

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT 15 JULY 1944

STALAG LUFT 1

STRENGTH: 2,867 AAF officers. Several hundred RAF officers and NCOs are also prisoners in this camp.

LOCATION: Pin-point: 54°22' North Latitude, 12°42'30" East Longitude. Camp is situated at Barth, a small town on the Baltic Sea, 23 kilometers Northwest of Stralsund.

DESCRIPTION: Stalag Luft 1 consists of 3 compounds each encircled by barbed wire. Barracks house 120 men apiece. Some of the buildings are divided into small rooms holding from 4 to 10 double-decker bunks, while others are partitioned into larger sections holding 24 two-tier beds. Rooms are well-lighted and adequately ventilated. Heating is generally satisfactory. Every prisoner received a straw mattress and 3 blankets, 2 from the Germans and one from the Red Cross.

TREATMENT: Correct.

FOOD: German rations of potatoes, turnips, bread, and cabbage are inadequate for sustenance. Prisoners live on the food parcels sent by the American, British, and Canadian Red Cross. In 2 of the 3 compounds the occupants of a room usually pool their food and take turns cooking, using forced-draft blowers which they have made from tin cans. In the third and newest compound a communal mess hall is in operation. Small vegetable gardens tilled by the prisoners furnish minute amounts of lettuce, radishes, beets, onions and tomatoes.

CLOTHING: Prisoners are reasonably well clothed and shod. Clothing supplies have come from the Red Cross because of the failure of the Germans to provide them.

HEALTH: Health is excellent. Two British doctors ably minister to the sick in the 20-bed camp infirmary. Patients whose condition require more extensive treatment are taken to a hospital in Neubrandenburg. A civilian dentist visits the camp weekly and is sometimes available in the town for emergency purposes. A full-time dentist, however, is needed. Calisthenics at the Senior American Officer's direction are compulsory twice a week. Showers are provided once a week.

RELIGION: Religious services are conducted in a special building set aside as a chapel. Rev. J. Hall is the Catholic and Rev. B. Drake Brockman the Protestant chaplain. Both are British.

PERSONNEL: American Senior Officer: Colonel J.R. Byefly German Commandant: Oberst Scherer

MAIL: Both surface and airmail from the United States take 4 to 6 months in transit. Average travel time for mail from the camp to this country is 100 days.

RECREATION: POWs play baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball and volleyball. An organized all-prisoner entertainment program includes frequent performances by the camp orchestra and occasional shows in the theater built by the prisoners. Able P/W instructors give course in Music, History, Engineering, Mathematics, Literature, and languages. Books on non-controversial subjects may be drawn from a growing library. Hobbies range from clay sculpturing and casting statuettes out of melted tin foil to embroidery and painting.

WORK: NONE

PAY: NOT KNOWN

AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN GERMANY
Prepared by MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, WAR DEPARTMENT 1 November 1945

STALAG LUFT 1
(Air Force Officers)

LOCATION: Stalag Luft 1 was situated at Barth, Germany, (54°22'N - 12°42' 30" E), a small town on the Baltic Sea 23 kilometers northwest of Stralsund.

STRENGTH: Stalag Luft I was opened in Oct. 1942 as a British camp, but when the Red Cross visited the camp in Feb. 1943, two American non-commissioned officers had already arrived. By Jan. 1944, 507 American air force officers were detained there. The strength of the camp grew rapidly from this date until April 1944 when the Red Cross reported 3,463 inmates. New compounds were opened and quickly filled. Nearly 6,000 POWs were crowded into the camp in Sept. 1944, and at the time of the liberation of the camp 7,717 Americans and 1,427 Britons were returned to military control.

DESCRIPTION: Early in 1944 the camp consisted of 2 compounds designated as South & West compounds, containing a total of 7 barracks in which American officers & British officers and enlisted men were housed. A new compound was opened the last of Feb. 1944 and was assigned to the American officers who were rapidly increasing in number. This compound became North 1, and the opening of North 2 compound on 9 Sept. 1944 and North 3 compound on 9 Dec. 1944 completed the camp as it remained until 15 May 1945. The South compound was always unsatisfactory due to the complete lack of adequate cooking, washing, and toilet facilities. The West compound, however, provided inside latrines and running water in the barracks. North 1 compound formerly housed personnel of the Hitler Youth, and because of its communal mess hall, inside latrines, and running water taps, it was considered by far the best compound. North 2 and North 3 compounds were constructed on the same design as the South compound, and were constructed on the same design as the South Compound, and were as unsatisfactory.

