

POST-GREECE

Corporal Norman Lay, 512 Survey Company, Royal Engineers

Relevant parts of his post-liberation PoW questionnaire are shown overleaf, but significant, interesting, essential and frequently hard-to-read details are highlighted here. The original layout, (mis)spelling and punctuation is preserved as far as is reasonable.

Liberated PoW Questionnaire (from National Archives, Kew)

Stalag XVIII A Registration Number not known.

No: *2183640* Rank: *Corporal* Surname: *Lay*
Christian Names: *Norman Victor*
Unit: *512 Survey Coy, R.E.*
Division: *-*
Date of Birth: *8 - 12 - 17*
Date of Enlistment: *20 - 9 - 39*
Civilian Profession: *Photographer and Magazine Designer*
Private Address: *28 Malden Avenue, South Norwood,
London S.E. 25*

Place & Date of Original Capture: *Kalamata, Greece 29 - 4 - 41*
Wounded when Captured? *No*
Main Camps in which Imprisoned:
Stalag XVIII A *Wolfsberg* *July 1941 - May 1945*
Working Camps:
Weisenbach *July 41 - August 41*
Leoben (Control Centre) *Oct 1941 - May 1945*

Serious Illnesses: *No*
Adequate Medical treatment: *-*

Lectures before Capture: *No*
Interrogation after Capture: *No*
Escapes attempted: *No*
Sabotage: *No*
Collaboration with Enemy: *No*
War Crimes: *No*

Additional Information: *At the most, only 20% of the Geneva Convention was ever recognised. Often, when mentioned, a pistol was brought forward as a more forceful sort of convention!*

Date *23 . V . 45*

From www.defencesurveyors.org.uk website:

Thus, at the end of March 1941, Colonel Martin Hotine, recently returned to Egypt from East Africa, was appointed Deputy Director (DD) Survey and sent to Piraeus in Greece to organise the Survey support to the campaign. He took with him his Directorate staff, the Headquarters and two Mobile Sections of 512 Company, 517 (Corps) Field Survey Company and 9 Field Survey Depot. He found himself with a particularly difficult task as the only maps of Greece available to the War Office at the outbreak of war were in most cases out of date and great difficulty was experienced in obtaining copies of the latest maps from the Greek authorities. When up to date maps were eventually received it was found that the text was printed in Greek characters and therefore had to be transliterated into Roman characters before new maps could be prepared. This led to considerable delays in production and issue and so in consequence, troops used such maps as were available and soon found that different editions did not agree and in any event, most were inaccurate.

By the time Commonwealth Survey units arrived in the country it was too late to produce standard maps of greater accuracy. Some bulk printing was carried out in Egypt but competition for space on the supply ships was strong and the supply system was extremely stretched. Therefore, it was considered essential that each consignment of maps was escorted all the way by an officer to ensure that they reached their destination. Hotine's already Herculean task was rendered virtually impossible when almost all of the technical stores of 517 Company were lost at sea when the ship carrying them was sunk through enemy action. It was also immediately apparent that it was inadvisable to send forward heavy trailer-borne printing equipment over the bad roads on what was likely to be a mobile campaign. These problems led to 517 Company taking over a local printing works and the 512 Mobile Sections being employed on anti-aircraft gun position surveys in the vicinity of Athens and Piraeus. Miscellaneous drawing and computing tasks were undertaken and some personnel were used as reinforcement to the Map Depots. Air photographs of Struma Valley were sorted and used to revise existing maps of that area. Also some photographic mosaics of selected areas were produced. It was stated at the time that if the surveyors of the Topographic Sections had also been given training as draughtsman and air survey plotters, far more could have been achieved during the Greek campaign. The military situation deteriorated so rapidly that the British soon faced withdrawal from the Greek mainland and so 512 Company's Mobile Echelon packed up for evacuation on the 23rd of April 1941. However, the German advance was so rapid that many of its personnel, together with a large portion of 9 Field Survey Depot, the Topographic Sections of 517 Company and part of the Survey Directorate were captured and became prisoners of war.

