

COMMUNICATION WITH PRISONERS OF WAR INTERNED ABROAD.

1. This leaflet applies primarily to British (including Dominion and Colonial) prisoners of war interned in enemy and neutral countries; but paragraphs 2-4 as regards the Letter Post are also applicable to letters and postcards addressed to prisoners of war of other nationalities interned abroad. The term "Prisoners of War" includes all interned persons, naval, military, air force and civilian.

LETTER POST.

2. Letters and postcards may be sent post free by ordinary post; but if intended for transmission by air mail they must be prepaid (see paragraph 5). They should be posted in the ordinary way and should not be sent to the British Red Cross Society to be forwarded. They should be clearly written or typed, and letters should not exceed two sides of a sheet of notepaper; otherwise they are liable to delay and may even not be delivered by the authorities in the country to which they are addressed. They must only deal with purely personal matters, and care should be taken that no information of any kind, which might be of use to the enemy, is given. No references to naval, military, aerial, economic or political matters are allowed, and movements of any members of His Majesty's Forces or any warship or merchant ship must not be mentioned.

3. Enclosures.—Any enclosure in a letter may cause delay. Picture postcards or pictorial matter of any kind must not be sent: snapshots or unmounted photographs of a personal nature are allowed.

4. Method of Address.—The address should be clearly written in INK both on the envelope and on the letter itself. As far as possible the following particulars should be given:—

- (a) Service No. and Rank (unless the addressee is an interned civilian), initials, and surname.
(b) British Prisoner of War.
(c) Prisoner of War Number (if known).
(d) Camp address. It is important that the Camp address below "Stalag" means permanent camp and is insufficient without the addition of the appropriate number.
(e) Country.

The top left-hand corner of the envelope should bear the words "Prisoners of War Post" and if addressed to a prisoner of war in German hands, the equivalent word "KRIEGSGEFANGENENPOST" should be added, or if addressed to a prisoner of war in Italian hands the words "Service des prisonniers de guerre." The name and address of the sender should be written on the back of the envelope. If, however, the sender is serving in His Majesty's Forces, whether at home or abroad, he must on no account give the address of his unit; instead he should state the address of a relative or friend in this country who would be willing to send on any letters received from the prisoner.

Specimen Address.

Prisoners of War Post. KRIEGSGEFANGENENPOST. P/O J.125001 A. B. J. Smith, No. 123456 Corporal T. Atkins, No. 567890 Leading Aircraftman K. Jones, British Prisoner of War No. 3306, Stalag XII A, Germany.

- (vii) Food, tobacco, cigarettes.
(viii) Photographic apparatus, field glasses, sextants, compasses, electric torches and other instruments of use for naval and military purposes.
(ix) Medical comforts. This includes medicines of all kinds, drugs and bandages.
(x) Complete suits, coloured or grey flannel trousers, sports coats or blazers, macintoshes, or any kind of overcoat. (These items of clothing, however, may be sent to civilians.)
16. Return of Prohibited Articles.—On receipt of a personal parcel it will be repacked under the supervision of a representative of the Consular, and any prohibited articles will be withdrawn and returned to the sender.

Parcels for Prisoners of War in Neutral Countries.

17. Address.—Parcels for prisoners of war in neutral countries must be forwarded through the British Red Cross Society. No special label is necessary and parcels should be addressed in the same way as letters (see paragraph 4) with the addition of the following:—

c/o British Red Cross Society, 14, Finsbury Circus, London, E.C.2.

No postage is required.

18. Packing.—Parcels when packed must not weigh more than 10 lb. each and should be packed as for the inland post. A list of the contents should be put inside.

19. Contents.—Neither the articles numbered (i) to (vi) in paragraph 15 nor food may be sent. In order that any prohibited article may be returned to the sender his name and address should be written on the cover, as described in paragraph 13.

Parcels and Packets sent by Permit Holders.

20. Books, Music, Packs of Cards, Games and Sports Equipment.—Many of the leading publishers and newsgents, etc., hold a special permit from the Consular Department, which enables them to execute and despatch orders for books, music, packs of cards and games for prisoners of war in enemy or neutral countries. Holders of permits can accept only orders for despatch direct: they can in no case accept books, etc., for forwarding to prisoners.

21. Newspapers and Periodicals.—These may be sent in the same way as books to prisoners of war in neutral countries, but not to prisoners of war in enemy territory.