The completion of the last 2 compounds gave the camp an L-shape appearance, which followed the natural contours of the bay on which the camp was situated. Guard towers were placed at strategic intervals, and although the compounds were intercommunicating the gates were closed at all times after the Spring of 1944. Prior to that, gates were kept open during the day.

Each barracks contained triple-tiered wooden beds equipped with mattresses filled with wood chips. A communal dayroom was set aside in almost every barracks, but equipment was negligible. Lighting was inadequate throughout the camp, and since the Detaining Power required the shutters to remain closed from 2100 to 0600, ventilation was entirely insufficient.

In addition to the buildings for housing, North 1 & West compounds contained 1 kitchen-barrack, 1 theater room, 1 church room, 1 library, and 1 study room each. These were used by all compounds because no other facilities were available. Maintenance of the buildings was completely lacking in spite of the fact that the officers volunteered to take care of many of the repairs if furnished the necessary equipment.

Stoves for heating and cooking varied in each compound except that facilities in all compounds were inadequate. Many of the buildings were not weather proof, and the extremely cold climate of northern Germany made living conditions more difficult for the POWs.

U.S. PERSONNEL: Maj. Wilson P. Todd was the Senior American officer until 19 Jan. 1944 when Col. William A. Hatcher arrived and replaced him. Col. Jean R. Byerly acted as his Executive officer until the opening of the North 1 compound of which he became SAO. Toward the last of Feb. however, Col. Hatcher protested so strongly to the Detaining Power over the poor conditions in the camp that he was suddenly transferred to Stalag Luft 3 leaving Col. Byerly as the SAO. At that time the compounds had been run as separate camps with little coordination between the compounds. After meeting with the Senior officers of all barracks, it was agreed that the British and Americans would be administered separately but with very close liaison, and that all Americans would be administered under a Provisional Wing Headquarters composed of 4 American groups. This organization was established on 6 April 1944 and remained somewhat the same until the liberation. Upon the arrival of Col. Hubert Zemke, the Provisional Wing was turned over to his command.

Several changes were made as the camp enlarged, but for the most part the camp administration was carried out on a military basis similar to the operation of an air base. At the time Col. Byerly turned over the command to Col. Zemke, his staff was as follows:

Capt. M.W. Zahn	Adjutant	Col. C.R. Greening	Co. Gp. 1
Col. E.A. Malmstrom	Co. Gp. 2	Lt. Col. C. Wilson	Co. Gp. 5
Lt. Col. F.S. Gabreski	Co. Gp. 6	Groups 3 & 4 were British Groups.	

Because the advance of the Russians indicated an early liberation, Col. Zemke changed the organization to an inter-Allied wing, nominating Group Capt. C.T. Weir as chief of staff of the organization called Provisional Wing X. Group commanders were retained and continued to be responsible for the administration, security, discipline & welfare of their own groups, but more emphasis was directed toward staff operations in the event of liberation. For this work, the following

staff was appointed and served until the entire camp was evacuated:

Capt. C.T. Weir	Chief of Staff	Capt. M.W. Zahn	Adjutant
Lt. Col. C.F. McKenna	A-1	Lt. Col. L.C. McCollom	A-2
Lt. Col. J.V.G. Wilson	A-3	Lt. Col. Luther Richmond	A-4
Lt. Col. B.E. McKenzie	Provost Marshall	Maj. J.J. Fischer	Judge Advocate
2 nd Lt. T.L. Simmons	Finance Officer	1st Lt. J.S. Durakov	Russian Interpreter

Each staff officer had several assistants to aid him in the performance of his duties. There also existed a Security organization.

GERMAN PERSONNEL: The German personnel changed frequently during the existence of the camp. The officers, their positions, and the dates that they served are listed below.

