A STUDY OF THE USE OF AXIS PRISONERS OF WAR IN THE UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II

A Thesis
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Business Administration

By

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1948

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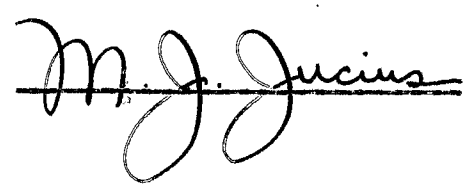

Acknowledgement

The author wishes to express his sincere appreciation for the guidance rendered to him by Professor Michael J. Jucius, and for the invaluable cooperation rendered by Karen K. Howton, his wife.

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CHAPTER I

THE PRISONER OF WAR PROBLEM

The Prisoner of War Problem Faced by the United States

Wherever they may be kept, prisoners of war constitute a unique problem of military administration. They must be fed, clothed, housed, given medical care, protected and guarded lest they escape. Special records must be kept and reports must be made. They must be accessible to visits by representatives of the Protecting Power and the International Red Cross. Even in efficient centralized prison camps they represent a considerable drain on manpower and supply resources of their captors. For example, in the United States a typical camp confining 3,000 prisoners required 573 army personnel for administration, management, guarding and work supervision. Total monthly consumption in food alone by 3,000 prisoners of war amounted to over 250 tons.[1]

A prisoner of war may be considered primarily an adversary removed from the battlefield and merely kept

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1 A. D. Marston, "Military Labor Service," Military Review, Vol. 27, July 1947, p. 59.

confined until exchanged or repatriated. By virtue of the fact that he is kept confined he becomes, on the one hand, non-productive and therefore a liability. Under international instruments regulating the treatment of prisoners of war, all captive enemy military and naval personnel, except officers and persons of equivalent status, may be required to perform labor. When properly trained, equipped, and employed, the prisoner of war becomes, on the other hand, an asset to be used in the best interests of the war economy of his captor.

In the successful prosecution of World War II by the Allies and in the victories gained by their armies in major engagements with Axis forces, the number of enemy taken captive reached a staggering figure, staggering because of the responsibility involved in their custody. In order to facilitate confinement and reduce the burden of care for the Allied Supreme Command overseas, it was necessary that over 425,000 of these prisoners be transported to the United States.[1]

Thus, the enemy prisoner of war problem facing the United States in its conflict with Germany, Italy, and Japan was that of deciding whether or not and how to

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1 A. M. Kruse, "Custody of Prisoners of War in the United States," The Military Engineer, Vol. 38, February 1946, p. 74.

extract the greatest advantage from these thousands of prisoners by fitting them as efficiently as possible into the country's progressive mobilization for the war effort.

The Importance of the Problem

The importance of the prisoner of war problem and the urgency of its satisfactory solution became apparent with the arrival of the first groups of prisoners from North Africa in the early spring of 1943.[1] Their arrival coincided with the development of acute manpower shortages in certain areas of the country, both in industry and in agriculture.[2] The prosecution of the war effort was at that time also very seriously affected by critical labor shortages at many army installations and other enterprises administered by the Government.[3]

Before this time, the United States had almost no

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1 M. S. McKnight, "The Employment of Prisoners of War in the United States," International Labour Review, Vol. 50, July 1944, p. 48.

2 Ibid., p. 48.

3 Kruse, op. cit., p. 74.

experience with prisoners of war.[1] The problem had been considered one mainly for the military rather than civilian authorities. To alleviate manpower shortages by recourse to prisoner of war labor where prisoners could be properly employed immediately became a problem for the various civilian governmental agencies concerned directly with the country's war production efforts. The problem required full cooperation between the War Department and these civilian agencies to bring about a balance between employment opportunities and obvious need for security and the prevention of sabotage.[2] Those prisoners held in the United States were early considered by the Director of the War Manpower Commission to constitute a very important reserve source of manpower despite the fact that many circumstances other than the need for security militated against their use.[3]

Further importance of the problem and the need for an effective solution is found in the nature of existing

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1 The prisoners of war arriving in the United States in 1943 were the first foreign army prisoners held within the continental limits of the country in more than a century. A few thousand naval prisoners of war were interned in the United States during the war of 1914-1918.

2 McKnight, op. cit., p. 49.

3 "WMC Policy on Wages of POW Labor," Commercial and Financial Chronicle, Vol. 159, February 3, 1944, p. 531.

international treaties concerning prisoners of war. The United States is a party to the convention signed at Geneva, Switzerland, on July 27, 1929. This agreement fixes the obligations of the captor power with respect to the treatment of prisoners of war. The extent to which a country may benefit from the productive labor of the prisoners under its control depends primarily upon the permissive provisions of the Geneva Convention.[1] A country holding prisoners of war can adhere to the convention and be limited in the use it makes of its captives. By taking this course, the same treatment may reasonably be expected for its own troops held prisoners by the enemy. On the other hand, prisoners of war can be used with less regard to their fair treatment. This course of action makes it likely that retaliation will result.

Any and all planning for utilization of prisoners as manpower additions must consider such matters as prohibited types of work, limitations on hours, wage rates, and environmental conditions. In addition, any plans made must decide the question of prisoner labor versus free labor.

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1 McKnight, op. cit., p. 53.

The Scope of This Study

Because prisoners of war are an important source of manpower for belligerent countries, a thorough study of their employment is of particular interest. It is the purpose of this study to define some of the salient features of the use of those Axis prisoners held in the United States during World War II.

In Chapter II an effort will be made to set forth various principles of efficient administration and effective employment of prisoners of war. In discerning the advantages of prisoners as a labor force, limitations encountered and mistakes made will be discussed in Chapter III. An analysis of plans and policies that were in effect from time to time will be rendered. In seeking an insight into the factors that affect the lives of prisoners of war at every turn and inevitably influence the quantity and quality of their work, Chapter IV will be devoted to human relations aspects.

How This Study Approaches the Problem

This study is based upon analysis of actual case material and upon interpretation of legal rules. Lessons learned from illustrative case histories will be cited. Knowledge thus acquired will serve to draw

pertinent conclusions.

To preclude basing recommendations on inconsistent and impractical foundations, isolated accidental cases will be avoided. Considerable attention will be paid to the Geneva Convention as a determinant of the degree of effectiveness with which prisoners may be employed.

Changing factors and unexpected developments in the war situation are discussed in the light of their effect on the prisoner of war labor program and the manner in which it was conducted to supplement the wartime labor force. Public sentiment and misconceptions regarding prisoner treatment are dealt with as factors which retarded Government policy concerning the utilization of prisoner labor to overcome country-wide manpower shortages.

Though this study deals with three different nationalities of prisoners of war, it treats with all prisoners as part of a large and valuable labor force. It considers the prisoner of war as an individual in recommending action to develop his productiveness. It seeks to define certain principles that are applicable without regard to nationalities or numbers of prisoners. Political and legal implications in the use of prisoner of war labor are cited to show their effect on plans and methods.

No attempt will be made to compare the practices of the United States with those of other detaining Powers. Such is beyond the scope of this study and highly impracticable owing to the differences in the numbers held by various countries, as well as in the various attitudes, legal and illegal, taken toward their employment.

CHAPTER II

PRISONER OF WAR ADMINISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

Introduction

Before an approach toward evaluating prisoners of war as a manpower source can be properly made, it appears necessary to consider first the means for handling them. In this chapter will be discussed the preliminary steps taken to set up prisoner of war camps, their internal organization for administration, and their location and construction.

It will be shown that in order to receive maximum benefit from the labor potential of prisoners, all organization must be sound and workable. A series of principles involved in maintaining adequate custody of prisoners will be brought out and discussed.

Similarly, a series of proven steps in maintaining discipline among prisoners of war will be enumerated. How the War Department instituted conservation practices in prisoner of war supply will be cited.

The Organization for Administration

Due chiefly to lack of experience with prisoners of war, the War Department had given limited thought

to their employment before they first began to arrive in this country.[1] From the beginning, demands for their labor were voiced by industry, agriculture and the armed forces. Concurrently, in this emergency, the Government, through its administrative agencies instituted a country-wide analysis of current labor requirements which could be satisfied by the use of prisoners of war.[2]

Flexibility became a major requirement to be met in furnishing prisoner labor to all parts of the country. To achieve it, an organization which decentralized authority to regional and local levels was set up within the War Department. Broad, basic plans and policies concerning prisoners of war were determined by the Personnel Division, War Department General Staff. In accordance with these, the Commanding General, Army Service Forces, was charged with all matters pertaining to enemy prisoners of war within the continental United States, including their custody, control, utilization, location, care, treatment, security and repatriation. Included among these responsibilities were:[3]

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1 Major General Archer L. Lerch, "The Army Reports on Prisoners of War," American Mercury, Vol. 60, May 1945, p. 543

2 Kruse, op. cit., p. 70.

3 War Department, "Enemy Prisoners of War," TM 19-500, 5 October 1944, p. 1.3.

1. The supervision and execution of War Department policies to make effective the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

2. The discharge of the War Department's responsibility in its supervision and administration of arrangements between belligerent Powers with reference to prisoners of war.

3. The supervision and administration of all matters affecting prisoners arising under arrangements or dealings with neutral powers or agencies, including the Central Agency for Information in neutral countries and the Protecting Power.

4. Formulating the necessary rules and regulations relative to the War Department's responsibility in the control of prisoners.

5. Coordination of policies and procedures concerning prisoners with other Federal agencies.

6. Establishment and operation of the Prisoner of War Information Bureau. 1

The Provost Marshall General functioned as the staff agency of the Commanding General, Army Service Forces, in carrying out the latter's responsibilities in all matters

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1 Article 77 of the Geneva Convention requires that each signatory set up an organization to receive reports and maintain records concerning enemy prisoners, as well as its own nationals held prisoner of war by the enemy. In addition to maintaining current information regarding capture, release, escape, exchange, death, etc., the organization also replies to inquiries concerning prisoners. Also it receives and keeps the wills of prisoners and forwards to the next of kin personal efforts of deceased prisoners. Finally, it transmits periodically to the Protecting Power and the International Red Cross information to facilitate the identification of each prisoner.

pertaining to prisoners of war. Commanding Generals of Service Commands were responsible to the Army Service Forces for all matters concerning prisoners within the geographical limits of their respective commands.[1] In turn, prisoner of war camp commanders were responsible to the Service Commands for the maintenance, operation, administration and management of the camps which they commanded. Where camps were located on military posts, the camp commander, in addition to his command function, also acted as a staff officer to the post commander on prisoner of war matters.

The prisoner of war labor program developed to the extent that several hundred thousand prisoners were employed in numerous occupational classifications in agriculture, food processing, industry and at military installations. With the programs on such a vast scale, it is hardly conceivable that individual prison camp commanders could carry a burden which included classification and assignment of prisoners by occupational skills, supervision over their use by private contractors, contract negotiation and the transfer of prisoners from

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[1] During World War II, the principle regional administrative level of the War Department was the Service Command, of which there were nine. Each was composed of a certain number of contiguous states, the number depending on the degree of army activity taking place within the group.

camp to camp to meet changing demands for their labor.[1] Further, it is not likely that this volume of detail could have been effectively handled in Washington by the Army Service Forces and at the same time insure promptness and flexibility in assignment and employment of prisoners.

Consequently, the full responsibility for the uniform operation of the prisoner of war labor program was assigned to the Service Commands.[2] Recognizing the need for an organization capable of operating in a sound, business-like manner, the Commanding General, Army Service Forces, in May 1943, called a conference of Service Commanders to discuss the matter.[3] As a result, the following type organization, known as the Service Command Prisoner of War Branch, was developed and remained in effect in each Service Command until all Axis prisoners were repatriated:[4]

1. Office of the Chief

    a. Supervises and coordinates the activities of the branch.

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[1] TM 19-500, op. cit., pp. 1. 3- 1.4.

[2] John B. Mason, "German Prisoners of War in the United States," American Journal of International Law, Vol. 39, April 1945, p. 205.

[3] War Department, Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1943, 3 September 1943, p. 218.

[4] Army Service Forces, Third Service Command Memorandum No. 2, 5 January 1945, pp. 1-3.

b. Coordinates all activities in connection with prisoners of war, including liaison with the, War Department G-2, Office of Naval Intelligence and the Provost Marshall General.

2. Works Project Division

a. Exercises staff supervision over obtaining of certifications of need for use of prisoner of war labor by private contractors.

b. Exercises staff supervision over use of prisoner of war labor by private contractors, compliance with contracts and manpower priorities and payments and collections under contracts.

c. Prepares plans for furnishing prisoner of war labor to meet critical labor needs, and maintains liaison with War Manpower Commission and War Food Administration.

d. Reviews and makes recommendations and proposals for establishment of new camps and changes in capacity or status of existing camps.

e. Reviews prisoner of war work and assignment reports and recommends corrective action or changes in assignments of prisoners of war.

f. Plans and coordinates transfers of prisoners of war into and out of the Service Command, except from Ports of Embarkation and other concentration points, and between base camps.

