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# Forechecking in captivity: Sport in the lives of Canadian prisoners of war at three German camps during the Second World War.

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**FORECHECKING IN CAPTIVITY:  
SPORT IN THE LIVES OF CANADIAN PRISONERS OF WAR AT  
THREE GERMAN CAMPS DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

by

**Bradley J. Davison**

**A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
through the Faculty of Human Kinetics  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Human Kinetics at the  
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## ABSTRACT

While essentially a detestable circumstance, most Second World War prisoner of war camps in the European theatre exhibited recreational outlets for POWs. Some gardened, attended lectures, or enjoyed theatrical productions; others developed tools, read books, or maintained a diary... still, many played sports. This study is an attempt to determine the sports experience of Canadian POWs at Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI. Conclusions were drawn from contemporary literature, archival documents, published and unpublished prisoners' recollections, and interviews with ex-POWs. The sports environment identified was active, constant, and deliberate. The War Prisoners' Aid of the YMCA provided most of the goods; Canadian prisoners were able to participate in softball, cricket, swimming, golf, volleyball, basketball, boxing, soccer, rugby, football, gymnastics, fencing, track and field events, badminton, deck tennis, table tennis, ice skating, ice hockey, running, and 'circuit bashing.' Participation was often highly organized, and served numerous ends.

**This study is dedicated to all those Canadian fliers held captive in  
German POW Camps during the Second World War  
and to Mom and Dad, 'Introduction, Body, Conclusion...'**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPOWRA	Canadian Prisoners of War Relatives' Association
CRCS	Canadian Red Cross Society
DND	Department of National Defence
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
OKW	Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (German Army High Command)
OR	Other Ranks
PAF	Polish Air Force
POW	Prisoner of War
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RCAF	Royal Canadian Air Force
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force
SAAF	South African Air Force
SAAG	Special Assistant to the Adjutant-General
WPA	War Prisoners' Aid of the World's Committee of YMCAs
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
Kriegsmarine	German Navy
Luftwaffe	German Air Force
Wehrmacht	German Army
Dulag	short for <i>Durchgangslager</i> ; a transition camp
Kommandantur	the German quarters in a German POW camp
Kriegie	short for <i>Kriegsgefangener</i> ; the German word for prisoner of war Allied POWs often employed this shortened term instead of 'POW'
Luft	short for <i>Luftwaffe</i> ; German Air Force
Oflag	short for <i>Offizierslager</i> ; a prison camp for officers
Stalag	short for <i>Stammlager</i> ; a prison camp for soldiers and non- commissioned officers
Vorlager	the area in a German POW camp between the POWs' quarters and the Kommandantur, sometimes including the infirmary, storehouses, and/or the German Punishment cells, known by POWs as the 'Cooler'

## Chapter One

### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Sport was a major and meaningful part of the daily lives of prisoners of war (POWs) at Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI. However, this facet of camp life has been largely understudied by academics until this point. This study evaluates various themes surrounding the sporting practices at the three camps, primarily discussing the activities available to and pursued by Canadian servicemen. Still, one must develop a basic understanding of the prison camp environment before one can truly begin to appreciate the role and importance of sport in this environment.

Approximately 10,000 members of the Canadian forces were captured and held as prisoners of war during the course of the Second World War. Jonathan F. Vance, a noted military historian, presents the most plausible totals from an array of sources, asserting that 7,088 Canadian Army, 2,524 Royal Canadian Air Force, and 94 Royal Canadian Navy and Royal Canadian Naval Volunteer Reserve became POWs during the war (5,399, 2,482, and 92 respectively for those captured in the European theatre).<sup>2</sup> Allied servicemen captured by enemy forces experienced a wide range of environments and installations while in captivity. From relatively comfortable lodgings at the Dulag Luft near Frankfurt, to solitary confinement at a civilian prison commandeered by the Gestapo at Paris, to dysentery, disease, and total lack of accommodation endured at Buchenwald (a concentration camp), to the cramped, harsh conditions at Japanese camps such as Niigata Camp 5B and Niigata 15D/15B, POWs faced a varied experience.<sup>3</sup>

While a branch of the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW - German Army

High Command) was tasked with the POW agenda, each armed service was responsible for the care of those POWs captured from its respective service.<sup>4</sup> For instance, army prisoners were processed and controlled by the Wehrmacht, air force prisoners by the Luftwaffe, and naval prisoners by the Kriegsmarine.<sup>5</sup> The basic camp established for army POWs was termed a *Stalag* while a Luftwaffe camp was characteristically named a *Stalag Luft*; captured naval personnel were typically sent to Marlag und Milag Nord in Northwestern Germany. Within these classifications, further distinctions between camps existed. A *Dulag* was a transit camp where recently captured prisoners could be interrogated, processed, and sent to more permanent camps.<sup>6</sup> An *Oflag* was a camp specifically assigned to the detention of officers; within the Luftwaffe's system, officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men co-existed in the same camps, while separate compounds were often developed within the camps to distinguish specific nationalities and/or ranks. It should be noted that during the later stages of the War, prisoners endured forced marches to different camps, and the original designation of camps became secondary to moving POWs away from Allied advances on both fronts.<sup>7</sup>

The way in which POWs were treated was, among other factors, guarded by international conventions ratified and/or acceded to by the belligerents. Most worthy of note are the agreements arising from the Hague Conventions (1899, 1907) and the Geneva Conventions (1929). While the Hague Conventions dealt broadly with the means and practices of war, the Geneva Conventions were geared specifically to the victims of war. It should also be understood that the international conferences held in the years and locations listed above yielded multiple conventions. For instance, the Diplomatic

Conference held at Geneva in 1929 rendered two international conventions (see Appendix I). The First Peace Conference of the Hague (1899), conducted between 18 May and 29 July 1899, was called by Nicholas II, Czar of Russia, with the intention of establishing a lasting global peace and limiting the progressive development of arms.<sup>8</sup> *Convention (II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land* is most pertinent to this study. Sixteen articles regarding prisoners of war, detailing such themes as POW control, labour, lodging, clothing, legal status, parole, escape and recapture, the information bureau, relief societies, postal services, the rights of officers, religious freedoms, wills and death certificates, and repatriation are listed in Section I, Chapter II of this Convention.<sup>9</sup> In all, 46 nations ratified or acceded to *Convention (II)* prior to the outbreak of the Second World War.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the formal agreements made at this conference, provisions were established for a second conference.

The Second Peace Conference of the Hague was convened on 15 June 1907 and adjourned 18 October 1907. Among other acts of progress, Section I, Chapter II of *Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land* revisited matters concerning prisoners of war.<sup>11</sup> This chapter expanded on the 1899 convention only slightly, defining the duties of the inquiry office in greater depth, exempting officers from mandatory labour, and refining wording throughout the text. While the number of signatories for the Final Act of this Conference grew from 27 in 1899 to 44 in 1907, it must be noted that only a portion of those nations actually ratified *Convention (IV)*, and

were thus bound to adhere to it.<sup>12</sup>

The course of the First World War revealed some serious shortcomings and ambiguities in international law as it concerned prisoners of war. The desire to organize a conference to revise these problems was expressed by members of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in February 1918.<sup>13</sup> A Diplomatic Conference was convened at Geneva on 1 July 1929 to appraise the drafts of two conventions, namely the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, and the *Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field*.<sup>14</sup> Most pertinent to this study, the first convention was developed to complement, not replace, the Hague Conventions, and established a number of innovations. In sum, Vance asserts,

The Geneva version ran to ninety-seven articles and elaborated on many of the provisions that had been proven inadequate by the experience of war. Once again, the basic assumption was that POWs should be considered on par with the Detaining Power's garrison troops with respect to rations, clothing, living space, and other necessities. Reflecting those areas that had proved troublesome during the Great War, the sections dealing with work, punishment, and relief operations were all expanded, as was the section on repatriation; an annex giving a draft agreement for the repatriation of prisoners, similar to those reached by the major powers during the Great War, was also included. Finally, the article covering the speedy evacuation of POWs after the close of hostilities was made more explicit.<sup>15</sup>

While a total of 53 nations eventually ratified or acceded to the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, only 39 did so prior to the breakout of hostilities in 1939.<sup>16</sup> Japan signed the Convention on the final day of the Conference, 27 July 1929, but neither ratified nor acceded to it. This action would have serious ramifications in Japan's practices towards captured POWs during the course of the Second World War.