Commandant:	Oberst Sherer	Sep. 43 to Jan. 45
	Oberst Warnstadt	Jan. 45 to Apr. 45
Adjutant:	Hauptmann Tems	Sep. 43 to Mar. 44
	Hauptmann Ersch	Mar. 44 to Jun. 44
	Major Buchard	Jun. 44 to Apr. 45
Lager Officer W.:	Hauptmann Eilers	Sep. 43 to Feb. 44
	Hauptmann Wolf	Feb. 44 to Jun. 44
	Hauptmann von Beck	Feb. 44 to Oct. 44
	Hauptmann Luckt	Oct. 44 to Jan. 45
	Major Opperman	Jan. 45 to Apr. 45
Lager Officer N.1:	Hauptmann Erbsch	Feb. 44 to Jun. 44
	Major Schroeder	Jun. 44 to Jul. 44
	Hauptmann von Stradiot	Jul. 44 to Oct. 44
	Hauptmann Probst	Oct. 44 to Dec. 44
	Major Steinhower	Dec. 44 to Apr. 44
Lager Officer N.2:	Major Sprotte	Sep. 44 to Dec. 44
	Major Steinhower	Oct. 44 to Dec. 44
	Hauptmann Bloom	Dec. 44 to Apr. 45
Lager Officer N.3:	Hauptmann Probst	Dec. 44 to Apr. 45

Of the above listed German officers, Maj. Opperman was the local Nazi leader and instructed the lager personnel and guards on all Nazi policies. The other outstanding members of the Nazi part were Oberst Sherer, Maj. Sprotte, Maj. von Miller, Maj. Schroeder, Hauptmann Erbsch and Hauptmann Tems.

Following the Normandy invasion the ardent Nazis tried to discuss the Nazi policy with the senior officers and to sway them to the German viewpoint of the war against the Russians. The Americans, nevertheless, did not enter into any discussions.

Prior to April 1944 treatment was considered fairly good. Following the April meeting of the Protecting Power, however, the German attitude towards POWs became more severe. New orders regarding air raids were issued by the Germans. These required all personnel to be inside when the "immediate warning" siren was blown. As a result, 3 cases of German patrol guards shooting at men inside the camp occurred during May. At the same time the Commandant issued regulations authorizing guards to use firearms to avenge what they termed "insults to German honor". The German interpretation of this order was extremely liberal, and more shooting developed. Oberst Scherer also became more severe in confining POWs to the arrest lock for minor infractions of German disciplinary regulations. He further denied all Red Cross foods and personal parcels as well as tobacco to POWs undergoing confinement in the arrest-lock. This restriction was protested to the Protecting Power without results because the Commandant refused to forward the correspondence to Switzerland. A visit by the Protecting Power in July gave the SAO the opportunity of bringing these facts to the representatives' attention. Even though the commandant was spoken to severely about his most recent violations of the Geneva Convention, it was not until the Protecting Power informed the German Foreign Office which in turn wrote to Oberst Scherer directly that Red Cross and personal parcels were allowed POWs in the arrest-lock.

After Oberst Warnstadt became commandant conditions became even worse. Instructions to the guards on the use of fire arms were liberalized, and on 18 March 1945, 2nd Lt. E.F. Wyman was killed and a British officer was wounded during an air raid warning that was not heard by 95% of the men in the same area. The defective system and the "shoot to kill" order were responsible for this incident.

Both Oberst Warnstadt and Oberst Scherer were inclined to inflict mass punishment by restricting an entire barrack for one person's infraction of a rule, and several protests to the Protecting Power had to be made about these occurrences. However, little satisfaction was gained from these protests, and mass punishments continued to be the general policy.

FOOD: Food was handled through a central warehouse for Red Cross parcels with all German food being prepared in separate kitchens in each compound. The German food was prepared by personnel hired by the German authorities or by Czechs who had been captured while serving with the allied forces. Red Cross parcels, when available, were issued at the rate of one per person per week. The distribution of this food was made by the barrack blocks, each barrack receiving one-third of its total weekly parcels 3 days a week. All food with the exception of the German ration was prepared by individuals in their own rooms. Only North 1 Compound used their communal kitchen to combine the German ration and the Red Cross parcel items to supply complete meals.

The German food ration, up until 1 Oct. 1944, consisted of 1200 to 1800 calories daily per man. The ration was gradually cut until it contained only 800 calories. In Sept., Oct., and Nov. 1944, Red Cross supplies became so low that they, too, had to be cut. During this period men were put on half-parcels each week. A shipment was received in Nov. and POWs then drew the normal parcel each week during Dec. in addition to a Christmas parcel. In Jan. the parcel supply again took a drop, and the men received $\frac{1}{2}$ parcel per week. From 3 March 1945 until the last of the month no parcels were distributed, and the German ration deteriorated to an extent that toward the end of the month, men became so weak that many would fall down when attempting to get from their beds. American "MPS" were placed around garbage cans to prevent the starving POWs from eating out of the cans and becoming sick. About 1 April 1945 a shipment was received from Lubeck via Sweden, and from that time until the evacuation the men obtained sufficient food.