3. Inspection and Camp Division

a. Inspects and exercises staff supervision over the administration, operation and security of prisoner of war camps, guarding of prisoners of war and Italian Service Units.

b. Recommends changes in Service Command prisoner of war policies and prepares instructions to carry out policies of higher headquarters.

c. Reviews recommendations for and coordinates establishment of new camps and changes in status of existing camps.

d. Plans and supervises Intellectual Diversion programs for prisoners of war.

4. Prisoner of War Personnel Division

a. Classifies prisoner of war by occupational skills.

b. Maintains machine records data for prisoners of war.

c. Assigns prisoners of war to essential military work and recommends assignment to other work.

d. Makes recommendations for the use of prisoners of war to replace other types of personnel.

e. Continuously reviews classification and assignment of prisoners of war.

f. Recommends programs for vocational and on-the-job training of prisoners of war.

5. Prisoner of War Authorization Division

a. Establishes and continuously reviews priorities for all types of prisoner of war work.

b. Reviews requests for and authorizes prisoners of war, including Italian Service Units, for essential military work.

c. Makes recommendations for use of prisoners of war to replace other types of personnel.

d. Analyzes prisoner of war work and assignment reports, maintains records of prisoner of war authorizations and strengths, prepares and consolidates reports for this and higher headquarters.

e. Reviews and makes recommendations on proposals for establishment of new camps and changes in capacity or status of existing camps.

6. Safety Division

   a. Reviews reports of injuries to prisoners of war and makes recommendations for corrective action to Prisoner of War Branch.

   b. Inspects Prisoner of War Camps and plants of civilian contractors for hazardous conditions, and recommends corrective action.

7. Director of Prisoner of War Supply

   a. Exercises staff supervision over all activities in connection with supply of prisoner of war camps.

8. Contract Division

   a. Exercises staff supervision over preparation, negotiation and termination of contracts for prisoner of war labor, reviews contracts for conformity with instructions and policies of this and higher headquarters, and recommends corrective action before final distribution of contracts.

9. Operations Division

   a. Plans and coordinates movements of prisoners of war from Ports of Embarkation and other concentration points to destination.

To permit closer study, and at the same time record from a document with limited circulation, the Service Command prisoner of war organization has been set forth in detail. It may be seen that the organization emphasized occupational classification and assignment of prisoners to promote their full utilization. This was facilitated by the use of machine records data compiled and processed by special machines manufactured by the International Business Machines Corporation. Up-to-date

prisoner personnel inventories were thus kept and types of prisoners needed were promptly located.

In this connection, it is worthy to note that the organization provided for the transfer between camps of individuals or groups of prisoners in order to utilize more effectively their particular skills. Of equal value in effective use of prisoners, was the continuous analysis of periodic reports of their productivity.

Camp Location and Construction

The original construction program for prisoner of war camps was designed primarily to locate them in areas which would afford maximum security and in latitudes which would minimize construction and maintenance costs. Potential sources of employment for prisoner labor also influenced the selection of camp sites to the extent that considerable heed was paid the demands of agricultural operators for manpower to augment labor shortages. This accounts for the location of most of the early camps in relatively isolated communities where employment for prisoners consisted largely of seasonal agricultural work.[1]

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[1] Kruse, op. cit., p. 70.

During the initial stages of the prisoner of war labor program, public sentiment retarded the location of camps so as to utilize prisoner labor on as comprehensive a scale as desired by the Government. Districts of dense population expressed concern over projected locations of camps in close proximity to them.[1]

On July 1, 1943, there were only 35 prisoner of war camps in the United States.[2] Experience gained from the operation of these showed that extensive use of prisoners on projects at considerable distances from base camps, and often in densely populated areas near vital installations, was not inconsistent with national security. This conclusion was reached as increased demands for prisoner of war labor arose.[3]

In September 1943, War Department restrictions upon camp locations were liberalized. In a memorandum on the subject it was declared that henceforth camps would be located where needed and the prisoners used to perform essential labor in the particular area. However, not to forsake security entirely, camp

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1 Ibid.

2 War Department, Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1944, 8 September 1944, p. 240.

3 McKnight, op. cit., p. 48.

commanders were instructed that when prisoners of war were employed in cities, near vital installations, or near seacoasts or international boundaries, additional measures would be taken to guard them.[1]

Prisoner of war camps were divided into two principal categories:[2]

1. Base camps established on a permanent basis for the complete administration of prisoners of war.

2. Branch camps established on a permanent or temporary basis to fill a definite work need and for the administration of prisoners of war under the supervision and with the assistance of their base camps.

By June 30, 1945, the number of base camps had risen to a total of 156 located throughout the United States in every state except Vermont, North Dakota, Montana and Nevada.[3] Since it was found impracticable to transport prisoners more than one hour's time to and from place of work, branch camps were established near most major work projects or areas.[4] On June 30, 1945, there were 377 branch camps located in all states

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1 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1944, op. cit., p. 241.

2 Kruse, op. cit., pp. 70-71.

3 War Department, Army Service Forces Report of 1945, 5 September 1945, p. 276.

4 "POW Labor," American City, Vol. 59, March 1944, p. 87.

except the four just mentioned.[1]

A further consideration governing the establishment of branch camps was the expense involved. They were never established at a loss to the Government. The policy was that when a branch camp was established to provide labor for private contractors, costs of reconversion of existing facilities, or the establishment of any new ones, were born by the contractors unless the net income from prisoner labor to the War Department during the length of the contract exceeded these costs.[2]

Under Articles 10 and 11 of the Geneva Convention, it is specified that (a) prisoners of war may be interned in enclosed camps but may not be confined or imprisoned except as an indispensable measure of safety or sanitation; (b) camp installations shall provide housing which will afford all possible guarantees of hygiene and healthfulness, adequate heating and lighting and fire protection. Further, space allowances and other housing conditions must conform to the facilities which are provided troops of the detaining Power.

The War Department in early 1943 directed that all

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1 Army Service Forces Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 276.

2 McKnight, op. cit., p. 49.

available surplus facilities should be converted to prisoner of war use. However, the military training program was then expanded to such an extent that little or no troop housing could be released. Decision was made, therefore, to design new prisoner of war camps and authorize new construction as the emergency required.[1] The facilities provided in new camp developments were basically identical for all types, namely, housing for prisoners, housing for guard personnel, and security of prisoners.[2]

One early type of installation for base camps was designed generally to provide minimum facilities for a maximum accomodation of 3,000 enlisted and 32 officer prisoners of war and the required guard detachment, whereas another type of camp increased the number of officer prisoners to 1,000. Housing layout adhered generally to typical requirements for United States troops whereby a 250-man company administration was maintained in 1,000 man battalion areas or compounds. This company administration layout was also used in branch camps of one or more 250-man units.[3]

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1 Kruse, op. cit., p. 70.

2 Ibid., p. 71.

3 Ibid.

The housing compounds for enlisted prisoners provided 50-man barracks (40 square feet per man), mess building, lavatories, and individual structures for infirmaries, recreation building, administration building, storehouses, and workshops. Facilities for recreation provided a minimum of two square feet per man.[1]

The housing of officer prisoners of war presented problems distinct from the usual ones for enlisted prisoners. Officer prisoners were provided quarters consistent with their rank on a basic allowance of 120 square feet per man. In the case of combined officer and enlisted camps, complete segregation was effected. Camps designated primarily for the custody of officer prisoners also included accomodations for certain prisoner enlisted personnel to serve as orderlies and maintenance workers.[2]

Facilities for the administration of prisoner of war base camps comprised usually an administration building, a place of worship and a central guard house for recalcitrant prisoners. In cases where the camp location was too far distant from an established military hospital, provision of hospital facilities at the camp was

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1 Ibid., pp. 71-72.

2 Ibid.

required. A warehouse and utility area provided for the complete maintenance of the camp and consisted of supply offices, warehouses, shops, a fire house and other miscellaneous facilities peculiar to the specific camp. A minimum area sufficient to permit an allowance of 200 square feet per man was provided for outdoor recreation.[1]

Numerous branch camps were of necessity semi-portable so they could be moved around frequently to serve agricultural districts where periods of employment were of relatively short duration. Tentage was utilized extensively for such camps.[2]

Due to major overseas movements of United States troops and curtailed training programs, a considerable amount of surplus troop housing became available for conversion into prisoner of war camps in the middle of 1944. This enabled the War Department to establish a policy precluding further new camp construction.[3]

In addition to surplus housing at army installations, use was made of facilities under the control of other Federal agencies. Properties formerly belonging

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1 Ibid., p. 72.

2 Kruse, op. cit., p. 72.

3 McKnight, op. cit., p. 72.

to the Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Youth Administration and the Farm Security Administration were taken over by the War Department. Also in many instances, state and local fairgrounds, armories, schools, auditoriums, etc., were converted to house prisoners.[1]

Experience in the administration of prisoner of war camps indicated a need for different layout criteria than that which prevailed for earlier camps of entirely new construction. It was found that the use of larger barracks (150-man), a consolidated cafeteria messhall, central canteen and recreation building and all facilities in one single compound considerably decreased land requirements and construction costs and made administration much easier. In this connection, an 1,800 man prison camp was found to be the most economical size from the standpoint of maintenance, ease of guarding and general control of prisoners. Experience also demonstrated that adequate recreation or exercising accomodations were essential to maintenance of prisoner morale, an important administration factor.[2]

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1 Ibid.

2 Kruse, op. cit., p. 72.

Organization and Control of Prisoners of War

Prisoners must be organized within their own groups in a manner that facilitates administration and control. Responsibility must be placed on one or more of the prisoner members of the organization in order that directives of the camp authorities may be passed on to individual prisoners. International agreements require that organizations of prisoners allow for certain of their number to act as agents in dealings with authorities of the captor forces and with representatives of the Protecting Power.

The overall organization for administration and control must provide for adequate security measures. These are extremely important as factors determining the number of overhead personnel required for guards. In planning for security consideration must also be given to the possibility of sabotage being committed by escaped prisoners.

Discipline is an important factor in control of prisoners and the Geneva Convention allows the detaining Power to exercise it according to certain humane standards. The degree of discipline extended also determines to a great extent how effectively prisoners may be employed on work projects.

Processing - On arrival at United States ports,

prisoners were given rigid medical examinations and had their clothing and personal effects fumigated as precautions against the introduction into the country of communicable diseases.

For identification purposes, a basic personnel record was completed on each prisoner. This record consisted of a standard form containing the prisoner's name, serial number, photograph, fingerprints, signature, a list of personal effects and other data such as religion, marital status, rank and branch of service.

Through an intelligence interview, port authorities made an attempt to separate prisoners according to their ideological or political beliefs. This was done in order to intern in specific camps any potentially troublesome Nazis or Fascists.

Although prisoners of war are universally searched at time of capture, a thorough search was again made at the port of debarkation. According to the Geneva Convention, prisoners were permitted to retain objects of personal use such as national uniforms, insignia, decorations, identification tags, helmets and gas masks. However, all equipment and implements of war such as ammunition, bombs, code books, maps, cameras, field glasses, radios, etc., not previously confiscated

were taken from prisoners at this point.[1]

Due to the obvious necessity for physical examinations and intelligence interviews of incoming prisoners of war, little criticism can be directed toward the processing system. However, one observer did express the opinion that the intelligence interview was too hurried to be effective in so far as discerning a prisoner's ideological or political beliefs. It was stated that in a desire to process prisoners quickly during daylight hours, interviewers could hardly allow themselves or the prisoners to relax. It was also pointed out that interviews were held at tables so near each other that any prisoner wishing to make it clear that he was anti-Nazi or anti-Fascist faced being overheard by other prisoners.[2]

Organization - Prevailing policy of the War Department was that prisoners of war of more than one nationality or race would not be interned in the same camp. Upon arrival at camps, prisoners were assigned to companies of approximately 250 each. Each company was commanded by a commissioned officer of the Army of the United States. Initially, the following additional

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., pp. 2.4 -2.5

2 James H. Powers, "What to Do with German Prisoners," Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 174, November 1944, p. 48.

army personnel were assigned to these companies: one first sergeant, one mess and supply sergeant, one company clerk with the rank of corporal, and, where necessary, two cooks. It was the practice to remove this personnel when prisoners became competent to take over their duties. However, an absolute minimum of one American officer and one supply sergeant was maintained at all times with each prisoner company.[1]

In accordance with the terms of the Geneva Convention, prisoners of war at each base and branch camp were allowed to select from their number a spokesman to represent them as agent or intermediary before the military authorities, the Protecting Power and the International Red Cross. Through experience, army authorities found that the burden of administration was made much easier where prisoners were allowed to conduct their own self-government to a degree consistent with the United Stated standards of discipline, cooperation and security. Squads, platoons, companies and battalions, in addition to the entire camp, were allowed to have unit spokesmen. This not only made administration easier, but facilitated the transmission of orders and formation of prisoners into work groups by the same prisoner each

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.9.

day.[1] In officer camps, the senior officer prisoner, unless incompetent or incapacitated, was recognized as spokesman. The selection of spokesmen for both officer and enlisted prisoners and their continuance in that capacity was subject to the approval of the camp commander.[2]

Prisoners were not allowed to exercise command. However, they were used to transmit orders of American personnel to other prisoners, but not between American personnel. In addition to any other assigned duties, spokesmen were held responsible for the maintenance and cleanliness of the quarters of their respective units. They were not allowed to exercise any disciplinary powers.[3]

Security - One of the most important responsibilities in maintaining custody of prisoners of war was the effectiveness of security measures. It was considered by the War Department that the efficacy of physical facilities for security not only decreased guard personnel requirements, but also created a psychological

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1 "Prisoners of War," Army and Navy Register, Vol. 64, May 22, 1943, p. 7.