While nations at war that had ratified the Geneva Convention were bound to maintain its standards, elements of the Convention were not always upheld. An aversion to blatant disregard for substantive elements of the Geneva Convention was maintained for fear of reciprocal action imposed upon one's own captured servicemen.<sup>17</sup> Still, S.P. MacKenzie writes, "[d]epending on the nationality of both captive and captor and the period of the war, treatment could range from strict adherence to the terms of the 1929 Geneva Convention to privation and brutality."<sup>18</sup> Clearly the extent to which belligerents proscribed to or disregarded the Convention depended on several factors. The authorities' humanitarian ethos and interpretation of a POW, the availability of resources to meet the Convention's standards, and the competency of officials in charge of the POW portfolio were all factors influencing the degree to which the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* was employed.<sup>19</sup>

Typically Axis POWs were afforded more opportunities and benefits, and experienced more hospitable environments than Allied POWs.<sup>20</sup> For instance, German servicemen captured and detained at Camp 30, Bowmanville, Ontario (Canada), enjoyed a remarkably decadent standard of living compared to the vast majority of Allied POWs in Europe. These captives enjoyed 'more than adequate' accommodations including an indoor swimming pool, a gymnasium, unfettered recreational opportunities such as cross country skiing beyond camp boundaries, a regular mail service, regular pay, a well equipped kitchen, a nourishing diet, well maintained sanitary facilities, medical and dental services, and a prisoners' canteen dispensing cigarettes, tobacco, razor blades, writing materials, and beer among other popular items.<sup>21</sup> While it should not be assumed

that all Allied camps were as accommodating as Camp 30, this brief example illustrates the types of conditions that many Axis POWs experienced during the War. However, it must be acknowledged that while those prisoners already in captivity typically remained in good care, thousands of Axis servicemen who surrendered at war's end died of malnourishment, hunger, and disease while in the care of Allied forces.<sup>22</sup>

The opportunities and hospitality experienced by Allied POWs in Axis camps varied greatly. In his PhD dissertation on the treatment of American prisoners of war in Germany, historian Andrew Hasselbring argues that the most important variable “was the character of the German in contact with the prisoners.”<sup>23</sup> Further, Hasselbring surmises that “[t]he experience of any one POW greatly depended upon his rank, when he was captured, the camp he was held in, his branch of service, and the Germans he came into contact with.”<sup>24</sup> In regards to different services, John Vietor, a former POW at Stalag Luft I, claims that Air Force prisoners were treated better than others.<sup>25</sup> He states,

At Stalag Luft I the Germans respected the letter, if not the spirit, of the main provisions of the Geneva Conventions... The Luftwaffe retained, more than any other branch of the service, a code of military honor and we [POWs at Stalag Luft I] were lucky to be under their control.<sup>26</sup>

Regardless of service, conditions in German POW camps typically began to deteriorate after the D-Day invasion in 1944; among other issues, the already meagre rations that POWs were forced to stomach were further reduced.<sup>27</sup> Conditions such as these engendered the necessity for the intervention of philanthropic organizations.

The primary aid society in regards to supplementing POWs' diets was the International Committee of the Red Cross and its National Societies, including the



Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS). Over the course of the War, this philanthropic body issued millions of food parcels to camps across Europe. The importance of these parcels is clear; Sergeant Bert Gnam, formerly a POW at Stalag IV B, Muhlberg states, “[i]t was fantastic what the Red Cross got to us. If it hadn’t been for them, I wouldn’t be here today. We would have died of starvation, sooner or later.”<sup>28</sup> Gnam is not alone in his sentiments. In a study to evaluate the Red Cross food parcel program conducted by Frederick Tisdall, Margaret Wilson, Joan Mitchell, Norma Gershaw, Grace Rouse, J.F. McCreary, and A.H. Sellers, hundreds of the 5,170 repatriated Commonwealth POWs interviewed stated that they could not have survived without the parcels.<sup>29</sup> Red Cross Societies from various nations participated in the food parcel program. The CRCS’s food parcel, weighing eight pounds and expected to last a POW seven days, typically included whole milk powder, butter, cheese, corned beef, pork luncheon meat, salmon, sardines or kippers, dried apples, dried prunes, sugar, jam, pilot biscuits, eating chocolate, salt and pepper, tea, and soap.<sup>30</sup> By the close of the Second World War, the CRCS alone had packed and shipped nearly 16.5 million food parcels for the European and Far Eastern theatres of war, at a cost of \$47,529,000.<sup>31</sup> Sergeant George “Hayden” Auld, an ex-POW from Stalag IV B, Muhlberg states,

Somebody should have had a medal of valour or honour for whoever designed the Canadian Red Cross Parcel. I have never, never heard one criticism of it. The Canadian Red Cross parcel was so well-balanced and well thought-out. I don’t know how you could have improved it.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the ICRC and its national societies, the War Prisoners’ Aid of the YMCA (WPA) contributed immensely to the supply of POWs under Allied and Axis

control. Established at the outbreak of hostilities in 1939, the WPA (a branch of the World's Committee of the YMCA) extended its services, "to all the belligerent countries holding or likely to hold prisoners of war and interned civilians."<sup>33</sup> While the ICRC and the WPA both sought to aid POWs, their roles and responsibilities within the POW agenda differed. Andre Vulliet contends,

At the beginning of the war friendly relations were established in Geneva between the respective headquarters of the two organizations [the War Prisoners' Aid of the YMCA and the International Red Cross] and, although no agreement was ever concluded restricting the program of work of either organization, it has been felt all along that the International Red Cross was chiefly responsible for collecting all information regarding prisoners and organizing in Geneva the central agency, through which such information is transmitted to PWs [POWs] and their relatives, for carrying the PW mail, for distributing all material sent in by National Red Cross Societies to their respective nationals held prisoners in enemy countries, for making certain the material, physical and sanitary conditions in PW camps currently conformed with the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. is not and never tried to be an inspecting semi-official body. As it was authorized to work with prisoners of war by courtesy of the governments concerned and for a specific purpose, it directed all its means to helping the millions behind barbed wire in keeping mentally and spiritually as fit as conditions permitted. Through its visiting secretaries throughout the world it found itself dealing chiefly in morale matters, ascertaining and meeting the needs of the prisoners along religious, educational and recreational lines.<sup>34</sup>

The role of WPA Secretaries was multi-faceted. During their frequent camp visits, these individuals listened to the plight of servicemen, became aware of morale problems, entertained requests from servicemen and determined camp welfare needs, suggested solutions and new activities, aided in religious ceremonies, visited the sick and wounded, and attempted to cooperate with both camp authorities and POW leaders.<sup>35</sup> Typical

themes concerning the Secretaries included spiritual and religious activity, education and intellectual diversion, musical activity, art and handicrafts, indoor games, theatricals and movies, gardening and landscaping, camp newspapers and radios, special and individual requests, and sports and athletics.<sup>36</sup> The number of Secretaries grew from fifteen in 1940 to between 150 and 175 in 1945. Though there were only eight full-time Secretaries assigned to German installations, over 2,500 visits were made to the region during the War.<sup>37</sup> POWs typically looked forward to visits from WPA representatives. Hasselbring notes,

The monotony of camp life in Stalag Luft 3 was broken up by visits from the YMCA secretary, Henry Söderberg. The prisoners would approach Söderberg as if he were a department store Santa Claus, one by one telling him what they wanted... When the shipment arrived it was like Christmas for the prisoners [see Appendix XII, Illustrations XXVIII-XXIX].<sup>38</sup>

While the WPA gathered and sent massive collections of materials to POWs, including hundreds of thousands of articles of athletic equipment and sporting goods, the organization was not always credited with their supply; WPA shipments were transported to camps overseas by ICRC ships and typically over land by ICRC transports.<sup>39</sup> Subsequently, the Red Cross may have been confused by POWs as the contributor of these materials.

In addition to the Red Cross and the WPA, other major relief societies, including the Canadian POW Relatives Association (CPOWRA), attempted to bring the comforts of home to prisoners. Among those items shipped to Canadian POWs were clothes, tobacco, reading material, musical instruments, recreational supplies, and sports equipment, among others.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, the families of servicemen captured abroad

were able to send communications and supplies to their loved ones.<sup>41</sup>

The life of a POW detained inside a German controlled camp was not an enviable one. From accommodations, to food, to clothing, to communication with the outside world, the typical daily existence of a POW in captivity left much to be desired. What follows is a brief synopsis of several important themes of camp life, including diet, recreation and leisure, escape, sport, and the POW demeanor.

Among all of the challenges facing the POW, food was always of primary concern.<sup>42</sup> At Stalag Luft I, Barth one former POW purports that prisoners were forced to endure a beggarly diet of 500 calories per day.<sup>43</sup> Another source suggests that the meagre daily diet amounted to approximately 800 calories at this camp.<sup>44</sup> Regardless of the exact figure, the fact remains that POWs were often provided with restricted diets from their German captors. The standard German ration served to POWs at Stalag VIIIIB, Lamsdorf in the winter of 1942-1943 was neither appetizing nor nutritious: each morning, prisoners received a cup of mint tea; at noon, they received a ladle of barley and vegetable soup (usually cabbage and turnips, although fish bones would sometimes be included); at 15:00 hours, a bread ration was served, seven men to a loaf measuring nine inches by five by five (made of rye and potato flour) which was supplemented with six or seven boiled potatoes; in addition to these rations, twice per week a POW might receive some cooked meat or cheese (often a repugnant form of fish cheese).<sup>45</sup> Generally prisoners' diets included potatoes, heavy black bread suspected of containing sawdust, turnips, beets, carrots, cabbage, marrows (vegetables usually served in some form of stew, which not uncommonly also included random meats), blood sausage, a pungent fish cheese,

margarine, chemically sweetened jam (made from turnips), sugar, mint tea, and ersatz coffee made from roasted acorns or scorched grain. Some items would be served more infrequently than others, especially the meat rations.<sup>46</sup> Having been provided with such harsh diets from the Germans, some POWs grew and maintained vegetable gardens to supplement their diets.<sup>47</sup>

In an effort to prepare varied meals and special dishes, POWs sometimes coalesced into groups to share foodstuffs. As Andrew Cox, an ex-POW, suggests,

In order to have as varied a diet as possible and to take advantage of the diversity in the contents of the food parcels, prisoners would join together in small groups called 'combines.' This enabled them to have access to a larger assortment of foodstuffs and thus provide a more interesting meal.<sup>48</sup>

While it was the desire of the National Red Cross Societies to prepare and ship enough food parcels to supply each POW with one per week, these resources were not always received. In some cases, the Allied bombing of transportation lines hindered the timely delivery of parcels.<sup>49</sup> In other cases, German officials simply neglected to supply POWs with their Red Cross ration. At times, a threat to withhold parcels, or an actual refusal to disperse parcels to POWs was spurred by POWs' unsatisfactory conduct or insubordinate behaviour.<sup>50</sup> Instead parcels were sometimes amassed in warehouses at the camps.<sup>51</sup> Even if supplemental rations were received and dispersed among POWs, challenges sometimes arose. Vietor asserts that cans of food from Red Cross parcels were punctured to ensure their hasty consumption at Stalag Luft I, thus limiting any stockpiles of rations for escapers.<sup>52</sup> Still, it is worthy of note that of all the POWs surveyed and included in the study conducted by Tisdall and colleagues, 58% of the Canadian army members, 68

% of the British army members, and 58% of the RCAF members surveyed reported either no loss or less than a 10% loss in weight while in captivity.<sup>53</sup>

Food was not the only topic preoccupying POWs in captivity. Anton Gill suggests that the best way to focus one's energy and elude the monotony of life was to join the escape efforts.<sup>54</sup> The fact that some POWs would pursue escape attempts is recognized in the Geneva Convention (1929). Article 51 of the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* states:

Attempted escape, even if it is not a first offence, shall not be considered as an aggravation of the offence in the event of the prisoner of war being brought before the courts for crimes or offences against persons or property committed in the course of such attempt. After an attempted or successful escape, the comrades of the escaped person who aided the escape shall incur only disciplinary punishment therefor.<sup>55</sup>

Though captured and removed from the battlefield, POWs could still torment their enemies with escape attempts, and even force them to divert extra resources to monitor camps and recapture escapees. By the end of 1943, approximately 400,000 German soldiers were tasked with the supervision of POWs, and many more would be mobilized for major escapes. SS Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler stated that he would have to assign 60,000 to 70,000 auxiliary troops to recapture the servicemen who broke loose from Stalag Luft III during the Great Escape of March 1944.<sup>56</sup> Although this is just one example, escape organizations were initiated among POWs at many of the camps.

Arguably Stalag Luft III, Sagan harboured one of the most intricate and successful escape organizations of all POW camps of the Second World War. Dubbed *X-Organization*, the escape committee at Sagan was comprised of some of the most

troublesome and escape-savvy Allied POWs, incorporating sections of tailors, engineers, surveyors, miners, artists, printers, graphic designers, look-outs, messengers, diversion-creators, German-speakers, entertainers, and administrators.<sup>57</sup> Escape attempts were classified as either 'over the fence,' 'under the fence,' or 'through the fence.' Roger Bushell, a South African and charismatic Squadron Leader with the RAF, was already a veteran escaper prior to his joining Sagan's ranks in the autumn of 1942 [see Appendix XII, Illustration XXVII].<sup>58</sup> Bushell, the eventual head of *X-Organization*, was the mastermind behind the Great Escape, an underground breakout from North Compound, resulting in the temporary escape of 76 airmen on the evening of 24/25 March 1944.<sup>59</sup> A Canadian by the name of Wally Floody was a member of Bushell's executive, and eventually was put in charge of sinking the shafts to 'Tom,' 'Dick,' and 'Harry,' the three original tunnels of the Great Escape scheme, and of their excavation.<sup>60</sup> This undertaking involved months of preparation and the combined efforts, in one way or another, of some two thirds of the POWs in North compound.<sup>61</sup> Another significant escape from Stalag Luft III involved the creation and manipulation of a gymnastics horse made from Red Cross crates. On the evening of 29 October 1943, three men escaped successfully through a tunnel that had been excavated beneath a gymnastics horse that fellow POWs had been using as a vaulting instrument.<sup>62</sup> A Canadian, Flight Lieutenant Dallas Laskey, was involved in this escape as a gymnastics participant.<sup>63</sup>

While similar escape organizations existed at other camps, such as the *XYZ Committee* at Stalag Luft I, it should be understood that Stalag Luft III was exceptional in regard to escape.<sup>64</sup> Aidan Crawley suggests that fewer POWs attempted to escape prison

camps than is commonly believed, and as time passed, the majority resorted to enduring captivity with as much cheerfulness as could be expected.<sup>65</sup> While Vance opines that airmen were the most frequent escapers among servicemen, one should realize that only three of the 2,482 RCAF members detained in the European theatre ever successfully escaped from permanent camps, and that of approximately 10,000 Commonwealth airmen held in these camps, fewer than 30 reached Britain or neutral territories.<sup>66</sup>

Recreational and leisure activities also contributed to POWs' attempts to occupy their time. What follows is a brief discussion of some activities that POWs pursued during those monotonous hours in captivity. In discussing his experience as an RCAF pilot held captive at Stalag 383, Hohenfels, Brian Hodgkinson recounts:

It was getting on toward July [1942] and the camp was settling into its daily routine of fighting the oppressive boredom and hopelessly wishing for war's end. Diversion was sought in every direction. Some of the men bought rabbits from the guards in exchange for chocolate candy, or soap, or cigarettes... To say that the barter and exchange industry thrived in our camp would be a terrible understatement.

Bridge, chess, checkers and cribbage whiled away many an hour for many a man. Perhaps the most ambitious attempt to divert ourselves was the theatre we started in one of the warehouses. When we finally got it underway, we produced a new show every 21 days.<sup>67</sup>

In fact, the WPA dispatched tens of thousands of games to camps including sets of chess, checkers, Chinese checkers, mah jong, dominoes, playing cards, lotto, and jigsaw puzzles.<sup>68</sup> The theatre appears to have been a popular distraction at several camps. In addition to the "thriving amateur dramatic society" arising at Stalag Luft III in the autumn of 1942 and the winter of 1942/43, Gill suggests POWs had access to a good library and lectures on numerous topics, including languages.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, POWs at Stalag Luft III



were sporadically afforded the opportunity to watch films in the camp's theatre.<sup>70</sup> In fact, the WPA sent one hundred 16mm sound projectors to German camps.<sup>71</sup> Gambling was another exciting means for POWs to pass their time, typically involving games of chance for cigarettes.<sup>72</sup> While John Grogan, a Canadian soldier captured at Dieppe, discusses games using dice, while other sources mention poker and other card games as a means to increase one's holdings.<sup>73</sup> Moreover, sports events, such as inter-compound or international matches, were sometimes the focus of gambling ventures between POWs.

Some camps received musical instruments; often times, bands or orchestras were established to perform concerts for prisoners and their captors.<sup>74</sup> The construction of tools, utensils, and other amenities from stray materials, such as emptied cans from Red Cross parcels, was another pastime that POWs engaged in.<sup>75</sup> Some prisoners also participated in dance. In early November 1944, an advertisement for ballroom dancing lessons was posted in some huts at Stalag Luft III. John D. Harvie, a former POW at Stalag Luft III, imparts that, despite some initial apprehension, the classes were oversubscribed, and a waiting list for POWs to attend classes was established.<sup>76</sup> Moreover, Canadian POWs at Stalag 383, Hohenfels partook in square dances on the sports field, while at the same time displacing dirt and sand from tunnelling, held in specially crafted pockets, through their pant legs.<sup>77</sup> Some POWs chose to devote parts of their time to establishing and maintaining vegetable gardens to supplement their diet (and sometimes, to camouflage tunnelling).<sup>78</sup> Many POWs spent hours recording camp experiences, memories, poetry, drawings, etc. in log books supplied by the WPA.<sup>79</sup> These activities served to balance the drudgery of everyday life in captivity.