Until this "starvation" period, the normal daily menu would consist of about 6 potatoes, one-fifth of a loaf of bread, margarine, marmalade, a small piece of meat (usually horsemeat), 2 vegetables (cabbage, parsnips, beets or turnips) tea & coffee, and a small amount of sugar. In addition, a thin barley soup was frequently served.

HEALTH: In Jan. 1944 a medical record on every man in camp was established, and as new POWs arrived, they were required to make out a similar record. The form consisted of recording any injuries or illnesses incurred since MIA, the nature of these, and the medical treatment needed by those not fully recovered while in camp. Illnesses and injuries incurred at camp were also included.

Originally the camp contained only a small infirmary which could accommodate 30 bed patients and provide two rooms for daily sick call. In Sept. 1944 another large barrack was built adjoining the infirmary and provided adequate facilities for hospitalization. When the infirmary was enlarged, the Protecting Power made arrangements with the IRCC to send additional supplies which included surgical instruments. Although serious cases were sent to Stalag 2-A at Newbrandenburg, the hospital staff at the camp was able to care for most of the ill and injured men.

The most serious detriment to the health of POWs at this camp was the very poor sanitation. One bathhouse containing 10 showerheads represented the only facilities for over 4,000 officers to bathe, and it was also used as a delousing plant for new arrivals or for any outbreaks of body-crawling insects. Early in 1945 an additional bathhouse was completed which contained 10 showerheads. Insufficient quantities of wash basins and soap made laundering difficult, and no arrangements were made to care for the men's laundry outside of the camp. Bed linen was theoretically changed once a month, but this period was greatly extended with the influx of new POWs. No facilities existed for the disposal of garbage not cared for by incinerators, and latrine and wash drains were so unsatisfactory that the areas around the barracks were frequently flooded.

The climate in the region was extremely cold, and both the number of stoves and the amount of fuel issued were insufficient to maintain good health. Upper respiratory diseases were a source of concern to the medical staff, and this became a great danger when the Germans required the shutters to remain closed during the night. Small ventilators were allowed open but offered insufficient air under the crowded conditions.

The medical staff of 2 British doctors and 6 orderlies was too small, and although additional doctors were requested, it was not until 1 March 1945 that an American doctor, Capt. Wilbur E. McKee arrived. The staff was considered very capable and cooperative at all times, but was hampered by the lack of medical supplies and facilities to handle such a large number of patients.

CLOTHING: The Germans issued no clothing to the POWs at this camp except 30 sets of German coveralls and 30 pairs of wooden shoes for the kitchen help; these were obtained only after repeated protests. The Red Cross supplied quantities of uniforms and blankets, but the camp expanded so rapidly that supplies were always inadequate until the summer of 1944 when a very large shipment was received enabling each man in camp to have 2 complete uniforms and 2 blankets. However, in Feb. 1945 many of the uniforms had become threadbare and a redistribution of uniforms was made.

The Germans also confiscated many articles of clothing under the claim that these items of American uniforms too closely resembled civilian clothes, thus violating the security regulations of the camp.

WORK: All POWs at the camp were either officers or non-commissioned officers, and although many of the NCOs came to the camp as volunteers for work in a "supervisory" capacity, they refused to work upon arriving at the camp and learning that the work was actually orderly duty. British and American privates were promised for these duties but never arrived.

PAY: The rate of pay was RM 7.50 for the officers. Money was turned over to the Finance Officer who in turn made available to each officer sufficient amounts to take care of postage and toilet articles. The unused portion was made a part of the communal fund for the enlisted men.

MAIL: All incoming mail at Stalag Luft I was censored at Stalag Luft 3 until Jan. 1945. Some pieces of mail received at the camp had been in transit 6 & 7 months, and normally men would be in the camp 7 months before receiving their first news from home. The average time in transit from the United States was 19 weeks. Toward the end of the war, the transit time was longer due to the transportation tie-up.