2 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.9.

3 Ibid., p. 2.10.

deterent against escape. At all prisoner of war camps in the United States, the following security measures are taken:[1]

1. Isolation of camp sites to avoid interferences from external sources.

2. Efficient prison camp enclosures.

3. Strategically located guard towers for complete observation.

4. Security lighting.

5. Patrol roads around enclosure perimeter.

6. Adequate guard personnel.

Inasmuch as these security measures were very significant factors in efficient prisoner of war custody, it is well to examine each more fully.

In the selection of camp sites consideration had to be given to eliminating certain environmental features that could aid escape. Among such features were heavily wooded areas, frequently passing traffic, nearby railroads, streams or airfields, and thickly populated United States troop areas into which prisoners could disappear and emerge in disguise as American soldiers. Sites were required to be located away from public observation. It was essential that adequate water supply and electric

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[1] Kruse, op. cit., p. 71.

power be available. Sites selected were of even terrain without abrupt breaks in contour. Except for a few isolated shade trees and sufficient low cut grass and weeds to prevent soil erosion and dust, camp areas were without vegetation which could hide prisoners.[1]

Of the above security measures the camp enclosure was of paramount importance. Barriers had to be constructed consistent with the minimum use of critical materials. Before the first prisoner arrived in the United States, several types of security fences were erected for experimental purposes. Demonstrations revealed the ridiculous ease with which escape could be quickly effected through and over all types of barbed wire vertical fences.[2]

The fence found to be most suitable for the outside barrier was a heavy galvanized woven wire industrial type with openings in the weave not greater than 1½ x 1½ inches. It was secured to the ground by weaving iron re-inforcing rods through the openings at the bottom edge and then pulling them close to the ground with iron hooks driven into the earth a depth of four feet. The fence was securely stapled from the inside

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

to oak posts. In height it was ten feet. At the top, slanting inward at a 45 degree angle, an apron of heavy barbed wire was erected. Twelve feet inside and parallel to the outer barrier, a five foot 5-strand barbed wire fence was erected. All fences were considered as temporary barriers only, the time element to overcome them being the factor involved. If a fence delayed consummation of a breakout sufficiently for the attempt to come within observation of the guard towers or perimeter patrols, the enclosure was considered adequate.[1]

Guard towers were located at intervals so as to afford clear vision of fence lines and interior areas. They were generally not over 1,200 feet apart for observation during unfavorable weather conditions. Their elevation was to a height which would command uninterrupted-view of a comprehensive area. Tower equipment included searchlights with auxiliary power, telephones, sirens, flares and weapons.[2]

Lighting for fences and enclosure areas was provided by flood lights mounted on 30 foot poles spaced approximately every 60 feet along the outer fence and 12 feet outside it. Floodlights burned continuously

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1 Ibid., p. 73.

2 Ibid.

during hours of darkness.[1]

Guards on foot, mounted on horses or riding in open vehicles were posted to patrol the roads running around the enclosure perimeter.[2]

Concerning guard personnel, the policy of the War Department was to provide a minimum number consistent with reasonable security against escape. During the first year of the period of internment of Axis prisoners of war in the United States, the following guard ratios were rigidly maintained:

1. One guard to eight prisoners employed on private contracts.

2. One guard to ten prisoners employed on military reservations.

3. One guard to ten unemployed prisoners.

4. One officer to each forty-five guards.

Civilians were not used to guard prisoners of war, nor were prisoners themselves used in this capacity.[3]

In order to free soldiers for combat, the War Department began in July 1943, to decrease the number of guards required by reducing certain security precautions.

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.30

Selected Italian prisoners were permitted to leave stockades for places of work, perform their jobs, and return without guard. They signed a statement that they would obey all rules and regulations and would not attempt escape. This limited parole was supplanted later by organizing trustworthy Italian prisoners into special work units. By the end of April 1944, provision was made to employ selected German prisoners without guards during daylight hours in areas where military personnel were regularly on duty, provided they were under an American supervisor and that frequent counts of them or inspections of their work were made.[1] Japanese prisoners were never employed without guards.[2]

In maintaining security of prisoners of war and preventing their escape or unnecessary death from attempting escape, careful instructions to both guards and prisoners are necessary. Guards were instructed that if prisoners attempted to escape or pass a defined limit to call, "HALT", not more than three times, and thereafter, if there appeared to be no other effective means of preventing escape, to shoot to kill. Guards

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1 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1944, op. cit., p. 244.

2 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 278.

were further instructed not to fire on prisoners at fences unless they were actually over the inside fence, or at it and obviously trying to go over, under or through it. The test was thus not the prisoner's proximity to the fence but his behavior.[1]

Prisoners were instructed as to the significance of the word, "HALT", including the various ways it might be expressed by guards acting in emergencies. They were also instructed concerning prohibitions against loitering near stockade fences. The use of "imaginary" deadlines to restrict prisoners to certain areas was not permitted. Careful instructions were issued by the War Department to camp commanders that where necessary to establish confines or forbidden areas, fences were to be erected and all prisoners notified.[2]

Previous mention has been made of the public's early reaction to the establishment of prisoner of war camps in thickly populated areas. The psychology of the average citizen automatically sensed potential personal danger and sabotage of public works as a result of escapes.[3] Due to concerted action taken by all

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.33.

2 Ibid.

3 Kruse, op. cit., p. 72.

internal security agencies in the United States to apprehend enemy agents and locate potential sources of subversive activity, the opportunity for escaped prisoners of war to procure aid and commit acts of depradation was reduced to a minimum. The Federal Bureau of Investigation was charged with the responsibility of coordinating search for escaped prisoners. Uniform procedures were established to insure coordination between all agencies concerned, namely, military police, state and local police forces and Canadian and Mexican authorities.[1]

The cumulative total of escapes from the beginning of the internment of Axis prisoners in the United States until June 30, 1945 was 1,800. A compilation of the lengths of time which prisoners were at large for the period shows:[2]

1,048	prisoners	at	large	one day or less
348	"	"	"	two days or less
178	"	"	"	three days or less
48	"	"	"	four days or less
31	"	"	"	five days or less
116	"	"	"	five to fourteen days
31	"	"	"	fourteen days or more
1,800	total escapes			

The fact that security of prisoners of war can be

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.34

2 Lerch, op. cit., pp. 545-546 and Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 278.

maintained without using excessive guard personnel is seen in the following comparative escape rates. During the year ending June 30, 1944, United States Federal prisons had an average population of 15,961 from which 69 prisoners escaped, or a rate of .44 percent. During the same period, there were in United States camps an average prisoner of war population of 288,292 from which there were 1,036 escapes or a rate of .45 percent.[1] When final repatriation of all Axis prisoners of war was completed in July 1946, 28 Germans, 15 Italians and no Japanese were at large.[2] It was observed that the vast majority of escapes were accomplished by slipping away from places of work. Many of the escapees were mental deficients who became lonely or frightened when they realized the language barrier they faced in a country of whose size they had no conception.[3]

Discipline - Under the Geneva Convention, camp commanders are authorized to exercise "disciplinary powers" over prisoners of war under their control. This makes prisoners subject to the laws, regulations and orders of the detaining army. In the case of the United States, enemy prisoners therefore are subject

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[1] Lerch, op. cit., p. 546.

[2] New York Times, July 23, 1946, p. 27, col. 6.

[3] Beverly Smith, "Nazi Supermen Hit the Dirt," American Magazine, Vol. 140, July 1945, p. 84.

to the Articles of War and within the jurisdiction of Courts-Martial.[1]

Within the camp commander's disciplinary powers certain administrative measures of enforcement are included, namely:[2]

1. Admonition, reprimand, or other oral or written reproof.

2. Withholding of privileges, including restrictions on diet to a minimum of 18 ounces of bread a day and all the water desired.

3. Discontinuance of pay and allowances of officer prisoners.

4. Discontinuance of daily monetary allowances of enlisted prisoners up to two-thirds of their monthly total.

In practice, War Department policy permitted these measures to be applied indefinitely, but only during periods in which prisoners were failing to comply with orders promulgated by camp commanders. It was required that camp commanders cease such administrative pressure when compliance was obtained in order that it would not thus become disciplinary punishment. These various measures were not limited to individuals, but could be applied simultaneously to all prisoners who failed

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.31.

2 Ibid.

to comply with administrative provisions.[1]

In simple language, the second measure constituted a "no work-no eat policy". Throughout the duration of the prisoner of war labor program any enlisted prisoner refusing to work or striking on a job was placed on bread and water until he was ready to engage actively on assigned jobs.[2] Withholding of canteen privileges was also found to be effective in securing cooperation from both officer and enlisted prisoners. For example, non-cooperatives were not sold beer, candy, soft drinks, cigarettes or tobacco. Once refused these items, the prisoner usually exercised care that his future conduct was such that it did not again cause his canteen privileges to be withdrawn.[3] Admonition, especially if it appealed to soldierly qualities, was found to be effective against officers and non-commissioned officers.[4]

As already mentioned, prisoners of war were subject to the Articles of War of the United States Army. Sentences ranging from confinement at hard labor for one

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 War Department, Office of the Provost Marshall General Memorandum Number 50, 18 April 1945, p. 1.

4 TM 19-500, p. 2.31.

week to the death penalty were given by Courts-Martial.[1] Following the intent of the Geneva Convention, the War Department notified the prisoner's Protecting Power of the impending trial not less than four week's beforehand in the event it was desired to send an observer to determine the justification for and the fairness of the trial. Each prisoner of war defendant was provided with an American officer as defense counsel. It was required that this officer speak the language of the defendant. Provision was also made to allow the defendant to select one assistant defense counsel from among his fellow prisoners of war located at the same or any camp within reasonable distance. In addition to the regular court interpreter each defendant was allowed to have his own if desired.[2]

In connection with the subject of controlling prisoners of war to make them a more efficient labor force, a number of proven principles of maintaining discipline, have been enumerated.[3]

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1 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit.,p. 278.

2 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.32.

3 These items were compiled as follows: Numbers one through five from TM 19-500, op. cit., pp. 2.32 - 2.33; number six from Lerch, op. cit., p. 544; numbers seven and eight from Powers, op. cit., p. 48; number 9 from Army Service Force Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 277; and number ten from an article appearing in the New York Times, January 18, 1945, p. 5., col. 1.

1. Firmness and exactness on the part of personnel having custody of prisoners of war should prevail at all times.

2. Fraternizing of military and civilian personnel with prisoners, acceptance of gifts or hospitality from military or civilian personnel by prisoners, and the association of prisoners with women should be rigidly prohibited.

3. Prohibit the imposition of collective punishment for the misconduct of individual prisoners.

4. Prohibit all singing outside stockades. Within the stockades allow the singing of only national anthems and non-political or non-ideological folk or popular songs.

5. Delegate no disciplinary powers to prisoners and give maximum punishments for participation in "kangaroo courts".

6. Notices should be posted on every prisoner of war bulletin board to the effect that any prisoner who feels that his life is in danger or that he may suffer injury at the hands of other prisoners should report at once to the nearest American officer who will assure his protection.

7. Intern prisoners in separate camps according to ideologies, degrees of cooperativeness, criminal records and nationalities.

8. Work assignments, work programs and selection of individual prisoners for duties should be the immediate exclusive responsibility of American officers and non-commissioned officers.

9. Abolish all political party salutes and slogans and prohibit the display of pictures of political party leaders.

10. Keep all prisoners busy at productive work. Avoid using unnecessary numbers of prisoners on menial tasks such as picking up paper and trash, sweeping walks and general area police.

It may be pointed out that maintenance of good

prisoner morale does not appear among the above principles. It is not intended to overlook this vitally important factor in discipline and control. A detailed discussion of it more properly appears in Chapter IV on human relations aspects.

Treatment

The Geneva Convention states that prisoners of war shall be humanely treated. In this respect it prescribes certain standards, an analysis of which is within the scope of administration. The War Department preferred to call its policies and interpretations regarding prisoner of war treatment, "firm but fair".[1] The treatment of Axis prisoners in the United States was dependant to a certain extent on availability of facilities and supplies which at times were difficult to procure. This did not deter the War Department in its aim to comply fully with the Geneva Convention, but did necessitate careful planning in order not to deprive the civilian population and armed forces of scarce items.

