

Beattie, Nels. 68310

Feb. 23, 1978

Mr. Joseph W. Fairfield

Star Route

Bridgeport, Nels. 69336

Dear Mr. Fairfield -

I am enclosing the only photos I have that are left from our Scottbluff camp.

But as for information about the camp, the only information I have is pleasant memories of those days. Dad did not have any printed information in his possession at the time of his death.

I do not know who the people are (or were) in the photograph of the "mess hall"

The War Bond sign and the Safety sign are probably not what you want. The other 2 are the inside of the Officers Club at Christmas.

I had hoped to find some pictures of the Coner Buildings, but none.

You may keep these photographs as I do not want them back.

Thank you very much for your letter and I feel that you are doing a very nice thing for this former P. O. W. We always felt that we treated them well, and with respect, even though there were war times and

they were the former enemy. I remember Dad saying that a lot of the P. O. W.'s did not want to go back to Europe when they had to be returned.

My sister who lives in Lincoln, also ran into a former P. O. W. when in Germany on a trip down the Rhein River, and he had pleasant things to say of those days and kind words for my

Father who was alive at the time. Of course Father did not know any of the P. O. W.'s by name, except a few that cached in the officers club.

I spent 2 years of

4-

High School and graduated  
in the class of 1945 from  
Scatterbluff High. I loved  
the town and the many  
friends I had there.

I now live in Topeka,  
Kansas and have been in  
Beatrice, because my mother  
is in poor health.

I don't think I have  
helped you very much, but  
good luck in your project.

Yours very truly,

Richard C. Dempster  
2832 Huntress St.  
Topeka, Mo. 66604

FILM DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 1978

Scottsbluff Nebr. P.O.W.  
Camp. Views from the  
watertower & others.  
Pictures, courtesy of Mrs.  
(Bonnie) Jim Loy, Minatare  
Nebraska.

FRAME NO. 5

Looking down on some of the barracks from the water tower,  
(date on back of scenes from the water tower shows  
Sept. 1, 1944). Scene looks to the west & south, probably  
shortly after noon.

FRAME NO. 6

Looking to the south east from the water tower

FRAME NO. 7

Looking to the south & east from the water tower.

FRAME NO. 8

Looking to the N. & W. from the water tower. Upper  
center & below square house just above intersection  
can be seen where the old airport buildings, (before  
the P.O.W. camp) were located.

FRAME NO. 9

Looking to the west from the water tower. Scottsbluff  
National Monument can be made out to the right center  
on the horizon. Hospital area to the left - below center  
and the last of the buildings to the west.

FRAME NO. 10

Another view looking west (similar to above) from the  
water tower.

FRAME NO. 11

Scene looks toward the south & west from the water tower.

FRAME NO. 12

Scene looks toward due south from the water tower.

FRAME NO. 13

Scene inside mess hall at Thanksgiving time (1944 ?)

FRAME NO. 14

Scene inside mess hall at Thanksgiving time (1944 ?)  
(same time as above). Those identified are: Far left  
across table - Lt. Pickersel & wife, center table across -  
Lt. Jim Green, front left - station surgeon, far right -  
this side of table - Colonel Clyde B. Dempster & wife.

FILM DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 1978

Scottsbluff Nebr. P.O.W.  
Camp. Pictures courtesy  
of Richard Dempster, son  
of Col. Clyde E.  
Dempster, Camp C.O.

FRAME NO. 28

"6th War Loan" P.O.W. Camp Scottsbluff Nebraska, sign  
at P.O.W. camp during it's existance.

FRAME NO. 29

Bar in officers quarters, building later moved to  
Minatare Nebraska where today it is the American  
Legion Hall there.

FRAME NO. 30

Safety sign at P.O.W. camp

FRAME NO. 31

Apparently Christmas time (1944 ?) at the camp. picture  
of interior of officers quarters.

FRAME NO. 32

Interior of officers quarters at the camp. Painting(s)  
by Romiti Pola on wall behind. His murals exist on the  
interwalls of the American Legion Hall in Minatare today.

FRAME NO. 33

Interior of mess hall at the camp, probably at Christmas  
time.

FRAME NO. 34

Kitchen Identified Left to Right as: 1.

2. James Loy 3. Captain Smith 4. Nickolette  
5. Sobania - (mess sargent)

FROM SCOTTSBLUFF (NEBR.) STAR HERALD, TUESDAY JUNE 21, 1944, PAGE 1.

### NAZI PRISONERS QUIT FARM JOBS IN STRIKE

German war prisoners from the prison camp here, employed by the Washakie Beet Growers association at Worland, Wyo., have been on strike since Tuesday protesting a change from day rates to piece work pay, the public relations officer said today.

He declined to reveal the number of prisoners at the camp at Worland but indicated that they all have refused to work. Other reports said 94 men are at the side camp.

The prisoners refused to go to the fields Tuesday morning and they are being held under guard at the side camp. Disciplinary action is planned if they continue to strike, he indicated.

