

No. 11340

From the Special War Problems Division

DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO:

War - Gen. Bryan

Date: MAY 8 1945

Via Airmail Pouch.

Bern, April 5, 1945.

Subject: American Interests - Germany
Requests for supplies for
religious services - Oflag
XIII B, Hammelburg.

The American Minister at Bern has the honor to enclose, for the Department's information and for such action as it may deem advisable, a copy of a letter dated January 20, 1945, addressed to the Kommandantur of Oflag XIII B at Hammelburg by Harry F. ALEXANDER, American chaplain, as well as an English translation of a letter dated January 23, 1945, likewise addressed to the Kommandantur of Oflag XIII B by Alan P. MADDEN and Paul W. CAVANAUGH, American chaplains detained at that camp, requesting supplies for religious services.

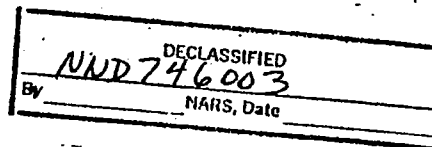
Enclosures:

1. - Copy of letter dated January 20, 1945;
2. - English translation of letter dated January 23, 1945.

File No. 711.4

GT/dmh

Original and hectograph to Department.



Enclosure No. 1 to despatch No. 11340
dated April 5, 1945, from the
American Legation, Bern.

COPY
dmh

Headquarters USA PW.
January 20, 1945.

Subject: Religious Supplies

To: Kommandantur KGF Oflag XIII B, Hammelburg.

1. Since the arrival of 400 Commissioned Officers of the United States Army at JGF Oflag XIII B, Hammelburg, supplies for religious services have not been available. It is requested that this letter be forwarded to the International Red Cross, Geneva, Switzerland, so that the following articles may be made available:

200 New Testaments
2 Cases Communion Wine
3,000 Communion Wafers
4 Dozen Candles
150 Hymnals
1 Communion Set.

Harry F. Alexander
Chaplain U.S. Army

1st Ind.

Hq. USA PW KGF Oflag XIII B, 23 January 1945.
To: Kommandantur, Oflag XIII B, Hammelburg.

Approved.

Charles C. Cavender
Colonel, U.S. Army
Senior Officer.

Enclosure No. 2 to despatch No. 11340
dated April 5, 1945, from the
American Legation, Bern.

TRANSLATION

Headquarters USA PW
January 23, 1945.

To: Kommandantur KGF Oflag XIII B, Hammelburg.

1. Two Catholic priests request you to furnish supplies for religious services for American officers. We need the following articles: altar stone, chalice and ornaments, missal, wine and hosts (for the priests and altar boys), cross and candles, Coporal Purificator, altar cloth, and if possible, communion wine.

2. All these articles might be obtained from the Papap Nunzio at Berlin if he hears of our needs.

Alan P. Mudden
Chaplain, U.S. Army

Paul W. Cavanaugh
Chaplain, U.S. Army

dnh

GermanyOFLAG XIII B.

Visited by Mr. Mayer on February 9, 1945.

Yugoslav Spokesman: BRASCHITSCH, Ilija D., General

American Spokesman: CAVENDOR, C. Charles, No. 23,665

Number: 4,451.

Among these are:

3,771 Yugoslavs, of whom 3,460 are officers and 47 non-commissioned officers.

680 Americans, of whom 620 are officers and 25 non-commissioned officers.

8 Yugoslav doctors
9 American "
2 Yugoslav chaplains
9 American "

From the Special War Problems Division

DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO:

War - Gen. Bryan
Date: SEP 25 1945

Remarks concerning number:

Three hundred Yugoslav officers had left Oflag XIII B on October 3, 1944, to be transferred to Oflag 65. These officers were transported handcuffed. The Commanding Officer protested vigorously after this transfer, and the next transfer was carried out in better circumstances; that is:

700 Yugoslav officers, who left Oflag XIII B to be transported without handcuffs on December 28, 1944, to Stalag II B.

The space left free by these Yugoslav officers is now occupied by American officers whose number increases constantly; for instance:

310 arrived on January 11, 1945, from Stalag IX B;
100 came from Stalag XII A at the end of January;
100 came from Stalag XIII D at the end of January.