Food - One of the most vexatious problems regarding treatment of prisoners of war in the United States was that of food. As limitations in available food-

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1 Lerch, op. cit., p. 544.

stuffs were imposed on the civilian population, much criticism arose that prisoners were being fed on a more generous scale than American civilians. Under the terms of the Geneva Convention, the Government was required to provide prisoners of war with a ration "equal in quantity and quality" to that provided American troops.[1]

At the beginning of the prisoner of war labor program in the United States, the War Department failed to recognize that this requirement did not necessarily mean that identical rations were to be issued to prisoners. In heed to public criticism, the Judge Advocate General of the Army in early 1944 ruled that the requirements of the Geneva Convention did not contemplate identical rations for prisoners of war.[2] Accordingly, it was decided that if rations for prisoners met the standards of the National Research Council used by the Quartermaster General in preparing menus, the legal obligations of the United States would be met. Thereafter, the Provost Marshall General, the Quartermaster General and the Surgeon General collaborated in preparing appropriate menus for prisoners with the required caloric content.

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1 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 276.

2 Lerch, op. cit., p. 542.

Substitutes were given prisoners for all critical food items. Directives were issued to reinforce this policy.[1]

In addition to substitution on menus, the War Department followed the practice of preparing menus and making food issues, where possible, according to national food habits. As compared with United States troops, it was found that prisoners of war, when fed according to their national food habits consumed and wasted less food. They preferred the more abundant basic, staple foods. For example, cabbage and potatoes were prepared as main vegetable dishes daily. Low grade, whole, salt water fish and cheap cold meats were well liked. Lower grades of flour which made heavier bread and pastries were issued.[2]

This demonstrates that with careful study of the prisoner of war food problem, considerable savings in subsistence supplies can be accomplished without adverse affects on prisoner health and efficiency. The commanding officer of one of the largest prisoner of war camps in the United States voiced the opinion that a great deal of the effectiveness of control over

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1 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 276.

2 TM 19-500, op. cit., pp. 2.15 - 2.19

prisoners could be assigned to the fact that they were maintained in good health and morale by being adequately, but not sumptously fed.[1]

Clothing - The responsibility for supplying clothing and footwear by issue to enlisted prisoners and by sale to officer prisoners is placed on the detaining Power by the Geneva Convention. Prisoners were required by the United States to wear the clothing they had at time of capture unless it was unfit for use.[2] Enemy national uniforms, however, were not allowed to be worn outside of stockades, for the reason that it was desirable to have all prisoners dressed uniformly according to standards permitting easy observation and recognition.[3]

All clothing issued to prisoners was dyed dark blue and marked in white across the back and seat with the letters, "PW", six inches high. The same letters four inches high were placed on the front of each sleeve and trouser leg slightly above the elbow and knee respectively. National uniforms of both officer and

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1 N. L. Margulies, "Proper Treatment of Prisoners of War - the War Department's Reasons for its Management," Vital Speeches, Vol. 11, May 15, 1945, p. 479.

2 Army and Navy Register, op. cit., p. 7.

3 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.10.

enlisted prisoners were not marked or altered in any way.[1] Officer prisoners were sold standard Army issue underwear and accessories. For tailoring into outer uniforms at their own expense, they were sold appropriately dyed fabrics from army surplus stocks.[2] Items of clothing and footwear issued to enlisted prisoners were from obsolete, Civilian Conservation Corps and low grade, reclaimed army stocks.[3]

The prisoner of war clothing problem can be a most difficult one because most supplies are required by a belligerent country for their own forces. On the other hand, it cannot be expected that ill-clothed and ill-shod prisoners will perform their work properly. The army was fortunate in that it had adequate old and reclaimed stocks available. Before using combat serviceable clothing or footwear for prisoners, it was planned to procure reclaimed stocks from Federal and state institutions. If this source proved inadequate it was further planned to work physically handicapped prisoners in manufacturing suitable clothing from inexpensive materials and with obsolete army equipment.[4]

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid., pp. 2.20-2.21.

3 Ibid., p. 2.14.

4 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit.,

Miscellaneous - It may also be pointed out that the Geneva Convention requires the captor to provide prisoners with other items such as cooking utensils, blankets, bedding, and work tools. Issues of cooking utensils and blankets were made from the same sources as clothing. In the beginning, prisoners were issued straw at a rate of 15 lbs. per man per month for use in mattress covers as bedding. This practice continued until agricultural shortages precluded it near the end of 1944.[1] It was found that prisoners turned out work of a quantity and quality in proportion to the quantity and quality of tools provided. The issue of used or reclaimed tools was therefore held to a minimum. For security reasons, as well as to prevent loss, prisoners were prohibited from taking tools and implements into stockades. All personally owned tools, except such small technical instruments as watch repair kits and wood carving sets were confiscated from prisoners.[2]

Not only to fulfill international agreements, but to protect the health of American troops and civilians, prisoners of war were given adequate medical, surgical

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.11.

2 War Department, Army Service Forces Circular Number 202, 1945, p. 3.

and dental treatment.[1] Medical and dental personnel from the prisoner population were used as far as possible.[2]

Summary

The labor effectiveness of prisoners of war may be aided or impeded by the administrative organization designed to control their use. Promptness and flexibility in placing the right prisoners on the right jobs prevailed in the War Department organization for prisoner of war administration. Locations of prison camps and the manner in which they are constructed are effective factors of control. Camps were located so as to place prisoners near places of work and away from environments not conducive to security. Construction must not only provide for security, but must also be economical and provide physical facilities for the maintenance of the health, welfare, and control of prisoners.

Prisoners must be organized within their own groups in a manner that separates trouble-makers, places

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.23.

2 McKnight, op. cit., p. 64.

responsibility, facilitates control and complies with international agreement. The War Department found that such organization could be best created by forming prisoners into 250-man companies and allowing spokesmen for each organic unit within and above the company.

Experience proved that selected prisoners could be employed without guards, thereby freeing United States troops for other duties. Camp commanders were authorized to exercise disciplinary powers over prisoners in their custody. Except for major offenses, administrative measures taken under this authority were effective in maintaining discipline. Among such measures were admonition and withholding of privileges.

If it is intended to abide by international agreements, treatment of prisoners must be fair. In the interests of making them an efficient labor force, prisoners must be adequately fed, clothed and shod and ministered to when ill.

CHAPTER III

AXIS PRISONERS OF WAR AS A PART OF THE NATIONAL LABOR FORCE

Introduction

In regulating the labor of prisoners of war, the Geneva Convention unfortunately, fails to state what may be done. Rather, it tells what is not allowed. To avoid encountering unfamiliar prisoner of war employment problems, it is much easier to use the labor of a country's own troops and civilian population.

On the other hand, the labor potential of prisoners, where effectively employed, becomes extremely valuable and results in significant savings in money and manpower. Effective employment may be accomplished only through careful study of the problem, establishment of sound policies, practices, and means for coordination between all agencies concerned.

To evaluate the accomplishments of such a large addition of the nation's manpower as were Axis prisoners of war, it is necessary to understand which prisoners worked, the types of work they did, the numbers used, and their value to the United States' war economy. Such an evaluation is undertaken in this chapter.

Liability to Perform Work

According to the provisions of the Geneva Convention, the detaining Power may utilize the labor of able prisoners of war. However, officers and persons of equal status are excepted. It will be shown later in this chapter that certain prisoners in United States camps were classified as non-effectives due to the fact they were not obliged to perform labor. In order to present a more accurate account of the composition of the entire prisoner labor force, it is believed appropriate at this point to explain which prisoners could be worked.

Though officers may not be required to work, tasks must be secured for them when requested and available.[1] Approximately seven percent of the German officer prisoners asked for work. This same figure generally prevailed for Italian officer prisoners until Italy's capitulation, whereupon, practically all Italian officers volunteered for duty with special work units. The number of Japanese officer prisoners requesting work was nil.[2]

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1 Mason, op. cit., p. 210.

2 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 277.

Concerning the liability of non-commissioned officer prisoners to work, the Geneva Convention states that they may only be required to supervise unless they expressly request different tasks. They may limit the type of non-supervisory work they agree to do to that in which they have a special skill or aptitude.[1]

Enlisted prisoners were required to do any and all work not prohibited by the Geneva Convention.[2]

Protected personnel, as defined below were not treated as prisoners of war insofar as being required to perform any and all types of labor permitted for other prisoners. This provision appears in the Geneva Convention. Persons coming within any of the following categories were eligible to be classified as protected personnel upon documentary proof:[3]

1. Military personnel exclusively engaged in medical activities or medical administration.

2. Military personnel performing duties at time of capture as assistant litter bearers or assistant first aid men.

3. Chaplains.

4. Members of authorized and recognized volunteer aid societies.

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1 Ibid., p. 212.

2 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 51.

3 Ibid., p. 6.3.

Personnel engaged in the above activities were furnished documents of identification by the German and Italian Governments. The Japanese Government, not being a signatory to the Geneva Convention, made no special effort to distinguish its own personnel engaged in these activities. The few protected personnel needed for the one Japanese camp were obtained by interview and interrogation. Protected persons from among German and Italian prisoners were assigned to serve only their own nationalities. Assignments were based on a ratio of two doctors, one dentist, two chaplains, Protestant and/or Catholic, and six enlisted medical men per each 1,000 prisoners. Surplus protected personnel were held at one camp and underwent refresher training in their specialities until called for as replacements.[1]

The War Department was slow to learn that in order to raise the number of effectives among groups of prisoners, impersonators of officer and non-commissioned officers had to be detected. Prior to July 1944, the practice had been to accept a prisoner's rank insignia and verbal statement as evidence of commissioned or

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1 Ibid., p. 6.3.

non-commissioned status. On the above date camp commanders were instructed to classify as enlisted prisoners all who could not furnish documentary proof of their status as officers or non-commissioned officers. This added nearly 5,000 prisoners to the total available for work.[1]

Approved and Disapproved Work

The prohibitions contained in the Geneva Convention on the utilization of prisoner of war labor relate not only to the rank and status of the prisoners, but to types of work as well. Thus it can be seen that the extent to which a captor may benefit from the productive labor of its prisoners depends on what is allowed by the Convention. Article 31 contains a general prohibition against using prisoners in work having a "direct connection with the operation of the war", and a particular prohibition against using prisoners "in the manufacture or transport of arms or munitions of any kind, or in the transport of material destined for combatant units."[2]

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1 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 276.

2 McKnight, op. cit., p. 54.

The phrase, "direct connection with the operation of the war," was found by the War Department to be exceedingly difficult to closely define.[1] To assure uniformity of interpretation as to the type of work approved or disapproved under the Geneva Convention, a Prisoner of War Employment Review Board was established in July 1943, in the Office of the Provost Marshall General.[2] Cases of doubt or question regarding the permissibility of any particular work were referred to the Board for decision and publication to all camp commanders for future guidance.[3] According to one of its members, the Prisoner of War Employment Review Board used the following broad interpretation as a guide in rendering decisions:[4]

> Prisoners of war may be employed in all those occupations which are normally necessary for the feeding, clothing, and sheltering of human beings as such, even though this work may be performed for, or results in benefits to, members of the military establishment, but that prisoners of war may not be employed in work which is solely of value in assisting the conduct of active belligerent operations. Therefore, for example, prisoners may be employed to

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1 Ibid.

2 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1944, op. cit., p. 242.

3 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.7

4 McKnight, op. cit., p. 54.

manufacture trucks and parts thereof, though these eventually be put to military uses, but they may not be employed to manufacture parts exclusively for tanks. Also, prisoners may be used in agriculture, food processing, the manufacture of cloth and leather, and the like, though soldiers may consume the crops or wear the clothing and shoes.

The following are example cases the Board decided, inter alia:[1]

1. Maintenance and repair work is authorized on any vehicle designed for the carriage of cargo or personnel, in contradistinction to vehicles designed as combat weapon carriers.

2. Work on the organic transportation equipment of a unit which has been alerted for overseas duty is prohibited.

3. Work on the preparation of motor vehicles against hazards incidental to overseas transportation is prohibited.

4. The steam cleaning of combat tanks and their motors is prohibited.

5. Primarily scrapping operations may be performed by prisoners of war on any type of vehicle.

6. Salvage work for the primary purpose of recovering parts for reissue is authorized only on vehicles of a type on which prisoners of war may do repair or maintenance work (see paragraph 1).

7. Scrapping operations only are authorized in connection with gun parts, gun mounts, empty ammunition in boxes, carbine or rifle cases.

8. Work in connection with rifle ranges or bayonet courses, or any training aids used for training personnel in the use of combat weapons is prohibited.

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1 Mason, op. cit., p. 214.