MEMO
PART I

No EXTRACTS
TOP SECRET
MLI/Gen/95317
MIS-X

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE FOR BRITISH/AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR

1. No. 283640 RANK CORPORAL SURNAME LAY
CHRISTIAN NAMES NORMAN VICTOR
DECORATIONS

2. SHIP (R.N., U.S.N. or MERCHANT NAVY)
UNIT (ARMY) 512 SURVEY COY. R.E.
SQUADRON (R.A.F. or R.N.A.F.)

3. DIVISION (ARMY), COMMAND (R.A.F. or A.A.F.)

4. DATE OF BIRTH 8.12.17 WEST NORWOOD.

5. DATE OF ENLISTMENT 20.9.39

6. CIVILIAN TRADE OR PROFESSION PHOTOGRAPHER and MAGAZINE
(OR EXAMINATIONS PASSED WHILE P.W.) DESIGNER.

7. PRIVATE ADDRESS 28 MALDEN AVENUE, SOUTH NORWOOD.
LONDON. S.E.25.

8. PLACE AND DATE OF ORIGINAL CAPTURE KALAMATA, GREECE. 29.4.41

9. WERE YOU WOUNDED WHEN CAPTURED? NO.

10. MAIN CAMPS ~~OR HOSPITALS~~ IN WHICH IMPRISONED.
Camp No. Location From To
STALAG XVIII A WOLFSBERG JULY 1941 MAY 1945.

11. WERE YOU IN A WORKING CAMP? YES
Location From To Nature of Work
WIESENBACH JULY 41 August 41
LEOBEN (CONTR. COAL TIRE) Oct 1941 MAY 1945.

12. DID YOU SUFFER FROM ANY SERIOUS ILLNESSES WHILE A P.W.? NO
Nature of Illness Cause Duration

(1) DID YOU RECEIVE ADEQUATE MEDICAL TREATMENT?

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GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE PART II TOP SECRET

1. No. 2183640 RANK CORPORAL SURNAME LAY
 CHRISTIAN NAMES NORMAN VICTOR

2. LECTURES before Capture:
 (a) Were you lectured in your unit on how to behave in the event of capture?
 (State where, when and by whom).
NO

(b) Were you lectured on escape and evasion? (State where, when and by whom).
NO

3. INTERROGATION after capture:
 Were you specially interrogated by the enemy? (State where, when and methods employed by enemy).
NO

4. ESCAPES attempted:
 Did you make any attempted or partly successful escapes? (Give details of each attempt separately, stating where, when, method employed, names of your companions, where and when recaptured and by whom. Were you physically fit? What happened to your companions?)
NO

5. SABOTAGE:
 Did you do any sabotage or destruction of enemy factory plants, war material, (communications, etc., when employed on working-parties or during escape? (Give details, place and date).
NO

6. COLLABORATION with enemy:
 Do you know of any British or American personnel who collaborated with the enemy or in any way helped the enemy against other Allied Prisoners of War? (Give details, names of person(s) concerned, camp(s), dates and nature of collaboration or help given to enemy).
NO

