

[Leaflet explaining the Red Cross prisoner of war food parcels system during world war 2 and asking for help].

Publication/Creation

[Between 1939 and 1945?]

Persistent URL

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FOOD PARCELS



FOR

PRISONERS OF WAR

sent by the

RED CROSS and ST. JOHN

WAR ORGANIZATION

THERE are approximately 50,000 British prisoners of war in German internment camps. In most prison camps the ordinary diet of our men consists of:—

PER DAY	10 ounces of bread.
BREAKFAST	Half-litre of 'ersatz' coffee.
LUNCH	Soup and potatoes.
TEA	Soup and potatoes, or meat and potato mash, or cheese, or sausage, with tea or 'ersatz' coffee.
	On Sundays a 2-oz. Camembert cheese or some jam.

THESE RATIONS MUST BE SUPPLEMENTED

This is obviously inadequate and monotonous and for this reason the War Organization of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John has undertaken to supplement the food and to provide cigarettes, tobacco, chocolate and sweets.

Parcels are sent each week at the rate of one for each prisoner of

war. Most of these parcels are packed in England and shipped to Lisbon.

From there they are sent by sea to Marseilles and thence to Geneva, where the International Red Cross distributes them among the camp Captains of the many prison camps in which our men are interned.

WHAT THE WEEKLY FOOD PARCELS CONTAIN

The contents of the parcels are varied, but they are always chosen to supplement the deficiencies in fats, proteins and vitamins of the German camp ration issued to our men. A typical parcel recently sent contained:—

1 pkt. Army ration biscuits	1 tin syrup
1 box cheese	$\frac{1}{4}$ lb. sugar
1 pkt. chocolate	2 oz. tea
1 tin herrings	1 tin peas
1 pkt. dried fruit	1 tin bramble jelly (vitamin C)
1 tin margarine	1 tin Ovaltine
1 tin roast beef	1 tin meat paste
1 tin steak and kidney pudding	1 pkt. sweets
1 tin milk	Soap

Cigarettes and tobacco are packed separately in sufficient numbers for each prisoner to receive 50 cigarettes, or the equivalent in pipe tobacco, each week.

In addition, a large number of parcels are being sent by the Canadian Red Cross, which is helping to share this burden with the Red Cross and St. John in this country, a generous action which is greatly appreciated.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I Do prisoners get the parcels?

In spite of past difficulties and delays in communication, acknowledgments are now being received

back in this country in steadily increasing numbers from the British camp Captains, to whom

the parcels are addressed for distribution. Representatives of the Protecting Power and delegates of the International Red Cross Committee report that parcels are now getting to the camps in large numbers.

There is, however, an inevitable time lag. When the consignments have been taken by the postal authorities to Lisbon they are trans-shipped to vessels specially chartered which make the voyage to Marseilles under the care of the International Red Cross Committee, one of whose delegates travels with them.

From Marseilles the consignments go by rail to Geneva, whence they are sent by the International Red Cross to the various camps for distribution.

The Red Cross and St. John is taking every possible step to speed up transport, and alternative routes by which parcels can be sent to Germany by the safest and speediest means are constantly being investigated. Parcels considerably in excess of the number of prisoners are being sent each week with a view to building up a reserve of about 300,000 parcels in Geneva.

2 Some prisoners say they have received International Red Cross parcels, but no Red Cross and St. John parcels. Why is this?

When parcels were delayed in transit last year, the Red Cross and St. John cabled instructions to the International Red Cross in Geneva to buy food in bulk for our prisoners of war and forward it direct to the camps, and about 450 tons were sent by this means. In order to do this permission to export sterling was obtained from the Treasury and special provision

was made to allow food to pass through our blockade to replace that sent from Switzerland to Germany. The prisoners of war in many cases probably never knew that this service was arranged by the British Red Cross and St. John. The fact that parcels are no longer addressed to individual prisoners by name may also have caused misunderstanding.

3 Can prisoners of war cook the food?

Yes, the camps have cooking facilities and stoves on which food

can be warmed up. Much of the food sent does not require heating.

4 Why are hard 'Army' biscuits sent?

To make up for the 'sloppy' German rations and to give our

men something to get their teeth into.

5 Can prisoners of war have the things they ask for?

Requests are considered by the Red Cross and St. John, but for obvious reasons a different parcel cannot be sent to every man. If a number of requests are received for the same thing, there is obviously some good reason why it should be included and if possible the

article is sent. The contents of the parcels are altered frequently to avoid monotony. Special arrangements are made by the Invalid Comforts Section to send wounded prisoners individual parcels of the food and medicines required by their particular circumstances.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The cost to the Red Cross of food, tobacco and soap alone works out at approximately 10s. a head per week for each prisoner. This does not include freight or losses due to enemy action, which is also borne by the Red Cross. Please help the Red Cross to keep up this service by supporting the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John Fund. See that there is a Penny-a-Week Fund in your place of employment. Support all local Red Cross and St. John collecting activities. Give generously on the Red Cross and St. John Flag Day. And please spare all you can and send a cheque or postal order to the Duke of Gloucester's Red Cross and St. John Fund, St. James's Palace, London, S.W.1, to which address also inquiries regarding the formation of a Penny-a-Week Fund may be sent.

Owing to the shortage of paper the number of these leaflets which have been printed is limited. You will greatly assist the Red Cross and St. John if you will pass this leaflet on to your friends, especially those who are relatives or friends of prisoners of war.



H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester's

RED CROSS & ST. JOHN FUND

ST. JAMES'S PALACE, LONDON, S.W.1

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