Formerly they were paid 80 cents a day to work in the beet fields, but the regulations have been changed calling for 80 cents for blocking and thinning a quarter acre in eight hours. Under the new pay scale, the prisoners can make less than 80 cents or as much as \$1.20 a day.

END

(1)

GERMANS IN PRISON CAMP HERE TACITURN AND CLING TO MILITARY BEARING; SMILES ARE RARE

Strong & tough, keep busy with class and farm jobs; Fond of Music

(Editor's Note - in accordance with Army regulations this material was submitted for review before publication to the public relations officer at the camp and to the bureau of public relations, War Department, Washington D.C. This story concerns a visit to the camp May 22)

BY DOUGLAS H. STANTON

(daily Scottsbluff Star Hearld Staff writer)

The Nazis at the Scottsbluff Prisoner of War Camp are a breed of men showing little in common with the Italians who preceded them.

In fact, the vivacious, bouyant and voluble southern Europeans who recently moved out, form a perfect contrast to the reserved, taciturn Teutons who have moved in.

When the writer visited the Italians at the camp, He was surprised at their eagerness for attention. Here were men who showed clearly that they harbored no malvolence, no ill - will.

They were glad to be out of the war. One look at a camera and they became a gesticulating, excited crowd, shouting "photographie" and quickly striking poses - some of them humorous.

The Nazis are different that, they leave the visitor with an impression he won't soon forget. Pictures are taboo.

Their every action shows they are proud men, strong soldiers who have been captured but have lost not one iota of their self respect.

They don't smile, and they look grim. Yet these Nazis don't give the impression of being sullen or vindictive. They are formally polite. Most of all they are aloof.

#### SALUTE FOR OFFICERS

All are enlisted men, and according to Geneva regulations salute American officers - with the up raised palm if the Nazis have their hats off and in American style if their heads are covered. Some of the salutes are snappy, yet given without a flicker of expression.

These Nazis are strong and tough, and they know it. In the compounds, where they are not required to wear the familiar blue denim overalls marked "P.W." many of them go about bare chested and in shorts.

Their bodies are bronzed and sturdy. The shorts and undershirts they wear were their fighting uniforms in the North African desert. Many of the undershirts bear the swastika and the Nazi winged emblem.

Others wear blue shorts, part of the Germans fighting equipment. Epaulets are in evidence, the property of all enlisted men in the Nazi army. The epaulets bear stars and other insignia defining the prisoners rank.

All of the prisoners came here from other camps. Those who were captured in the North African campaign naturally would be expected to have become acclimated to their new lives. But others now here were captured more recently in Italy. The captives occupy two of the three compounds.

Most of the prisoners appear to be young men, mostly in their twenties. A camp officer said that to his knowledge, the youngest in the camp was 21.

#### GIVEN FARM WORK

Though there is absolutely no fraternizing between the Nazis and camp personal, the newly arrived captives are willing workers and full of industry. There are no laggards in the Hitler army.

They furnish their own cooks and kitchen police. They police their own quarters. They work in engineering details and as hospital ward men. Some are highly skilled.

(2)

At the time of the visit, two details were working outside the camp, one sorting potatoes, and the other employed by a nearby tree nursery. They are reported to be doing satisfactory work.

By June 1st., all the men will be employed in agricultural work throughout the North Platte Valley. Side camps are planned. Farmers now are signing contracts, and the captives will be in demand.

Classes are under their own men, and the Nazis appear strong for education. There are very few illiterates. The "Oberfeldter" or first sargent in charge of the library spoke fairly good english.

A mimeographed list of classes taught 5 nights a week was shown me by camp authorities. The list included a wide variety of subjects, as English, Agriculture, Chemistry, Commerical Reckoning, Algebra, Latin, Poetry, History, Electrical Engineering, Physics, Biology, Geography, Drawing, and the theory of heat.

The camp library now boasts 1,500 volumes, furnished by the War Prisoners Aid of the International Y.M.C.A., the National Catholic Welfare association and German Organizations.

### MANY CAN SPEAK ENGLISH

Apparently nearly all the captives can either speak or understand some English. There are few who do not know what is wanted of them.

The Germans are employed in a tailor and shoe repair shop maintained by the camp, working for both their own men and the camp personal. When visited, they were making kitchen aprons from old canvas tops.

Like the Italians, the men play a hard game of soccer, volleyball and handball are other favorites. They like to stay out doors and soak up the sunshine.

Unlike the Italians, they don't go in for "shows", preferring straight music. It didn't take the Nazis long to tear down down all the ornate trappings the Italians used in the opera house. They still were in the process of tearing down the last vestiges. But there is at least one operatic voice in the camp.

In the former Italian theatre one captive was playing the piano and another tooting a french horn, studing the score painstakingly. An embryo band is already under way.

The Germans bake fine soft bread. Like the Italians, they like starchy food. But in the form of potatoes rather than spagatti. Favorite dishes are frankfurters and saukrut and the triditional sausage. The cooks are under the supervision of an American mess sergeant. The menus are printed in German a week in advance. The bakery turns out a ton of bread a day.

### VISITORS ARE IGNORED

Several handsome - looking cakes were stored in a kitchen cupboard. It was revealed that the prisoners bake a cake for every one of their number who has a birthday.