9. Work in connection with complete guns of any kind is prohibited.

10. Work on gas masked is permitted.

The most obvious value of uniformity in the types of work assigned prisoners of war was that it insured compliance with international agreements and precluded censure by the Protecting Power or the enemy Government. Decisions and standard lists of approved jobs such as were issued by the Prisoner of War Employment Review Board also assure that prisoner labor will not be wasted on trivial work or work not in the interests of good social or economic practices. To prevent such waste the War Department concurrently with the arrival of the first prisoners, found it necessary to prohibit strictly their employment as personal servants of members of the military forces of the United States. Similarly, prisoners were not allowed to be employed in bars, clubs, or such establishments in the capacity of bartenders, waiters, bus boys, etc. For social reasons, prisoners of war were not permitted to work inside Federal, state or local prison walls, nor in proximity to convicts.[1] In this connection, prisoners of war are not to be

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.8.

considered or treated as convicts.[1]

Unhealthy or dangerous work is also among the types prohibited by the Geneva Convention. The War Department construed this provision to forbid the employment of prisoners of war on jobs considered to be unhealthy or dangerous either because of their inherent nature, or because of the particular conditions under which they were performed, or by reason on the individual prisoner's physical unfitness or lack of technical skill. The particular task was considered, not the industry as a whole. The specific conditions and surroundings attending each job were the deciding factors.[2]

In conformity with these considerations, prisoners were not employed on jobs beyond their physical capacity nor on those requiring the use of high-speed cutting instruments or mechanisms dangerous to those unskilled in their use. As another example, prisoners were not employed in jobs requiring them to climb to dangerous heights. This ruled out their use as structural steel workers, top fellers in logging, etc.[3]

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1 "Conditions of Employment of Prisoners of War - The Geneva Convention of 1929 and its Application," International Labour Review, Vol. 47, February 1943, p. 173.

2 McKnight, op. cit., pp. 55-56.

3 TM 19-500, op, cit., p. 5.4.

It was found by the War Department, however, that many otherwise dangerous tasks for prisoners could be made safe by the use of simple appliances and brief preliminary job training. For example, in the early period of their employment in the United States, prisoners were not employed in many types of work in the logging industry. With safety appliances and proper training, they were later seen performing such tasks as swamp logging, steam driving, booming, power skidding and slash burning.[1]

Conditions of Employment

The War Department was aware of the desirability of returning prisoners of war to their own countries with a feeling that they had been treated fairly by the United States Government. That attitudes of former prisoners of war would determine to a great extent our postwar relations with Germany, Italy and Japan was realized. For this reason, and as well as for fully complying with international regulations, conditions of employment of prisoners of war in the United States were given careful consideration.

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1 "Warriors to Woodsmen," Business Week, December 25, 1943, p. 50.

Policies regarding hours, wages and disability compensation insured against practices detrimental to efficiency and morale.

Conditions of Employment

Hours - Hours of work and the weekly rest, which are highly important factors in the employment of prisoners of war, were among the questions to which agents of Protecting Powers and International Red Cross delegates paid most attention during their inspections of United States camps.[1]

Under Article 30 of the Geneva Convention, the working hours of prisoners "shall not be excessive and shall in no case exceed those permitted for civil workers employed on the same work." This same article also prescribes a weekly rest period of "at least 24 consecutive hours".

The especial interest of inspecting agents in hours and rest periods may be accounted for by their fear that wartime emergency exceptions to prevailing hour legislation for civil workers might cause over-zealous camp commanders or contractors to violate the above mentioned

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1 International Labour Review, Vol. 47, op. cit., p. 185.

article of the Convention.[1]

War Department policy on hours for prisoners was that none would work shorter periods than civilian workers on the same type of work in the particular locality, except that prisoners would not be absent from their camps more than twelve hours, including travel time to and from work.[2] In actual practice the standard work week for prisoners throughout the United States was 48 hours with Sunday as the day of rest.[3] Christmas Day, December 25, was the only legal holiday authorized prisoners of war.[4]

Aside from the matter of compliance with the Geneva Convention and of assuring that prisoners of war were not accorded better working conditions than civilians, the War Department found the 48 hour work week most suitable. An 8 hour day permitted the prisoners to maintain themselves and their quarters in a clean and healthy condition. Time was also available for recreation, reading, letter-writing, hobbies and self study,

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1 Ibid.

2 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.8.

3 War Department, Office of the Provost Marshall General Memorandum Number 82, 20 October 1945.

4 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.10.

all of which went to make the prisoner a better worker.[1]

Compensation - Where it deals with wages to prisoners for labor performed, the Geneva Convention confines itself to very general principles. The provision is that prisoners of war shall not receive pay for work in connection with the administration, internal arrangement, and maintenance of camps, but that when employed on other work they shall be entitled to a rate of pay to be fixed by agreements between the belligerents. During the course of its participation in World War II, the United States was unable to reach such agreements with the Axis Powers.[2] Pending the absence of any other instrument or agreement on which to base prisoner wages, the War Department fixed them generally according to rates of pay of United States Army privates doing similar types of work. Account was taken in this determination of a prisoner's lesser personal expenses and his overall lower productivity as compared with an American.[3]

Therefore, when employed on paid work, whether in a supervisory capacity or otherwise, prisoners, including

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1 Lerch, op. cit., p. 542.

2 International Labour Review, Vol. 47, op. cit., p. 188.

3 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1944, op. cit., p. 188.

officers and non-commissioned officers, were compensated at a rate of 80 cents per day. This was reduced proportionately when a prisoner failed to turn out a full day's work.[1] In March 1944, an incentive pay system was established for certain types of work prisoners of war at that time were performing. This system was intended to increase production in food processing plants. Prisoners in such plants were enabled to earn up to a maximum of $1.20 per day. Each prisoner acting in a supervisory capacity was paid an amount equal to the average earnings of the work group he supervised.[2]

At this point it appears appropriate to point out that all prisoners of war held in the United States were given a daily allowance of 10 cents in addition to and regardless of the amount of wages earned. This was to permit the purchase of necessities such as toilet articles, ink, pencils, etc., which the United States Army did not furnish its own troops.[3]

All allowances and wages were paid to prisoners of war in script redeemable for merchandise at the camp canteen. If the prisoner elected, his script, in whole

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1 McKnight, op. cit., p. 62.

2 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 59.

3 Lerch, op. cit., p. 54.

or in part, was deposited in a trust fund against which he could draw at any time or save until his repatriation whereupon it was paid in his own national money.[1]

Axis prisoners held in the United States felt that amounts paid them as wages were a fair return for their labor. The United States Government similarly felt these wages were fair in view of the cost involved in bringing prisoners to the United States, maintaining their health and providing them with facilities where earnings could be actually spent for comforts and necessities.[2]

Disability Compensation - One of the weakest provisions of the Geneva Convention is that regarding accidents at work. In 1929, when the Convention was drawn up, the experts apparently failed to foresee all the desirable features of social insurance. The provision finally settled on was that prisoners of war who suffered accidents at work would be entitled to the same treatment as the wounded. This does not take into account the fact that the sick and occupationally diseased are a world burden rather than one for those individuals specifically affected.[3]

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1 McKnight, op. cit., p. 62.

2 International Labour Review, Vol. 47, op. cit., p. 190.

3 Ibid.

In the United States it was felt that laxity of compensation rules concerning prisoners of war might be reflected in greater accident rates, lowering of standards by employers and supervisors, lower prisoner production and morale, and in censure by belligerent countries.[1]

In August 1943, the Secretary of War ordered that prisoners of war would be considered employees of the United States for the purposes of disability compensation. The order specified that contractors for prisoner labor would be required to comply with all applicable workmen's compensation laws pertaining to accident prevention, insurance coverage, etc. Contractors were held liable by the Federal Government for claims arising out of prisoner accidents up to the amount it cost to rehabilitate the prisoner.[2] Prisoners of war sustaining injury, not caused by their own wilful misconduct, were paid by the War Department at the rate of 40 cents per day, excluding Sundays, until able to engage in work again or until repatriation or death.[3]

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1 L. S. McCombs, "Coverages and Forms," Spectator Property Insurance Review, Vol. 10, June 28, 1945, p. 26.

2 Ibid.

3 McKnight, op. cit., p. 63.

Other Conditions - Employable prisoners performed work only when the job was commensurate with their physical abilities. At least once a month they were inspected by an army medical officer and classified according to their ability to work as follows : (a) heavy work; (b) light work; (c) sick otherwise incapacitated - no work. This action was taken to comply with the Geneva Convention as well as for its favorable long run effects in maintaining the efficiency of the entire prisoner of war labor force.[1]

Employment Policies

At the start of the prisoner of war labor program in the United States the intention was to employ prisoners chiefly as replacements for soldiers performing labor at military installations. However, urgent demands for their labor arose from civilian activities, expecially agriculture. These demands were required to be met without impairing the rights of free workers. Adequate policies were necessary to insure that needs of both military and non-military activities would be equitably cared for insofar as possible. It was also

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1 Ibid., p. 64.

necessary that policies precluding the employment of prisoner labor on non-essential work by established.

Priorities and Allocations - To assure that a part of the prisoner of war labor force would be available for non-military needs, the War Department and the Office of War Mobilization agreed that prisoners would be employed in the following order of priority.[1]

> Priority I - Essential work for the maintenance and operation of reservations and installations of the armed services. Essential work was defined as that which would have to be done whether or not prisoners were available.
>
> Priority II - Work projects certified by the War Manpower Commission or the War Food Administration as being essential and for which there was no civilian labor obtainable.
>
> Priority III - Useful, but not essential work on military reservations.

This system resulted in approximately 70 percent of the prisoners being available for employment by the military and 30 percent for employment by civilian agencies.[2]

To place prisoners of war in areas where their services were most needed, the Army Service Forces,

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.9.

2 Beverly Smith, "Nazi Superman Hit the Dirt," American Magazine, Vol. 140, July 1945, p. 84.

the War Manpower Commission and the War Food Administration established a Joint Allocation Board to distribute them among the Service Commands. Distribution was such that numbers were available for both Priority I and Priority II needs according to requirements prevailing at the time.[1]

Employment By the War Department - As already mentioned, the primary purpose of employing prisoners of war at military installations was to free soldiers for combat duty. Generally speaking, prisoners were not utilized in lieu of civilians at military installations located in areas where surpluses of labor existed. It was the policy, however, to employ prisoners to displace civilians who could be transferred within the installation to some work of a type not permitted for prisoners of war.[2] Prisoners were utilized to the fullest extent to displace troops and civilians, regardless of the availability of such troops and civilians, in the administration, management and maintenance of prisoner of war camps.[3]

Contractual Employment - The War Manpower Commission

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.2.

2 McKnight, op. cit., p. 57.

3 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.13.

and the War Food Administration controlled the employment of prisoners of war by private contractors.[1] These agencies determined whether or not requests for prisoner labor could be filled from other sources. A private contractor seeking prisoner labor presented his needs to the local office of the United States Employment Service where they were certified. This certification was acted upon successively by the State and Regional Directors of the War Manpower Commission for all non-agricultural needs. State Agricultural Extension Services worked with the War Food Administration in processing agricultural labor requests in a similar manner. Requests were finally approved or disapproved by a committee consisting of appropriate officials from the Service Command, The Regional War Manpower Office and/or the Regional Office of the War Food Administration.[2]

A joint statement of policy governing the employment of prisoners of war on contract work was prepared and issued by the War Department, the War Manpower Commission and the War Food Administration in early 1943. It remained in effect throughout the duration of the

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1 Ibid., p. 5.19.

2 "Priorities in Allocating Services of Prisoners of War," Monthly Labor Review, Vol. 58, June 1944, p. 1189.

prisoner of war labor program and its principal provisions were:[1]

1. Prisoners of war will not be employed in any capacity where they may displace employed free workers, or in any activity that will impair the wages, working conditions, and employment opportunities of free labor.

2. Prisoners of war will be employed only when free labor is not available and cannot be recruited from other areas within a reasonable length of time. That provision includes all secondary resources from which workers normally are recruited to perform work in a particular activity.

3. Prisoners of war will not be made available for contract employment at a cost to the employer of less than that of free labor.

The significance of the first of the above provisions is readily apparent. It was promulgated to meet labor opposition and is further discussed in the following chapter of this study.

In actual practice the second provision concerning recruitment of labor was strictly adhered to. Before a need for prisoner labor was certified, it was required that the prospective contractor and the local office of the United States Employment Service or State Agricultural Extension Service study employment office registrations, Selective Service Board records, engage

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[1] "WMC Policy on Wages of POW Labor," Commercial and Financial Chronicle, Vol. 159, February 3, 1944, p. 531.

in advertising for labor and in personal canvass of community groups and labor organizations.[1]

Concerning the third provision, the prevailing wage in the particular area for free labor performing the same kind of work as was proposed for prisoners was determined by the appropriate office of the War Manpower Commission. This wage was paid to the Government by the contractor and from it 80 cents to $1.20 a day was received by the prisoner in the form of canteen script. The balance was deposited in the United States Treasury.[2]

Extent and Manner of Utilization

To accurately describe the effect of prisoners of war on the country's wartime labor force, it must be shown how many were employed, the amounts and types of work accomplished and the value of such work. It is the purpose of the following sections to present this information in a form which will enable an evaluation of the prisoner of war labor program as conducted by the United States during World War II.

Numbers Used - The following compilation shows the

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1 Ibid.

2 L. S. McCombs, "Coverages and Form," Spectator Property Insurance Review, Vol. 10, November 30, 1944, p. 28.

monthly prisoner of war population in the United States during the period of their internment. The percentage of the total population that was effectively utilized for labor each month is also indicated. In this connection, work both inside and outside the stockade is included.

Non-effectives among the prisoners included those hospitalized or sick in quarters, those in transit from ports of debarkation to camps or from camp to camp, those in disciplinary confinement and officers who did not volunteer for work. Throughout the entire program and especially in the beginning, considerable numbers of non-effectives were in part those confined in non-co-operative's camps where the work available inside the stockade was not in proportion to the large number of prisoners confined therein.

