

GERMAN PRISONERS IN ENGLAND ARE A DOCILE LOT OF FELLOWS

Make it Hard to Believe Stories
of the Brutality on Battle-
fields

SIX GUARDS FOR
SIX THOUSAND

They Are Tired of War and
Care of Them is a Real
Sinecure

By Harry Payne Burton.

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Frith Hill, Eng., Oct. 22.—"Wie geht's, Fritz?"

I tossed the question to one of the 6,000 Germans roaming over the great compound England has built for her prisoners-of-war in a tight little valley tucked in amid the hills of Surrey.

"How goes it yourself, kid? And when did YOU see the Woolworth tower last?" The German prisoner answered the question JUST THAT WAY, in just those English words, and his very lips smacked "New York" with each syllable!

"Well," I said, "what are YOU doing here with a Jaeger cap on when you own a perfectly good American accent like that?"

"Oh, just what a thousand more or so of us are doing—waiting for the war to finish so we can go back."

"To Germany?" I interrupted.

"Not on your tintype!" he returned.

"To the States! To our jobs. No more Europe for me. I get my naturalization papers the minute I hit New York this time. The statue of liberty is my motto from now on!"

All Seem Happy.

"Fritz" was a good sample of most of these "prisoners," I found. They are all pretty happy and are more or less glad they are out of the battle line. They all tell you they didn't want war and they add, "neither did the Frenchies." The little they saw of the fighting in Belgium has made them realize that war is no longer a worthy engagement for mankind, no matter what the cause, they tell you. Such an attitude, coupled with German military discipline and German genius for organization, has made the care of these prisoners a real sinecure. Dumped into the compound with three or four carloads of tents and material for field kitchens and other paraphernalia, these soldiers and sailors of the Kaiser soon evolved a rigid order out of a tumbling chaos.

Each side of the square compound is about a quarter of a mile in length. The inner wire fence is

of very flimsy construction, but the prisoners have been told that any man who climbs over will be instantly shot. The next fence, about ten feet further back, is made of barbed wire and is about 12 feet high. Surrounding the whole camp, about 20 feet outside the tall fence is a "cat's cradle" barbed wire entanglement. The inside of the camp is divided into two sections—one for the military, and the other for the civilian or "spy" prisoners.

Only Six Guards.

And it requires only six guards by day and 12 by night to guard these 6,000 "terrible Huns!" The six day guards are stationed on high platforms. The six extra guards at night patrol the spaces between these platforms. Powerful electric lights illuminate the outer zone after dark.

In the matter of food the prisoners have little to complain of. Each man is allowed a pound and a half of meat a day and bread in proportion. The perfect discipline of these German soldiers is never better known than when the rations are being handed out. The men line up in orderly fashion and there is not the slightest pushing or jostling.

"It's a marvel," said one of the guards to me. "It is easier to feed these 6,000 prisoners of war than it would be to look after 50 men in a deaf, dumb and blind asylum. Put some food in front of 20 of our English boys and there would be fighting at once!"

"They know all the latest news. Many speak English. They even heard of the sinking of the three British cruisers before we of the guard did. The civilian prisoners are allowed visitors and the former wig-wag the news to the soldiers."

They Have Money.

"Some of them have lots of money. With this they can buy tobacco and little delicacies in the way of food at the store in the compound. All those you see with the brass eagle still on their helmet or cap you can depend have money or they would have bartered the eagle for cigars long ago!"

"I tell you it is hard to swallow the stories of brutality that are told here in England about the German soldiers. These fellows are the quietest lot of men I have ever had to deal with. They never quarrel among themselves, and are as docile as lambs. The only thing that is the matter with them is that they are too polite. That is they are polite compared to our soldiers."

Have these prisoners any chance to escape? They certainly have. They have at least 40 army axes in their enclosure, and by throwing hundreds of blankets over the barbed wire and smashing down the posts supporting the fencing could get out and overcome the guards in ten minutes. For each sentry has only ten rounds of ammunition.

But, as my British soldier friend pointed out:

WHERE WOULD THEY GO IF THEY DID GET OUT?