In a typical barracks the Nazis were busy making shelves over each bed for their barracks bags. They paid no attention to the visitors. Pin - Up girls and colored pictures apparently clipped from German magazines filled the walls by the cots. There were many photographs of loved ones. One prisoner had a home - made calendar in German.

There is little evidence of the religious drawings and symbols so characteristic of the Italian prisoners, practically all of whom were devout Roman Catholics.

The present occupants are approximately equally divided between Catholic and Luthern faith. A Catholic Chaplain is on the camp staff and Luthern services conducted every Sunday by a Pastor from Scottsbluff. One Chapel is located within the stockade. The Nazis have not disturbed the handson Altar built by the Italians.

(3)

If the Nazis are concerned over the progress of the War, they do not show it. There are a number of radios in the camp (long - wave only) but camp officers said the men appear to listen principally to musical programs. They pay no attention to the planes overhead.

There are movies every Sunday and Monday afternoon, with non workers attending the Monday show. "Andy Hardies Blond trouble" was the film being shown the day of the visit. The Germans attend without benefit of special Sub - titles.

The "spokesman" or ranking Nazi non - commissioned officer of each compound previews the movies. The prisoners specifically requested through their leaders that war films be stricken from the list. Though frequently wearing as little clothing as possible, the Germans take great pride in their personal appearance. They are clean shaven. There is a shortage of clothes - lines because they are constantly washing their own clothes.

#### MISS TREES AND FLOWERS

Their purchas of toilet articles with canteen coupons are heavy. The demand for "cokes" and 3:2 beer is marked. They may purchase a pint of beer daily, but that is the limit. The captives are given 10 cents a day when not employed outside the camp, and 80 cents additional, when working. The government is paid the prevailing wage by employers. The difference is used to help pay the cost of maintaining prisoners in this country. They may draw all of their 80 cents a day in canteen coupons or deposit a portion in trust funds.

It was surprising to learn that almost the first comment of these military - minded men on their arrival here was that there were no trees or flowers about the camp.

They got to work immediately, spading up the ground and planting flower and vegetable seeds. Now they want more vegetable seed.

The strangest note came at the beginning of the trip. A group of prisoners was whistling "The Woodpecker Song". Then it was recalled that the popular American melody of a summer ago was an adaptation of an old Italian Folk song.

Leaving the camp. That seemed to be about the only thing the Nazis and their predecessors had in common.

END

## INTRODUCTION

### SCOTTSBLUFF & BRIDGEPORT NEBRASKA P.O.W. CAMPS - A BRIEF HISTORY

During a trip and tour of Europe in 1975 our tour arranger for Germany was Herr Hugo Friedel of Höchst Germany. During a conversation with him I mentioned living at Bridgeport Nebraska. "I know where that is" was his reply, "I was a prisoner of war during WWII there - at Scottsbluff, - & at Crawford Nebraska".

After returning home and keeping a correspondence with him, he made plans to visit the sites of Scottsbluff & Bridgeport and the former camps, during a business trip & a side trip here in 1976. As the scheduling of time was too short and airplane connections at the last minute couldn't be met, he abandoned his trip here. Then in 1978 he again made plans and a target date of April 7 was set, this time achieving his goal.

About a month before his visit (1978), plans were made here to research and obtain as much information on the P.O.W. camps as possible and thus produce some kind of report or history. With this in mind we set about gathering information, & while the P.O.W. camp at Scottsbluff (the main one for this area) started in May of 1943, we gathered our main information from May 1944 on, since the German prisoners were first brought in then, and intermittently until it's close in the spring of 1946. Italian prisoners were the first to be kept at the Scottsbluff internment camp, then when the German prisoners were brought in the name was changed to P.O.W. camp. The Bridgeport camp came in June and lasted until about August or Sept. 1945, apparently although no termination date was found.

A few photos of the camp were found (about 18 in all at this writing of the Scottsbluff camp), several given to us by Mr. Richard Dempster of Topeka Kansas who's father, Col. Clyde B. Dempster, (of Dempster Windmill - Beatrice Nebr.) was camp C.O. at the time. Other photos were loaned to us for copying by Mrs. Jim Loy of Minatare who worked at the camp at the time & met her guard husband there. These latter photos proved to be quite valuable in that about 6 photos were taken from atop the camp water tower and covered about a 270 degree view of the camp & showed the camp as it was. Although she did not know who took the photos or with what kind of camera, the date on the back of the photos were stamped Sept. 1, 1944. As of this date - April 21, 1978 - no photos of the Bridgeport camp were found.