Great difficulty was experienced in getting letter & card forms in sufficient quantities to have the normal ration issued each month. On several occasions none was available even though the commandant was informed that stocks were low and that additional supplies should be requisitioned.

Officers were permitted to send 3 letters and 4 postcards per month, while the enlisted men were allowed to send 2 letters and 4 postcards per month.

MORALE: The morale of men was particularly good after the Allied invasion of the continent, and remained high until the starvation period during which time there was a definite decline. Normally speaking, however, the morale was at all times good.

WELFARE: Representatives of the International Red Cross visited the camp approximately every 4 months, sometimes at the same time that the representatives of the Protecting Power made inspection trips. Every attempt was made by these representatives to keep ample supplies of food parcels and clothing issues flowing into the camp, and the shortages of supplies were blamed on lack of cooperation of the Commandant of the camp or the bogging down of transportation facilities. The Protecting Power representatives did not seem to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the German officials to improve the camp conditions in the earlier stages, but after the spring of 1944 improvements would be noted after these visits. The Protecting Power delegates promptly turned over to the IRCC and the YMCA all of the requisitions for supplies and equipment. These agencies were equally prompt in filling the orders. The YMCA representatives went to the camp every 3 to 4 months and arranged for supplies of athletic equipment, books, musical instruments, theatrical supplies as well as telegrams to the next of kin. His visits were considered very valuable as morale builders.

RELIGION: Protestant services were held from the time the camp was opened, but it was 8 months before a Catholic priest was obtained for men of that faith. As the strength of the camp increased the Germans obtained additional clergymen until there were 3 Catholic and 3 Protestant chaplains. Unfortunately only two of the compounds offered satisfactory facilities for holding church services, and requests for other compounds to use the communal mess hall in North 1 compound were refused. Outdoor services were held when weather permitted.

RECREATION: Outdoor recreation was hampered through lack of sufficient sports grounds. Only West & North 1 Compounds were there full-sized football and baseball fields, and although teams from other compounds were permitted to use this field for competitive sports, spectators were excluded. Excellent sports equipment was available throughout the camp, however, and the men in the other compounds managed to improvise games suitable to the limited space.

The 2 bands formed at the camp offered extremely good entertainment and provided music for theatrical productions which were frequently given. A radio was received through the YMCA, but the extra loudspeakers were not permitted in barracks by the Detaining Power.

An educational program was started early in 1944. When the camp became overcrowded, and communal rooms had to be sacrificed for living quarters, group study was no longer possible. Technical books of all kinds were available in the well-stocked libraries for individual study.

Many of the men with artistic talent spent their time in creative work, such as woodcarving, painting, drawing, and constructing models. The Recreation Officer collected all of these items for a post-war exhibit since an unusual amount of talent was apparent in the results.

LIBERATION: On 30 April 1945 the SAO had several conferences with the Commandant, who had orders to move the camp to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Russians. The SAO stated POWs would not move unless force was used, and the commandant finally agreed to avoid bloodshed. At about 2200 that evening, the guards turned out the perimeter and street lights. A few moments later these same guards were observed marching out of the camp leaving the gate unlocked. As soon as this news was conveyed to the SAO, he formally took over the camp. The following morning the PW military police of the camp were put in charge of all guard stations to see that the men remained orderly and stayed in the camp. Another organization was formed to serve as exterior guards to prevent wandering parties of Germans from coming into camp. On 1 May 1945 contact parties were sent out to make contact with Russian advance troops. After 2 or 3 days of having Russian commanders of scouting parties visit the camp, the Russian commander of the

area was finally reached, and arrangements were made to provide food for the POWs.

EVACUATION: Although the actual liberation was performed by the Russians, no effort was made by them to evacuate the POWs from the area. On 6 May 1945, Colonel Byerly, the former SAO left camp with 2 officers of a British airborne division and flew to England the following day. After reporting to 8th Air Force headquarters on the conditions at the camp, arrangements were made to evacuate the liberated POWs by air. This operation was completed on 15 May 1945.

"SOURCE MATERIAL FOR THIS REPORT CONSISTED OF INTERROGATIONS OF FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR MADE BY CPM BRANCH, MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, AND REPORTS OF THE PROTECTING POWER AND INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS RECEIVED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT (Special War Problems Division)." Taken from the introduction (general) of camps.