Later, the overall prisoner of war population grew to such an extent that the number of non-cooperatives had negligible effect in keeping the ratio of effectives to non-effectives at a low figure. The lower proportion of effectives during 1943 is partially accounted for by the fact that security was given more consideration in the early months of the prisoner of war labor program than was extensive employment. Until sufficient experience was gained by the War Department, many employment opportunities, where a question of maximum security existed, were necessarily passed up.

AXIS PRISONERS OF WAR INTERNED IN THE UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE MONTHLY PROPORTION EFFECTIVELY EMPLOYED*

Date	NUMBERS IN THE UNITED STATES				Percentage of Total Prisoner of War Population Effectively Employed During Month
	Germans	Italians	Japanese	Total	
1943					
March	22,994	14,546	8	37,548	49.5
April	31,040	15,213	8	46,261	49.0
May	34,613	15,260	8	49,881	48.0
June	37,642	15,770	23	53,435	50.0
July	55,636	24,746	35	80,417	50.0
August	88,902	28,449	43	117,351	58.5
September	119,202	31,870	43	151,115	59.5
October	119,713	36,002	53	153,206	60.0
November	119,687	37,811	58	158,572	64.5
December	121,131	44,508	58	163,022	60.0
1944					
January	121,505	49,647	82	171,234	58.5
February	122,446	51,433	119	173,998	59.0
March	129,838	50,247	128	180,213	65.5
April	133,135	50,136	347	183,618	68.5
May	137,889	50,134	441	188,464	70.0
June	143,690	50,217	480	194,387	75.5
July	146,101	50,278	562	196,941	80.0
August	159,459	50,277	578	209,314	89.5
September	192,846	50,272	730	243,848	95.0
October	248,205	51,034	1,143	300,382	88.5
November	281,344	51,032	2,292	334,668	80.0
December	305,648	51,156	2,443	359,247	80.0

AXIS PRISONERS OF WAR INTERNED IN THE UNITED STATES DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE MONTHLY PROPORTION EFFECTIVELY EMPLOYED*
(Continued)

Date	NUMBERS IN THE UNITED STATES				Percentage of Total Prisoner of War population Effectively Employed During Month
	Germans	Italians	Japanese	Total	
1945					
January	305,681	50,988	2,497	359,166	82.5
February	305,867	50,561	2,820	359,248	83.0
March	307,208	50,523	3,122	360,853	84.5
April	311,630	50,549	3,528	365,707	85.5
May	343,115	50,343	4,012	397,470	89.0
June	354,003	50,122	4,730	408,137	90.0
July	369,366	49,784	6,080	425,230	91.5
August	365,237	38,132	8,598	411,967	91.0
September	364,689	20,060	9,112	393,851	93.5
October	359,838	18,241	8,062	386,141	95.0
November	335,276	6,228	3,912	345,416	90.0
December	327,714	104	778	328,596	90.0
1946					
January	301,211	21	2	301,234	90.0
February	286,247	19	0	286,266	95.0
March	231,117	15	0	231,132	95.0
April	179,849	12	0	179,861	95.0
May	121,498	12	0	121,510	95.0
June	60,400	12	0	60,412	95.0
July	301	12	0	313	0.0

Source: * This table was compiled from monthly prisoner of war strength reports released by the War Department and published in the New York Times during the period involved.

It may readily be seen that the monthly flow of prisoners of war into the United States followed no progressively planned schedule. From September 1943 through February 1944, the increase in shipments lagged due to a stable situation then existing in the Italian campaign. Relatively few prisoners were captured during that time. Similarly, from December 1944 through March 1945, increases were slight, with an actual decrease in January as compared with February due to repatriation of a number of seriously ill Italians. The Ardennes campaign during that same period allowed little time to process captured Germans for shipment to the United States from European ports.

Beginning in April 1945, thousands of Germans were captured as their Government and army began to deteriorate. The large numbers arriving in the United States between April and July 1945, were those enroute and in the process of shipment when the European campaign ended.

September 1945 saw the beginning of the repatriation program. The smaller numbers of Japanese were quickly repatriated in order to close out the camp where they were interned. The Italians were rapidly repatriated as a reward for their generally co-operative work during internment.

German prisoners were held longer and used extensively by the War Department in connection with the

operation of ports and personnel discharge centers demobilizing United States troops. The 313 prisoners remaining in the United States at the end of July 1936 were fugitives and those too ill to be moved from hospitals.

Work Accomplished and Its Value - From March 1943 through June 1946, Axis prisoners of war in the United States performed 106,216,982 man-days of work shown by years as follows:[1]

1943 - 11, 300, 321	man-days	
1944 - 30, 178, 664	"	"
1945 - 47, 422, 614	"	"
1946 - 17, 315, 383	"	"
Total-106, 216, 982	"	"

The estimated money value, at then prevailing wage rates, of the work performed by prisoners of war during these four years has been set at $359,796,456.00 divided annually as follows:

1943 -	$ 38, 872, 474.00
1944 -	102, 181, 124.00
1945 -	159, 325, 617.00
1946 -	59, 417, 241.00
Total -	$359, 796, 456.00

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1 Compiled from Army Service Forces Annual Reports of 1943, 1944, 1945, and 1946; Sections dealing with prisoners of war.

It is also estimated that 80 percent, or $287,837,164.00 of this amount accrued to the Government either in the form of cash deposits into the United States Treasury or in the form of savings to the War Department. The remaining 20 percent, or $71,959,291.00 of the above total was paid to prisoners in canteen script.[1]

Types of Work Performed - In order to secure the maximum benefit from the labor of prisoners of war and permit their employment as far as practicable on work they did in civil life, the Army Classification system was extended to all except German officers, the latter being assigned only to agricultural work. Information concerning previous occupational skills, education, hobbies, technical schooling, earnings, etc., was entered on a standard form. Each prisoner concerned was then assigned an occupational speciality number corresponding with prepared occupational descriptions published by the War Department. This occupational speciality number was used by the camp commander and the Service Command in keeping prisoner personnel inventories and in assigning and transferring prisoners to jobs for which qualified.[2]

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1 Ibid.

2 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.11.

The labor performed by prisoners at military establishments consisted of prisoner of war camp work and regular post or installation work.

Tasks in the prison camps included prisoner of war company and stockade administrative duties such as stenography, typing, bookkeeping, translating, filing, and the operation of various office machines. All maintenance of buildings and grounds in the camp was performed by prisoners qualified as plumbers, painters, carpenters, blacksmiths, bricklayers and electricians. All prisoner of war camp facilities such as prisoner hospitals, messhalls, canteens, libraries, schools, recreation rooms, warehouses and heating plants were operated by prisoners.[1]

The type of work in connection with military establishments other than prisoner of war facilities included the operation of bakeries, laundries, meat-cutting plants and subsistence warehouses. Prisoners were found performing practically all types of labor and technical work in military printing plants, hospitals, sewerage treatment plants and in various army laboratories and equipment testing facilities. Post Quartermasters and Post Engineers used prisoners for a wide

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1 Ibid.

range of jobs in supply, building maintenance, landscaping and in minor clerical work. Maintenance, repair, reclamation and salvage operations on non-combat vehicles and on clothing and equipment were performed extensively by prisoners.[1]

At this point it may be appropriate to mention the War Department's policy on the employment of Japanese prisoners. The provision was that they would be occupied solely within or near their stockades working at their own housekeeping and at raising a part of their own food. The comparatively few Japanese prisoners brought to the United States were primarily for intelligence purposes until toward the end of 1944 when increasing numbers were brought in because of over-crowding in camps located in the Pacific Theater of Operations.[2]

All Japanese were confined in one prisoner of war camp located at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin. The War Department made one exception to its employment policy when approximately 500 Japanese prisoners were allowed to be worked in an emergency harvest in California. These prisoners were enroute to Pacific Coast ports for repatriation and were removed from their trains in October

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1 McKnight, op. cit., pp. 57-58.

2 New York Times, February 14, 1945, p. 4, col. 1.

1945, and worked about four weeks in the fields.[1]

After the capitulation of the Fascist Italian Government on September 8, 1943, the War Department began formulating plans for using Italian prisoners of war more effectively through forming them into special organizations similar to United States Army service troop units. They were employed on tasks not permitted by the Geneva Convention for ordinary prisoners of war. It was construed that with the Fascist surrender, the United States could legally enter into agreements with Italian prisoners as individuals. The Provisional Italian Government interposed no objections and encouraged Italian soldiers held as prisoners in America to support the Allied cause through volunteering for all work connected with the war effort.[2]

Accordingly, on February 12, 1944, the Secretary of War in a directive establishing the Italian Service Units, declared:[3]

> In order to utilize to the maximum the service of Italian prisoners of war who are loyal to the cause of the United Nations, they will be organized under Army Tables of Organization and Equipment into service units without

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1 New York Times, October 30, 1945, p. 8, col. 3.

2 Lerch, op. cit., p. 543.

3 Army Service Forces Report of 1944, op. cit., p. 245.

> arms. These service units will be organized, trained and utilized in the United States and its overseas areas.

The prisoners comprising the personnel of the Italian Service Units were all volunteers. They were released from stockades and placed in the custody of an American officer attached to each unit as a representative of the United States Army. Though Italian junior-grade officers were used to staff these service units, the over-all command and training was the responsibility of the United States Army. An American officer in the grade of brigadier general was appointed Commanding General, Italian Service Unit Program, to supervise the project. Eighty percent of the Italian prisoner of war population served in these units. The remainder of the Italian prisoners was excluded because of pro-Fascist inclinations, lack of aptitude, criminal records, physical unfitness and because some were fearful that reprisals might be taken against their families at home.[1]

A total of 181 Italian Service Units was organized by the end of 1944. These included 136 Quartermaster Corps Units, 28 Engineer Units, 16 Ordnance Units and one harbor craft unit with the Transportation Corps.

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[1] Ibid., p. 246.

Within these groups of units the individual members were performing almost every service type occupational speciality which American troops in similar units performed. These specialities ranged from office machine mechanic and shoemaker to tug boat pilot and heavy tractor driver.[1]

As already mentioned, prisoners of war were made available for assignment to work projects certified by the War Manpower Commission and the War Food Administration. Labor was performed in connection with such projects as agriculture, forestry, mining, quarrying, construction, food processing, and transportation, as well as for state and local governments.[2]

In agriculture prisoners of war performed all types of work connected with large scale farming. They were used most extensively in the production of cotton, rice wheat, sugar cane, and tobacco. Prisoner labor was especially useful in emergency harvests that occurred after floods or rainstorms.[3]

Work in forestry consisted of the production of logs, pulpwood, chemical wood, and fuelwood. Prisoners of war also performed many jobs in reforestation and forest clearing.[4]

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1 Ibid.

2 McKnight, op. cit., p. 58.

3 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1944, op. cit.,p. 242.

4 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.6.

Since the Geneva Convention prohibits the use of prisoners of war in underground mines and quarries, those employed in connection with such industries were used above the ground where they were effective at maintenance, car loading and track laying.[1]

In construction and transportation their chief employers were the railroads. In this industry they were particularly adaptable to economical use in large, easily guarded and supervised gangs.[2]

Hardly an agricultural or cattle raising area in the country was without prisoner labor at one time or another in food processing and meat packing.[3]

Their employment by local governments and municipalities was for such work as constructing or repairing drainage facilities, street repair, work connected with water supply facilities and the unloading of fuel at power plants.[4]

Summary

The Geneva Convention stipulates the types and

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1 Ibid.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 "POW Labor," American City, Vol. 59, March 1944, p. 87.

categories of prisoners of war who may be required to work. Also contained in the Convention are certain prohibitions as to types of work. Briefly, no prisoner may be required to perform tasks which have direct connection with the war effort of his captor.

Officer prisoners may not be required to work, but may volunteer to do so. Non-commissioned officers may be required to do supervisory work only unless they request other tasks. Protected personnel, namely, prisoners of war who were serving as medical men or chaplains at time of capture, are not liable to perform labor. They may be used only in their specialties to serve members of their own nationality.

Many questions arise concerning the directness of a particular task with the war effort. To answer such questions insofar as they affected the employment of Axis prisoners of war in the United States during World War II, the War Department established a Prisoner of War Employment Review Board to decide on questionable tasks for prisoners. This proved to be an effective step in increasing the effectiveness of utilization of prisoners.

Prisoners usually worked the same hours as did free American labor. Based on a net equivalent of the pay of United States Army privates, they were paid amounts

of from 80 cents to $1.20 per day.

To insure an equitable amount of prisoner labor being used on non-military projects, the War Department and various civilian manpower agencies agreed upon a priority system which allowed an average of 70 percent of the prisoners of war for military use and the balance for non-military use.

During their period of internment in the United States Axis prisoners of war performed labor valued at over $359,000,000.00. Eighty percent of this amount represented actual savings to the Government and the balance was paid to prisoners in canteen script.