For those harbouring more active ambitions, sports activities were sought by many prisoners. In comparison to the aforementioned recreation and leisure activities, sports activities may have played a more substantial role. Durand claims that, regarding the activities held at Stalag Luft III, “[p]erhaps no other camp activity matched sports in stimulating mass participation and widespread interest...”<sup>80</sup> Comparatively, Hasselbring argues that sport was second only to walking the perimeter in the popularity of organized activities at most camps.<sup>81</sup> While a few sources comment on the accessibility, development, motives, organization, and/or participation in sport by POWs, all too often the existing literature only mentions briefly the occurrence of such activities at various Axis prison camps across Europe. These activities include, but are not limited to, baseball and softball,<sup>82</sup> ice skating and hockey,<sup>83</sup> rugby,<sup>84</sup> volleyball,<sup>85</sup> soccer,<sup>86</sup> basketball,<sup>87</sup> football,<sup>88</sup> cricket,<sup>89</sup> gymnastics,<sup>90</sup> tennis,<sup>91</sup> table tennis,<sup>92</sup> golf,<sup>93</sup> combative sports such as judo, wrestling, and boxing,<sup>94</sup> fencing,<sup>95</sup> swimming,<sup>96</sup> track meets/sports days,<sup>97</sup> and ‘circuit bashing’ or ‘pounding the circuit.’<sup>98</sup> While these opportunities may contribute to an illusion that POW camps were somehow luxurious, or that these facilities made life enjoyable, the reality is that these camps were neither. Arthur A. Durand states,

Explanations for the public’s erroneous impressions are not hard to find. In keeping with the policy of writing cheerful letters home, few really negative reports got beyond the military and the State Department. A Red Cross bulletin published monthly for the benefit of next of kin printed pictures of one or two swimming pools, and the public assumed that every camp had one. The bulletin sought to allay the fears most families had and tried to highlight the most positive aspects of life in captivity. And finally, most people did not understand that prisoners often boosted their own morale by pretending their makeshift facilities were in fact the real thing. Thus a small and sometimes dirty fire-pool became a swimming pool, and a twisted patch in the sand became a nine-hole golf course.<sup>99</sup>

It must be understood that, while sport may have fostered momentary ‘escapes’ from a camp reality, prisoners still had to endure a harsh life while in captivity. POWs existed under the watchful eye of their enemies, stomaching varied meals, far away from their family, friends, and their active brothers in arms. Truly, in regards to the existence of sport in POW camps, Vance warns,

As appealing as this sounded, it should not be imagined that captivity was anything but unpleasant, for such amenities only served to help POWs make the best of a bad situation. The prison camps themselves were usually either mediocrally uncomfortable or monotonously similar.<sup>100</sup>

Gill describes further the demeanor of the typical POW, suggesting that, “it was hard for a POW to shake off the malaise engendered by the fact that he wasn’t doing anything useful, that he was listless owing to poor nutrition, and that he was horribly sex-starved.”<sup>101</sup>

Still, it can be argued that sport played a significant role in the lives of POWs, contributing to the maintenance of physical fitness, relieving boredom, raising morale while expressing national traditions, and not least of all, diverting attention away from escape activity. This study is an attempt to relate this importance of sport in POW camps, specifically among Canadians at three Stalag Luft camps.

## Endnotes

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1. The title 'Forechecking in Captivity' was purposely chosen to reflect prisoners' participation in sport at several levels. 'Forechecking' is a term commonly used in ice hockey and can be defined as checking in the opponents territory, with the intent to gain control of the puck and create a scoring opportunity. At its most basic level, the title was chosen to refer to prisoners' playing ice hockey. In addition, this term refers to sports relationship with escape in the camps. Despite being captured and remanded to a prison camp, many prisoners were eager to continue the war effort against the Germans, even in captivity. Successful escape attempts diverted thousands of German troops from other operations to finding the escapees. Thus, in a sense, escaped prisoners were helping Allied troops on the battle fronts in that those extra German forces were not available to fight, ie. prisoners were in a sense 'forechecking in captivity.' Sport was sometimes employed to mask escape attempts or divert German attention away from escape work. Moreover, prisoners endured a battle with their German captors every day. Captivity promoted a monotonous life stricken with sadness, melancholy, and depression. Sport allowed prisoners to fight this enforced captivity with several benefits including, but not limited to, renewed feelings of satisfaction, excitement, and achievement. In this final context, these prisoners were 'forechecking in captivity.'

2. Jonathan F. Vance, *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), pp. 255-256.

3. Brian G. Hodgkinson, *Spitfire Down: The Pow Story*, ed. George E. Condon (Manotick, Ont: Penumbra Press, 2000), p. 101; John D. Harvie, *Missing in Action: An RCAF Navigator's Story* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), p. 44, 117; Charles G. Roland, *Long Nights Journey into Day: Prisoners of War in Hong Kong and Japan, 1941-1945* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2001), p. 234.

4. Anton Gill, *The Great Escape: The Full Dramatic Story with Contributions from Survivors and their Families* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2002), p. 15.

5. Daniel G. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands: Canadian Prisoners of War 1939-45* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1983), p. xiii.

6. H.F. Stich and W. Stich, *Prisoners of War, Internees and Refugees in the European Theatre of World War II: Postal History* (Vancouver: H.F. Stich, 1990), p. 81.

7. For an in depth discussion of the forced marches Allied prisoners endured during the later stages of the War, refer to John Nichol and Tony Rennell, *The Last Escape: The Untold Story of Allied Prisoners of War in Germany 1944-45* (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada, Ltd., 2002); the Second World War evolved into a two front war when German forces invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, effectively drawing the Soviets into the

conflict. The 6 June 1944 D-Day invasion of Normandy by the Allied Expeditionary Force (including British, American, and Canadian forces, and the French Resistance) marked the breach of 'Fortress Europa' (mainland Europe) by the Western Allies, marking the beginning of the gradual advance of Allied forces, and German withdrawal on the Western front (Western Europe). Similarly, Soviet forces began a summer offensive on the Eastern Front (Eastern Europe) on 22 June 1944, marking the beginning of the final advance of Soviet forces towards Germany, and the concurrent retreat of German forces towards the motherland.

8. Dietrich Schindler and Jiri Toman, *The Laws of Armed Conflicts: A Collection of Conventions, Resolutions and Other Documents* (Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1988), 50-51, quoted in International Committee of the Red Cross, "Final Act of the International Peace Conference. The Hague, 29 July 1899: Introduction," International Committee of the Red Cross website, <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/INTRO/145?OpenDocument> (Accessed October 26, 2005).

9. *Convention(II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, 29 July 1899, Diplomatic Conference of the Hague of 1899, sec. I, chap. II.

10. The following nations ratified or acceded to *Convention(II) with Respect to the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, the Hague, 29 July 1899, by the beginning of the Second World War: Argentina, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Rep.of), Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Montenegro, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

11. *Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, 18 October 1907, Diplomatic Conference of the Hague of 1907, sec. I, chap. II.

12. The following nations had ratified or acceded to *Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, the Hague, 18 October 1907, by the beginning of the Second World War: Austria-Hungary (with reservations declared 27 November 1909), Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Germany (with reservations declared 27 November 1909), Guatemala, Haiti, Japan (with reservations declared 13 December 1911), Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation (with reservations declared 27 November 1909), Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, United

Kingdom, and United States of America. Note, Argentina, Bulgaria, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Greece, Iran (Islamic Rep. Of), Italy, Montenegro, Paraguay, Peru, Serbia, Turkey, Uruguay, and Venezuela signed, but never ratified Convention (IV); those nations that had ratified the 1899 Convention, but had not ratified the 1907 Convention, were still bound by the first. The 1907 Convention replaced the 1899 Convention for those who had ratified both.

13. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 86.

14. *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, 27 July 1929, Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1929; *Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field*, 27 July 1929, Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1929.

15. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 88.

16. The following nations had ratified or acceded to the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* prior to the inception of the Second World War: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia (13 August 1940), Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia (5 June 1941), Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Egypt, El Salvador (22 April 1942), Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Iraq, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein (1 November 1944), Lithuania, Mexico, Myanmar, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia (15 September 1939), South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America, and Venezuela (15 July 1944).

17. S. P. MacKenzie, "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in World War II," *The Journal of Modern History* 66 (September 1994): p. 491. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28199409%2966%3A3%3C487%3ATTPOW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E>

18. *Ibid.*, p. 487.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 490.

20. For more information on the treatment of Axis POWs in Allied hands, see Martin Auger, *Prisoners on the Home Front: German POWs and "Enemy Aliens" in Southern Quebec, 1940-1946* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); and Ron Robins, *The Barbed-Wire College: Educating German POWs in the United States During World War II* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University International Finance Section, 1995).

21. Daniel Hoffman, *Camp 30 "Ehrenwort": A German Prisoner-of War Camp in Bowmanville 1941-1945* (Bowmanville: The Bowmanville Museum Board, 1988), pp. 18-21.