Important remark:

The only important question is that of food.

All officers say that they are constantly hungry. At this time, they are interested in almost nothing but their food. (Only the news from the front satisfies them a little.) German rations are in fact growing poorer, and will decrease further after February 12th.

Last year, the Yugoslavs were still receiving numerous packages from their families; now these parcels no longer reach them. The "standard" American parcels are much appreciated, but at the rate of one package a month they are not sufficient to feed the prisoners.

The

The Americans themselves receive no parcels. They have received, however, as a loan, 629 "standard" American packages from the stock of the Yugoslav spokesman. It concerns new prisoners captured on the west front and, who, after having been very well fed by the American army, are now suddenly reduced to meager German rations.

The food situation at Oflag XIII B is very critical.

Conditions and lodgings.

Except for the departure of 100 Yugoslav officers, nothing has changed in the lodgings of the Yugoslavs since the last visit. The Yugoslav prisoners are a little more crowded than before, having had to give a little space to 1500 Americans, of whom a part are already at the Oflag, while the rest will be new arrivals from the west front or from evacuated camps.

The Americans live in five stone barracks, on the average of 40 officers to a room. The beds are arranged in rows one above the other, two or three beds high. Each prisoner has a good mattress, two sheets, two coverlets, and two towels. These articles are all furnished by the detaining Power.

All prisoners complain that the bedrooms are all very poorly heated. The temperature having risen slightly since the third of February, a superior order from the "Wehrkreis" XIII has forbidden the distribution of coal until further notice.

On the whole, the barracks are in an extremely bad condition; the matériel is too old and nothing has been renewed for several months. The Yugoslavs have had to turn over to the American prisoners two large assembly rooms.

The latrines of the Oflag are in an extremely unsatisfactory state, the cleaning being very badly done.

Food

As has been indicated in the beginning, the food situation is growing worse and worse in this camp. See in the appendix a list of the daily rations, comparing the week preceding the 11th of February with the week beginning the 12th, date on which the daily food rations will be again decreased. A glance at this table will suffice to show that prisoners are at present under-nourished. A more substantial supply of Red Cross packages would be more than ever desirable.

The Yugoslav head-doctor has organized general weighing of the Yugoslav prisoners since the month of November. These have given the following results:

Average loss of weight per prisoner during the first month (November, 1944): 1 kilo.

Average loss of weight per prisoner during the second month (December, 1944): 2 kilos.

Average loss of weight per prisoner during the third month (January, 1945): 2 kilos.

In

In three months, the prisoners of Oflag XIII B have therefore lost, on the average, 5 kilos each. This statement of the Yugoslav head-doctor has been confirmed, since the last interview, by the German head-doctor.

Clothing:

Some clothes for the Yugoslav prisoners are promised from Geneva. These prisoners are awaiting them impatiently, for the condition of their clothing is very mediocre, especially of their shoes. If this shipment arrives complete, the spokesman will be satisfied with the situation in this respect.

Most of the American prisoners have arrived recently from the front, still not badly dressed. However, a certain number of them probably have urgent need of underwear and especially of shoes.

Consignments:

Shipments of food as well as of clothing have arrived, up until now, in fairly satisfactory fashion. However, these shipments are becoming rarer and rarer, and it would be desirable that, in all cases, an important collective shipment of "standard" parcels of food be sent as rapidly as possible to Oflag XIII B.

The Yugoslav spokesman had, on the first of February, 2,778 standard packages which will be distributed during the current month of February. He has loaned 629 packages to the American prisoners and hopes that the International Committee of the Red Cross will replace them.

The distributions of the packages of food, as in all the camps, have been made more and more severe for the last few weeks. The German authorities authorize them only in very small quantities, for each prisoner may possess only one daily ration for himself.

The 700 Yugoslav officers who left on December 28, 1944, for Stalag II B received their December package, but, for January, the packages which were destined for them arrived at Oflag XIII B after their departure; the spokesman, not knowing the present address of these prisoners, the camp to which they had been directed now being in the zone of war, will not be able to forward these 700 packages. He has included them in the number 2,778 mentioned above.