22. Tobacco and Cigarettes.—These may be sent to prisoners of war and interned civilians in enemy and enemy-occupied countries and prisoners of war in neutral countries by firms who hold a special permit from the Consular Department. Orders should be placed with these firms by relatives desiring to take advantage of the arrangement. The minimum quantity which may be sent free of duty in one parcel is 4 oz. net.

23. Parcels (but not packets) despatched to neutral countries by permit holders must be accompanied by the appropriate number of Customs Declarations and Despatch Notes. The maximum limit of weight for parcels despatched to neutral or enemy countries is 11 lb.

Educational Books.

24. The Educational Books Section of the British Red Cross Society arranges for prisoners of war to continue their preparation for examinations, and enables them to undertake vocational training with a view to preparing themselves for the after-war period. The Society gives advice, and arranges for books to be sent to any prisoner wishing to read a special subject. Forms of request for these books are sent to the prison camps. Financial contributions from relatives and friends are invited, but when these cannot be given the Society undertakes the whole cost. Correspondence cannot be sent direct to prisoners of war, but on application to the Society help will be given as to possible means of despatch.

Telegrams.

25. Telegrams making inquiry regarding the welfare or whereabouts of prisoners of war cannot be sent to the British Red Cross Society. Such inquiries must be addressed to the British Red Cross Society, The Lord Chamberlain's Office, St. James's Palace, London, S.W.1.

There is no telegram service to prisoners of war, but in cases of grave emergency only it is sometimes possible for the British Red Cross Society to send a message to the International Red Cross Committee in Geneva for them to pass on to their representative in Berlin to send to the prisoner concerned. Inquiries regarding the despatch of messages in such cases should be addressed to the British Red Cross Society at the address shown above.

General Post Office.

December, 1940.

10/40 (40/12121) 4341 2008 12/40 H & S Ltd. Gp. 404 (13078)

From Mrs. J. Smith, 83, Maple Road, Andover, Hants.

The details underlined in the foregoing specimen addresses are merely examples and care should be taken that the appropriate details furnished in letters sent by the prisoner are inserted in the address of letters sent to him.

5. Air Mail.—Letters and postcards addressed to prisoners in German or Italian hands will be forwarded by air to Lisbon and thence by surface transport, provided that they are prepaid at the normal European air mail rate of 8d. for the first ounce and 3d. for each additional ounce (postcards 2d.) and bear a blue air mail label in the top left-hand corner. In other respects the general regulations in paragraphs 2-4 apply to these letters. The air mail service gives some acceleration over the ordinary service, but the total time of transmission may still be lengthy.

N.B.—No attempt should be made to communicate with Prisoners of War through people in neutral countries.

PARCEL POST.

Parcels for Prisoners of War in Enemy (or enemy-occupied) Countries.

6. Parcels cannot be despatched by relatives direct to a prisoner of war. Food, clothing, soap and tobacco are sent regularly to prisoners in enemy countries by the British Red Cross Society and Order of St. John of Jerusalem (see paragraph 9) and "personal" parcels for prisoners in enemy countries may be sent under the arrangement explained in paragraph 12 of this leaflet. A card of acknowledgment for signature and return by the prisoner is enclosed in every parcel despatched. For parcels for prisoners of war in neutral countries see paragraphs 17-19.

7. In addition to the parcels sent by the Red Cross, orders may be given to firms holding special permits for the direct despatch of parcels containing books, music, packs of cards, games, tobacco and cigarettes (see paragraphs 20 and 22).

8. Customs Duty is not normally charged on parcels sent to prisoners; and the Customs Declarations and Despatch Notes which usually have to be prepared by the senders of foreign parcels are not required.

Parcels sent by the British Red Cross.

9. Food and, except as set out in paragraph 22, tobacco cannot be sent by relatives to a prisoner of war. Food, soap, cigarettes and tobacco at the cost of 10s. per parcel are sent to British, Dominion and Colonial prisoners of war in enemy territory by the British Red Cross and St. John War Organisation. Contributions towards defraying this expenditure will be gratefully accepted. Such contributions should be sent to the Appeal Secretary, Prisoners of War Department, St. James's Palace, London, S.W.1, or, for men of Scottish regiments, to the Scottish Red Cross, 206, Bath Street, Glasgow, C.2. Postage must be paid on letters addressed to the Red Cross Society.