22. MacKenzie, "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in World War II," pp. 502-503.

23. Andrew S. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich" (PhD dissertation, Temple University, 1990), p. 134.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 297.
25. John A. Vietor, *Time Out: American Airmen at Stalag Luft I* (Fallbrook, CA: Aero Publishers, Inc., 1951), p. 86.
26. *Ibid.*
27. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 152-153.
28. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Sergeant Bert Gnam), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 82.
29. Frederick F. Tisdall, et al., "Final report on the Canadian Red Cross Food Parcels for Prisoners-of-War," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, no.60 (March 1949): p. 4; copy held in the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa..
30. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
32. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Sergeant George "Hayden" Auld), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 82.
33. Andre Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War* (Geneva: International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations, 1946), p. 9, Library and Archives Canada: MG28-I95, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada Collection, Container 275, File 1: War Services: YMCA Pamphlets.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.
38. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 265.
39. Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War*, p. 84.
40. For work done by major aid societies in Canada, refer to Jonathan F. Vance, "Canadian Relief Agencies and Prisoners of War, 1939-1945," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31 (Summer 1996): pp. 133-147.

<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=10974345&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1132099402&clientId=2241>

41. For restrictions on what family members could and could not send to POWs refer to Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa: Post Office Department of Canada. *Regulations concerning Communication With Prisoners of War Interned Abroad* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, March 1941); *Regulations Governing the Forwarding of Parcels to Prisoners of War Interned Abroad*, (Canada: The T. Eaton Co. Limited, n.d.); Hon. William P. Mulock, Postmaster General, *Revised Regulations Governing Communication with Prisoners of War in Enemy, Enemy Occupied or Neutral Countries* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, May 1943); Hon. William P. Mulock, Postmaster General, *Supplementary Leaflet to Revised Regulations Governing Communication with prisoners of War in Enemy Occupied or Neutral Countries* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, January 1944). A Copy of each is held at the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.

42. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 78; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 145.

43. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 79.

44. Bill Norman, *Halifax Squadron: The Wartime Bombing Operations of No. 640 Squadron, Leconfield* (Guisborough, Cleveland: Bill Norman, 2005), pp. 229-230; on this passage, Norman recounts the experiences of Flight-Lieutenant John Goldby at Barth between 20 January 1945 and 1 May 1945.

45. John Patrick Grogan, *Dieppe and Beyond, for a dollar and a half a day* (Renfrew: Juniper Books, 1982), pp. 29-30.

46. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 145-146.

47. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 117.

48. Andrew B. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken: Memoirs of a Prisoner of War* (Port Elgin: The Brucedale Press, 1999), p. 38.

49. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 152-153.

50. Robert A. Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe: From a Prisoner's Wartime Log, 1942-1945* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Publishers, 1982), pp. 41-42; for other means of reprisals, refer to Arthur A. Durand, *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), p. 201.



51. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Flying Officer Ray Epstein), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 191.
52. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 120.
53. Tisdall, et al., "Final report on the Canadian Red Cross Food Parcels for Prisoners-of-War," p. 4.
54. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 57.
55. *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, 27 July 1929, Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1929, sec. V, chap. 3, pt. I, art. 51.
56. Jonathan F. Vance, "The War behind the Wire: The Battle to Escape from a German Prison Camp," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28 (Oct., 1993): p. 676.  
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-0094%28199310%2928%3A4%3C675%3ATWBTWT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W>
57. Gill, *The Great Escape*, pp. 2-3.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 10; while three POWs eventually made their way to neutral territory, 50 POWs, including six Canadians, were recaptured and executed.
60. Ken Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen: The Remarkable Exploits of a WWII Bomber Pilot and Great Escaper* (London: Grub Street, 2004), p. 132, 145.
61. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 99.
62. Refer to Eric Williams, *The Wooden Horse* (Barnsley, England: Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2005); Aidan Crawley, *Escape from Germany, 1939-45: Methods of escape Used by RAF Airmen during World War II* (London: The Stationery Office, 2001), pp. 176-189; Oliver Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time: RAF Bomber Command Prisoners-of-War in Germany 1939-1945* (London: Grub Street, 2003), p. 73; Eric Williams, Oliver Philpot, and Michael Codner were the three men who escaped Stalag Luft III via the tunnel beneath the vaulting horse.
63. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 122-123.
64. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 103.
65. Crawley, *Escape from Germany, 1939-45*, p. 1.
66. Vance, "The War Behind the Wire," p. 677; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 160; Aidan Merivale Crawley, *Escape from Germany: A History of R.A.F. Escapes during the*

*War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), p. 5, quoted in Brereton Greenhous et al., *The Crucible of War, 1939-1945: The Official History of The Royal Canadian Air Force Volume III* (Canada: Co-published by University of Toronto Press Inc. in cooperation with the Department of National Defence and the Canada Communication Group - Publishing, Supply and Services Canada, 1994), p. 776; Despite Crawley's claim that less than 30 Commonwealth AF POWs ever escaped to Great Britain or neutral territories, Oliver Clutton-Brock lists thirty-four members of the RAF (including members of the RCAF, RAAF, PAF, SAAF, RNZAF) who escaped from German POW camps and reached Allied Lines, their dates of escape, and a brief discussion of their respective escapes in *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, pp. 467-469.

67. Hodgkinson, *Spitfire Down*, pp. 148-149.

68. Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War*, p. 31.

69. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 92.

70. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 166.

71. Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War*, p. 33.

72. Grogan, *Dieppe and Beyond*, p. 31.

73. Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe*, p. 46; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 250.

74. Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe*, p. 100; Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 55; Gordon Barnes, "Music in a Prisoner-of War Camp," *The Musical Times* 85 (May, 1944): pp. 152-153; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 66.

75. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 167; Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, pp. 48-49.

76. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, pp. 163-164; dance in the POW camp is also referred to in Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe*, p. 99.

77. Hodgkinson, *Spitfire Down*, p. 181.

78. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken*, p. 84; Gill, *The Great Escape*, pp. 167-168.

79. Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War*, p. 35.

80. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247.

81. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 223.

82. Tim Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II: The National Pastime Behind Barbed Wire* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002); Dancocks,

(includes an interview with Pilot Officer Harold Garland), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 101; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 140; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 234, 247-248; Robert K. Barney and Stephen R. Wenn, "The Great Escape: Sport and Recreation at Stalag Luft III - A Case Study," pp. 3-4. Unpublished Essay, Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. Abstract for this paper can be found in *North American Society for Sport History Conference Proceedings* (Arizona State University: NASSH, 1988), p. 56; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 224; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 67; Tony McCarthy, *War Games: The Story of Sport in World War Two* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1989), p. 156; Delmar T. Spivey, *POW Odyssey: Recollections of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III and the Secret German Peace Mission in World War II* (Attleboro, Mass: Colonial Lithograph, Inc., 1984), p. 71; John R. Harris, *Serving and Surviving: An Airman's Memoirs* (Victoria: First Choice Books, 2004), p. 108; Warwick Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344: Sport in Prisoner-of-war Camps during World War II," *Sporting Traditions* 11 (May 1995): p. 82.  
<http://www.aafla.org/SportsLibrary/SportingTraditions/1995/st1102/st1102g.pdf>

83. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Sergeant Brian Filliter), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 87; Dancocks, (includes an interview with Flight Lieutenant Barry Davidson), *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 101-102; Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 90; Harvie, *Missing in Action*, pp. 172-173, 175; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 141f, 142; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 84, 247; Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344," p. 82; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," p. 5; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 68; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, pp. 71-72; Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 105, 108.

84. Gill, (includes an interview with Jack Lyon), *The Great Escape*, p. 66; Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 150; Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe*, p. 108; Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 159; Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken*, pp. 54-55, 80; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," pp. 4-5; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 67; McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 154; Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 108.

85. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 136; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 142; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, pp. 247-248; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," p. 7; Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344," p. 82; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 225; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 67; McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 156; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71.

86. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 174; Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 140, 146, 164; Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken*, p. 80; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 140; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247; Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, p. 99; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," p. 3; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 225; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 67; McCarthy, *War Games*, pp. 152-153; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71; Charlie Hobbs, *Past Tense: Charlie's Story* (Burnstown, Ont: General Store Publishing House, 1994), p. 129, 141; Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 108.

87. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, pp. 247-248; Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344," p. 82; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 224; McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 156; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71; Hobbs, *Past Tense*, pp. 132-133, 142.
88. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 67; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71.
89. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, 140; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," p. 4; Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344," pp. 83-88; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 67; McCarthy, *War Games*, pp. 156-157; Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 108.
90. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 142; Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, p. 53, 62, 95; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," p. 7; Crawley, *Escape from Germany, 1939-45*, pp. 178-179.
91. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 142.
92. *Ibid.*, p. 104f, 142; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 68; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72.
93. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Flight Lieutenant Cliff Irwin), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 102; Dancocks, (includes an interview with Flight Lieutenant Art Crighton), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 125; Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 150; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, 142; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, pp. 247-248; Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, p. 33, 92; Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344," pp. 82-83; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 225; McCarthy, *War Games*, pp. 157-158.
94. Hodgkinson, *Spitfire Down*, p. 149; Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 66; Grogan, *Dieppe and Beyond*, pp. 29-30; Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe*, pp. 44-46; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, pp. 141f, 142.; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 248; Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, p. 53; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," p. 7; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 225; McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 156; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72.
95. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, pp. 247-248; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," p. 7; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 225; McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 156; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72.
96. Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, p. 89; Franks "Cricket in Stalag 344," p. 83; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 225; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 68; Sherwin Podolsky, "The Olympic Movement Remembered in the Polish Prisoner of War Camps of 1944," *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (renamed the *Journal of Olympic History* in 1997) 3 (Spring 1995): pp. 13-16.  
<http://www.aafla.org/SportsLibrary/JOH/JOHv3n2/JOHv3n2d.pdf>
97. Gill, (includes an interview with Les Brodrick), *The Great Escape*, p. 66; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 140, 142; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 249; Robert K. Barney and

David E. Barney, "War, Incarceration, Reminiscence: Sport and Olympic Games in Prisoner of War Camps in World War II, 1940-1944." Unpublished Essay, Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. Abstract for this paper can be found in *North American Society for Sport History Conference Proceedings* (Penn State University: NASSH, 1999), pp. 6-7; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," p. 7; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 67.

98. 'Circuit bashing'/'pounding the circuit' denotes the act of walking around the inner perimeter of the camp repetitively; refer to Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 97; Harvie, *Missing in Action*, pp. 129, 138-139, 154, 178-179, 182; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 143; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, 249; Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, p. 23; Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape," pp. 2-3; Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," pp. 243-245; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 146; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72; Hobbs, *Past Tense*, pp. 126-127.

99. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, pp. 247-248.

100. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 142.

101. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 56.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Literature

The following review of literature is broken down into four major areas. Section I highlights authoritative works encompassing prisoners of war from the Second World War and the POW experience in the Second World War. Section II reviews articles and documents dealing with topics peripheral to, but not specific to, sport in POW camps, including major aid societies, the shackling affair of 1942-1943, the international rights of POWs, and the Red Cross parcel program. Section III examines several sources describing recreation, sport, and other camp activities that POWs pursued. Lastly, Section IV reviews the published work of several ex-POWs. Each of these sources was selected and reviewed in an attempt to establish an astute foundation in the topic and demonstrate the need for this research initiative.

### Section I: Authoritative Sources on the Second World War POW Experience

Today, anyone with an interest in prisoner of war history can engage the topic through a number of different avenues. From films and television to novels and art, there are numerous media through which to interpret the lives of Second World War POWs. In addition to these, much scholarship has been devoted to the topic, as well as the environments that prisoners endured. While some of these initiatives focus on certain populations or specific facets of incarceration, others have addressed POW camps from a more global approach. In *Long Night's Journey into Day: Prisoners of War in Hong Kong and Japan, 1941 - 1945*, Charles G. Roland discusses the conditions endured by

POWs in the Far East. Though this study will not focus on the Far East, Roland's research shows that, despite such deplorable and unrelenting conditions, some POWs engaged in sporting activities in the early phases of captivity; for instance cricket, field hockey, and soccer were played in Hong Kong camps until the summer or autumn of 1942.<sup>1</sup>

European POW camps were much different than those established in the East. Jonathan Vance's *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century* evaluates the efforts of the Canadian government and philanthropic organizations to aid POWs. More expansively, Vance elaborates on the experiences of Canadian POWs abroad throughout the major conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In simplistic terms, the efforts of the Canadian government towards captured servicemen abroad can be categorized in terms of relief and release. The "relief campaigns attempted to bring all the comforts of home, within reason, to the prison camp," while, at the same time, release attempts were made through political channels to repatriate POWs from both the European and Far Eastern theatres of war.<sup>2</sup> Several themes concerning prisoner of war camps are discussed.

Vance highlights the evolution of major conventions and treaties regulating the treatment of prisoners of war, specifically citing the International Peace Conference at The Hague (1899), the Second Peace Conference at The Hague (1907), and the Diplomatic Conference at Geneva (1929). The struggle between major philanthropic organizations for a stake in relief endeavours to POWs abroad is also discussed; the exploits of the Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS), the War Prisoners' Aid of the

World's Committee of YMCAs (WPA), and the Canadian POW Relatives Association (CPOWRA) are noted. Specific to this study, Vance provides an in-depth description of prison camp life in the European theatre during the Second World War. Facets of Canadian POWs' existence are chronicled in this work, extending from the capture of the first Canadian POW in September 1939,<sup>3</sup> to the grim forced marches of 1945 and the eventual capitulation of the Axis powers in Europe.<sup>4</sup> Themes include camp structure, camp facilities, diet, entertainment, morale, and escape, to name a few. Furthermore, Vance identifies some specific sports and events that arose in captivity. Among the camps mentioned, sport examples are taken from Stalag Luft III at Sagan, including participation in a softball league, a sports meet, and participation in soccer, hockey, cricket, gymnastics, volleyball, boxing, table-tennis, and golf.<sup>5</sup>

Oliver Clutton-Brock's *Footprints on the Sands of Time: RAF Bomber Command Prisoners-of-War in Germany 1939-1945* is a comprehensive source addressing a number of topics concerning the POW experience. The majority of chapters examine the existence of various German POW camps, chronicling significant events from the camps' inception to their decline. Most important to this study, Clutton-Brock devotes entire chapters to Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI.<sup>6</sup> These chapters are pivotal in understanding each camp's inception, structural development, ongoing complement of POWs, and eventual decline. The inclusion of accurate dates are supported by substantive documentation. Clutton-Brock's work is meticulously detailed. For instance, in discussing the departure of various clusters of POWs to installations around Germany, the author goes so far as to detail their release date (often to the hour), means of transportation, and intended



destination. This source is also significant for the impressive collection of appendices found in the later part of the book, including a 210-page appendix listing alphabetically the vast majority of RAF/Bomber Command POWs held in German camps during the Second World War.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the POWs' names, this incredible appendix includes each flyer's rank, nationality, squadron, aircraft, date that he was downed, mission's target, camps interned, POW number, and some special comments. *Footprints on the Sands of Time: RAF Bomber Command Prisoners-of-War in Germany 1939-1945* is pivotal in realizing the physical orientation of Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI as well as determining camp strengths and the attendance of key characters. In short, to say that this book is helpful or noteworthy would be an understatement.

In his PhD dissertation entitled "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," Andrew Hasselbring presents a multifaceted account of the prisoner of war scenario in Germany. The author astutely describes various levels of POW control and organization. For instance, Hasselbring discusses the primacy of OKW's (German Army High Command) Prisoner of War Office and the responsibilities of two subordinate branches, the General Office (POW welfare) and the Organization Office (security and investigation of escapes).<sup>8</sup> While OKW commanded supreme control of the POW agenda, Hasselbring asserts that most of the organization's authority was delegated to the Luftwaffe, Wehrmacht, and Kriegsmarine.<sup>9</sup> The organization of German personnel employed in the detention of POWs is also detailed at the camp level. Hasselbring acknowledges and defines the roles of the Camp Commandant, the Lagerführung, the Abwehr Officer, the Gestapo Agent, and the Captain of the Guards.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Hasselbring describes

typical camp administration in regards to American POWs, specifically referring to the Senior American Officer (SAO), the Man of Confidence (MOC), Adjutants, Committee Heads, Barracks Chiefs, and Room/Combine Liaisons.<sup>11</sup> These positions are comparable to the system employed by British and Commonwealth POWs.<sup>12</sup>

Beyond the structures of various formations involved in the POW existence, Hasselbring comments on the POW experience and indicates multiple factors dictating one's treatment, stating that "[t]he experience of any one POW greatly depended on his rank, when he was captured, the camp he was held in, his branch of service, and the Germans he came into contact with."<sup>13</sup> While these elements surely had an impact, POWs still had to contend with intrinsic factors as well. Hasselbring asserts,

Boredom and monotony were among the hallmarks of being a prisoner of war. Up to this point the young men's entire military lives had been filled with constant activity and new experiences. Now they had nowhere to go and nothing to do that really mattered. It became a constant struggle to stay interested - a fight not every POW won.<sup>14</sup>

Most pertinent to this study, Hasselbring devotes a chapter to POWs' participation in sport; he discusses the implement of various sports, the reasons why they were played, and their popularity, stating that "[o]f the organized activities in most camps, participation in a sport was the most popular activity, second only to walking the perimeter. Morale bounded back the more the men were able to get outside and occupy themselves with equipment sent by the YMCA."<sup>15</sup> Hasselbring further discusses the importance of the YMCA and their Secretaries in collecting and sending various forms of aid to POWs, specifically citing the role of Henry Söderberg at Stalag Luft III.<sup>16</sup>

"American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich" is a comprehensive study of the German

POW camp experience and, while specifically geared to American servicemen, contains an array of pertinent information, owing to the typical co-existence of Canadians and Americans in captivity, and their shared North American heritage.