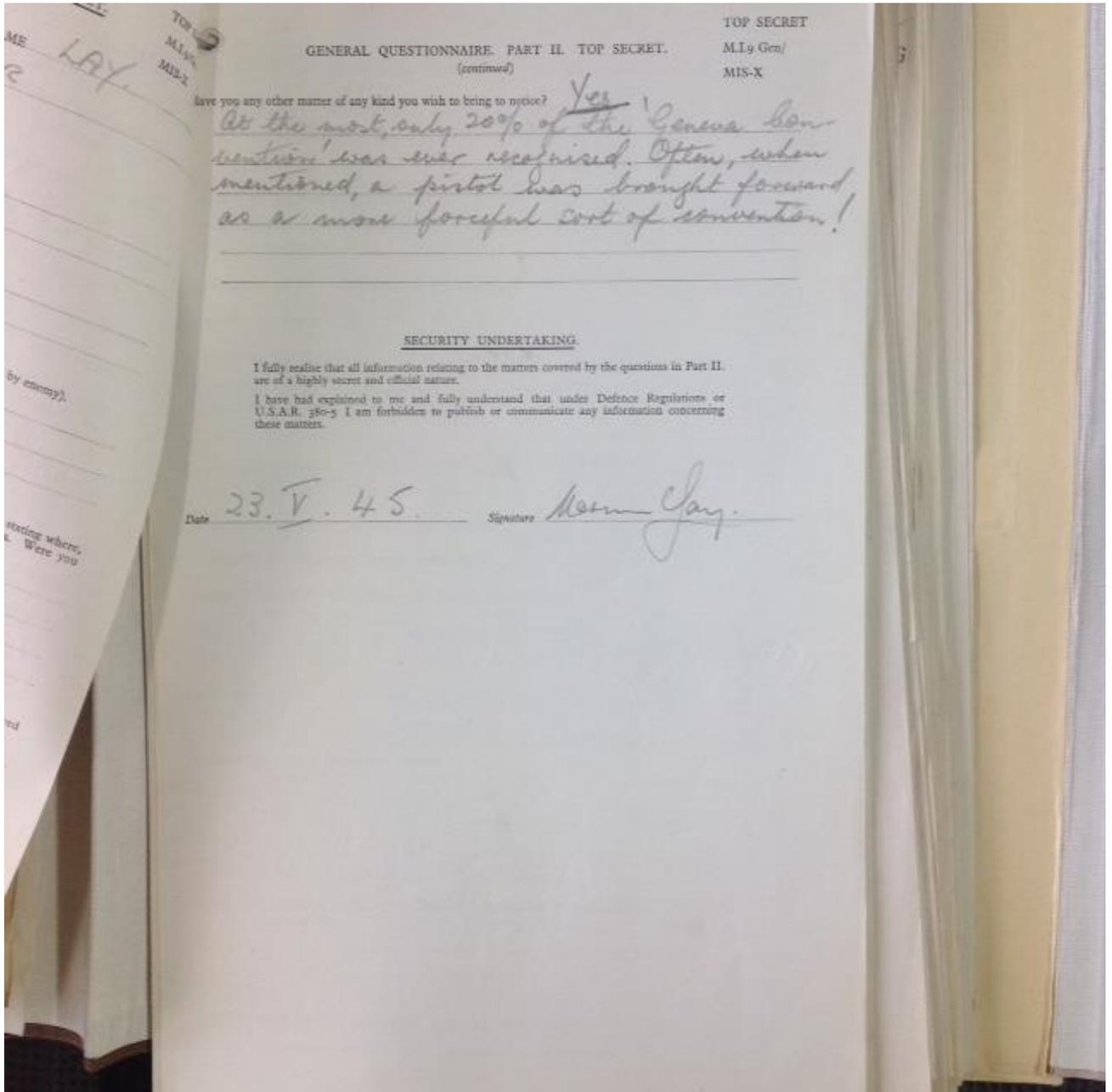
7. WAR CRIMES:
 If you have any information or evidence of bad treatment by the enemy to yourself or to others, or knowledge of any enemy violation of Geneva Convention you should ask for a copy of "Form Q" on which to make your statement.
 (Note: Form Q is a separate form involving information on "War Crimes" and describes the kinds of offences coming under this title.)

Date 23.V.45

GENERAL QUESTIONNAIRE (continued)
 Do you any other source of any kind you wish to bring to notice?
As the next, only 20% of mentioned was ever accepted as a more favorable

SECURITY UNDER
 I fully realize that all information relating to the use of a highly secret and official nature. I have had explained to me and fully under U.S.A.R. 38c-3 I am forbidden to publish these matters.

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Corporal Norman Lay - PoW Questionnaire, Page 3 of 3

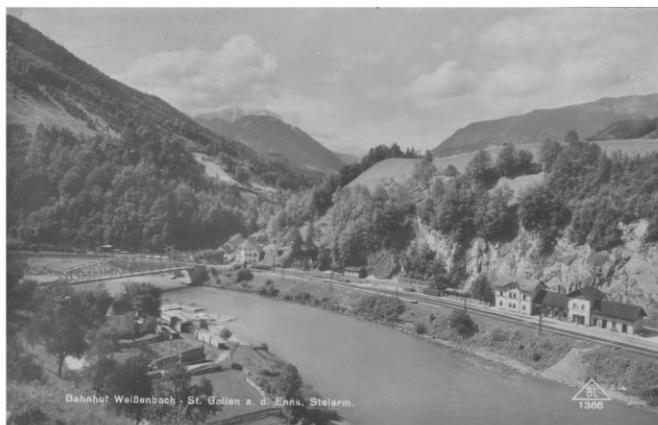


From Ian Brown's "Stalag 18A" website:

Work Camp 785 GW



Location: Weissenbach an der Enns



Type of work: Paper Mill
Man of Confidence: Sgt F Collins
Number of Men: 59 approx.
Known to be present

Forename	Surname	Rank	Unit	POW	Comments
D	Allary	Pte	RASC	2427	
H.W.	Arden	Pte	RASC	2315	
Fred	Baines	Spr	RE	5801	also 2056/L
A	Barlow	Sgmn	R Sigs	5850	also 2056/L
Sidney Albert	Biffin	Spr	RE	2449	
George C	Bradbury	Spr	RE	5876	capt'd Crete; also 2056/L
Bertram	Brown	Pte	2NZEF	4010	New Zealand
A.M.	Cassidy	L/Cpl	R Sigs	587	
D	Christie	Pte	2/6 Inf. Bn.	3670	Australia
John	Cobb		India		
Fred	Collins	L/Sgt	RAOC	2326	
A	Comes				
Max A	Crang	Pte	2/6 Inf. Bn.	7479	Australia
G	Davies				
Taffy	Dennis	Spr	RE	5792	possible
A	Dobson				
Joe	Dooler				Leeds
George	Dutton		RAOC	5903?	
Doug R.	Elliot	Pte	1 Cps Supp CIm	4042	Australia
G (Jock)	Findlay	Pte	RASC	2316	
G	Fraser	Pte	Bk. Watch	2345	
E.A.	Garner	Dvr	RASC	2329	
Albert	Gibb				
W.P. (Ginger)	Greatrex	Spr	RE	5766	also 1107/L
Norman	Hodgetts	Gnr	2/3 Fd. Rg.	5851	Australia; also 2056/L
Ern J.G.	Hodson	RQMS	RA	5896	also 2056/L
T (Yorkie)	Holden	Dvr	RE	5786	
Ernest	Holley	L/Bdr	RA	5881	also 2056/L
Ernie	Jacks	Dvr	R Sigs	5639	also 2056/L

G	Jackson		NZ		
Mark A	Jenner	Gnr	RA	5828	also 2056/L
W (Bill)	Jones	Tpr	RAC	5787	3RTR
Arthur T	Kingsbury	Tpr	RAC	1938	
C	Lea		RASC		
H	Marshall	L/Cpl	RAC	8120	
A	Matthews	Dvr	RASC	7616	
I	McPherson				
C	Parker		RAC		
Edgar	Parry	Pte	RAVC	2343	also 2056/L
Ronald	Peters	Pte	21 Bn.	4124	New Zealand
W	Pirini	Pte	2NZEF	5857	New Zealand; also 2056/L
A.S.	Pitcher	Dvr	RASC	2453	
C R	Pratt	Dvr	RASC	5862	also 2056/L
Ron	Reed				
Walter	Robson	Tpr	RAC	2589	Derbyshire; transferred to Stalag 344
George	Rutter	Spr	RE	5581	also 2056/L
E	Salmon	Pte	2/6 Inf. Bn.	3527	Australia
Clarry	Stanley	Pte	HQ Gd. Bn.	3807	Australia
A E	Start	Dvr	RASC	2311	
Anthony	Strettles	Sgmn	6 Div. Sigs.	3811	Australia; died 27.2.43 ; also 11041/GW
Reggie	Swayne		RASC		
R	Thomas	Pte	2/4 Inf. Bn.	4018	Australia
Tony	Vella	Spr	RE	5702	Turkey; also 2056/L
W (Nellie)	Wallis	Dvr	RASC	2438	
Percy	Webber	Pte	RAVC	2638	
Elvet	Williams	Pte	Welch	5841	Wales; also 2056/L
Perce	Williams	Spr	RE	2948	<i>possible</i>
Jack	Worsnop	Dvr	RASC	2299	
George	Yates	Marine	RM		
T	Zantuck	Pte	2/6 Inf. Bn.	3681	Australia

		
Autumn 1942	Spring, 1943	Spring 1944
		
RASC group	Colonial group	Nov '42 group
		
Autumn 1943	Birmingham group	Birmingham group
		
Room 4, Summer 1943		Room group

		
George Bradbury	I McPherson	M A Crang
		
Duff Cooper	Ernie Jacks	Jock
		
Ozzy	Jack Worsnop	Baines & Rutter
		
Manchester group, 1943	RAOC group, 1943	Room 2, 1943
		
Mark Jenner & Lager cat		Percy & Yorky
		
Christmas 1943	Christmas 1943 Program	Christmas 1943
		
	Weissenbach 1984	

Thanks to Gill Bradbury, daughter of George Bradbury and John Collins, son of Fred Collins, for the names and pictures.)

The following excerpt is taken from 'Arbeitskommando' by Elvet Williams.

Weissenbach a.d.Enns already had a British POW camp. Its inmates had been absorbed into the village work-force, and that work-force lived on and for the paper mill. The mill straddled the village between road and stream. Timber stacks occupied more ground than the mill itself.. The huge stacks kept the prison camp, sited on the narrower back road, out of sight of main village life.

The camp consisted of only one building. It also bordered a road, whilst its compound contained a narrow useless area, enclosed by barbed wire on all four sides.

The entrance door of the building opened straight into a dining room or common room extending the width of the hut. At the far end an identically situated door led down several steps into the compound stretched along the bank of the stream but separated from it by barbed wire. From the right of the common room a central corridor passed along the longer end of the building, with doors opening on either side into small barrack rooms, each with four double bunks. On the left, the common room showed three doors. The first was the entrance to the guards quarters, which meant that all their comings and goings had to be an intrusion into common room activities. The second door had two different padlocks with two different keys, one held by the Germans, the other by the British, and belonged to a small room used as a parcel store. The third door, against the further wall, took one into a short corridor lined on both sides with zinc troughs serving as wash basins and equipped with taps for cold water. the corridor led through another door into the Big Room, a dormitory spanning the width of the hut.

The casement-pattern windows opened outwards for air, but not for short cuts, since strong iron bars were set into the frames. The only stove in the prisoners' quarters squatted in the middle of the common room, ensuring that most off-work hours would be spent away from the bunks. The great attraction of the stove lay not so much in the amount of heat it threw out to warm the room, but in its versatility, attributable to its large area of hot plate and its rear oven.

A further significant improvement in our lot was that lighting was by electricity, in every room.



The following account and photographs were sent to me by Richard Schlager, an Austrian from Vienna, who was born in Weissenbach and lived there as a child.

Tuesday 8 May 1945

The day on which the Second World War officially ended, was one of the most eventful in the whole war in this little Steier village on the borders of Oberosterreich.

According to the eye-witness accounts of my grandmother (at the time 32 years old) and my mother (13 years old), tragedies and dramas were played out in the village and surroundings which will be described briefly below.

To set the scene, an English POW camp had been set up in Weissenbach. The barracks included living accommodation, a cook house (the former "40's" house which served as living accommodation for our family in the 1960s)and the wash-house. (the wash/cook house was in use up to the break-up of the settlement in the 1980s.) The settlement lay close to the former Cellulose factory, opposite the woodpile.

Early Morning

The existence of the POW camp was probably known to the English soldiers who were advancing from the South, because on 8th May 1945, at 8 o'clock in the morning the community offices in Weissenbach on the Enns were filled with English soldiers. These soldiers looked as though they had spent the night of 7th/8th May on a "straw camp" which my grandmother, who worked in the council offices, and who amongst other things was responsible for the "Fleischbeschau" (?) immediately noticed, as the "straw

camp" had not been there the day before. As the Town Mayor, Mr Delmonte, contrary to his normal habits, was not yet in his office, all the other town officials went back home as well.

The End: The Jaksche Family

The mayor was at the time at the community doctor Dr. Jaksche's surgery. A tragedy had taken place there the night before. The community doctor, an ardent Nazi had exterminated his whole family. First his two older sons had to shoot themselves, and then Dr. Jaksche shot his three younger children, his wife and himself.

The Russians are coming

When the Mayor came back to the community offices from the doctor's, a Russian officer arrived there coming from the direction of Altenmarkt.

The conversation between the officer and Mayor Delmonte according to my grandmother, was about lines of demarcation, that had been set up in the middle of the Enns, and the advance or rather the non-advance of Russian troops due to the fact that in the town an English POW camp existed and that American troops had already advanced as far as Buchauersattel (about 10km further in the direction of St. Gallen.)

Following this conversation, the Russian officer went back to Altenmarkt. This remained the only visit of a Russian soldier to Weissenbach.

The town of Altenmarkt remained occupied by Russians for a considerable time. During this time there were stories of many rapes (the cries of the women could be heard across the Enns).

Get the Americans...

For the locals, the visit of the Russian officer led to a fear that Russian troops could occupy the town.

In order to avoid this, some locals drove with several English POWs through St. Gallen to Buchauersattel to persuade the American troops to move as quickly as possible in order to reach Weissenbach. The American troops had however got stuck in a huge engagement with the retreating German army in Buchauersattel.

According to the accounts the American troops immediately drove with Jeeps and lorries to Weissenbach and together with the British soldiers who had arrived the night before, carried out negotiations with the locals.

The Train

A Reich's train from Hungary with so-called "Jewish goods" had been standing at the station in Weissenbach for weeks guarded by the Volkssturm. On the 8th May however, the train was plundered, with most of the locals (mainly older men, women and children) taking part.

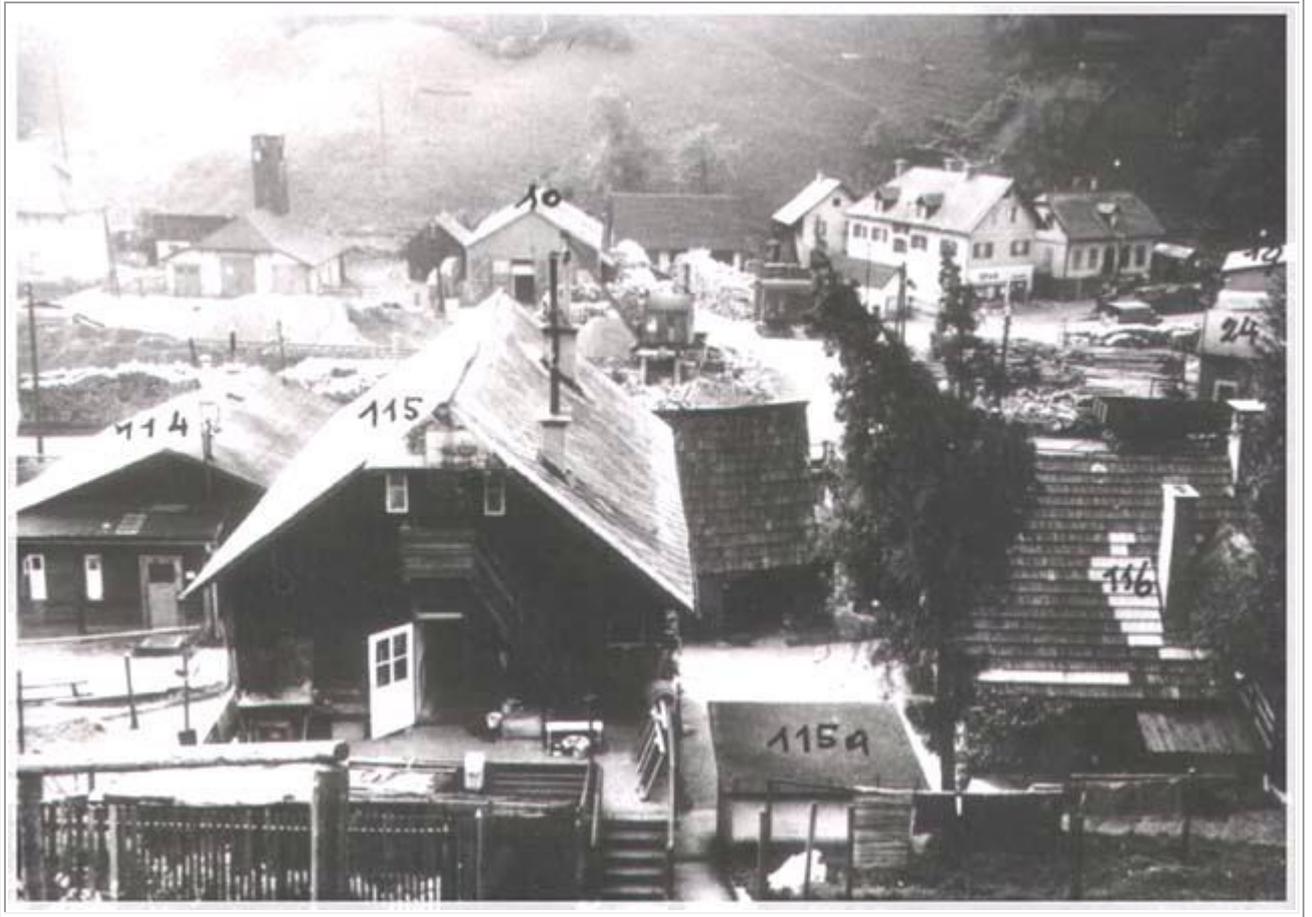
According to the accounts there were some grotesque scenes where two women would fight over a shoe, as each wanted to have a complete pair. In the train there were rolls of cloth, shoes, clothes, tinned foods, medical instruments and every type of household article. According to my mother, former English POWs had themselves made suits ("Steier suits") out of the material and it was possible to see locals with suits made from the plunder of the 8th May 1945 right up to the 1990s.



The camp stretched from no.112 to no.117. The Cookhouse was no.114 and the Wash-house, no.115



After the war, this camp was used by the factory as homes for the employees. No.114 was my home from 1958 until 1975.



Work Camp 194 GW

Location: Leitendorf (near Leoben)

Type of work: Brickworks/Magnesite Works

Man of Confidence: Cpl N Lay

(Red Cross) Report1

Date of visit: 13th November 1942

The British Prisoners of war live in one room where they eat and sleep. Some of them have to sit on their beds when eating. The Accompanying Officer saw the Chief Engineer of the factory about this. He insisted that the men should be given an extra room to eat in. There are only two taps for washing. However, this is a minor complaint as the men can have hot showers every day.

