



# PRISONERS OF WAR BULLETIN

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## Repatriates Report on German Camps

By J. Townsend Russell

The 234 seriously sick or seriously wounded American prisoners of war repatriated from Germany in September came from 20 different camps or hospitals. A few men were flown from England, but most of them came on the diplomatic exchange ship, *Gripsholm*. The camps or hospitals from which the men came were: Bad Soden, Bremen Hospital, Res. Lazarett 104 (Stalag III B), Lazarett VI C, Oflag 64, Oflag 79 (formerly Oflag VIII F), Oflag VII B, Stalag III B, Lazarett III B, Stalag IV D/Z (Hospital Heilag Annaburg), Lazarett Hohenstein (Stalag IV F), Lazarett Stalag VII A, Laz. Meiningen (Stalag IX C), Lazarett Stalag XIII C, Stalag XVII B, Stalag 344 (formerly VIII B), Stalag Lufts I, III, and IV, and Lazarett Lobin.

In interviewing repatriates at the Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D. C., and the Halloran General Hospital on Staten Island, N. Y., every effort was made by the Red Cross to see at least one man from each camp or hospital, not only to get an over-all picture of current prisoner of war conditions inside Germany, but to obtain as much detailed information as possible about supply problems, living conditions, medical treatment and so forth, in each camp or hospital.

### Camp and Hospital Conditions

There was, quite naturally, much difference between one man's report on conditions at one camp, and another's report on conditions at another. Even from the same camp, repatriates' reports did not always agree. There was, however, complete unanimity on the increasingly vital part which Red Cross supplies play in the lives of prisoners of war. German rations, which judged by American standards were never good, are

steadily diminishing in quantity and deteriorating in quality. Discipline, too, grows increasingly stricter in all German camps, with the authorities more and more preoccupied with the prevention of escapes. *(As the strain inside Germany grows, the problem of getting supplies to the camps increases, and so does the concern of the German authorities lest the prisoners hoard canned foods for use in escapes. In some camps, according to recent reports, the authorities insisted on all Red Cross supplies in camp storehouses being distributed to the men.—Ed.)*

### War's End Hoped For

There was a widespread hope throughout the camps that the German war machine would break down before the end of this year. When the repatriates left the camps in Au-

gust, many of the comrades they left behind were hoping to be home by Christmas. The men were kept well informed by new arrivals at the camps about the progress of the fighting. The Germans themselves published the news of the Normandy invasion on D-Day. Another reason for their optimism was that, in most camps, they saw only old soldiers on guard, and boys manning the machine guns and searchlights in the watchtowers. While the men on the whole were optimistic about an early end of the fighting in Europe, they also realized that the job of getting food and other supplies to them from outside Germany would grow still more difficult as transport and distribution inside became more chaotic. *(The American Red Cross will continue to ship prisoner of war relief to Europe until hostilities*



Winter at Hammerstein. Sent by Sgt. Fred Thomas (left) from Stalag II B.