John Nichol and Tony Rennell's *The Last Escape: The untold story of Allied prisoners of war in Germany 1944-45* describes, in detail, the evacuation and dissolution of numerous stalags and oflags, and the agonizing forced marches that prisoners endured farther into German territory.<sup>17</sup> Specific to this study, Nichol and Rennell discuss the environment at Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI in their final days, and the series of events that culminated in their abandonment.

S.P. MacKenzie evaluates the treatment and experience of primarily Allied POWs in his article "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in World War II." Specifically, MacKenzie defines several key factors that encouraged the varied treatment of Allied prisoners, including the humanitarian ethos harboured by captors towards POWs, the availability of resources to meet international standards, and leadership within the captor's POW program.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, MacKenzie discusses the fear of reciprocal action as a motive to treat POWs according to the Geneva Convention.<sup>19</sup> Other themes including the Shackling Affair of 1942-1943 and escape are discussed.

Anton Gill provides an excellent account of life inside Stalag Luft III in *The Great Escape: The Full Dramatic Story with Contributions from Survivors and their Families*. Though the primary focus of this book concerns the key players, planning, implementation, and repercussions of the famous Great Escape that occurred on the evening of 24/25 March 1944 at Luft III's North Compound, Gill describes the camp

layout, daily activities, and important personalities at Sagan. Moreover, Gill gives some attention to the various sporting exploits of POWs. Though POWs struggled to displace profound feelings of frustration and disillusion induced by a lamentable circumstance, the theatre program and sports events allowed POWs to assuage, if not temporarily escape, these harsh realities.<sup>20</sup> In a game of rugby between POWs, participants were able to boost their morale by challenging one of their captors to raise a team of German guards to play. The guard responded, “Yes, if you let us keep our guns.”<sup>21</sup> Sport played other roles as well. A boxing match is mentioned as a means to distract German guards in the watchtowers from an ensuing escape attempt.<sup>22</sup> POWs also used exercise as a means to disperse dirt from tunnelling. Through special pockets attached inside one’s pants, a POW could spill dirt out his pant-leg at a convenient time, and disperse it into the track while walking circuits around the camp’s perimeter.<sup>23</sup> Gill also mentions the creation of an ice-rink at Stalag Luft III and the skating and hockey matches that ensued.<sup>24</sup> It is interesting that he credits the supply of the skates solely to the Red Cross; in addition to the Red Cross, other commentators suggest that skates and hockey equipment were also supplied by other organizations including the YMCA, the Salvation Army, the Knights of Columbus, and independent donors such as Conn Smythe.<sup>25</sup> Beyond these incidental examples of sport, it seems that sport was actually a commonplace occurrence in the POW camp. When the tunnel named ‘Harry’ was ready for use, Roger Bushell, head of the Escape Committee at Stalag Luft III, stressed the importance of presenting a facade of normality to POWs. Gill suggests that resuming sports activities that spring were a part of maintaining normal camp life.<sup>26</sup>

While Gill thoroughly describes those issues central and peripheral to escape at Stalag Luft III and makes some reference to sport, other areas such as camp activities outside of North Compound are discussed in less detail. Arthur A. Durand's *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story* illustrates the development of new compounds at Stalag Luft III and the cohorts that inhabited them in greater depth. Furthermore, Durand discusses the circulation of POW newspapers and their daily coverage of camp sport; "[d]uring the summer sports season, the *Klarion* [one of Stalag Luft III's POW newspapers] came out every morning with a small daily, listing games to be played that day, scores and summaries of games played the day before, and new standings in the compound's two softball leagues."<sup>27</sup> In addition to those sports listed by Vance and Gill, Durand contends that POWs engaged in American football, basketball, wrestling, weight lifting, and even fencing at times.<sup>28</sup> While Gill suggests that the best way to focus one's energy and elude the monotony of everyday camp life was to join the escape efforts, Durand states, "[p]erhaps no other camp activity matched sports in stimulating mass participation and widespread interest."<sup>29</sup> This study attempts to bring clarity to conflicting beliefs such as these.

## **Section II: Authoritative Sources Related to Sport in Axis POW Camps**

The establishment of, and participation in, sport and recreation in Axis POW camps relied on the culmination of several important factors. POWs needed the opportunity, equipment, space, and adequate strength levels to engage in these pursuits. Binding international agreements, such as those developed and signed at the Hague

(1899, 1907) and Geneva (1929), contributed to POWs' rights while in the care of the Detaining Power (assuming the Detaining Power was a party to the convention by ratification, accession, or virtue). The Geneva Diplomatic Conference was held from 1 July to 27 July 1929, to evaluate both the proposed *Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field*, and the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*. Germany signed (27 July 1929) and ratified (21 February 1934) both conventions, and was subsequently bound to treat its captives to the proscribed standard (though this standard was not always maintained).<sup>30</sup> While Japan signed the two documents on 27 July 1929, the government failed to ratify the second treaty, and was subsequently not compelled to abide by its laws. Communist Russia neither signed nor accessioned the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*.

In order to engage in sports activities, one must have the time to play. Conventions from the Hague (1907) and Geneva asserted that, while belligerents could employ POWs as workers, officers were to be exempted.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, officers were more likely to have spare time to devote to leisure. Most specific to this study, under Chapter 3 of the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* entitled 'Hygiene in Camps,' Article 13 states, "[t]hey [POWs] shall have facilities for engaging in physical exercises and obtaining the benefit of being out of doors." Equally important, under Chapter 4 entitled 'Intellectual and Moral Needs of Prisoners of War,' Article 17 states, "belligerents shall encourage as much as possible the organization of intellectual and sporting pursuits by prisoners of war."<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, the document did not define nor

set a standard for terms such as ‘facilities’ and ‘encourage,’ thus relying on the interpretation of the detaining power. Still, the inclusion of articles 13 and 17 are noteworthy since ‘physical exercise’ and ‘sport’ were not mentioned in Chapter II of the 1907 Hague Convention concerning the rights and treatment of POWs.<sup>33</sup>

Though the Hague and Geneva Conventions outlined their rights, Allied POWs still relied on assistance from philanthropic relief agencies to survive. In his article “Canadian relief agencies and prisoners of war, 1939-45,” Jonathan Vance discusses the Canadian government’s attempts to co-ordinate and appease major philanthropic organizations in their quest to supply POWs overseas. Vance adds to his findings in *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century*, expanding on the efforts of the Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS), the War Prisoners’ Aid of the YMCA (WPA), and the Canadian POW Relatives Association (CPOWRA). With its primacy already established from the Great War, the CRCS was again endorsed by the Canadian government as the primary relief agency.<sup>34</sup> In addition to the critical role the Red Cross played in delivering food parcels to POWs overseas, many sources credit the Red Cross for bringing sports equipment to POWs abroad.<sup>35</sup> Still, Vance acknowledges that the WPA, among many other acts of benevolence, supplied POW hockey and baseball teams in Europe during the Second World War.<sup>36</sup> As such, the role of the YMCA should not be underestimated.

On 16 October 1939, the Director of Auxiliary Services, Brigadier W.W. Foster, issued a memorandum through the Department of National Defence (DND) entitled, “Information relative to Organization of Entertainment and Welfare for the Forces in

Canada.” Attached was a list detailing services volunteered by national organizations co-operating with DND dated 20 October 1939. The following denotes the services offered by two of those organizations:

5. Red Cross Society

- (a) Medical and Hospital supplies through A.M.C.
- (b) Active and convalescent Hospitals through A.M.C.
- (c) Family Welfare in co-operating with Welfare Agencies.
- (d) Provision of Comforts for Soldiers...

7. Y.M.C.A.

- (a) Recreational Huts, (reading and writing rooms).
- (b) Entertainment, (Cinema), and supervised Sports.
- (c) Education, (cultural and religious)
- (d) Canteen service if required.
- (e) Use of local buildings, Programme and facilities.<sup>37</sup>

If this domestic arrangement is any indication of the function these organizations extended to Canadian POWs overseas, one would expect the YMCA to have played a leading role in the delivery of sports related goods. Yet, this inference is neither supported nor refuted in the literature.

Andre Vulliet adeptly presents the role and impact of the YMCA in aiding Second World War POWs in *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War*. While Vulliet expresses that his book is a preliminary report, it is rich in information, detail, and pertinent statistics. Specifically, Vulliet discusses the inception of the War Prisoners' Aid of the YMCA under the umbrella organization of the World's Committee of the YMCA at the outbreak of hostilities.<sup>38</sup> In addition, Vulliet contrasts the role of the WPA with another major philanthropic organization, the International Red Cross, in its efforts to aid and supply



POWs.<sup>39</sup> While some topics are discussed at the international level, the roles and impact of YMCA Secretaries visiting POW camps are mentioned. Typical themes that these representatives addressed include spiritual and religious activity, education and intellectual diversion, musical activity, arts and handicrafts, theatricals and movies, gardening and landscaping, camp newspapers and radios, special and individual requests, indoor games, and sports and athletics.<sup>40</sup> In fact, Vulliet writes, “[m]ost important... of all non-intellectual activities engaged in all PW camps, was sports and athletics. It appealed to nearly all youth and was found indispensable at all ages to lessen the bad effects of seclusion.”<sup>41</sup> Vulliet also includes a detailed list of materials sent to Stalag Luft III, from the time of that camp’s inception through 31 October 1944, as supplied by WPA stockpiles at Geneva and Stockholm (see Appendix X).<sup>42</sup> This list includes all sports and sport related equipment sent to the Sagan camp during this period. Overall, Vulliet provides an authoritative account of the role and actions of the YMCA, through the WPA, in aiding POWs during the Second World War.

