

Since the kitchen equipment of 10 boilers & 2 ovens per compound was obviously inadequate, almost all food was prepared by the various room messes in the blocks. These messes obtained from the kitchen only hot water and, 4 times a week, hot soup. Cooking within the block was performed on a range whose heating surface was 3 square feet. During winter months, PW were able to use the heating stoves in their rooms as well. With few exceptions, each room messed by itself. All food was pooled, and room cooks were responsible for serving it in digestible & appetizing, if possible, form. Since the stove schedule provided for cooking periods from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m., some rooms ate their main meal in mid-afternoon, while others dined fashionably late. Below is a typical day's menu:

Breakfast - 9 a.m. Two slices of German bread with spread, coffee (soluble) or tea.
 Lunch - noon Soup (on alternate days), slice of German bread, coffee or tea.
 Supper - 5:30 p.m. Potatoes, one-third can of meat, vegetables (twice a week), slice German bread, coffee or tea.

Evening snack - 10 p.m. Dessert (pie, cake, etc) coffee or cocoa.

A unique PW establishment was Foodacco whose chief function was to provide PW with a means of exchange and a stable barter market where, for example, cocoa could be swapped for cigars. Profits arising from a 2% commission charged on all transactions was credited to a communal camp fund.

HEALTH

Despite confinement, crowding, lack of medical supplies & poor sanitary facilities, health of PW was astonishingly good.

For trivial ailments, the compounds maintained a first aid room. More serious cases were sent to 1 of the 2 sick quarters within the camp. Sick quarters for the South Compound originally consisted of a small building with 24 beds, a staff of 3 PW doctors and some PW orderlies. This also served the North & West Compounds. The Center Compound had its own dispensary and 2 PW doctors. On 1 June 1944, the three-compound sick quarters was replaced by a new building with 60 beds.

The Germans furnished very few medical supplies. As a result, PW depended almost wholly on the Red Cross. Large shipments of supplies, including much-needed sulfa drugs, began to arrive in the autumn of 1944. PW were also glad to receive a small fluoroscope and thermometers.

Most common of the minor illnesses were colds, sore throats, influenza, food poisoning and skin diseases. When a PW needed an x-ray or the attentions of a specialist, he was examined by a German doctor. It usually took months to obtain these special attentions. Cases requiring surgery were sent to one of the English hospitals, as a rule Lamsdorf or Obermassfeld. Emergency cases went to a French hospital at Stalag 8C, one mile distant.

Dental care for the North, West & South Compounds was provided by a British dentist and an American dental student. In 14 months, they gave 1,400 treatments to 308 PW from the South Compound alone.

Sanitation was poor. Although PW received a quick delousing upon entry into the camp, they were plagued by bedbugs and other parasites. Since there was no plumbing, both indoor and outdoor latrines added to the sanitation problem in summer. PW successfully fought flies by scrubbing aboorts daily, constructing fly traps and screening latrines with ersatz burlap in lieu of wire mesh.

Bathing facilities were extremely limited. In theory the German shower houses could provide each man with a three-minute hot shower weekly. In fact, however, conditions varied from compound to compound and if a PW missed the opportunity to take a hot shower he resorted to a sponge bath with water he had heated himself - the only other hot water available the year around.

CLOTHING

In 1943, Germany still issued booty clothing of French, Belgian or English derivation to PW. This practice soon ceased, making both Britons & Americans completely dependent on clothing received from the Red' Cross. An exception to the rule was made in the winter of 1943 when the camp authorities obtained 400 old French overcoats from Anglo-American PW.

Gradually, Americans were able to replace theri RAF type uniforms with GI enlisted men's uniforms, which proved extremely serviceable. When stock of clothing permitted, each PW was maintained with the following wardrobe: