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The Experiences of a Canadian  
Civil Affairs Officer in  
Germany, March 1945 - April 1946

1. This report is the sequel to an earlier report dealing with the experiences of a Canadian Civil Affairs Officer in France and Belgium. Like the previous report the present one is a personal account by Captain J.E.G. Labrosse and is based upon his personal diary and various documents in his possession. The reader will realize that a certain amount of what is written here is hearsay, as the author was not always in a position to check the various rumors and stories; and some is simply a reflection of the author's views. The material contained here is, however, of historical value as the record of experience of a Canadian officer attached to a British Civil Affairs Unit.

INTO GERMANY

2. On 7 Mar 45 we received word that the officers and men of the 1st British E.C.A. Group were to be posted to the Second Army (Main) C.A., with effect from 7 Mar 45 and that they were to report to the Town Major at Diest for further instructions. We therefore left Armentieres at 1045 hrs going through Lille, Tournai, Brussels and Louvain and arrived at Diest. Upon our arrival, the Officer Commanding of our Detachment reported to the Town Major for further instructions. As there was no accommodation available in the town or the district we were obliged to return to Louvain for overnight accommodation. Next morning we found the Headquarters of our Group situated in the outskirts of Louvain on the road Louvain-Tirlemont.

3. I was attached temporarily to 119 Detachment, for quarters and rations, and was located in the small village of Roosbeck in Eastern Flanders. The officers and men of our Detachment were billeted in private houses. One house was requisitioned as a Headquarters and messing hall. We were five officers and six other ranks. Three other Detachments were billeted in the same village. All Detachments which had been formed from the 1st British E.C.A. Group, were stationed in small villages between Louvain and Tirlemont. The Provincial Detachment for Westphalia was composed of the Provincial Detachment Headquarters and 50 sub-Detachments of all sizes. The Provincial Detachment for the Province of Hannover included 70 sub-Detachments.

4. On 19 Mar 45 I was attached to the Headquarters of 307/08 Provincial Military Government Detachment



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for the Province of Westphalia as Relief and Welfare Officer. I therefore moved from Roosbeck to Kerhkon where the Detachment Headquarters was located. The Headquarters was composed of 80 officers and 200 other ranks. We lived in an old XVI Century Manor which had belonged to one of the oldest families in the Flanders. On 23 Mar instructions were received that the Westphalia and Hannover Detachments would be attached to the Ninth American Army for all purposes for the invasion and the occupation of Germany until relieved by the British Army. The 307/08 Detachment to which I belonged and its R.B.\* and kreis detachments were therefore attached to the XVI Corps of the Ninth American Army for the Military Government Administration of the Province of Westphalia. On Saturday 24 Mar 45, while we were still in Kerhkon, we watched thousands of planes and gliders flying over our heads towards Germany to the bridgehead at Wesel. They were American and British planes and carried British and American paratroops. On the following day all Detachments in the District received orders to move to the Headquarters of Civil Affairs of the Ninth Army, located in the town of Tirlemont. The Headquarters and the messing Halls were located in the barracks of a Belgian Cavalry Regiment. As the space was limited the beds were spread all over the place to accommodate everybody. During the next week lectures were given on Germany.

5. On Easter Sunday, 1 Apr 45, both provincial Detachments were instructed to proceed at once to Germany. This order was received at 0830 hrs in the morning. An advance party was sent at once to the town of Kamp Linfort, located in the Province of North Rhine, to requisition billets. The Westphalian Detachment left about 1100 hrs going through St Trond Tongres, Maastricht, where we halted about one hour for lunch, then through Roermund to Kamp Linfort where we arrived about 1800 hrs. As the town had been completely evacuated during the attack on the Rhine, all the troops were billeted in private houses.

6. On Tuesday, 3 Apr, we left Kamp Linfort about 0700 hrs in the morning to reach the small village of Heiden, the temporary Headquarters of the XIII Corps. On our way we crossed the Rhine at Wesel. On the west side of the river the road leading to the bridge had been destroyed and we had to go through shell holes to reach the pontoon bridge laid across the Rhine. After crossing the river we were in the town of Wesel which had fallen a few days before to the American Ninth Army. The town was badly damaged and the ruins were still smoking when we entered. With the exception of a part of the Railway Station, which was still standing, only a few walls here and there could be seen above the rubble. On each side of the road Wesel-Heiden we could see hundreds of gliders which had been used by the paratroops who had helped to seize the bridgehead.

7. We arrived at the small village of Heiden where we reported at once to the Headquarters for further instructions. Our job was, if possible, to prevent Refugees and Displaced persons from impeding the movements of troops by keeping the roads clear and preventing them from trying to reach the bridge at Wesel and crossing the Rhine. During the day we could see on all roads leading to the village light armoured cars protecting the entrance of the

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\* "Regierung Bezirke" - a political German district.



village. Every civilian was stopped and questioned; many were arrested and put in a temporary cage. Most of them were refugees trying to reach Wesel.

#### WE ARRIVE AT MUNSTER

8. Next morning orders came for us to proceed to Munster, where the Corps Headquarters had moved the night before. We left Heiden about 0800 hrs going through Coesfeld, an important railway junction for Holland and Northern Germany. The railway viaduct had been demolished by a ten thousand ton bomb. The town had been largely destroyed; the streets were torn up and one could hardly get through them; the railway tracks were ripped and twisted into queer and fearsome shapes. I remember seeing an odd sight, a railway locomotive which had been hurled upon the top of another by bomb blast; even a crane could not have done better. Debris and rubble covered the streets as high as the first storey of many buildings. Dulmen, another important road junction on the main highway Munster-Wesel, had been completely destroyed by air raids and fighting around the town. Finally we arrived on the outskirts of Munster about 1000 hrs and reported at once to Corps Headquarters for further instructions. As there was still fighting going on in the town, it was impossible for us to start work. In the fields across the road from the apartment house where the Headquarters was located we could see German soldiers giving themselves up. By the apartment, at the corner of the street, was an artillery battery, shelling the retreating German Army on the other side of the town on the road Hamm-Dortmund. Shells were bursting all over the place. Later in the afternoon, the battle quietened down and the Americans were in full possession of the town.

9. Munster was the capital of the Province of Westphalia. It was one of the most beautiful towns in western Germany, but when we entered it had been reduced to rubble and ruins. Munster had been bombarded for the first time, on Easter Sunday 1943, again in 1944 and also before our arrival. Bulldozers began at once to clean the streets to make a way for military traffic. That afternoon we went back to Heiden for the night. Next morning we came back to Munster and visited the famous Stalag VI where about 5,000 Allied prisoners of war, French, Poles and Russians had been kept. As we crossed the town we could see the debris and rubble piled, in some places, as high as a two storey building. On the Cathedral Square only a few buildings were standing up and the famous XIII Century Cathedral completely destroyed. The Lambert XII Century Church had a part of the steeple destroyed, the interior was gutted but the four walls were standing. Nothing was left of the City Hall and the business section. Around the Station there was not a house standing for about ten blocks. It took us an hour to cross the town to the camp owing to the rubble.



### THE P.O.W. CAMP AT MUNSTER

10. We were welcomed on our arrival by the Camp Commandant, a Polish Doctor, who had been appointed Officer Commanding by the German Camp authorities before their departure the previous week. The German staff had left food supplies for two weeks and other commodities. The Doctor had organized his camp very well; but one night the Russians had stolen the keys of the kitchens, made a good meal and found some schnapps; they became so drunk that they set fire to the kitchen and burned the food supply store. As a result the prisoners had to go without food for two days. We immediately sent a dispatch rider to the Quartermaster Stores and shortly afterwards lorries loaded with "K" rations arrived. Regular allied rations were thenceforth issued to the camp. We re-organized the kitchens and the next day it was ready. Daily rations were drawn at the Quartermaster Stores under the supervision of an American Staff. The Doctor told us that he had had no trouble except with the Russians who drank too much and were unwilling to obey anybody since the Germans had left. The camp quarters were in a fairly good condition but the Russian quarters were the worst I have ever seen during my stay in Germany. It was pitiful to see the P.O.W's eating their ration but their greatest joy was to receive cigarettes with it. Some smoked the cigarettes with tears in their eyes; others kissed them. The P.O.W's were like children so very happy to be delivered and all thinking that soon they would be sent home. We were continually asked when they would be allowed to return home; what had happened in their countries, etc. There was a French Captain, who had been a Staff officer at St Cyr, who asked us all kinds of questions about the French Army. He was broken hearted at the downfall of France, but we comforted him by telling him of the great part played by the New First French Army, which was under the command of General Leclerc. He told us that all the prisoners knew of the invasion and the swift advance of the Allied Armies; and that while they knew liberation was only a matter of time they did not expect us so soon. Everywhere we were greeted with tears of joy and happiness; many could hardly believe that they were to be free at last.

### REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS CAMP NO. "B"3

11. On Thursday, 5 Apr 45, I was placed in charge of a Refugees and Displaced Persons camp, located on the road Munster-Dulmen, about a mile from the little village of Buldern. I was left alone in the camp with no guard and with only one "K" ration. Assistance had been promised me before night fall but it never appeared. I had been forgotten. I proceeded to install myself in the officers hut and made a thorough inspection of the Camp. What a mess the place was in! American troops spent a night there and had upset everything.

12. The camp had previously served as a Hitler Jugend training camp. It consisted of seven large wooden huts, a large garage for lorries, and outdoor latrines for 500 persons. The camp buildings formed a square with a parade



ground enclosed in the centre. Near the entrance, facing the parade ground the administration building was located. Here were also the Guard room, the Orderly Room, the Kitchen and the Messing Hall. There was, in addition a camp hospital with an attractive medical inspection room with a good Dispensary. The camp hospital consisted of eight beds, an isolation room, a dispensary and a toilet. The sleeping quarters consisted of four large buildings accommodating about 450 persons. At the rear between the Administration Building and the first sleeping hutment were to be found officers and sergeants quarters, the garage and the workshop.

13. During my inspection I found two French Refugees wandering around the camp looking for food. They were on their way to Wesel. I explained the situation to them and they stayed with me, one of them becoming my batman. They helped me clean the Officers Quarters and we made ourselves as comfortable as we could for the night. The next morning as I was inspecting one of the buildings I found an ablution room with 20 showers served by a steam furnace which had been sabotaged by the Germans before their departure; one valve had been left open and the basement was flooded. A thorough inspection of the kitchen was made. I found five big boilers under which fires could be set, a large electric refrigerator, a large camp stove and kitchen accessories of all kinds. I was very happy about these discoveries. As I had seen the Mayor the day before with the Officer in charge of all the camps in the district I sent one of my men to fetch an electrician to connect the wires which had been cut by the Germans before leaving. At 1200 hrs the lights were on again. That afternoon 100 Germans came to clean every building. Early in the afternoon the Staff of the camp arrived. They included Capt Lismer, Sgt Brown, both Canadians, and a British Corporal. Capt Lismer and Sgt Brown were to be responsible for the external administration of the camp and all supplies; the corporal and myself were to look after the internal administration. Capt Lismer and I visited the Mayor of the village to arrange for food supplies such as bread, potatoes, meats, etc; also all materials needed for the camp.

14. That afternoon we posted a Sentry at the Cross-road to stop the refugees from going to Wesel. The first day we collected about 150 refugees and displaced persons of all nationalities. We installed them in the huts, made them clean the camp, erect the double deck beds, clean the kitchen, etc. By nightfall the camp was in good condition and ready to receive more refugees and displaced persons. Amongst those who came in were five good cooks; one of them had been a Chef at the Feldkommandantur in Munster. He was appointed the Chief Cook. He was a Marseillais, a marvelous cook but what a story teller! The refugees and Displaced Persons were fed that night with requisitioned rations. The French P.O.W's were regarded as ex-Allied soldiers and were entitled to the Allied Army rations; the others were considered as civilians and received civilian rations. I had found in the kitchen basement about ten tons of potatoes. Meats, breads, vegetables were requisitioned by Capt Lismer at the Mayor's Office. We also visited several German farms where we



saw tons of vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, beets, parsnips, etc, which had been specially set aside for the Wehrmacht (German Army).

15. By Saturday, 7 Apr 45, i.e. only two days after opening the camp there were about 300 refugees being cared for. The provision of a camp civilian staff was a real necessity. This was drawn from the refugees themselves. There was a Central Refugee Committee representing each nationality. Military Government could not expect to provide the staff to run camps of this nature and had to rely on finding suitable personnel among the refugees. We merely acted in an advisory capacity. Each nationality had its own "Chief" who was responsible for keeping law and order amongst his own countrymen; the cleanliness of the huts, beds, mattresses, blankets, latrines used by his countrymen, the clothing issued, fatigues and general duties in the camp, helpers in the kitchen to peel potatoes, and especially for the good discipline at the meal parade. Each nationality was divided into groups of 100 and again subdivided into groups of 50. Each group and sub-group had leaders who worked under the "Chief" of the national group. Each day at 1000 hrs we met the nationality "Chiefs" and listened to their complaints and issued instructions regarding duties for the following day. The following nationalities were represented: French, Belgian, Dutch, Italians, Poles, Russians. /

16. We had the camp organized like a regiment, with "companies", "platoons", "sections", etc and found by experience that it was the best way to run the camp. American sentries were posted at the road junction to direct all refugees moving westward to our camp. As the numbers of inmates increased we cleaned up the workshop and the garage and used them as sleeping quarters. Loads of straw were brought to the camp from neighbouring farms and used as mattresses. After a few days we were able to find mattress covers which were filled up with straw. This was more sanitary than having straw strewn all over the place.

17. We had asked for transport but nothing had been given us. Accordingly Capt Lismer requisitioned several German lorries and cars for the camp transportation. These vehicles were under my supervision and the civilian chief of the garage. Gasoline and oil were supplied to us by the American Army. The lorries were used to fetch foods, building materials, water for washing, straw, etc.

18. On 8 Apr 45 a special request was sent to the officer commanding the American Battery "A" 571 Triple A/A for additional guards to be posted around the camp and the cross-road to help to keep order amongst the refugees. Our request was granted at once. An hour later a guard of 25 other ranks with a Top Sergeant and a Corporal arrived at the camp. Lt-Col Hunter of the Battery "A" 571 Triple A/A was the Commanding Officer of all the camps in the District with his Headquarters at the Castle in the village of Buldern. The N.C.Os. and the men were billeted in the same hut as we were with only a wall separating us. A field telephone was connected with the Headquarters at the Castle. The duties of the guard consisted



of mounting the Guard around the camp, at the cross-road, and keeping order. Guards were always present at meal times. At night the guards were doubled and a special section was kept in duty for outside call. No civilians were allowed on the roads at night. The sergeant was responsible to me for the discipline of his men in the camp. They had their own cook, and three refugees were detailed to keep their quarters clean.

19. At curfew all guards turned out to see that everyone was in his billet. Guards saw that the black-out rules were strictly enforced. The sentries posted at the cross-road were required to check all passes or identification papers; those whose papers were not in order or who appeared to be suspicious characters were sent to me for further inquiry, and then, if I was not satisfied, to the Intelligence officer or the Commanding Officer at the Castle. The sentries at the cross-road helped to catch about 1,000 Germans who had hidden themselves in the woods surrounding the Recklinghausen pocket. These men were ex-soldiers trying to reach their home town; most of them were dressed as civilians but had no passports. A great deal of useful information was obtained and important arrests were made. Each German was sent to the Castle. A Message Slip, M-120, accompanied the driver and was handed to Intelligence Officer or the Commandant on arrival. This form outlined the details concerning the arrest. In special cases telephone conversations were held with the Headquarters before the prisoners were forwarded (See Appendix "B").

20. Among the Dutch families who arrived at the camp there was a woman who complained all the time about the Allies, especially the Americans. She was never satisfied. We investigated and found that she and her husband were both notorious Dutch Nazis. They had a full hand bag of German Mark Notes and several precious stones. Both were arrested, paraded by the sergeant to the Officer Commanding at the Castle. Both were sent to Holland under heavy escort and handed over to the Dutch Military Authorities at the frontier.

21. Each time a refugee disobeyed an order or perpetrated an offence maliciously he was paraded before the Officer Commanding at the Castle, by the sergeant of the Guard with a message signed by myself. Here are a few illustrations of the kind of thing which sometimes happened. On 2 May 45, at 0030 hrs, a refugee was caught wandering around the camp trying to escape. He was arrested at once, and in the morning paraded to the Officer Commanding (See Appendix "D" No. 1). On 4 May 45, a Frenchman, who had reported himself to the camp with his bicycle was told he could not take it to France. He therefore took a knife and ripped the tires to pieces. He was arrested for sabotage. He was paraded to the Officer Commanding and received solitary confinement in the Castle dungeon, for two days. (See Appendix "D" No. 2). In another case a Dutch refugee threw his plate of food on the ground saying that the food was no good and not palatable. He was given four days of solitary confinement (See Appendix "D" No. 3). Two Belgians were caught trying to



make their way to the road to Wesel on the Rhine. They were punished by two days of washing dishes at the Castle. (See Appendix "D" No. 5).

22. Refugees seem to have had a mania for stealing potatoes from the kitchen even when they received between 2500 to 3000 calories a day. They were always hungry, probably because most of them did no work and being idle all day the only thing they had in their mind was to eat. One was caught, one day, making a fire to cook his potatoes beside a hut where there were over 50 beds. I sent a guard to warn him to put out the fire at once but he refused to obey the order. I ordered the Guard to fire on the cooking pan with his Sten and the man was arrested at once. He received two days at hard labour unloading ammunition trains into Army lorries. (See Appendix "D" No. 4).

23. Each time we had to transfer the Refugees from one camp to another, the Officer Commanding had to be notified so he could get accommodation and quarters for them. (See Appendices "E" Nos. 1, 2, 3).

24. As I have already hinted above, all persons, who did not have their passports or identification papers in order, were sent to the Intelligence Officer for further questioning. Many of those with whom we came in contact had discharge papers from the Wehrmacht, but these were of no value. Capt Shay of the C.I.C. was the Intelligence Officer of the Battery. He was assisted by a sergeant of a British Field Security Section. As we were not far from the Ruhr pocket, thousands of German soldiers were found hiding in the surrounding woods after the surrender of the German Army in the Ruhr. Some of them had been living in the woods for months. Most of them had hidden their arms in the woods, before taking the road home, and had their soldier book but no other papers to identify them as civilians. They were arrested and questioned by me and sent to the Intelligence Officer for further disposal.

25. A large stockade had been built around the Castle. After a week of rounding up suspects at every cross-road in the district it was filled up. One day, we received orders not to arrest any more people because the stockade was overcrowded. Some of those whom we let pass thought they were free but as soon as they reached another district they were arrested. Proclamations were posted in every town stating that no one could have a ration or labour card without registering first at the Labour Office with his discharge papers stamped with the seal of the Allied Forces. Those prisoners of war who were caught in hiding were to be punished with death. These proclamations brought a large number of German prisoners of war to camps. Included as appendices to this report are copies of slips accompanying arrested German soldiers and other nationalities.

Appendix "F" 1: A German soldier, who had been a Nazi party member wandering on the roads and not reporting to the Allied Military Authorities.



Appendix "F" 2: A German Policeman, whom we had arrested and who had not reported himself to the Military Government.

Appendix "F" 3: Two Germans discharged from the Wehrmacht in Dusseldorf. There had not been any discharge for months prior to our arrival. The papers had been a forgery.

Appendix "F" 4: A Dutchman, who had stolen from one of his countrymen in the barn where they had been sleeping, was arrested and sent to C.I.C. for questioning, after paraded to the Officer Commanding. He was awarded a two years sentence at hard labour in Holland.

Appendix "F" 5: Two Poles arrested for menacing farmers; one of them had been a Nazi during his stay in Germany working on farms. After liberation, he began to black-mail and menace the farmers in the district. A few came to the camp complaining about him. He was warned to desist but did not pay any attention so I had him arrested. He was severely dealt with.

Appendix "F" 6: These fifteen Germans of the Wehrmacht were trying to reach their homes without reporting themselves to the Allied German War Prisoners Authorities.

Appendix "F" 7: These five men were in the same position as the fifteen others but the three boys who had been in the Wehrmacht had destroyed their papers thinking they would reach home quicker.

Appendix "F" 8: Sixteen Germans without pass or soldier's book, a few of military age.

Appendix "F" 9: Six Russians who were caught looting a German farmer by one of our guards when going to the farm to fetch milk for the Camp Hospital.

Appendix "F" 10: Five men who were caught looting farmers and killing cows.

26. Looting was regarded in a serious light. Our Officer Commanding had no heart and no use for any looter. The severity of the penalties for looting were made clear in "Allied Military Government of Proclamation No. 2"; Article 1 of which listed the offences against the Allied Forces which were punishable by death. These included any person who committed any act of plunder or pillage or who robbed the dead or wounded; and any person who raped any nurse or other woman serving with the Allied Forces or who should commit assault upon any such nurse or other woman with intent to commit rape. In every case



an inquiry was held. Many murders and burning of farms were only solved after the use of the third degree. The death sentences did not, however, seem to worry the Poles or Russians. Many of these people did not kill for revenge but for the thirst of blood. The refugees and Displaced Persons with whom we had the greatest trouble were the Poles and the Russians. They were disliked by every other nationality. Many western Refugees asked us why we did not go to Stalingrad and have it out with the Russians.

27. On Sunday, 8 Apr 45, the parish Priest of the little village of Karthaus, about half a mile from the camp, came to say the Mass for the refugees. That Sunday morning a roll call revealed that the number of refugees in the camp was now over 600. Having accommodation for only 500 steps were taken at once to remedy this situation.

#### CAMP ADMINISTRATION

28. Each of the large huts was divided into five dormitories. Each dormitory contained about 25 double deck beds and was in charge of a leader who was responsible for the discipline and cleanliness of his dormitory. An orderly was in charge of each dormitory for a period of 24 hours. The duties of the orderly consisted of the maintenance of order and cleanliness in the room and also preventing thievery. He saw to it that every blanket was taken out in the sun and the beds were made ready for the 1100 hrs inspection. He reported to me any deficiencies in the room. On sunny days nobody was permitted to remain indoors; everybody was obliged to go outside to take a sun bath. The orderly also showed each new arrival how to make his bed. Nothing was allowed on the floors, everything had to be placed on the bed near the pillow in army fashion. No papers could be left on the floor or food left lying around the room. It was strictly forbidden to cook in the dormitory. Gambling was forbidden as it usually led to a fight. The floors were swept three times a day. The orderly had to see that lights were extinguished at lights-out.

29. On Sunday afternoon, 8 Apr 45, the guards at the cross-road sent us a French doctor and a Padre with their staff who were proceeding towards the Rhine with a French ambulance car. We explained to them that it would be impossible for them to cross at Wesel. Dr. Vigneau, the French Army Doctor, had been a prisoner of war in a German camp near Bremen for over five years with Padre Moreau, a Belgian Army Chaplain, and his two medical sergeants and orderlies. The Doctor and the Padre took charge of the hospital. A few hours after their arrival our Medical Inspection Room became a real hospital. All refugees were inspected and deloused on their arrival. Minor surgical operations were carried out and vaccines and serum injected in those who needed them. Special diets were prescribed by the doctor in cases where refugees were suffering from malnutrition or starvation. Dr. Vigneau with Sgt Brown went to Munster to fetch drugs and medical



supplies. As a result, the Dispensary was well equipped. Daily sick parades were held every morning on the parade ground at 0900 hrs. A roll call of each person of every nationality was held and their names given to the Hospital orderlies for medical records. As their names were called they were paraded to the doctor.

30. A twice-daily milk parade was also held, under the Doctor's supervision, for those who needed it, such as children, expectant mothers, weak women, men from the Concentration Camps, famine cases, and tuberculosis cases, which were numerous owing to the lack of vitamins. The British corporal in charge of the stores and the kitchen was personally responsible for the fetching of milk from neighbouring farms. Every morning and every night he went to German farmers to fetch the milk for the camp. The milk was boiled before it was handed over to the hospital. The hospital maintained a list of those entitled to milk on the doctor's orders. Double portions of milk were given to certain cases under the doctor's advice. The best care was given to cases of famine. When the doctor and the padre had organized the hospital a German doctor from the nearby village was chosen to replace them as they both wished to return to their own countries. The doctor left his two sergeants behind in charge of the hospital, so that the system established would not suffer interruption. A special request was made to the Commanding Officer at the Castle for a laissez passer at the Rhine and the Belgian and French frontiers for the doctor and the padre. This was granted at once. How happy the doctor and the padre were. Their joy cannot be adequately described. Dr Vigneau had not seen his wife and children for over five years. We gave them the gasoline and oil they needed to reach their destination. Two weeks later we received a grateful letter of thanks from them. Capt Lismer and I were very sorry to see them leave but happy for their own sakes.

31. At this point I should like to describe the daily routine at the camp. Reveille was at 0630 hrs; breakfast parade at 0700 hrs. Everybody had to be present on the parade ground for the roll call. Those who were sick were accounted for and their breakfasts arranged for. After the roll call by the "Chief" of each nationality the report was handed into the Orderly Room. Breakfast was then served. It usually consisted of ersatz coffee or, when possible, good Allied coffee, two slices of German bread, two pieces of sausage (when we were able to get them) or oatmeal with powdered milk.

32. At 0800 hrs the fatigue parties reported on the parade ground for the roll call. There were those who were detailed for kitchen fatigues, such as dishwashing, potato peeling, etc. Each dormitory took its turn at providing kitchen details. There were the camp fatigues who cleaned the parade ground, picked up the papers around the camp, looked after latrines, emptied garbage pails, etc. There were carpenters and their helpers who built a new hut; lawnmakers and the gardeners who worked in the flower garden in front of the parade ground. As we had requisitioned private cars and German lorries for the camp transport an expert mechanic was in charge of the garage. Every morning he handed in his list for parts he needed for repairs.



33. At 0900 hrs the sick parade was held at the camp hospital. At 0930 hrs, I received all heads of the permanent staff; the chief cook, the garage man, the plumber, the electrician, the carpenter, the stationary engineer, the lawnmaker, the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief. We discussed their requirements and heard complaints. At 1000 hrs we met the "Chiefs" of each nationality and their subordinate leaders, the Chief of the Registration and orderly room staff to discuss daily matters and camp routine and what might be done to improve the lot of the refugees in the camp. At 1100 hrs there was the camp inspection. I was accompanied by each of the Chiefs who took notes concerning their own departments. We began every morning with the kitchen and then proceeded to the ablution rooms, the sleeping quarters, the garage, the boiler room, the latrines, the workshops. We inspected the garbage disposal arrangements, the parade ground, around the huts and the camp hospital.

34. In each room special attention was paid to the water and sand pails for fire. The fire chief of the camp had been a fire chief of a big town in Holland and was a very smart chap. We had located a fire pump which he had repaired and always had ready for action. He formed a fire brigade in the camp with ten firemen with experience. Orders were that on sunny days every blanket should be placed in the sun for desinfestation for about two hours. Straw for mattresses was changed twice a week and burnt. Everyone was present during his hut inspection standing by his bed. No luggage was permitted on the floor. Everything was arranged in military fashion.

35. As we were able to have soap for every one, each person received half a cake for bathing and washing their clothes. Every person was obliged to take a shower at least once a week. There was an orderly in the ablution room where there were 20 showers. Each room had a special hour for the use of the ablution room. From 1100 to 1200 hrs it was reserved for mothers, their children and the ladies. A woman orderly was in charge of the ablution room during these hours. The afternoon between 1500 hrs and 2200 hrs was free for everybody. The laundry area was outside the huts near the playing ground. A horse drawn water tank brought water for washing four times a day. There were six big wash tubs near two salamanderstoves for hot water, a long clothes line for drying. Two large garbage cans were available to hold the waste from the refugees meals and two large water drums in which they could wash their plates and utensils. We inspected this area twice daily. When the camp inspection was over it was lunch time.

36. Dinner parade was held at 1200 hrs. Food was, of course, put aside for those who were on duty outside the camp. It took about 45 minutes to one hour to serve 1,000 refugees. At first there was practically no discipline at meal parades. On the third day, I decided that all gatherings should be on a military basis. Every nationality was to form a company and every room a platoon. The French prisoners of war illustrated what I meant with a demonstration of a company and a platoon. With the help



of the "Chief" of every nationality I explained to the civilians what I wanted. For instance, if hut No. 1 and rooms Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4 were French, then the hut was the French Company, and each room a platoon; the same for Belgians, Dutch and other nationalities.

37. Two large tables were placed outside the kitchen on which food was served to each one in line. They were allowed to eat in their own rooms. Each "Chief" of nationality was present during the meal parade to maintain the good behaviour and discipline of his countrymen. Women, children and married couples were served first. We had a special hut for them.

38. About 1300 hrs was my lunch time. I usually ate alone because the three others were out. During my meal I was disturbed frequently for this or that; I was never able to have a minute to myself. It might be a lorry coming back with wood or straw to the camp or a truck with rations. In the afternoon I went around and talked with the refugees. Everyone told me his little story, what he had suffered in Germany, how he had been well treated or mistreated. Much of the material in this report was obtained in the course of these little chats. Sports were often arranged in the afternoon; occasionally we had football games between the different national groups. An all-star team composed of the best players of each nation was selected to play against the American troops. This was a good game; the Yanks were beaten three to one. The Americans showed the refugees how to play baseball and they seemed to enjoy it. Our object was to keep their minds busy so they would not get into mischief. Every afternoon at 1500 hrs I inspected the sentries at the cross-road in company with the Top Sergeant. At 1600 hrs I inspected the kitchen and the food again paying particular attention to the cleanliness of the refrigerator. The meat inspection was always very strict. I looked to see that the cook's fingernails were clean, and that there was no food laying around, that the supper would be ready for 1800 hrs. At 1700 hrs, I visited the hospital, chatted with every patient and handed out cigarettes. I looked over the hospital record book and discussed cases with the sergeant in charge. Cases of infectious diseases were at once sent to the Refugees hospital at Recklinghausen. We had an isolation room for cases of infectious disease, but our hospital was too small to hold very many cases. At 1700 hrs, after the departure of the French doctor, a sick parade was held by the German doctor appointed to our camp. At the supper parade everybody had to be present for the roll call except those on duty; the latter were suppose to be back the latest by 1900 hrs because the cooks had orders to close the kitchen at 2000 hrs. Usually all were present.

39. We had a radio playing all day in the camp with loud speakers, and the main topic of the day was the B.B.C. News at 2100 hrs. In the evening there were occasional concerts on the parade ground by the camp orchestra with community singing. Each nationality had its night for a concert. I was the leading man for the singing with my badine.\* There were recitations, yarns and plays. We always finished by playing the American,

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baton



British, and other Allied Nations national anthems. At 2130 hrs the curfew was indicated by a burst of machine gun fire. The guards turned out, and with the chiefs of each nation, were responsible for seeing that everybody was in their huts. The black out was rigourously observed because we were still at war. 2200 hrs was lights out, and everybody was supposed to be in bed. After the lights out every night, I paid a little visit to the American boys next door. By 2230 hrs I was back in my quarters. At 2300 hrs I inspected the Camp with the Top Sergeant and two sentries to see about the black out, the lights out and that every sentry was at his post. We sounded out the doors and windows of the food stores, and the kitchen. Half an hour later I was ready to go to bed. Sometimes I discussed camp problems with Capt Lismer, Sgt Brown and the corporal before retiring. Then, too often, when I was ready to go to bed a sentry would report that someone was sick in one of the huts, or that something else was wrong. If I heard the mooing of a cow, I knew there would be trouble and that it would be not long before someone would come for help. It usually meant looting of farms or slaughtering of farm animals. Sentries had orders to shoot in the direction where the noise came from and patrol could be sent out to catch slaughterers and visit the surrounding farms. We caught several Poles and Russians slaughtering animals on different occasions. After the killing of the cows they took the legs to roast and left the rest there to rot. On other occasions the men in our camp might try to get in the women's hut, or there might be a brawl among the different nationalities. We never knew what the night would bring us. Capt Lismer and myself took turns on night calls, so that one of us could have a good night's sleep.

40. Clothes of all kinds had been requisitioned by the Military Authorities from the German local authorities for clothing the refugees. Upon their arrival, after their registration and delousing with D.D.T. their clothes were inspected, if found unfit for wear, new ones were issued at once. One day two German farmers came to the camp with ten suits of clothes for sale or exchange for cigarettes or food. They told us that refugees had gone to their farms and exchanged the clothes for eggs and bacon. A close check revealed that this was true. We questioned each refugee, to whom a suit of clothes had been issued. All kinds of lies and alibis were told us. Some said their clothes had been stolen. Not a word of truth could be obtained. These people were informed that no other clothes were to be issued to them and they would have to wear their old rags. Here we were devoting ourselves day and night to the task of improving their welfare only to be rewarded with ingratitude and lack of cooperation. The Refugees seem to think we were obliged to help them and that they owed nothing in return. Most of them were the laziest people we had ever met before; they could hardly help themselves, even when they had everything handy in the camp. They had in their minds, that after the liberation, they were to be waited on by the Germans.

41. Before we had taken over the camp, we had paid a visit to the Mayor of the Village of Buldern in which district our camp was located. We ordered him to requisition



from the local farmers all the food needed for our camp. The Mayor had been appointed by the Americans upon their arrival. A few days later we met the village Pastor and the Parish Priest, who told us, that the mayor had actually been a notorious Nazi and that he had worked behind the scenes, and that through his influence a number of people had been arrested and sent to Concentration Camps. We reported this to the C.I.C., who investigated and found that our information was correct. He was arrested at once and sent to Political Prisoners Camp. A new Mayor was appointed at once by C.I.C. The new Mayor had held the position prior to 1933. As Capt Lismer was in charge of the requisitioning of meat, vegetables, potatoes, bread, etc, he dealt directly with the Mayor. The bread was baked for us at the local bakery by the Germans. One day the local baker decided not to work any more for the camps. He was at once arrested and sent to the Political Prisoners Camp. A distribution centre or store was set up where all the requisitioned food was brought and re-distributed under the American supervision to all the Refugees Camps in the district. A daily parade state was handed over to the store before the rations were issued. Every night at 1700 hrs, we sent a lorry to the store to fetch our rations. Meats and perishable goods were stored in the refrigerator. At 1900 hrs food for the next day was issued to the head cook and his assistants. The daily bread ration amounted to between 600 and 700 loaves. Each refugee was allowed two pieces at each meal. Every two weeks we received Allied displaced persons rations, which were used for morning meals with German rations for dinner and supper. The calories content was between 2500 to 3000 calories per day. Heavy workers, fatigues and the staff personnel had extra rations. When we had food left over, a second portion was served to each room in turn. Each time, it was possible to have cigarettes and sweets, they were distributed amongst the permanent staff. As most of the inmates of the camp did no work the ration was quite adequate. It struck us as rather surprising that many refugees wished to remain in Germany and were not anxious to go back to their own lands. The fact is that on the whole, refugees, working in Germany, had been very well fed by the Germans.

42. We often found that refugees, who were detailed to peel potatoes, would steal them filling their pockets once they had finished their work and making fire in some out of the way corner to cook the potatoes. They paid no heed to fire hazards or warnings. Those who were caught doing this were dealt severely with. As nobody seemed to pay any attention to our warnings, I gave orders to the Top Sergeant and his men that the first fire they saw they would shoot at. That day they located about fifty and fired at them. Those who were caught were detailed to latrines or garbage duties. The refugees had no need to eat between meals as their rations were adequate and most of them were idle all day.

43. This potato problem suddenly quieted down. One day an American sentry told me: "This is too good to be true; there is something fishy somewhere". I detailed two camp policemen to watch the potato peelers, as they were still disappearing at the rate of almost a quarter of a ton a day. One day, going around the camp's limit, I saw smoke in the wood across the field. The Top Sergeant



and I went to investigate at once. We found a whisky still with two jugs of whisky beside it and not far distant two tons of potatoes. We hid ourselves behind the trees and waited for further developments. Suddenly we saw four men, amongst them two of the camp policemen who had been placed in charge of the potato peelers. When they began working on the still the sergeant and I suddenly emerged from our hiding places and with our revolvers in hand placed the men under arrest. I whistled and four G.I.s. appeared and took the men away. We demolished the still and arranged for the potatoes to be brought back to the kitchen.

44. The men were paraded to the Officer Commanding at the Castle and were awarded two years imprisonment in a Dutch prison. They were escorted to Holland under heavy guard and handed over to the Dutch authorities at the frontier. When the sentence was known, it was read out at the meal parade by the "Chief" of their nationality. That night two men brought over to my place two five gallon jugs of whisky which were destroyed. After this incident the camp hospital reported to me that on the previous day, three men had reported themselves sick but did not state why. After inquiries were made, we found that they had drunk the famous whisky. After this punishment the situation returned to normal.

45. It was forbidden by the Military Government for any Displaced Persons or Refugees to go to German farmers to buy, exchange, trade or barter for farm products. One morning while working in my office, I heard a pig grunting. I looked towards the door and saw it in front looking at me. At once I called the nationalities "Chiefs" to inquire where the pig was from. Nobody knew anything about it. During my kitchen inspection that morning I opened one of the cauldrons to find in the pea soup a large piece of pork and in the cooking stoves some nice roast pork instead of beef stew. I made inquiries, but again nobody seemed to know anything. How they had brought the pig into the camp remained a mystery. A few days later, my corporal, going for his milk learned from one of the farmers that Refugees had exchanged two suits of clothes and 600 pieces of sausage and an old tire for the pig. These incidents illustrate a few of the troubles we experienced with Displaced Persons and Refugees.

46. Many times, during my thirteen months with the British Army of Occupation, I asked myself if all the sacrifices we had imposed on ourselves to liberate these people were worth while. Such things as these would not have been tolerated by the Germans. Why did these people behave themselves under the Germans and cause us so much trouble? I do not know. I believe they felt we were obliged to them instead of them being obliged to us. We never heard them say "the food was good". The cooks naturally complained of this lack of gratitude. The cooks worked 12 to 15 hours a day and received no remuneration. Nobody was paid on the camp staff. How little it would have cost people to say "Thank you" or "The food is good". On numerous occasions I chatted with Frenchmen, Belgians, Dutchmen, Italians, Russians and Poles. It became obvious from such conversations that many refugees were German



in their sympathies, that their own country meant little to them; in fact it would not be far from the truth to say that the majority preferred to work in Germany where they received better salaries, and worked under better conditions than in their own countries. It should be remembered that they received food, clothing and fuel for their families at home while they were working in Germany.

#### THE UNCOOPERATIVE ATTITUDE OF THE POLES AND RUSSIANS

47. It seems that almost every day German farmers came to the camp and asked for protection against Poles and Russians who were wandering around the country. As notices and proclamations had been posted by the Military Government forbidding German farmers from selling or exchanging products with Displaced Persons or Refugees, the Russians and Poles, who did not want to live in camps, wandered around the countryside threatening farmers if they did not give them food. All available food had been requisitioned by the Military Government for Refugees Camps. A special squad was therefore formed to deal with these people. It consisted of a corporal and four other ranks with two machine guns and a jeep. This squad was on alert 24 hours a day. Captain Lismer and I had a car and each time the squad went out at night we went with them.

48. One night about 2300 hrs, one of the farmers from whom we obtained milk for the camp hospital, came and told us that Russians were looting a neighbour. At once the squad jumped in the jeep. A few other G.Is., who were not on duty, followed them with another vehicle. Capt Lismer was in charge of the party. When they reached the farm and entered his house, they found out the farmer had been killed; his throat cut open with a razor, his wife raped and disembowelled with a knife. His daughter had also been raped and one of her breasts cut and the baby's hands cut. At once the men covered all the buildings of the farm. Meanwhile the lorry rushed the wife, daughter and baby to the hospital. A thorough search of every building began. Finally the culprits were found in the barn, three of them slaughtering the livestock. One of the G.Is., who spoke German, asked them what they were doing. They answered it was none of our business. They assumed a threatening attitude as they had knives and one had a revolver. The soldiers ordered them to surrender, but they paid no attention, pretending not to understand. The G.Is. then opened fire killing the three of them; two others, who were hidden, fired on the soldiers but were wounded. They were taken at once to the hospital at the Chateau. We learned later that they had been hanged. This was not an act of vengeance on their part, it was an atrocity.

49. Another night a German widow came to the camp, about 0200 hrs in the morning, and told us that five Russians were raping her twelve year old daughter. When the squad reached the farm they attempted to arrest the Russians who attacked the troops with knives. The Americans fired killing four of them and wounding the fifth. He was hung the following day at the Castle. But what a horrible sight



we saw. The little girl was covered with blood and dead when we arrived.

50. The slaughtering of livestock was a nightly occurrence; and murders were all too common. Sometimes we were fortunate enough to arrive in time to catch the culprits. Too often they managed to get away. Many times the farms were burned, livestock killed, and farmers murdered just from sheer blood lust. The bestiality and ignorance of these people were amazing. Almost invariably the people who perpetrated these crimes were Poles or Russians. They would feign ignorance, paying no attention to orders, and would always produce an alibi for not obeying Military Government Proclamations, even after they had been translated to them in their own language.

51. The Poles and Russians, we have had in our camp were transferred to a Russian refugees camp at Nottuln, about five miles from our camp. There were over 5,000 of them. The Officer in charge of the camp told me, one day, that they did not want to cooperate at all. The Americans put up a Notice, stating that it was forbidden to go out of the camp; several began to go out and when the guards shot over their heads as a warning to stop they took their revolvers and fired on the guards. Hundreds of Refugees from Western Europe seemed to feel that the attitude of the Russians was an indication of trouble to come. To us it appeared, rightly or wrongly, that the misbehaviour of the Russians was deliberate with a view to making our problems more difficult.

52. Refugees and Displaced Persons told us almost every day that instead of going to Berlin, we should have gone to Moscow and Stalingrad, if there was to be a lasting peace. After seeing what I did of the Russian behaviour I began to fear that Allied cooperation might not last and that this contained the seeds of a future war. The belief in a war between Western Europe and Russia is deeply ingrained in the minds of Germans and many Displaced Persons owing to the constant repetition by Hitler of the idea that the Western Powers or Russia will govern the World. There were many people in our camp who still believed in the German propaganda; and the behaviour of the Russians gave it a semblance of truth.

53. The Germans themselves asked us the same kind of questions about Russia. Many refugees who had been in the Russian Zone, told us that when the Russian troops arrived, it was possible to recognize British and American war equipment, such as motor vehicles, tanks, etc, but that the Russians still relied upon horse drawn transport and that Russian supplies were not comparable to ours. They saw the Russians strip the pockets of the Allied Prisoners of War stealing their watches, precious objects such as rings, etc. The Russians do not appear to have had much respect for the International Convention concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land. We were told that the Russians permitted over 200,000 German Prisoners of War to die in the cages at Stalingrad. Only a few of the Prisoners taken at Stalingrad survived. This statement was reported to me by one of the German Red Cross Directors of the Province of Westphalia. A waiter, at the St James



hotel bar at Paris, told me how the Russians had dispossessed him and another prisoner of their belongings after being delivered by them as war prisoners; even after he had displayed his French Communist party membership card. The Russians simply tore the cards to pieces. The Allies seem to have been afraid or unwilling to tell the Russians to behave themselves. Those, who, like myself, spent some time in Germany with the Military Government are not surprised at present Russian policy.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE ROUTINE

54. From 4 to 12 Apr 45 our camp was used as a general reception centre for all West European refugees - French, Belgians, Dutch and a few Italians. On 12 Apr the first group - 52 Belgians and 158 Frenchmen - were sent in lorries to the assembly centre at Wesel to be repatriated to their homelands. The railhead for refugee traffic was at Meklenbeck about ten miles from our camp where a refugee transit centre had been set up. Our camps were very crowded. For example, on 10 Apr we were responsible for 1100 refugees and our camp could hold 600 at the most. The other 500 were sleeping in barns in the surrounding farms and came to meal parades and a daily nominal roll call. This was typical of the whole British Zone at this time where there were about 5,000,000 refugees and displaced persons. We were told that the quicker we could get rid of them the quicker we could begin to administer Germany. We therefore spent little time beyond that necessary to pass them on to their homes.

55. On their arrival in the camp, they were taken to the orderly room where they gave their names, nationality, date of birth and their former trade or profession so that they could be used to best advantage. Each nation had a representative in the orderly room to watch over their own personnel. Refugees were then escorted to the camp hospital for medical inspection and delousing. Old clothes were burned or buried, other clothes were spread with D.D.T. and the attendants were specially dressed in overalls of oiled silk. After the medical inspection, the refugees were assigned beds in rooms set aside for their nationality and were given identification cards with their name and number. Then they received fresh straw to fill their mattresses and were taken to read the camp's permanent orders which were posted in every room. Usually their belongings were inspected for small arms, knives or blunt instruments.

56. Our camp police and fire department were under the supervision of one chief appointed by the camp commandant and directly responsible to him. There were representatives of each nationality, working with their own groups to keep law and order, watching their own huts during meal parades and supervising the kitchen during the daytime. They were difficult to trust and appear to have had a share in every racket in the camp. Twice we completely changed the whole police staff and finally, after a scheme for distilling whisky had been discovered I got fed up, discharged them all, and gave their duties to the American guard.



BULDERN AS A DUTCH REFUGEE CAMP

57. On 12 Apr 45 SHAEF decided that refugees were to be segregated by nationality and our camp became the Dutch refugee camp. As no special camp had been set up for Italians we were assigned the 50 who happened to be in our camp. They were no good as heavy workers, claiming that they had done enough work for the Germans, but as singers, musicians, artists, they were marvellous. The chief of our orchestra was an ex-conductor of the opera at Naples and on one night they gave us an excellent rendition of "La Tosca". They formed a concert party and visited the surrounding camps. Another Italian became our landscape gardener and set out one of the most beautiful flower gardens I have ever seen in the front of our parade ground as well as planting rows of flowers around the entrance to each hut.

58. After the departure of the other nationals we found it much easier to operate our camp. All we needed was one staff, a chief and four sous-chiefs and the orderly room chief. This cut our work by at least a half. Due credit and praise should be given to the Dutch chief and his staff for the handling of the camp. Many had been business men in their own country and were smart, clever, clean, and well-disciplined. On Sunday, 22 Apr, a notorious Dutch Nazi was discovered by some of his countrymen and only the American military guards prevented him from being lynched. I ordered the top sergeant to take him to military headquarters where Lt-Col Hunter of 571 Triple A/A Regiment disposed of him.

59. When the camp became purely Dutch the French doctors were removed and an old German doctor was appointed as medical officer to the camp. He lived only half a mile away and every afternoon held his sick parade about 1700 hrs. Only mild cases of sickness were treated in the camp, the others being sent to the General Refugee Hospital at Recklinghausen. Later a United States Army medical officer was appointed to our camp, but since he had fifteen camps under his care he was not available for emergency cases. We were lucky not to have had any epidemics. Perhaps this was because once a week we carried out a very complete disinfection. Blankets and clothing were deloused and sprinkled with D.D.T., fresh straw was supplied in all mattresses and even personal belongings were spread out for inspection and treatment if necessary. Every day the ablution rooms and latrines were disinfected with creoline and the garbage was burned or buried. Only two cases of infectious diseases - one of diphtheria and the other of typhus - were found and they were at once isolated in the hospital at Recklinghausen. In our camp the hospital dispensary was well equipped with drugs and surgical instruments which had been found in a German Army medical store at Munster.



## REPORTS ON ATROCITIES

60. In the Administration Building of our camp was a dark room with a rope hanging from the centre of the ceiling. One afternoon I visited a farmer across the road who explained its purpose. Whenever a "Hitler Youth" was caught doing something wrong or even being inefficient, he was brought here to be whipped. His hands were tied to the rope and hanging there, stripped to the waist, he was beaten by another "Hitler Youth" until he fainted. When he regained consciousness the officer in charge told him that the enemies of the Reich would all be so treated. The victim never knew the identity of the comrade who lashed him.

61. Numerous cases of malnutrition reported at our camp, some of them walking in great pain and so weak that they could go no further. Among them were young men six feet tall with grey hair and not weighing more than a hundred pounds. Most of them had been punished in Germany for disobedience of orders or for sabotage in war factories. Special medical care and diet were provided for these unfortunates. The worst case we met, was that of a young Belgian farmer from the District of Mons. One night in 1942 he had declared in a cafe that he would never work for the Germans or say "Heil Hitler". Next morning he was arrested and a Belgian judge sentenced him to a concentration camp in Germany. There he was suspended by his hands and whipped by guards who demanded that he say "Heil Hitler" with every blow of the lash. He refused and when he was finally cut down in a fainting condition he was kicked about the head with the heavy boots of the German guards, suffering 22 recorded skull fractures. He was then taken to the camp hospital where he received medical attention but before he was fully recovered he received a second and similar beating. As he was a strong man he had been able to stand up under the punishment but he told of several German victims who had been crippled for life or had died as a result of their beatings.

62. A few days before the American soldiers arrived the whole staff of his concentration camp had fled leaving their victims in the wire cage. At their liberation the prisoners were entirely naked and they had proceeded to search every house in the village to get the clothes they needed. They were so happy at their new freedom that they forgot their pains and took the road home eating what they could find and sleeping in barns. The young Belgian told us that the thing which kept him going was his desire to see his family again and to find the judge who had sentenced him to this camp. When he reached us he was so weak we sent him to the hospital at Recklinghausen where the Allied military authorities recorded the particulars of his case. One day he heard a doctor say that he had not long to live, so he walked out of the hospital and travelled the 40 kilometres back to our camp. Permission was granted for a laissez passer over the Rhine at Wesel and Capt



Lisner took him back to Mons. Upon his return Captain Lisner told me of a very touching family reunion but had heard nothing of what happened to the judge. The doctors who had examined this man declared that it was most surprising that he was still alive for his skull had been flattened in about one-quarter inch from the beatings that he had received.

63. One afternoon there arrived at our camp two Canadian soldiers who had been taken prisoners at Dieppe. One was from the South Saskatchewan Regiment and the other from the Fusiliers Mont Royal, the French Canadian from the town of Saint Vincent de Paul and the westerner from Saskatoon. They had a requisitioned German car and wanted gasoline to continue their trip to Brussels. We were happy to see them because they were the first Canadians we had yet seen in Germany. We kept them with us for two days and they told their story. They had been to a Stalag in Upper Silesia with about 800 Americans, British and Canadians. Early in January 1945 when the Russians were advancing into Upper Silesia they were ordered to proceed west. Out of the 800 who left the Stalag only 200 had reached the Province of Westphalia. They had been forced to walk all day with only two meals of beet soup. They slept in barns if available, if not they huddled in the open in the dead of winter. If one of their comrades fell on the road they were not even allowed to turn their heads. As they passed through towns and villages in Eastern Germany the crowds lined up on the sidewalks jeering and spitting in their faces. Some casualties were suffered during an air raid near Berlin but as they entered the province of Westphalia they were liberated by American soldiers who gave them uniforms and a car to take them to Belgium.

64. We never saw anyone who hated the International Red Cross so much as these Canadian ex-prisoners. They told us that the parcels sent by the Canadian and American Red Cross to be distributed among the prisoners of war were turned over instead to the Germans. They had caught German guards smoking their cigarettes, eating the contents of the parcels and even wearing their underwear. Protests were made to the International and German Red Cross but nothing was ever done that they could see to remedy the situation. I have been told by the Americans that they found hundreds of thousands of cigarettes intended for P.O.W. in Germany in German Army stores and literally millions of parcels which had never been delivered. These Canadians also told us that one day they had observed Germans loading machine guns, mortars and ammunition into Red Cross Ambulances but when they reported the case to the International Red Cross inspector who visited the camp, they were told to mind their own business and the Canadian who had reported the case was severely dealt with.

65. We fed these boys with good steaks and the best food we could find. We gave them gasoline and had their car overhauled by our garage men. When they left I wrote a letter to Lieutenant-Colonel Payan, Canadian Garrison Commander at Brussels to ask that they be well received and flown to England. Later I received letters from them



saying then that Colonel Payan had treated them like a prince and arranged air passage to England. They said that the Canadian Army in England was giving them the best of care and that they soon were to be repatriated to Canada.

66. Statements regarding the camp at Buldern can be verified by Capt L.J. Lismer, C.I.C., attached to 307/08 Provincial Military Government at Munster, Westphalia, Sgt Brown, R.C.A.S.C. of Vancouver, B.C., S/14686779 L/Cpl S. Moren, 307/08 Headquarters Military Government Detachment (British Army). On 4 May 45, orders were received that the British personnel of the camp were to report to Military Government Headquarters in Munster for new duties.

67. Upon my return to Munster, I reported to the Deputy Commander of our Detachment, who assigned me the duties of Relief and Welfare Officer for the Province of Westphalia. The following paragraphs explain some of the problems of our branch and the measures which we took to solve them.

#### ALLIED PLAN FOR DENAZIFICATION OF GERMAN WELFARE

68. On 31 May 45, the directors of all welfare organizations and agencies which were allowed to function under Military Government were summoned to the Office of the Relief and Welfare Officer for new instructions. The new policy of Military Government was to eradicate all taint of Nazi ideology from these Societies and to ensure that they were in accordance with the principles of Military Government and to ensure that no differentiation of treatment should be made due to race, colour, religion or creed in the activities of these Societies or Organizations. The Arbeitwohlfahrt (Workers Welfare) originally founded in 1919 by the Socialist Party, built up a nationwide organization from 1919 to 1933 but was dissolved by the Nazis in October 1933 and its properties and funds confiscated, most of them finding their way into the coffers of the Nazi Party Organizations (N.S.V.). It was planned to revitalize those private welfare societies which had had a sound democratic or religious basis and were well established before 1928. Further it was planned that all Party Welfare Organizations or agencies should be dissolved or absorbed by the Provincial Welfare and that all discriminating decrees and laws should be abolished and annulled forthwith. Welfare of Jews was to be the special care of the German Red Cross until it became possible to form a Jewish Welfare Organization. See Appx "A"

69. Orders were issued by the Allied Military Government at SHAEF Headquarters that upon our arrival in Germany all National Socialist Welfare Party Agencies and Organizations should be dissolved at once and their funds frozen. The German Red Cross had been greatly used by the Nazis during the present war and had become for all purposes a para-military organization. All holders of office, even to the level of platoon commander, were ipso facto party members, and as such would require careful screening.



70. The organization was to be completely denazified and reorganized on sound democratic basis. Confessional Welfare Organizations such as Caritas Verband, Innere Mission and Social Workers should be aided by Military Government to reorganize themselves and institutions confiscated by the Nazis should be handed over to their original owners. All paid and non-paid members of all welfare organizations and agencies, etc, should fill in a fragebogen (a questionnaire) which was filled in by every German official, to disclose their political connection with the Nazi Party, the date they joined, the position they had held, if they had been members of the S.S., the reasons why they left the party, if they had been members of the Wehrmacht, the reasons why they had been discharged, whether they had been voluntary members of the party or forced into it. There were over 50 such questions to be answered and heavy penalties for any one making false declarations. These were to be screened by the Public Safety Branch of Military Government and no one should be dismissed, retained or appointed without the authority of the Relief and Welfare Officer.

71. Welfare was to continue its daily routine until further notice but in all welfare schools teaching should be suspended until all the books had been approved by the Educational Branch of the Military Government. The same applied to all hospitals and institutions where nurses were taught. All Nazi institutions were to be absorbed by the Provincial Welfare, and all the Nazi personnel replaced as soon as possible. All welfare organization money was to be frozen until orders were received from the Military Government Finance and Property Control Branch.

72. The Provincial Welfare Officer was responsible for the general supervision and efficiency of all German Welfare within his Province. During the summer of 1945, Youth Welfare became the responsibility of the Educational Branch and Social Insurance, the responsibility of Man Power Division. Staff Officers, Welfare, were under the command of, and were technical advisers to, the Provincial or Governmental District Detachment Commanders, whom they were to keep informed of all Welfare matters. On technical matters Staff Officer No. 3 (Captain) at Governmental District Detachment was to report to Staff Officer No. 2 (Major) at Provincial Detachment, who in turn would report to Staff Officer No. 1 (Lt-Col) Welfare at Headquarters Public Health and Welfare Branch I.A. & C. Division.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROVINCIAL WELFARE OFFICER

73. The following summary of the responsibilities of Provincial Welfare Officer is extracted from Military Government Instruction No. 27. See Appx "B"

1. He will see that all Military Government Instructions to Welfare Authorities and/or Societies are carried out.

2. He will be responsible for the supervision of the Wohlfahrtsamt (Provincial Welfare) and other Private Welfare Organizations at his



level, and will make recommendations to the appropriate authority on removal of officials found to be inefficient or non-cooperative.

3. He will see that all Welfare Committees authorized by Military Government are formed and functioning efficiently and will whenever possible attend such committee meetings and satisfy himself that Military Government policy is being put in force.

4. He will collect and forward all returns called for by H.Q. Control Commission Germany, and see that the German authorities supply correct and up-to-date information.

5. He will exercise overall supervision of those private welfare societies who are members of the Provincial or Governmental District Welfare Committee and ensure that they make such returns each month as may be required by Military Government.

6. He will maintain the closest possible liaison with all Divisions and Branches on whose fields welfare activities may impinge.

Later in our narration we will explain in more detail the functioning of these Welfare Committees. In the summer of 1945, 307/08 Provincial Military Government Detachment was the only one in the British Zone to have a Welfare Officer at the Provincial level.

#### GERMAN RED CROSS

74. The German Red Cross served both utilitarian and charitable purposes. It was organized as a voluntary aid association and cooperated with other welfare organizations. Prior to 1933, the German Red Cross Society was one of the best and most efficient on the continent, but it was taken over by the Nazis in 1933 and lost its independence completely in 1937. At that date they had the following numbers of institutions and centres: 280 Institutions with 18,000 beds; local nursing centres over 2,000; First Aid Centres 6,582; report centres for accidents 27,000; ambulances 699. These institutions covered all Germany and had a membership of 1,461,748. Their report centres for traffic accidents along the autobahn or other highways and their ambulance service were among the best organized on the continent.

75. This all came under the Military Government Control after our arrival. Military Government allowed them a previous deduction tax of ten Reich Mark Pfenig on each head of the population in the Province of Westphalia to finance their Society. They also received a certain percentage of collections made by the Provincial Welfare. Their welfare activities were widespread. They maintained hospitals, sanatoriums, convalescent homes, recreation homes, establishments for mothers and children



and provided nurses in rural areas. They had established soup kitchens in many cities after the Allied occupation to help the transient Germans, evacuees and refugees. In the railway stations, bunkers and shelters provided a refuge for travelling mothers, children and single women. In Munster, Dortmund and Hamm, they had established Red Cross stations in bunkers and shelters, where they rendered the most humanitarian services to travelling people. First aid stations were in charge of a doctor and a few nurses. One of their auxiliary services was the transportation of the sick and wounded through the province. Their famous ambulance service came under the Fire Branch of Military Government to prevent the abuse of transportation. Their automobiles, accessories, cars, fuel, tires, etc, were under the supervision of the Welfare Officer of the Military Government.

76. The Sisterhood of the German Red Cross was reorganized as prior to 1933, on a sound democratic basis. Their work consisted of evacuating Germans from other Zones into ours, providing doctors, nurses, food, etc, on trains provided by the Military Government. As the refugees became more numerous the German Red Cross could no longer cope with the situation due to the lack of experienced workers, so many having been dismissed as Nazis. Appeals for help went to the British, Swedish and Swiss Red Cross and special permission was granted to train new members to deal with the emergency. Millions of Reich Mark, belonging to the Westphalian Society were recovered from the German Bank at Hamburg. Public Health Branch was in charge of the medical section, their discipline and meeting of their material needs. Under the heading of International Red Cross more will be written concerning the German Red Cross work.

#### DEUTSCHER CARITAS VERBAND (GERMAN CATHOLIC CHARITIES)

77. The Deutscher Caritas Verband, the chief organization for the Catholic Welfare Associations in Germany, is an incorporated body with headquarters in the Werthman House in Freiburg, Breisgau. The Diocesan Caritas Associations for the Province of Westphalia were under the Diocese of Munster and the Archi-Diocese of Paderborn. The Archi-diocese of Paderborn was the largest in the British Zone and one of the most densely populated. There were over 1,000 institutions belonging to Caritas Verband: 104 hospitals, 38 convalescent homes, 95 old peoples homes, 17 single homes, three houses for crippled, three houses for frails, 13 suckling homes, 38 educational establishments, 237 kindergartens, 222 sewing rooms, 309 stations for nursing, 38 voluntary organizations for the care of children and the youth, 13 charity organizations, 18 communal and social institutes with Catholic Sisters. Over 200 institutions had been partially bombed out and some completely destroyed. Caritas Verband for Munster was not so big as the organization for the Diocese of Paderborn because they had several institutions in the Province of North Rhine and in the Province of Hanover. They had about 500 institutions in Westphalia.



78. Confessional Charitable Organizations consisted of paid and non-paid members, mostly voluntary workers, beside the Sisters and the Brothers of the religious Orders. They had Catholic training centres for Catholic workers, nursing schools, training schools for infants' nurses, seminaries for social workers. Their welfare work consisted of welfare in rural areas, child care, youth welfare for pre-delinquent and delinquent adolescents, public health welfare of the crippled, welfare institutions for the feeble-minded, psychopaths, epileptics, insane, blind and mutes, drunkards, transients and homeless. In Munster there was one of the most modern houses for students in Germany, under the patronage of Caritas Verband. There were also about 500 Provincial Welfare institutions of the same type - some Catholics, others Protestants or lay. Under the Provincial Welfare supervision they were governed by Catholic Sisters or Evangelical Nuns or laity.

#### INNERE MISSION

79. The Innere Mission is the welfare organization of the Evangelical Churches of Germany, corresponding to Caritas Verband. The National Agency is the Central Ausschuss fur Innere Mission (Central Committee for Innere Mission). This provides the organizational co-ordination of all connected associations and establishments of the Innere Mission. Its members are the State and Provincial association as well as special associations whose activities reach beyond the boundaries of States and Provinces. The central administrative office, which was in Berlin-Dahlem, was under a professional director, who is assisted by several section chiefs. For the Province of Westphalia, the coordination was from the Innere Mission at Bethel for the institutions, establishments, associations, and territory. Their professional workers were Sisters and Brothers and voluntary workers in each parish. Their institutions were on the same type as those of Caritas Verband. Innere Mission had 800 institutions in the Province of Westphalia all governed by the Evangelical Sisters Staff.

#### VISITS AND OBSERVATIONS IN WESTPHALIA

80. On 17 Jun 45, I received orders from the Brigadier to visit a few of the main Provincial Welfare Institutions, and upon my return to make a report. We first visited the tuberculosis Sanitorium at Wald Brilon for pregnant tubercular mothers. This institution was one of the most modern I have seen in Europe. We paid a visit to an insane Asylum with over 3,000 inmates at Marsburg. The institution was in good condition but overcrowded. At Buren, we visited the Provincial Welfare Headquarters and a few institutions for Deaf and Mutes. During my tour of inspection in the lower part of the Province I found that most institutions were overcrowded and that it was impossible to release any build-



ings because so many other institutions had been requisitioned for military purposes or for Displaced Persons. I interrogated the Directors of all institutions about their needs and requirements, checked if they had all their personnel fragebogen and found how many had been dismissed and/or replaced. The visit gave me an idea of the problems of welfare, overcrowding of institutions, lack of clothing, and just enough food for survival. Upon my return I made a report of the situation to the Commanding Officer of our Provincial Detachment. Prior to my departure, I had ordered Dr Teetmyers of the German Red Cross to make a purge of his Nazi staff. On 20 Jun upon my return he reported that the purge had been carried out, but that the German Red Cross was losing its best and most experienced members and that new recruits were to be enlisted at once to fill the vacancy. I notified him that no one could be hired on his staff without previously being fragebogen and found acceptable to the Military Government.

81. On 25 Jun 45 I paid a visit to the Bishop of Munster, accompanied by the Director of Caritas Verband for the Diocese, the late Cardinal von Gallen, who died in March 1946. The Bishop was one of the greatest anti-Nazis in Germany. He had always condemned Nazism from the bishop's throne by his pastoral letters, especially on the question of State control of children, the youth camp policy, the Nazis doctrines and ideologies. He reminded me that the Allies should not think that all Germans were Nazis. He protested about the murders of German farmers by the Poles and the Russians, the burning of the farms and the rape of the women in Germany. He declared that he had always believed in Democracy, and at the beginning of the Nazi rule a council of the German bishops had warned the Western Powers of the danger of war but that nobody paid any attention to them. His brother, Count von Gallen, had been in a concentration camp for over a period of two years, because he was one of the last deputies of the Prussian Diet, to give his demission to the Party as such. He told us that every morning, a Schuleleiter (School Inspector) visited every class in each school asking the children if any one had the day before heard anything said against the Fuhrer, the Nazi Party or the Greater Reich. If a child only stood up, without even saying a word, the parents were at once arrested and sent to concentration camps and the child sent into a Nazi institution to be raised as a good Aryan. In 1941, during the Corpus Christi procession, a Regiment of S.S. was sent from Recklinghausen to stop the procession and arrest the Bishop. When they arrived, the Colonel came into the Cathedral to put the Bishop under arrest but the Bishop, who was a man about six feet and a half, took him by the collar and threw him out.

82. On 26 Jun 45 Major Battersby, Statiscian Public Health Officer, and myself paid a visit to the Famous Bethel Protestant Colony, the largest of its kind in Europe. Founded in 1869 by Pastor Frederick von Bodelschwing, the Institution is a unit of the Innere Mission. It stands on the Hills above Bielefeld, a self-contained community of more than sixty buildings. It houses 6,500



inmates, cripples, epileptics, old people, invalids and refugees. Devoting themselves to a life of self-sacrifice in the care of the sick and the needy are 2,000 Sisters, who undertake six years training and are then asked if they are willing to spend the remainder of their lives at the Institute. In charge is Sister Dora Schoof, for ten years Matron of the German Hospital in London, until recalled in 1937 by Ribbentrop because, to use her own words, "of her friendship with the Jews". During the war years much of the Institution's work was contrary to Nazi precepts, and the story is told of a visit by S.S. men with orders to immolate the most helpless inmates at the time when the racial fitness creed had reached the peak of fanaticism. The Pastor, then 65 years old, the late Dr Frederick von Bodelschwing (son of the founder), resisted and invited Hitler's own physician to visit the institution. This he did, and the S.S. order was rescinded. Several buildings were damaged by bombs during the raid on the famous viaduct near the town including the Sisters' Homes and accommodation today is scarce. Now, while grappling with the immediate problem of relieving distress, the organization is embarking upon a task - long planned in secret during the dark days of the Nazi regime - the mission of evangelisation. The Theological College was reopened and 120 students will study for the next 12 months. The College was closed by the Nazis in 1937 and today there is a long waiting list, with little hope of accommodation for more than a very small percentage.

83. As self-supporting as present day conditions permit, the colony has its own medical staff, teachers, professors, its own shops, post office and clothes weaving plants. One building is a miniature factory where aluminium pots and pans are made, some for sale, but mainly to supply the needs of the community.

84. In another house, a group of epileptics worked under supervision at the cloth weaving looms. The finished material is made into overalls, tableclothes and dresses. In the valley beside Bethel are the colony's own farms supplying the dairy needs of the community. Work is part of the cure for many of the unfortunates in the Institution and each is fitted, as far as possible, into some vocation which will suit either temperament or ability. A little grey-haired lady of 70 is in charge of the maternity hospital. Two hundred or so babies are born in the hospital each month for many expectant mothers are brought to the hospital simply because they have not means of providing proper care for the babies. They are placed in charge of fully-trained nurses, but often entry to the hospital has been too long delayed. No unfortunate is turned away from this institution: indeed, before the war, nationals from other European countries went there and today in the epileptic wards there are still many foreigners. With a greater need in Germany now than ever before in her history, the Protestant Colony of Bethel is endeavouring to discharge ideals to which its Sisters are pledged - the care of the sick and the needy. Special Instructions were received at the Headquarters of B.A.O.R. that the Welfare Officer should take special care of the Institution. Dr Kunze was the fin-