10. Invalid Comforts.—The Invalid Comforts Section despatches, at regular intervals, consignments of ordinary household drugs, bandages, linens, dressings, etc., together with such things as cod liver oil, malt, tonics and invalid food and comforts addressed to the Senior Officer of the Prisoners of War Camp; in the case of illness or of minor injuries that are not sufficiently serious for hospital treatment, these remedies are thus at hand when needed. Relatives of a prisoner can send to the Invalid Comforts Section, 14, Carlton House Terrace, London, S.W.1, medicines or special remedies direct from their own chemist, to be included in these parcels. Such contributions must not weigh more than 1 1/2 lb. for one person; to facilitate packing all bottles should be avoided, and wherever possible remedies and medicines should be in capsule or tablet form. These special gifts are labelled with the name of the prisoner for whom they are intended and included in the

parcel to his Camp or Hospital. Postage on parcels so sent to the British Red Cross must be paid at the ordinary inland rate. At the request of the relatives, or the Senior Officer of the Camp, individual food parcels can be arranged for serious or chronic cases requiring special diet, in place of the ordinary weekly food parcels. Men who are known to be in hospital are sent a special parcel for four weeks.

11. Clothing.—The Prisoners of War Department of the Red Cross and St. John arranges for the following articles to be sent to the prison camps for every prisoner of war:—

- Shirts, Towels, Shoes, Razors and blades.
Pants, Blankets, Pyjamas, Shaving sticks.
Vest, Pullover, Toothbrush and
Socks, Handkerchiefs, Handkerchiefs,
Toiletries, Soap, Cigarettes, etc.

Uniforms and Great Coats are supplied by the War Office, Admiralty and Air Ministry.

"Personal" Parcels for Prisoners in Enemy (or enemy-occupied) Countries.

12. Once every three months the next of kin of a prisoner in enemy territory is allowed to send him a "personal" parcel. The parcel must not weigh more than 10 lb. when packed, so that when repacked it comes within the international limit of weight. Each parcel must bear a special tie-on label which will be sent periodically direct to the next of kin by the British Red Cross Society. The sender must fill in the label, which will then bear an address in the following form:—

Prisoner of War PERSONAL PARCEL, Regt. No. Prisoner of War No., Rank, Name, Camp, C/o British Red Cross Society & Order of St. John, 14, Finsbury Circus, London, E.C.2.

The address must also be copied in ink on the cover of the parcel. Unless the parcel bears the special label, it will not be accepted at a Post Office. No postage is required. If the sender requires an acknowledgment of the receipt of the parcel at Finsbury Circus, a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed.

13. Packing.—The parcels should be packed as for the inland post. The name and address of the sender must be clearly written on the cover of the parcel, except that if the sender is serving in His Majesty's Forces he must not write his own address but must give the address of a relative or friend and may request the relative or friend to forward any acknowledgments received in respect of the parcel. A duplicate list of the contents must be put inside the parcel; forms for this purpose are sent with the tie-on label by the British Red Cross Society.

14. Permissible Articles.—Among the articles which may be sent are the following:—

- Blankets, Brilliantine in tins, Brushes of all kinds.
Button-cleaning outfits (solid, not liquid polish),
Chewing gum, Chocolate in slabs,
Cigarette filter tips and cigarette rolling machine but NOT cigarettes or cigarette papers.
Clothing, including underwear, civilian or Service shirts, any footwear,
Small metal instruments, (See para 15 for prohibited articles.)
Coloured silks and cottons, plain linen or canvas for embroidering.
Dentifrice (solid or powder but NOT in tubes).
Frames with tails or unbreakable glass.
Hosiery containing usual items.
Kit bags, Knitting needles and wool.
Pencils, Pipes, and tobacco pouch.
Safety razors and blades, Safety tin openers.
Shoe polish (solid, not liquid or in tubes).
Soap of all kinds, Towels, face cloths and sponges.

15. Prohibited Articles.—The following articles may not be enclosed:—

- (i) Written communications (letters must be sent separately).
(ii) Printed matter.
(iii) Pictorial illustrations and photographs.
(iv) Money, stamps, stationery and playing cards.
(v) Articles in tubes, tins and other receptacles, which cannot easily be opened for inspection.
(vi) Spirits or other liquid spirit for cooking stoves, matches or any other inflammable material.