The food provided by the works is good and clean. Private food can be prepared.

There is no trained medical orderly in this camp and the sick are attended by the Man of Confidence. If there is any need, patients can be sent to a civil doctor. In case of emergency the civil doctor can be called for. Dental treatment is relatively satisfactory here, as the prisoners are allowed to go to a civil dentist in Leoben.

There is no canteen, but the Man of Confidence can go to town for errands.

Football can be played every Sunday morning.

Mail comes in very irregularly. The Accompanying Officer promised to look into this.

On the whole except for overcrowding due to the fact that the factory contains no spare rooms, this camp can be called good.

(Red Cross) Report 2

Date of visit: 21st January 1943

This is part of a general report on six Work Camps visited on the same day. The camps were:

- A 956 GW: Building operations, 37 men (5 Australian, 12 NZ)
- A 980 GW: Magnesium mine, 117 men (20 Australian, 25 NZ)
- A 924 GW: Building operations, 270 men (12 Australian, 40 NZ)
- A 47 GW: Building operations, 20 men (all British)
- A 959 GW: Saw Mills, 23 men (7 Australian, 3 NZ)
- A 194 GW: Brick works, 28men (1 Australian)**

The camps visited in particular were 956 GW and 924 GW. The men of the Labour Detachments were captured in Greece in April 1941 and arrived three months later at Stalag XVIIIID. Certain Labour Detachments date from this period, others were formed later.

Accommodation

The prisoners of war are lodged in barrack huts of the usual kind, well built. Generally these are provided with two tier bunks having palliasses and two blankets issued by the company for which they are working. These blankets are often both small and thin, but most of the men have a third one which is their own personal property. At night they cover themselves with their greatcoats. Both the daylight and the electric light are adequate. The heating is satisfactory.

In certain Labour Detachments the prisoners of war lock up their personal effects in cupboards, but, for the most part they have none and their place is taken by suitcases made of compressed fibre.

Clothing

All the POWs in these Detachments possess one complete uniform. This is in more or less good condition depending upon the date of their last stay at the Stalag where it is possible to exchange worn clothes for some in better condition. Certain men still have some articles of French, Belgian or Yugoslav uniform which they were given at some time or other at Stalag XVIIIID.

In regard to footwear, the state of this varies according to the nature of the work done by the men. In some cases shoes, as well as trousers, are taken away from the men at night and put outside the cantonments where at the present time everything freezes. In the morning the prisoners are obliged to put their shoes near the stove in order to get them soft again and the leather obviously suffers from this treatment.

Except in rare cases the prisoners get no working clothes issued to them and, as the exchange of uniforms is made only on a very reduced scale since their captivity, the condition of clothing is relatively bad for British prisoners. The officer of the battalion of the guard attached to these detachments has, however, assured the delegates that each POW will receive a complete new outfit which will come from the stocks in the old Camps XVIIIIB (annexe) (ex XVIIIID) and XVIIIIB, which are about to be closed down. If the prisoners are able to keep these outfits strictly for working purposes everything will be all right. This matter still remains unsettled, however.

On the other hand, in regard to underclothing, prisoners have all that they need.

The laundry is done by such POWs as can heat the necessary water. In the winter the clothing has to be dried in the prisoners' room.

Food

The food is prepared by the prisoners on suitable stoves or in the communal kitchen of the Company for which they are working. This arrangement has given rise to no serious complaints.

The food rations correspond to those of the civilian population.

In most of the Detachments the prisoners have adapted the stoves in their rooms so that they can cook upon them the food supplies coming from their personal and collective parcels. As a general rule the food given to prisoners is satisfactory from all points of view.

Hygiene

The installations available to prisoners for personal washing vary a lot from one Detachment to another. Thus some are primitive while others are modern and convenient.

On the other hand, the latrines are everywhere very primitive; among other things the five seats available for 270 men in the Detachment A 924 GW are clearly insufficient.

This last mentioned Detachment has an Infirmary comprising 12 bunks. This is under the direction of an

English doctor, Captain William Gunther, No. 4940. Six bunks were occupied on the day of our delegates' visit by prisoners suffering from influenza, dysentery and some complaint suspected to be tuberculosis. The general state of health is excellent. In case of need prisoners can go alone to consult civilian doctors. Sick prisoners and victims of accidents while at work are sent to the neighbouring town where they are well cared for.