CHAPTER IV

HUMAN RELATIONS ASPECTS

Introduction

That prisoners of war were advantageously employed by the United States during World War II has already been shown in this study. However, in order to form a more comprehensive picture of the entire employment program, it is necessary to gain an understanding of those human relations aspects that were present.

The methods used to motivate, supervise and train prisoners are enumerated and analyzed in this chapter. Their reactions and attitudes toward their status in the nation's war economy is brought out. It will be shown that the morale of a group of prisoners is as much a determinant of their efficiency as it is in the case of free workers.

The general approach to the problem of evaluating the prisoner of war as a workman is through seeking out various influencing factors, among which are the attitudes of those most concerned with his presence and employment, namely, employers, organized labor and the public. These factors are dealt with in the light of their effect, both on the individual prisoner and on the entire prisoner employment program.

The Prisoner of War as a Workman

An able prisoner of war can do a full day's work. Because his captor can, under international agreement, make him work, the prisoner may be forced to produce through negative methods such as a loaded gun or threats to restrict his privileges. The quantity and quality of work obtained in such manner will at best be only enough to merely satisfy the guard or supervisor.

On the other hand, a prisoner who is given a fair task will tend to perform it in quantity and quality in proportion to the means available to him. Supervision, training and morale are considered to be the most important of these means, and an insight into their principles which were applicable to prisoners of war seems essential.

Productivity of the Prisoner - No better way was discovered to get maximum production out of a prisoner of war than by the use of the "task system".[1] To insure that the productivity of prisoner labor would be approximately that of civilian or soldier labor, the War Department required the use of this system whenever the nature of the task made it possible to predetermine

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1 War Department, "Handbook for Work Supervisors of Prisoner of War Labor," Army Service Forces Manual M-811, July 1945, p. 6.

the amount of work that prisoners could be expected to complete in a specific time.[1]

The task system consisted of assigning to each prisoner, or each group of prisoners for completion in a determined interval, a definite amount of work reasonable and possible of accomplishment. Special circumstances such as language difficulties were taken into consideration.[2]

To enable the accurate setting of the task, private contractors were required to determine and state in their requests for prisoner labor the amount the average adult male civilian performing the same work would produce in one day. The same was required of military employers of prisoner labor.[3]

To insure that the daily tasks were fair and reasonable they were subject to the surveillance of camp commanders at all times.[4]

Those disciplinary measures discussed in Chapter II of this study were applied where necessary to assure that prisoners completed their assigned tasks.[5] However,

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.10.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

it was found that prisoners of war responded to incentives in the same manner as free workers. Incentives found most effective were the chance to earn more wages and the opportunity to gain more free time in which to read, rest, pursue hobbies or engage in exercise. Mention has previously been made of the fact that prisoners working in foot processing plants were on occasions paid up to $1.20 per day in order to increase production of vitally needed products.[1]

Almost without exception, it was found that prisoners of all categories and nationalities developed hobbies during their internment. Free time to pursue such hobbies was often the incentive to which a prisoner responded most quickly.[2] A prisoner working under a time incentive was permitted to return to the stockade when he had performed his daily task. German prisoners especially were found to be interested in mechanical devices, tools, etc., and the chance to operate them served as another effective incentive to turn out good quality work.[3]

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1 Ibid.

2 Army Service Forces Manual M-811, op. cit., p. 10.

3 Beverly Smith, op. cit. p. 82.

German prisoners were also found to have keen competitive spirits and outstanding pride in accomplishment. To take advantage of this, the War Department, in a series of instructions to employers and contractors, advocated letting prisoners identify their work by some method such as initialing or tagging or announcing individual production before the assembled group of prisoners. It was also found that this system served as a check for the inspection of the complete job. Though not mandatory under the Geneva Convention, rest periods were determined to be helpful and necessary in maintaining prisoner production.[1]

Work Supervision - As in the case of any individual worker or group of workers, the productivity and efficiency of prisoner of war labor was found to be directly dependant on the adequacy of supervision. Camp commanders were instructed by the War Department to continually determine the adequacy of work supervision provided by the various employers of prisoners. Where supervision was found to be inadequate, this fact was reported to the employer. Following this, if adequate supervision was not provided, camp commanders had authority to

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1 Army Service Forces Manual M-811, op. cit, p. 15.

discontinue the furnishing of prisoner work groups.[1]

In a handbook prepared as an aid for supervisors, the War Department pointed out that it would be necessary to think of prisoners as individuals while continuing to think of their characteristics as a group. Supervisors were cautioned against typing all prisoners alike because they shared the same general characteristics.[2]

To maintain better rates of production through making the best individual placements possible, supervisors were instructed not to work prisoners together when it was known that their personalities or ideologies clashed. Alertness toward individual aptitudes and unusual abilities was recommended as a prerequisite for efficient prisoner utilization. Experience demonstrated that prisoners would often fail to volunteer information to the effect that they could perform certain skilled jobs for fear of being censured by their fellow prisoners of war. To discover such hidden talents supervisors were instructed to be constantly watchful for display of adeptness in handling tools and following instructions. The interest paid to a particular phase of a task of technical nature was also to be observed.[3]

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1 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 5.11.

2 Army Service Forces Manual M-811, op. cit, p. 16.

3 Ibid.

One of the most effective instruments of supervision and instruction was found to be a "job breakdown sheet" written in two columns, English in one and the appropriate foreign language in the other. The committing to memory by supervisory personnel of certain carefully prepared foreign language phrases for purposes of instruction was also found to be of value. To aid in conveying instructions, it was found helpful to tag all English speaking prisoners of war with white arm bands. It was recommended these prisoners be spread out evenly among the work group.[1]

Many of the techniques used to advantage in supervising the work of free American labor were found just as effective in supervising prisoner labor. For example, supervisors were warned to be aloof and not fraternize with prisoners who, being naturally accustomed to impersonal relations with superiors, respected leadership when the gap between themselves and their supervisors was maintained. Prisoners of war who were previously trained to be orderly and thorough as soldiers were usually quick to spot bad management practices. To prevent contempt on the part of prisoners toward American systems, it was especially necessary that supervisors know in advance how many men would be required to

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[1] Ibid., p. 9.

perform a job and exactly what each man would do. Similarly, a prisoner assigned a too simple task quickly typed his supervisor as inefficient and wasteful.[1]

In the preceding chapter it was pointed out that non-commissioned officer prisoners could be required to do supervisory work only unless they requested other tasks. On the whole they did not make good supervisors for two major reasons (1) a lax attitude towards prisoners under them to prevent being thought of as collaborators and (2) except on the simplest gang work a disproportionate number of American supervisors was still required at the next level of supervision.[2]

The best type of supervisor was found to be the American who could be a tough task master and who knew the technical aspects of the jobs to which his prisoners were assigned.[3]

Job Training - Throughout the period of employment of Axis prisoners of war in the United States, preliminary job training was stressed as an important factor in securing maximum production efficiency from prisoners engaged in skilled and semi-skilled work. Training

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1 Ibid., p. 10.

2 Ibid., p. 14.

3 Ibid., p. 10.

materials and technical manuals were prepared in appropriate foreign languages and distributed by the War Department, the United States Forest Service, State Vocational Educational Bureaus, and trade associations to which private contractors belonged. Camp commanders had the responsibility of assuring adequacy of training in the same manner they assured adequate supervision.[1]

The learning process of the individual prisoner of war was found to be exactly the same as that of any trainee. German and Italian prisoners were accustomed to good instruction due largely to the fact that the industrial systems in their countries operates on the apprenticeship system. It was noticed that they utilized to the fullest extent any technical manuals, job descriptions and the like issued to them.[2]

Ordinarily, good instructors from among the prisoners themselves were available to use in job training. Where such instructors were not available, interpreters had to be relied upon.[3]

To be certain of clear understanding on the part of prisoner trainees, it was found advisable to have

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1 McKnight, op. cit., p. 56.

2 Army Service Forces Manual M-811, op. cit., p. 9.

3 Ibid., p. 9.

the interpreter himself go through the various phases of the job at hand, speaking as he performed each operation. Where an interpreter was used merely to pass words along, it was observed that listening prisoners had a tendency to divide their attention between such interpreter and the person speaking English.[1]

Examples of other training techniques utilized are found in numerous phrase books, safety manuals, cartoon booklets, etc., prepared for prisoner use. Cotton growers of East Texas evolved a phrase book of English agricultural terms and presented them with their German or Italian counterparts printed directly opposite on the same page.[2] The California State Vocational Educational Bureau provided agricultural and horticultural training manuals which effectively appealed to the prisoners' interests because comparisons with European practices were presented.[3] The United States Forest Service employed 200 rangers in training prisoners for forest industries. In this forestry training program emphasis was placed on the future vocational aspects of raising pulpwood and introducing North American trees in Europe.[4]

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1 Ibid.

2 Business Week, December 25, 1943, op. cit., p. 50.

3 New York Times, December 10, 1944, p. 9, col. 2.

4 Business Week, December 25, 1943, op. cit., p. 50.

Finally, it may be said that most prisoners of war wanted to learn something of their former trades or professions as practiced in the United States, to keep abreast with new developments in them, or to develop any new trades or professions which could benefit them after the war. For this reason alone prisoners were highly receptive to good training. This in turn made it imperative that employers of prisoners carry out adequate training programs at all times.[1]

Morale - It is needless to state that a prisoner of war workman with low morale is just as much an ineffective as is a free worker in a similar state. Though the free worker may agree with his employer on some group goal or point of common interest and thereby improve matters, the same can hardly be applied in the strictest sense to a prisoner of war. Such factors as the constraint of a stockade fence, the humiliation of capture and individual defeat, the separation from one's family, the lack of privacy and the monotony of waiting are ever-present morale depressants among prisoners. Not one of them can be entirely eliminated by the detaining Power. However, much can be done to lessen their adverse effects and consequently make the prisoner a

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1 Army Service Forces Manual M-811, op. cit., p. 8.

better workman. In its prisoner of war employment program, the War Department was aware of this. Effective steps were taken to maintain morale in a satisfactory state through a number of means.

Fair treatment, satisfactory working conditions, equitable renumeration for work performed and adequate food, clothing and shelter have already been mentioned as morale factors. The Geneva Convention prescribes their provision in certain minimum degrees. The United States provided them amply, yet not sumptuously, in the interests of better prisoner morale, as well as in the interest of organization, control, discipline and administration.

Obviously, there are other things than decent treatment and bare necessities of life that may be extended to prisoners in order to improve their morale. These things are envisaged by the Geneva Convention, but not strictly required or definitely specified. Article 17 states that "as far as possible belligerents shall encourage exercise of religion, intellectual diversion and recreation by prisoners of war". It may be seen that this provision leaves it to the detaining Power to determine the availability of these aspects of prison camp life. The United States provided ample facilities for religion, education and

recreation in all prisoner of war camps.[1]

The religious needs of prisoners were ministered to by captured ministers or priests. On occasions when such personnel were not available American Army chaplains and civilian ministers or priests were called upon. All services were in the language of the prisoners.[2] As mentioned in Chapter II, each prisoner of war camp was provided with a place of worship.

Prisoners were allowed to set up educational programs of various types under the supervision of the camp commanders. They were allowed to enroll in correspondence courses at designated American universities. Subscription to a wide list of approved English and foreign language newspapers and periodicals was permitted. Radios not equipped for short-wave reception were installed in recreation rooms.[3]

In addition to an exercise area for each camp, a certain amount of sports equipment was provided by the War Department. The German, Italian and Japanese Red Cross organizations provided some recreational equipment, musical instruments, books, handicraft tools and

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1 Mason, op. cit., p. 214.

2 Ibid., p. 209.

3 TM 19-500, op. cit., p. 2.27.

theatrical accoutrements as did many American aid societies or welfare groups. All foreign and domestic welfare and recreational contributions were censored and examined before delivery to prisoners.[1]

As a further morale matter prisoners of war were permitted to receive, subject to security clearances, singly or in groups, visitors kin to them in the relation of wife, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, uncle, aunt, or cousin.[2]

The War Department referred to these above discussed facilities or "social privileges" extended to prisoners and was of the conclusive opinion they made the prisoners better workers as well as easier to handle and deal with.[3]

Attitudes of the Civilian Population

Throughout the program of employment of Axis prisoners of war in the United States, civilian opinions and ideas, both sound and unsound, had to be considered by the War Department. The prisoner of war was an object of public attention and practically everyone had ideas

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1 Ibid., p. 2.28.

2 Ibid.

3 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 280.

on his treatment.[1]

In general, the civilian attitude toward prisoners followed along natural inclinations. Civilians working with or near prisoners were generally cognizant of the fact that they were satisfactory workers and well worth the cost of their care and maintenance. Americans having relatives in enemy prison camps were often indignant at the War Department for its treatment of prisoners in this country. The average citizen in between these two categories voiced opinions in line with what he was currently reading in his newspapers and periodicals which in many cases did not state all facts.[2]

There were times when public criticism actually hampered the prisoner of war labor program. The War Department was forced to answer countless thousands of letters, accusations and criticisms. Especially in 1943, public fear and opposition retarded the location near work projects of numerous camps. Public indignation and attention made a number of prisoners express fear for their own safety. This was especially true in the case of the Japanese. The War Department experienced the fact that when a Japanese prisoner

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1 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 281.