*Joseph W. Fairfield*

## SUMMARY

As there were labor shortages during WWII due to a large percentages of Americans in the armed forces, this labor shortage at home was fulfilled by Italian and German P.O.W. S, the Scottsbluff camp being the main branch for this area, with numerous side camps. It appears that at one time during this era almost every town had some small contingent of P.O.W. S for a labor force in that area - numbering from only a few to a great number. The farmers evidently grew to a dependance on this labor force as concern in the early part of 1946 news papers questions the removal of the camp. In the Jan. & Febr. issues - (Scottsbluff Star Herald) Such head lines as "Farm Labor Inc. - would keep Germans - here" (Wednesday, January 9, 1945 - page 3 - Star Herald) Jan. 15, 1946, page three, Col. 2, Scottsbluff Star Herald states: "Nazi War Prisoners soon to start home" - Jan. 19, 1946, page 1, Col. 1, "P.O.W. S in process of Evacuation here" (Star Herald) Then Febr. 2, 1946, Page 1, Col. 1 (Star Herald) states: "Army officers dim - P.O.W. Labor hope - S.B. Camp to close in 60 days", showing a slow down in their going home. Scottsbluff Star Herald for Febr. 3, 1946 - Page 1, col. 4, states: "War Prisoners are expected here for spring beet labor. Apparently a slow phase out was made at the camp during the 1st. half of 1946, after which the buildings were sold off. Several farmers bought the buildings & used them for out buildings, barns etc. Several were taken up to the present day Scottsbluff Airport, two were moved to Minatare Nebraska & were joined together making the present day American Legion hall. Many local "German Weddings" were held in this building and in 1973 D. Lustign Worlander folk dance group performed at a dance there one saturday night. Only a few foundations and the scant outlines of roads are all that remain of the Scottsbluff camp today. For a few years after the removal of the buildings it was used as the garbage dump for the city of Scottsbluff. After this was abandon - later cattle were turned in for grazing by a local farmer.

The P.O.W. camp at Bridgeport, after the war (apparently) two of the buildings, which are on the fair grounds (Morrill County Fair grounds) were used for stock buildings. The bridgeport Blade for June 7, 1945 mentions "concrete floors" being laid in two structures, this probably being the two show barns along the hyway that are being used today. Another building that probably was built or at least used at the time, still remains and looks like buildings from that era, so probably was. The majority of the P.O.W. S apparently lived in a tent city while guards lived in adjacent buildings. In about 1971 - 1972 one of the buildings was destroyed by wind but another building was replaced over it. Neither of the two buildings with the concrete floor probably looked as when first used. One of the local residents of Bridgeport said he could remember seeing the P.O.W. S playing volley ball for recreation.

Several of the P.O.W. S, liking the country and the treatment given them, returned to the Area and became U.S. Citizens.

*Joseph W. Fairfield*  
*March 18, 1978*

## INTRODUCTION

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*Joseph W. Rainfield*

REMEMISANCE OF MRS. E.F. FAIRFIELD, FORMERLY OF MINATARE NEBR., ABOUT SCOTTSBLUFF  
P.O.W. CAMP ----- FEBRUARY 26, 1978

(1)

In the spring of the year----- final plans had been made to house European Prisoners of war on a plot of ground which formerly had been an airport near Scottsbluff Nebraska for training young men who were interested in learning to fly aircraft and later to try flying various types of war aircraft.

Joe, Inez (son & daughter) and I drove near where a train load of Italian prisoners from northern Africa were unloaded one time. They were then marched to their camp and were such a pitiful sight. The train had passed our home first, but it was far from the camp location. These men had been under siege a long time, it was a hot climate, many wore old ragged and dingy shorts, looked thin and hungry. They were hired out to farmers who needed help as the fine young men from the United States, married and single were fighting in Europe. As I remember my husband never hired more than three of these Italians at a time, a guard was sent along who gave his work little attention even when carrying a gun, but it may not have been loaded. We invited the guard into our home to eat with us, but the P.O.W.S had their lunch brought from camp and I never knew what food they brought. We hired much larger groups of the German P.O.W. S as more workers were needed for harvest then which could have been late summer and fall. Towards the last need for P.O.W. workers, a guard was not sent as the men were faring so much better over here, perhaps even better than in their home country peace time. The few pictures able to be taken of the inside of barracks and dinning rooms showed great neatness and one picture showed rows of large pies. They might only have been served to officers but mention has been made of the large quantities of flour and other staple cooking needs that were used every day.

There were big boxes of delicious moist German bread and big hunks of fresh cheese sent in their lunches (to the farm). Once I exchanged an equal amount of my bread for a portion of theirs and always sent out at least two or more for each man, some hard boiled eggs.

The last day the Germans worked on our farm, my husband took his tractor to help another neighbor some distance from our home, so it left me alone, knowing that twenty or more of these men would be in our yard at noon. Their speech was low and guttural which made them sound more harsh and frightening, but all went well even when I had to let two or three come into the kitchen to get drinking water. I enjoyed making jelly and jam, yet had learned that others than me in the family didn't care for it as I did, and had a lot of the jars on the table, thinking to throw it out. Some were several years old and rather sugary. One P.O.W. noticed them, called it marmalade, made motions in asking for it. I was glad to get rid of it and every jar was returned, completely cleaned out even if I hadn't spoons enough. Then they gathered in formation with one acting as leader and marched back to work as they had come, - it must have been pulling weeds from the beet field. Joe and Inez surely were in school that day, as were the Meyers boys and Mr. Meyers was carrying mail (neighbors).

One of the German P.O.W. S escaped, and as so little attention was made to this event, except a little publication, at first. A story was told finally, that it was known where he was all the time as he was easily picked up in Canada when time to send all back to Germany. The tale I heard was that it was planned even by our country officers, to see if our intelligence officers could use their knowledge if really needed.

There were some splendid art talents among the Italian P.O.W. S. The building for officers in charge of the prisoners was purchased by the Minatare American Legion members and moved to a location in Minatare where it stands yet and is used by many organizations besides the American Legion. The walls had large wonderful

REMEMISANCE OF MRS. E.B. FAIRFIELD, FORMERLY OF MINATARE NEBR., ABOUT SCOTTSBLUFF  
P.O.W. CAMP ----- FEBRUARY 26, 1978

(2)

paintings made by an Italian P.O.W. artist. It was American scenes, mostly of olden times as covered wagon days. One was of Civil War canons and men fighting.

It is not clear to me how we transported all the German P.O.W. S that last day, as we did not own a truck. Mr. Meyers, across the road had one and he hired many P.O.W. S a time or so. One morning he sent his oldest son Bob after them and there was a collison at a cross road with a man driving his car and hurrying to work in Scottsbluff. He was Mr. Lattin who never fully recovered from his injury. One P.O.W. at least, had a broken leg, several were injured.

Bonnie Breeden, a Minatare young lady, was secetery to one of the P.O.W. U.S. officers. She met and married James Loy, one of the guards. He came from Kansas. They made their home in Minatare, until finally building a very modern home, south of the East Lawn Cemetery, north & west of Minatare Nebraska.

One time when my husband had hired a small group of P.O.W. S a former garden spot had grown up with holly hocks, we hadn't found the garden spot worth the work as we couldn't get water on it as needed. The P.O.W. men were waiting a short time until we could take them back to camp. They asked for some of the flowering stalks but cut the stalks to fit under their long coats as they were punished if thought to have stolen anything. This happened the same, only about a kitten. A guard had come this time and I asked if pets would be allowed inside the barrake. He said they were, if not found right after a work assignment so the thought of stealing would not be suspicioned. Then rations for the pet would have to come from the P.O.W. S own meal and he must keep all clean where it lived of course. I don't remember if these P.O.W. S were German or Italian. I gave them a kitten of course, as we always had more than we wanted.

in  
END

RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. BILL THOMAS OF THE SCOTTSBLUFF NEBRASKA P.O.W. CAMP.  
FEBRUARY 26, 1978 (ASSISTANT POLICE CHIEF - MITCHELL NEBRASKA)  
(NOW)

I think I was shipped there in 1943 and stayed till the end of 1945, the last par, about December, then we moved out in January 1946, then we went to Camp Carson Colorado. They were all moved by then, everybody was gone. We went to Camp Carson, but I think it's Fort Carson now, I think it's just south of Colorado Springs Colorado. I was supply sargent at the Scottsbluff P.O.W. camp - in cold storage & parishables.

There were about 3,000 prisoners at the peak of the harvest season, in between times they were shipped wherever they were needed, - wherever there was harvest.

The pictures that Mr. Dempster sent (to Joe Fairfield) were taken in about 1944 or 1945. I couldn't tell you how many buildings were used out there at the time, but there were 9 compounds, inside the fence. Each compound had it's own mess hall, mess sargent, for so many confineies each. I was overall supply sargent for the camp, for the cold storage & parishable items.

END

NOTE: Mr. Bill Thomas was cold storage, food supply Sgt. at the P.O.W. camp in charge of all cold storage foods.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. STEVE SOROK, 1901 AVE. L. SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA.  
(FORMER MAIL CARRIER AT THE SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA P.O.W. CAMP)

(1)

Personal pictures could be taken at the camp, I have pictures of the prisoners laying brick for a side walk. I had one P.O.W. in my office (mail) to help clean the office - I had two to help me translate the mail addresses, that is to what camp it would go to, we had 27 branch camps operating - Bridgeport, Bayard, Broadwater, Torrington, Michell, Morrill, Douglas, Dubois, Sidney, to name a few. It would all be addressed to the P.O.W. camp at Scottsbluff Nebraska.

The Bridgeport P.O.W. camp existed in 1944 & 1945.

At the time the camp opened up we had Italian prisoners, this was in 1943 in June, then they left in 1944, because they more or less lost the war, then they swore allegiance to the United States. Then we got german prisoners in. They came to the Scottsbluff camp about the 18th of May 1944. I have some news paper clippings about the camp, but now it's all put away. The camp folded up in 1946, it existed until June of that year, I left in February when I was discharged from here, I came down from Camp Hill Colorado. Since I had had previous experiance at working in the post office, I was chief postal clerk at the camp (P.O.W. camp - Scottsbluff).

There were close to 4700 prisoners at the camp. From time to time in the winter months when they had nothing to do here they sent them down south to work in the crops, you see. This was better than 75% of them sent south, then they would bring them back here.

