp during 1940-42. And, in 1940, a hut camp here was supposedly occupied by Polish and English enlisted men PoW's and the French officers.

Before the war, the camp was, according to rumorologists, an academy of some sort for teen-aged youths.

Altburgund, then called Schubin, had not then become an oflag satellite and was an historic Polish town.

Once a main-line city, it was built by one of the most-used Roman routes to the Baltic sea. It was originally located here so that Gonsawkatal, the surrounding marshy lowland, would provide a terrain obstacle to invading armies.

Mentioned in documents as early as 1055, Schubin attained more importance in the 14th century, when a fortress was constructed.

In 1616, a town coat of arms was originated: a silver pelican feeding its nesting young with its blood, on a background of red.

Political importance came in 1818, when Schubin was made the capital of this county area. As such, it grew rapidly and its population doubled in a decade.

Establishment of a royal county court helped spread the growth, while eleven factories, a dye works, three mills, a brick kiln and tannery added to its industrial importance.

Fire swept the town in 1840 and cholera ravaged it from 1852 to 1866. With the growth of America, many of the

townspeople emigrated to the United States and Canada.

THE ITEM's predecessor, "Schubinen Kreisblatt," was the first paper published here, dating from 1853. It appeared both in German and Polish.

World War treaties placed the town under Polish control. In 1939, when Poland was defeated, the Germans once again took over.

Oflag's "Clip Joint" Trims 22 Heads Daily

By: Willard Duckworth

Tonsorial technicians Gunner John Parkin and Pvt. Douglas Imlah make up in experience and ability for what their beauty establishment lacks in decoration and perfumery.

Parkin, the chief barber, learned the art of "hair-do" in a salon in England back you know when, Imlah, his assistant, enjoyed the same profession but confined his activities to the male pate exclusively.

"Twenty-two heads," 20 minutes allotted to each, is Parkin's estimate for a typical "clip joint" day. Multiply that by thirty days and one begins to wonder why everyone in camp can't have a soft hair mattress.

When asked whether conversation was desirable while cutting hair, Parkin stated bluntly that he preferred total silence inasmuch as all topics of discourse were long ago exhausted.

Imlah earnestly agreed. He also mentioned that lieutenants are toughest to please.

"That's right," chimed in his boss. "There's a lieutenant who played in that show 'The Old Soldier's Home.' He has fair hair and a handle-bar moustache. Well, that officer was the toughest I've ever had. He came back every day for three days running because I didn't cut his hair short enough. Fi-

nally I got it down to one-eighth of an inch. Quite a complex he must have."

That most insidious of all diseases affecting the ego — baldness — was mentioned. How could baldness be prevented?

With the air of one who really knows, Imlah advised, "The best prescription for baldness is to rub plenty of salt hering into the hair. When the roots come up for a drink, tie 'em in a knot."

Ex - Steak Slicer Now Saves Kriegies' Soles

Located on the East side of Oflag 64 stands a weather-wrinkled old shack known as the Cobbler Shop. Lt. Ormond Roberts heads the concern.

The former salesman and meat-cutter for Swift and Co. learned his new trade at Oflag 9 A/Z.

"We handle all kinds of shoe repairing," he said breezily. "Nothing to it. After all there's not much difference between hacking up a tough hunk of beef and a piece of leather. We take care of 10 to 15 pair of shoes a week. Not bad for a two-man team."

Oh! A two man team. "Why, sure." His voice dropped. He looked furtively around to see if any fifth columnists were present. "Englehart — but too ambitious. Deep in politics, you know. Looks like he's aiming to purge me."

The subject was quickly changed and he was asked to name his hardest assignment.

"Murphy," he said without hesitation. "That guy comes up with a dirty, decrepit, no-good, beat-up, old bag. I'm supposed to repair it, and make it look like an Oshkosh alligator job."

With the compulsory weekly walks, Roberts predicts a rise in business.

Variety Show Feb. 3-4

"Rehearsal" Frank Maxwell's fourth Variety Show, comes to The Little Theater on February 3 and 4 bringing with it novelty skits and songs. Stars include: James "Casey" Koch, John Hannan, Bob Rankin, and Patrick Heathcote.

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