2 Lerch, op. cit., p. 536.

complained to the Protecting Power, retaliation against Americans held prisoners by Japan promptly occurred. Generally, the German and Italian prisoners considered the civilian attitude toward them amusing. They were aware that they were protected by the War Department's policy of complying with the Geneva Convention. Also, practically all of them had long been exposed to the European scene where prisoners of war were so commonplace that they were hardly noticed.[1]

In April 1945, the House Military Affairs Committee, following an investigation which failed to substantiate any of the numerous civilian criticisms, reported as follows:

> The greatest single factor which enables us to get relief to our soldiers in enemy hands is the scrupulous attitude of the United States Army in fulfilling the Geneva Convention. Some have lightly called this policy "mollycoddling". The truth is that the Army has maintained the highest discipline in handling prisoners and has obtained from them millions of valuable days of work.

This report was widely publicized at the time and lessened much of the criticism against the Army's management of the prisoner of war labor program.[2]

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1 Robert Devore, "Our Pampered War Prisoners," Colliers', Vol. 114, October 14, 1944, p. 14.

2 New York Times, May 9, 1945, p. 8, col. 3.

From the above it may be construed that a good public relations program in connection with the treatment and employment of prisoners of war would have been of value in keeping down criticism and complaints. This thought is further substantiated when it is pointed out that the major portion of the data of a factual or analytical nature appearing in this study was compiled from published sources, either technical in nature or extremely limited in circulation.

Attitudes of Employers of Prisoners of War

Actually it would be a relatively simple matter to dispense with this phase of the human relations aspects of the prisoner of war labor program. This could be done by stating that from all indications those employing prisoners were on the whole satisfied with their production and their conduct as workmen. This satisfaction could, without doubt, have been partly due to the fact that during the wartime manpower shortages, any available labor was gladly utilized. To present a more complete picture of the employment of prisoners in a war economy, it is, however, believed pertinent to include a representative sample of the comments of employers.

The Executive Secretary of the Maine Potato Growers

Association stated that prisoners of war employed at harvesting potatoes were as fully productive as American civilian workers.[1] Cotton growers in Texas credited prisoner labor with saving the 1945 crop from rotting due to lack of pickers.[2] The Combined Pulp and Paper Commission declared that prisoners of war were satisfactory forest workers and attributed the stepped-up wartime rate of paper production in the United States and Canada to them.[3]

Military commanders using prisoners of war were unanimous in their opinion that such labor was of major assistance to the war effort. In particular, port of embarkation authorities spoke in very high terms of the work of Italian Service Units in loading and unloading freight cars and ships. Other installation commanders found the work of German prisoner mechanics of great importance in automotive repair shops, supply depots and at airfield maintenance.[4]

In its final report before deactivation, the Army Service Forces declared that the cooperation of prisoner

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1. New York Times, October 14, 1945, p. 26, col. 3.
2. Beverly Smith, op. cit., p. 82.
3. Business Week, December 25, 1943, op. cit., p. 50.
4. Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 282.

employers, Governmental and private, was greatly instrumental in making the prisoner of war labor program a success. It was stated that very few intentional violations of War Department policy or the rules of the Geneva Convention occurred. Only two contracts were cancelled for non-cooperation on the part of contractors.[1]

Attitudes of Organized Labor

Mention was made in the preceding chapter of War Department policy concerning competition of prisoner of war labor with free labor. It was explained that before obtaining prisoners, every prospective private employer had to first have the approval of the War Manpower Commission or the War Food Administration. This was rendered in the form of a certification that no free labor was obtainable in the community to perform the work in question. It was also mentioned that employers were required to pay prevailing civilian wages. This was to prevent one employer from being subsidized to the detriment of his competitors.

In spite of this clear-cut policy, which from all indications was rigidly enforced, considerable union

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1 Army Service Forces Annual Report of 1945, op. cit., p. 277.

opposition to the employment of prisoners of war was encountered. In every case the grounds for such opposition were extremely vague and without practical foundation. In the final analysis, organized labor's attitude did not impede the prisoner labor program to any great extent. It did, however, result in harassment to the War Department. Preparation of replies to labor executives and statements to the press required hundreds of man-hours on the part of responsible officials in the Provost Marshall General's Office.[1]

As was done in the case of employer attitudes, a sample of those of organized labor is included to present a more complete picture of the prisoner of war as a workman. It is to be noted that these attitudes are reflected from all labor levels, national and local.

The official organ of the American Federation of Labor carried the following statement in February, 1944:[2]

> The Executive Council is deeply concerned over the indiscriminate employment of prisoners of war in competition with free American workers. This cannot be justified on the grounds of manpower shortages or for any other reason. It is felt that a clearcut program should be worked out for the employment of prisoners on useful projects where there will be no danger of sabotage and no conflict with free American workers.

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1 Lerch, op. cit., p. 540.

2 American Federationist, Vol. 51, February 1944, p. 6.

A year before this the Executive Secretary of the California State Federation of Labor alleged that plans to move 3,000 prisoners of war to his state were intended to depress the labor market.[1] The president of the Wisconsin State Federation of Labor stated that "the use of prisoners in the forests is objectionable to the unions even though it might advance the war program."[2] On another occasion, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees refused to permit Italian Service Units to aid in clearing snow from rail yards "because of the danger of sabotage and dissension".[3] In New Jersey a local union attempted to collect a work-permit fee of 25 cents per man per month from prisoners of war employed on a large farm.[4]

Such comments on the part of organized labor seem absurd in view of the fact that extensive manpower shortages existed during World War II. As conclusively shown by this study, prisoners of war were needed to fill these shortages. It is hardly conceivable that responsible

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1 New York Times, February 20, 1943, p. 16, col. 4.

2 "War Prisoners Opposed," Business Week, January 15, 1944, p. 96.

3 New York Times, February 12, 1945, p. 12, col. 6.

4 "Prisoners Dues," Business Week, February 19, 1944, p. 94.

labor officials were not aware of this. The only conclusion that can be reached is that perhaps organized labor did actually fear that the opportunities of free workers would be impaired, and that oppostition was appropriate as a matter of insurance.

Summary

In order to obtain maximum production from prisoners of war, the "task system" was found to be best. This consisted of assigning to each prisoner or group of prisoners a definite and reasonable amount of work to be accomplished in a specified period of time.

Prisoners responded to incentives in the same manner as other types of workers. Increased earnings and free time were the most effective incentives used.

Adequate supervision and training increased prisoner of war production and effective steps were taken by the War Department to assure that those concerned realized this.

Morale was considered an important factor in making the prisoner a better worker. Facilities for education, religion and recreation were amply extended to all prison camps for this reason, as well as for promoting good discipline and control.

The extent to which prisoners were effectively

employed depended on the various attitudes of the public, the prisoner employer and organized labor. Public apprehension and sentiment caused considerable difficulty and forced the War Department to spend an excessive amount of time in replying to inquiries, criticisms and allegations.

On the whole, employers of prisoners of war found them to be satisfactory workers. Organized labor generally opposed the prisoner labor program for fear that the rights of free workers would be impaired. This fear was unfounded due to strict Government policy that prisoners of war would not be employed in competition with free American workers.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding chapters of this study various principles were set forth which must be kept in mind by those confronted with the task of employing prisoners of war. While international regulations for the protection of war prisoners may help to insure the uniform recognition of certain permanent principles, there are many others that evolve from the lessons of experience.

Reviewing these, it is first recalled that organization, both of groups of prisoners and agencies of administration, must be sound. In the overall administrative organization flexibility is a major requirement to be met. Provision must be made for the transfer between camps of individuals or groups of prisoners in order to utilize effectively their particular skills. Prisoners must be organized within their own groups in a manner that separates trouble-makers, places responsibility, facilitates control and complies with international agreements.

In the final analysis, these requirements were met in the organizational structures for prisoner of war administration in the United States. Such organizational structures were the result of adequate planning based

on experience gained from the administration of a few of the earlier camps when the number of prisoners was not large.

Mention was also made of certain principles of prisoner of war camp location and construction, calling attention to the fact that maximum security and nearness to employment opportunities are the major governing factors in determining sites and physical structures. In this connection it was pointed out that carefully planned physical facilities were instrumental in holding to a minimum the number of guard and overhead personnel required.

Discipline was another phase of the prisoner of war problem to which the War Department gave careful consideration. In the interests of making prisoners into an efficient labor force, discipline was maintained firmly and fairly. On the whole there was a noticeable absence of any major disciplinary problems in prisoner of war administration in the United States. This can be attributed to clearly defined rules and procedures promulgated to prisoners and the authorities over them as well.

In the discussion of treatment of prisoners of war it was shown that legally they must be adequately fed and clothed. The value of fair treatment was recognized

as paramount in determining the efficiency and morale of prisoner labor. Careful study of the food problem by the War Department resulted in significant savings. It was found that prisoners when fed according to national dietary habits consumed and wasted less food. Clothing for prisoners presented no great problem due to the practice of issuing old, obsolete and reclaimed stocks in Government warehouses.

Following this series of administrative principles, insight was gained into exactly how prisoners of war were fitted efficiently into the country's progressive mobilization for the war effort. It was shown that agreements between military authorities and various civilian Governmental manpower agencies assured equitable distribution of prisoners for both military and non-military needs. The necessity for a Prisoner of War Employment Review Board was explained. The point was made that provisions of the Geneva Convention relating to permissible types of work are not too clear. Consequently, in order to insure uniformity in employment practices and prevent waste of manpower, the Board ruled on cases of doubt as to suitable and legal types of work.

An evaluation placed on the production record of the prisoner of war labor force revealed that the contribution rendered to the war effort was definitely of

value. When estimated in financial terms, such value was set at $287,837,164.00, part of which was deposited in the United States Treasury while the remainder represented savings to the War Department. Actually, an evaluation of the worth of the prisoner labor force is not complete unless consideration has been given to those indirect benefits received. These benefits cannot be estimated in financial terms.

For example, every effectively employed prisoner of war in the United States meant another American citizen available for service as a war worker or as a member of the armed forces. As a further example, prisoners were found especially suitable for employment in those industries and activities which normally used large numbers of unskilled workers. Among these are agriculture, forestry, railway track maintenance, food processing and meat packing. The ranks of free workers formerly available for these activities were quickly decimated by induction and, especially, by the lure of high wages in war plants and shipyards.

It is vital to note that the same human relations aspects are present in a prisoner of war employment situation that exist in any labor program. Where properly motivated, supervised and trained, the prisoner was found to be as fully productive as the average

inexperienced free worker performing the same task.

The War Department in its management of the prisoner of war labor program found it necessary to consider the attitudes of the civilian population, the employers of prisoners, and organized labor. There were times when public sentiment and feelings interfered with the fullest utilization of prisoners. This interference was not actually great, though it did cause the War Department to alter its plans for the location of several of the earlier camps. The reason was that centers of population expressed fear that escaped prisoners would commit acts of sabotage. In general, the attitudes of employers toward the employment of prisoners of war as manpower additions were favorable. The opinion prevailed that the prisoner of war was a satisfactory workman. Organized labor rendered a continuing, though not too strong, opposition to the prisoner labor program. This opposition appeared unjustified when definite Government policy precluding the competition of prisoner labor with free labor was rigidly enforced. This attitude is understandable when it is construed that perhaps organized labor voiced it as a reminder to the Government not to allow the rights of free workers to be impaired.

It is felt that the United States coped with the prisoner of war problem during World War II in a proper

manner. The thousands of prisoners brought into this country in order to reduce the burden of care overseas were efficiently fitted into the nation's war economy. By adequate training, proper equipment and planned employment these prisoners became an asset. Major credit for the effectiveness of the prisoner labor program may be attributed to sound policies and practices which controlled the prisoners, fitted them into the right jobs and assured their employment where they were most needed. In view of its limited previous experience with prisoners of war, the War Department managed the program in a creditable manner. By taking the stand that the Geneva Convention would be scrupulously observed, this country avoided censure. This policy also prevented retaliation and secured better treatment for members of our own armed forces held prisoner by the enemy.

Aside from the apparent necessity for interning prisoners of war in the United States, the venture can be amply justified from the war production point of view. Acute manpower shortages were considerably eased by the prisoner labor force. Many essential work projects in agriculture, forestry, mining, railway construction and maintenance, food processing, meat packing and trade were completed with prisoner of war labor. Had this labor not been available, many of these work

projects might have otherwise been abandoned.

The management of the prisoner of war labor program resulted in a wealth of practical experience for the War Department. From the viewpoint of national defense and military preparedness, this alone is sufficient justification for the entire venture.

In the opinion of the author, our National War Manpower Doctrine should envisage the systematic and planned use of prisoners of war in the future. If again engaged in war, this country will likely find shortages of labor a major problem. The experience of World War II supports this contention. In order to provide for additions to our wartime manpower resources and to release troops to the armies in the field, the author would urge our national strategists, military and civilian, to incorporate in mobilization plans adequate provisions for the full utilization of all prisoners of war captured and interned by our own forces.

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