At the time we got the germans in here, they were quite proud. In the early part of the war they would come in singing, "Today we are Germans, Tomorrow the World is ours". Then they weren't allowed to sing so they would whistle & hum as we unloaded and brought them up from the trains. It didn't take them to long for them to change their tune. When it came time for them to go back, they wanted to stay. After they were here awhile, we didn't even have to guard them. The farmer would bring in a truck and get a truck load of prisoners and behind it they would have a car following with two guards. After a while the farmers just came in and no guards were needed, -- you couldn't have driven them out of here when they knew they were going back home, especially when they knew they were going to land occupied by Russia and other countrys. They didn't even want to back, - they wanted to stay here, - we had to guard them so we could get them back.

Even though the war was over in April - May 1945 the prisoners were not sent home immediately, because arrangements had to be made to get them out of here. When so many of the P.O.W. S were sent home, the same ships were used to bring back so many Americans. It worked on an exchange basis.

As far as the amount of buildings that were at the camp, it covered quite an area. I would say it covered about 120 acres or more, self contained, that is for sewage, - we had our own water tower, & our own post office. Originally it was the "Internment Camp" at Scottsbluff Nebraska. In 1944 they changed the name to P.O.W. camp, when the germans came in.

As far as activities of the P.O.W. s at the camp they played a lot of Soccer, more so the germans liked to play soccer. The Italians liked to work more or less with their hands, & musically inclined. The germans were more active physically. We had prisoners from all walks of life, bookkeepers, Doctors, Dentists, and journeymen mixed amongst them. The german military personal were so much different than the American military personal. Here if someone is a journeyman, Dr. or Lawyer you are automaticly commissioned, whereas in Germany they must earn that commission. If he's a Dr. or journeyman there he'll start at the bottom like anyone else, and he has to work up. We had german Dentists out there that were real good Dentists - they were just Corporals & Sargents, but they were better than some of our Captains.

From time to time there were some that escaped, three of them were found down

RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. STEVE SOROK, 1901 AVE. L. SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA.  
(FORMER MAIL CARRIER AT THE SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA P.O.W. CAMP)

(2)

here at the river bridge out on 20th street. Then there were two more that escaped, - they got to Canada, - they worked in Canada, then went to Philadelphia, then they were picked up aboard ship in a barrel. We never heard anymore of them, it was strictly confidential what happened to them.

There were American intelligence personnel in the camp with the P.O.W. S but we didn't know it. There was one fellow who was real nice, who was with me, was in personnel and he was a Corporal. Later on I found out he was a Lt. Colonel for the American intelligence. Whenever the American intelligence or F.B.I. would come in we would mix the prisoners up from one barracks to another and weed out so many. No one knew who disappeared etc.

None of the prisoners gave us any trouble out there, they ate the same food we did and were the same (as us). One time they went on strike, they had to come and get their two slices of bread, and go get their water. They just thought they were being smart, but they soon learned differently. Even if they didn't work they still got fed - they still got 10¢ per day even if they didn't work, but if they worked they got 80¢ per day, this was under the articles of war.

Several times I would come into the Scottsbluff post office, (we'd get our mail through the Scottsbluff post office). I would get a truck load of parcels that had been received from Germany - nothing but dry old black bread. The German people sent it to them but they never ate it, they just through it away. We had to give it to them, they had to sign for it, - it was from the home land of Germany, and it was to let them know that Germany was thinking of them.

The latter part of the war when we got the last few prisoners in, they were anywhere from 14 - 15, some were 80 years of age, and they didn't even have military clothes on, all they had was a white gauze around their arm, to show that they were gorillas - they were soldiers - they were military. Their underwear was made of paper.

There was never any case of sabotage, but one time they did try to dig a tunnel under the perimeter fence.

Dried fruits were always asked for. One time they had a big party going, they took this dried fruit, fermented it and distilled it, and made their own liquor.

We had one Italian prisoner there, he was a brilliant man, and he was from California. He would ridicule the other Italians, calling them "Wops" and everything else. I said to him "why your a good American - you speak fluently, what are you doing amongst them ? " "Well it's a long story" he replied. Later on his brother came to see him, - his brother and his father lived in California, and they were very well to do. What happened was he went to Italy to get married. Her brother was just being ordained as a priest, so he married them. Then the war broke out so naturally they drafted him. War was declared on Italy (by the U.S.) and he was in an Italian uniform, so he was declared as having bore arms against his own country. After the war then he would have to get a new American Citizenship - so what choice did he have ? I was in a military ski troup, we had many Sweeds and Norweigans that came over from Europe and were in our army, it only took a year after their declaration of allegiance to get their citizenship, but of course as soon as they put on a uniform of the U.S. they immediately became enemies of Germany.

There were no S.S. men among the german P.O.W. S, these were all regular army men. The last bunch we got in were from the African Corp., taken in Libya, and the german "Desert Fox" command.