Dental attention given to the prisoners varies much from one attachment to another. In certain of them prisoners can, without difficulty obtain all the attention they need, against payment, artificial dentures included. For this purpose they go to a local dentist. In other detachments prisoners can have nothing save extractions done. For instance, 7 men in the Detachment 924 GW were able to go to a nearby town during the last 9 months in order to get their dentures repaired or to have new ones made. Some few men have even been able to be seconded from their Detachments for a week or two in order to have their teeth attended to.

Leisure, Intellectual and Religious needs

The Detachments have been visited once or twice by an Anglican pastor and a Catholic priest. The Catholic prisoners are not allowed to attend the celebration of Mass in the local churches.

Each Detachment is in possession of books coming from individual parcels or from the Stalag Circulating Library where books can be changed two or three times a year.

No study courses have been organised but in the large Detachments prisoners give lectures and a certain number of men have obtained books from Geneva or direct from England.

A jazz orchestra plays in the largest of the Labour Detachments. The others have some guitars, Mandolins and small accordions which they have been able to obtain on the spot.

The prisoners have no indoor games.

Sports are not indulged in much, as the work is generally speaking very arduous. Moreover, besides having not much leisure time the prisoners have neither sports equipment nor a suitable ground on which to play outdoor games. Nevertheless the prisoners' physical state is satisfactory.

Canteen

There is no canteen. It is extremely difficult to procure even articles of essential necessity in this district. Prisoners are without such things as razor blades, toothbrushes, tooth powder, toilet paper, paper, pencils, black boot polish, cigarette papers, etc.

Collective parcels

Since September 1941 it has been possible to distribute each week one parcel weighing 5 kg, or its equivalent in 'bulk food'; each Detachment has a small reserve stock which the Camp Leader has complete authority in allotting. The only complaint is that tinned foods are opened at the time they are distributed; they are supposed to be emptied into containers which the prisoners cannot always obtain. All but 1 or 2 per cent of the men received a Xmas parcel. It has now been announced that the old system of distributing one 5 kg parcel will be reverted to in future. This news was received with great satisfaction by the prisoners.

In regard to clothing parcels, these are practically non-existent.

Work and Pay

The number of working days is not very large: 8 hours a day, 5 on Saturday and Sunday free. With regard to the nature of the work done, this varies according to the Detachment. It is usually concerned with transport or mining, in the construction of roads, embankments, buildings, and in quarries or sawmills. The prisoners with the exception of those in A 980 GW do not complain of the work.

The basic pay is 0.70 RM per day; certain prisoners who are employed on piece-work rates earn up to 2 RM per day. It is to be observed that the prisoners have no opportunity to spend their money.

Correspondence

The delegates received complaints from all quarters on the subject of correspondence. This together with the subject of clothing is the principal concern of the prisoners in these Detachments. A very considerable slowing-up in the distribution of mails has taken place since the summer. While at that time letters between England and the Camps took two or three weeks to come and go, it now takes as many months for them to make the journey. Moreover, one letter out of three, either outgoing or incoming, never arrives. The letters most recently received in the Detachments date from last October. Prisoners who have worked in the central Camp Administrative Department aver that many weeks elapse between the arrival of the mail at the central Camp and its distribution to the Labour Detachments.

Interview with the Camp Leaders (without witnesses)

The interview with the Camp Leaders touched on all the points mentioned above.

Interview with the German authorities

These were conciliatory. Our delegates were assured that they would give full attention to the solution of the difficulties referred to, as far as lay in their power.

Conclusion

The living conditions of the prisoners are fairly satisfactory as a general rule and the civilian population is well disposed to them. The country is pleasant and the climate is healthy. The New Zealanders and the Australians have now become perfectly acclimatized to it. The collective parcels service functions to the satisfaction of everyone. It is the matter of correspondence and of the clothing situation which causes concern at the moment. Our delegates, however, have been informed that a solution of the clothing problem will soon be arrived at.

(Red Cross) Report 3

Date of visit: 26th May 1943

No serious complaint was put forward regarding this camp. However it appears that the working hours are rather long, but as the prisoners are doing transport work (unloading of wagons) and the civilians work the same hours, the men themselves realise there is not much chance of any complaint being successful. The Man of Confidence says that sports facilities are poor and that just at present they have no football and would be grateful to the YMCA if it could let them have one.

(Red Cross) Report 4

Date of visit: 2nd December 1943

23 British Prisoners of war. Bad accommodation and unhealthy working conditions. The delegate proposed the dissolution of the Kommando which was granted.