Cantine:

It is almost inexistent.

Hygiene:

The sanitary installations of the camp are not entirely satisfactory, especially the latrines. Besides, for three weeks, it has not been possible to take showers or baths, because the water-pump has been damaged, and moreover, the lack of coal prevents heating of the water.

The laundry has for the same reason (lack of coal) become problematical.

Medical

Medical care:

As in the past, the medical service functions very well, thanks to the numerous doctors, especially well qualified, at this Oflag; the German head-doctor who has a good understanding of the prisoners, makes their task much easier.

It is still Colonel Danitch who acts as Yugoslav head-doctor. Major Berndt, Albert L., No. 25272, acts as head-doctor for the Americans.

On the day of the visit, the number of bed patients was as follows:

370 Yugoslav patients
7 American "
2 Belgian "
1 French patient.

These Belgian and French patients come from Stalag XIII C.

No epidemic has broken out at the camp. As for the sick, it is a question mainly of digestive disorders. There are, in addition, 17 cases of arrested tuberculosis among the Yugoslavs, and one case of active tuberculosis, an American.

Fifty Yugoslavs are unfit for service; in present circumstances, they have no hope of being repatriated. The doctors insist again that steps be taken to hospitalize the seriously wounded in neutral countries.

The quarantine hospital receives medicines from the detaining Power in relatively sufficient quantities. On the other hand, it is almost impossible to receive articles for the dressing of wounds, except a few cellulose dressings. Fortunately, the doctors have now, thanks to the shipments of the Red Cross, a small reserve of dressings.

Most of the Americans are in good health; their few patients are ill with influenza; besides, some newly arrived prisoners have frozen feet.

As for the food, see the special paragraphs at the beginning of the report, "Important remark": It is very probable that the number of Yugoslav patients will increase seriously in the coming weeks, especially among the older officers, who cannot endure such under-nourishment.

Leisure and intellectual and spiritual needs:

Religious services have been held regularly for all prisoners; the chaplains are even too numerous.

The Americans have received books from the Australian spokesman of Stalag XIII C.

The organization of recreations does not function at present; the prisoners, under-nourished, do not have any desire for amusements. They are interested in food and in news.

Correspondence:

Correspondence:

Correspondence with Serbia has completely ceased.

The Americans have all sent a card announcing their capture, on arrival at the camp. They receive at present the regular prescribed forms for their correspondence.

Discipline:

Discipline is good among the prisoners.

Relations between prisoners and German Authorities of the Oflag is also good, except with the captain of the "Abwehr" who does not seem to be well liked.

The leaves of the medical personnel are regulation.

Special case:

Second Lieutenant George H. Varem, USA Army number 01030621, was killed January 22, 1945, by a guard, while he was going from one barrack to another; according to the American spokesman, the guard fired without good reason. The affair is in the hands of the protecting Power.

Interview with the Spokesmen, the doctors and with several prisoners:

All these interviews took place without witnesses. The Delegate was thus able to discuss freely all questions mentioned under the preceding headings.

Conclusion:

The prime question at this Oflag is that of the obviously insufficient food. It is not an exaggeration to say that the prisoners are hungry, and it is to be desired that urgent relief shipments of food reach them, for there is no hope of seeing the German food rations improve in the coming months.

Oflag XIII B

<u>Article</u>	<u>Grams weekly</u>		<u>Difference</u>
	<u>Before 2/11</u>	<u>After 2/11</u>	
Meat	250	220	30
Spread for bread	150	130	20
Cooking fat	68	60	8
Nahrungsmittel	250	230	20
Cheese	62.5	50	12.5
Potato	3750	3300	450
Fresh vegetable	600	300	300
Sugar	175	155	20
Coffee-substitute	17.5	17.5	-
Tea-substitute	7	7	-
Marmelade	175	155	20
Bread	2150	1850	300
Rye flour	54	45	9
Sauerkraut	175	145	30
Dried beet chips	90	90	-
Julienne	30	-	-
Wheat pollard	25	25	-
Prepared soups	30	-	-
Salt	70	70	-