RECOLLECTIONS OF MR. STEVE SOROK, 1901 AVE. L. SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA.  
(FORMER MAIL CARRIER AT THE SCOTTSBLUFF, NEBRASKA P.O.W. CAMP)

(3)

The Atlanta P.O.W. camp was not the main P.O.W. camp in this area. This (Scottsbluff) camp was Service Command, Unit 4752. The prisoners were brought directly here from right off the ship, via train. We had nothing to do with Atlanta, sometimes we'd get prisoners from there and we sent prisoners there. I took prisoners to Atlanta Nebraska. It was a big center camp for that area. This was the H.Q. camp for this area, parts of Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota etc. Our commanding officer was Clyde B. Dempster, from Beatrice Nebraska, he had the Dempster Mills.

The signature of the camp was Service Command Unit 4752, but we always ridiculed it as "Sick Crippled & Useless" because most of these (American) men were either of limited service or limited assignment. I myself was injured in service, therefore instead of getting discharged I was still usefull, so I was put in as a mailman out here, as I had the experience in civilian life.

The mail was already screened in Texas before it got here, at the Adjutant Generals department first, where it was censored. The local mail came in here, some of the P.O.W. S had relatives here, we had our own censors here. The censored part of the letters were cut out completely, and completely eliminated, with razor, sissors etc. They knew good & well their restrictions on letter writting, not to put to much in it etc. They were only allowed one letter and two postcards a month. If they wrote to often they were restricted, penalized, or the letter even sent back. There was no sence in them taking a chance. They had a quota restriction. The exchange of mail was through the American Red Cross, or through a netural country.

END

## LABOR REQUESTS EXCEED TOTAL IN PRISONER BASES

9,500 War Prisoners are Available in Region, Army Reports.

OMAHA. (AP) - Approximately 9,500 of the 12,000 prisoners of war now allocated to the Seventh Service command are available for use under labor contracts. Brig. Gen. Paul B. Clemens disclosed, but requests for P.O.W. labor are running between six and seven times the number available.

Gen. Clemens, director of the Seventh Service command security and intelligence division under which the P.O.W. branch operates, said that in an effort to supply this demand, largely for agriculture, maintenance work at military installations has been reduced to bare essentials and some 40 branch camps have been established in the nine states of the service command area. Maj. W. L. Wolcott heads the P.O.W. branch.

The service command also has adopted this policy: No fixed labor pools will be maintained for any locality, but it will survey for feasibility any project properly certified, regardless of the particular locality of the project.

Two conditions must be met before the army will survey a request for P.O.W. farm labor: first, the contractor must obtain a certificate of need from his state extension director setting forth the prevailing wages in the area for which the labor is sought, and establishing the fact that free labor is no longer available. The applicant then must get a priority rating from his state or regional WNC director.

### WORK IN BEET FIELDS

The service command will then determine the requirements for suitable housing, transportation, sanitation, security, etc. at the site of the project, and whether P.O.W. labor may be properly employed. When these conditions are met labor will be provided - if it is available at the time.

The contractor must provide and maintain facilities, but there are allowances from the war department toward the cost.

Prisoners, virtually all German, are being used in sugar beet fields near Scottsbluff, Nebraska; Greeley and Camp Carson, Colo.; for lumbering in northern Minnesota, northern Colorado and southern Wyoming, for general farming in Nebraska and Kansas. Some 850 will be sent to northwestern Missouri for the potato harvest, and others will likely detassel corn in Iowa. They will also be used in food processing plants and hemp fields.

Gen. Clemens said that while there is still resentment against P.O.W. labor in a few localities, the demand for it at this time is traceable to past success. The prisoners for the most part prefer labor assignments, and there is no record of attempted sabotage or violence from any of the labor camps. Reports on the effectiveness of their labor have been gratifying, the general said.

END

## PRISONERS NOW AT CAMP HERE

About 200 German P.O.W. S Located at Branch Camp Doing Farm Work

Approximately 180 German prisoners of war from Fort Robinson arrived at the branch labor camp here Sunday afternoon and began farm work in this vicinity on Monday. First Lieutenant Donald A. Edwards from the Scottsbluff P.O.W. camp is commanding officer of the branch, which is located at the fairgrounds, south of Bridgeport. About twenty enlisted men from the Scottsbluff camp have arrived to act as guards and assist with office work.

County Agent E.C. Nelson stated that of the 189 prisoners, approximately 170 are available for farm work. Some of the prisoners are already at work and as soon as weather conditions permit, they will all be in the fields. At present, the prisoners are doing hand labor on sugar beets. Mr. Nelson said that this work would be over between the tenth and the fifteenth of July and it would depend on labor requests whether or not the camp would remain during the summer months. Mr. Nelson also said that virtually all growers, who do not have their own labor supply have signed labor contracts.

Two of the permanent buildings at the fairgrounds are being used at the labor camp. The stock barn has been converted into a mess hall. The structure has been divided into two parts with the prisoners using one half and the army personnel the other half. The poultry building is now sleeping quarters for the enlisted men. Concrete floors have been laid in both structures and innovations making them habitable have been made in each.

The prisoners, Lt. Edwards stated are housed in tents, five to a tent. There is certainly no evidences of "coddling." The prisoners provide their own cooks and their menu, while adequate, could not be termed "fancy." A sample days menu, according to the lieutenant would consist of oatmeal, canned milk and water, bread and coffee or tea for breakfast; sausage sandwiches and water or perhaps coffee or tea for lunch and bean stew, peas and beans mixed, potatoes, perhaps a vegetable salad and coffee and bread at dinner. The prisoners receive no beef, no fresh meat with the exception of kidneys or occasionally heart, no butter, but once in a while margarine. Their fare, while plain, nevertheless consists of at least 2500 calories daily, twice that allowed the people of Holland under German occupation. A high fence surrounds the camp and flood lights have been installed.

Lt. Edwards stated that the prisoners work on a task basis. Each prisoner doing beet labor is required to complete one-quarter of an acre of blocking and thinning per day and they stay in the fields until the task is completed. They work in details of ten to 12 men, each with a military guard. They do not work on Sunday unless an emergency arises and then the work is voluntary. The prisoners are paid at the rate of 80 cents per day, which is paid to them in canteen checks which they spend at their own post exchange.

The prisoners are not permitted visitors, with the exception of their own relatives. Lt. Edwards commutes between the local installation and the Scottsbluff camp. When he is absent, Pfc. Garland Burnett is in charge of the officer.

PRISONERS CAUGHT AT FORT MORGAN

Two German prisoners of war, Theodore Rogge, 21, and Otto Koch, 23, who escaped the Bridgeport branch prisoner of war camp sometime last Thursday night, were apprehended Sunday near Ft. Morgan, Colo. The pair were picked up on a highway near that town by Sheriff Sam Pederson, of Ft. Morgan.

The fugitives told the sheriff that they had been working in a field near Bridgeport Thursday afternoon and "Just walked away". Inasmuch as neither PW could speak English, local assumption is that they rode a freight train to Colorado.

The men were first missed Friday at early morning roll call, and FBI and law enforcement officers in this area were notified immediately. The Germans were returned to the Scottsbluff PW camp on Monday night.

END

BY S.J. WOOLF

(N.R.A. ARTIST CORRESPONDENT)

ABOARD A U.S. LST - There are 28 German prisoners on the top deck of this LST on its way back from France. They seem little interested in their surroundings and show no curiosity when the ship approached a southern base in England.

There are Westphalians, Bavarians, Prussians, East Prussians and Saxons among them. Their ages vary from about 17 to 45. The oldest is a gaunt Bavarian, a dark haired chap who at times displays a keen sense of humor. There are two or three with whom I try to talk, who are surly and pay no attention to my questions.

Their clothing all show signs of wear, yet they are by no means in tatters. I can not examine their boots closely but they appear to be in good condition.

According to most of them 1933 marked the crest of Hitler's popularity. This dwindled gradually, when many of his promises were not fulfilled. When the war began many of the older people lost their faith, but the Hitler youth greeted it with enthusiasm. Doubt as to the out come of the war began to spread when Russia was attacked. Today, say the majority with whom I speak, - about 33 per cent of the population still follows the fushrer.

#### HITLER YOUTH IS STILL DEFIANT

When this is said I noticed the youngster of the prisoners shake his head defiantly, but he will not tell me why he disagrees with this and only smiles superciliously.

The square-head from Westphalia says that the Luftwaffe is practically done for: that while there are still numbers of planes, the bombings of factories has made replacements impossible. None of them has seen the rocket bomb and most of them are surprised that it is in use. One of them laughingly remarks that he never believed in its existence and thought Dr. Goebbels was its inventor.

A sad looking peasant type from Frankfort tells me his name, but asks me not to mention it, as he has a wife and a little girl of seven "at home" and he fears retaliation. For he is particularly virulent in his talk about the Nazis. He says that he had been leading a happy life as a farmer. Although he had little money, he was contented: then he was snatched away and made to fight - for what he did not know.

I asked them when the German people think the war will end. The Saxon pipes up: "Don't you know the Germans have not been allowed to think since Hitler came to power?"

"Even if they did," adds the Bavarian, "They were afraid to say what they thought."

Then, just as we are entering the harbor, he nudges the ribs of the man next to him and says in an undertone, "See, the fushrer is keeping his promise, we are landing in England."

END

FROM SCOTTSBLUFF (NEBR.) STAR HERALD, TUESDAY JUNE 21, 1944, PAGE 1.

### NAZI PRISONERS QUIT FARM JOBS IN STRIKE

German war prisoners from the prison camp here, employed by the Washakie Beet Growers association at Worland, Wyo., have been on strike since Tuesday protesting a change from day rates to piece work pay, the public relations officer said today.

He declined to reveal the number of prisoners at the camp at Worland but indicated that they all have refused to work. Other reports said 94 men are at the side camp.

The prisoners refused to go to the fields Tuesday morning and they are being held under guard at the side camp. Disciplinary action is planned if they continue to strike, he indicated.

Formerly they were paid 80 cents a day to work in the beet fields, but the regulations have been changed calling for 80 cents for blocking and thinning a quarter acre in eight hours. Under the new pay scale, the prisoners can make less than 80 cents or as much as \$1.20 a day.

**END**