While Vulliet’s work addresses the WPA’s role in POW affairs from more of an ecumenical approach, Chris Christiansen discusses his experience as a YMCA field delegate/secretary in *Seven Years among Prisoners of War*. While this source focuses on a number of humanitarian issues beyond the scope of this study, a number of salient points are made. Firstly, Christiansen provides the dates of the first and last camp visits conducted by YMCA field delegates.<sup>43</sup> Moreover the breadth of a field delegate’s typical camp responsibilities is described. While conceding that there were only six delegates assigned to the German quarter at the time of his working there, Christiansen admits that

he alone was responsible for visiting 24 prison camps and six field hospitals.<sup>44</sup> In regards to the treatment of POWs at these facilities, he asserts that British and American POWs were typically treated the best.<sup>45</sup> Later, he comments on the various recreational, spiritual, and intellectual aids that were provided by the YMCA and their use by POWs. He concludes,

I do not think that any activity played a more important role than sports. The camp commandants recognized that football and other ball games were an excellent remedy against loneliness and depression, and in numerous instances they had sports fields established and helped procure the necessary equipment, if not locally, then through the YMCA.<sup>46</sup>

Interestingly, Christiansen reveals that when the Allies began bombing Berlin, the headquarters of the YMCA secretaries in Germany, the HQ was relocated to Sagan, and that POWs from nearby Luft III would sometimes visit (under guard of course), seeking new stocks of supplies.<sup>47</sup> In all, Christiansen's book is important because it contributes to an advanced understanding of the role of the WPA secretary, and includes specific references to sport and its importance to those in captivity.

In *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in World War II*, A.M. Hurst reports on both the domestic and foreign role of the Canadian YMCA during the Second World War. Specific to sport in POW camps, Hurst recounts the experiences of George Porteus, the YMCA supervisor to the Winnipeg Grenadiers. Having been overcome by Japanese forces in December 1941, members of the Grenadiers and the Royal Rifles of Canada were sent to the POW camp at North Point in Hong Kong. Porteus attempted to continue the services expected of him as a YMCA Supervisor. To relieve the boredom, sports activities were popular in the early months of captivity while POWs remained relatively

healthy.<sup>48</sup> A sixteen-team soccer league, a sixteen-team softball league, and a six-team softball league for officers were established by 27 January 1941, having been organized by a sports committee consisting of two officers and two supervisors.<sup>49</sup>

In July the sports committee decided that the excitement and the drain on physical energy in highly competitive sport were not in the best interests of men who were on a very poor diet and who were losing weight and beginning to show signs of deficiency diseases, and softball inter-regimental leagues were changed to inter-company recreational games with the idea of providing mild exercise outside.<sup>50</sup>

By September 1942, with levels of dysentery and diphtheria on the rise, there was little interest in sports participation.<sup>51</sup> Hurst notes, “even the final distribution of athletic equipment, which was received from the World’s Committee of the YMCA, failed to stimulate any increased interest.”<sup>52</sup> Also included in Hurst’s book are two letters from Senior Canadian Officers at Stalag Lufts I and III, thanking the Canadian YMCA for their recreational and sports supplies.<sup>53</sup> The previous three sources foster a greater understanding as to the YMCA’s prominent role in supplying sports equipment to POWs during the Second World War.

To participate in sport activities, one must possess certain energy levels and a standard of health. According to Article 11 of the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* (Geneva, 1929), “[t]he food ration of prisoners of war shall be equivalent in quantity and quality to that of the depot troops.”<sup>54</sup> Belligerents did not always abide by these regulations. Japanese authorities, not obligated to meet the standards set in the convention, procured and served beggarly meals for POWs.<sup>55</sup> Especially in the later stages of the war, German authorities did not have sufficient food

to nourish their captives. As a result, POWs and depot troops both endured meager ersatz rations that left much to be desired. Therefore, it was imperative that POWs received foodstuffs from external sources to supplement their diet. Frederick F. Tisdall expands on the state of Canadian POWs' diet, and the nutritional value of Canadian Red Cross food parcels in his articles entitled, "The War: Canadian Red Cross Food Parcels for British Prisoners-of-war in Germany" and "Further report on the Canadian Red Cross Food Parcels for British Prisoners-of-War."<sup>56</sup> Later, in "Final Report on the Canadian Red Cross Food Parcels for Prisoners of War," Tisdall and colleagues provide important insights into the Canadian Red Cross food parcel program, including the fact that the Society packed and exported 16.5 million food parcels to POWs abroad between January 1941 and the end of the War.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, the article details the contents of the parcels and their typical caloric composition, and includes the results from interviews administered to returning POWs on the consistency and effectiveness of the parcels. Of note, 69.4% of the 5170 ex-POWs' responses "stated that they would not have had enough food without Red Cross food parcels" and "[h]undreds of the men stated that they could not have lived without the parcels."<sup>58</sup> These sources provide important references concerning the POWs' diets, and similarly contribute to answering the question of whether or not POWs would have possessed the necessary energy to participate in sports on a regular basis.

Jonathan Vance's article entitled "Men in Menacles: The Shackling of Prisoners of War, 1942-1943" provides an astute narrative on the Canadian government's expected role, contrasting will, and subsequent action during the confrontation between England

and Germany over the shackling of prisoners. This conflict arose when, during the Allied raid on Dieppe in August 1942, German forces came across Allied orders recommending the binding of captives to prevent the destruction of valuable documents.<sup>59</sup> Subsequently, on 7 October 1942, German authorities declared that 107 officers and 1,269 other ranks would be shackled in German camps.<sup>60</sup> Britain quickly responded by declaring that German POWs would be shackled in retaliation, expecting that the Canadians, holding the lion's share of German POWs at the time, would support the action without question.<sup>61</sup> Eventually, in the wake of careful Canadian politicking and the expressed concerns of organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), tempers cooled, and the two sides disengaged from their stances. The last prisoners directly involved in the ordeal were released from their daily bonds in the final months of 1943.<sup>62</sup> This series of events is important because a significant number of those POWs who endured the shackling affair were Canadian.<sup>63</sup> Since these individuals were forced to wear rope and then shackles from dawn until dusk, one would assume that any attempts to participate in sporting events must have been curtailed. Still, this affair was endured by servicemen in the stalag system, and was not imposed at Stalag Lufts I, III, or VI. Subsequently, the shackling affair's impact on the sporting practices of Second World War POWs, while worthy of discourse, will not be discussed in any depth here.

The aforementioned sources in this section pertain to POWs' opportunity, resources, and adequate strength levels to engage in sport practices. These sources suggest that, in certain environments, Canadian POWs would have been allowed, even encouraged, to play sports, and have had the adequate equipment and strength to do so.

In contrast, it is clear that less hospitable environments existed where POWs were shackled or endured starvation diets, eliminating the possibility of sports participation. This research initiative determines the sports practices of Canadian servicemen at the three Stalag Luft camps under investigation.

### **Section III: Recreation, Sport, and Other Facets of Camp Life**

To understand the context within which sports activities either developed or were suppressed, one should first become familiar with other facets of camp life. The following articles concern various aspects of life in captivity in Axis POW camps. In “Kriegie Talk,” H. Homer Aschmann explores standardized terms and common vocabulary that evolved among British and American POWs in German camps. Examples of such popularized terms include *Kriegie* (short for *Kriegsgefangener*, German for prisoner of war), *Goon* (name given for German guards), *Appel* (name given to frequent roll-calls in camp), *Kaput*, *Ferret* (name given to the German guards tasked with detecting escape plots), and *Honey Wagon* (the contraption used to drain the latrines).<sup>64</sup> While common POW vocabulary is discussed in other sources, Aschmann provides a sizable list of words and phrases with which to refer.

Gordon Barnes comments on the collection and development of a musical group at Stalag Luft VI in a letter entitled “Music in a Prisoner-of-War Camp.” Sgt. Barnes, the Secretary to the Musical Society at that camp, addressed the letter to *The Musical Times*, which had it copied and printed. Within the Musical Society at Stalag Luft VI evolved a camp orchestra of approximately 30 players, who performed concerts for the entire camp.

Concerts included pieces by Mozart, Bach, and Beethoven among others, and were sometimes performed in conjunction with the camp's 'Male-Voice choir.'<sup>65</sup> The incorporation of similar programs in other camps is documented elsewhere.<sup>66</sup>

Escape was another important theme among POWs. In "The War behind the Wire: The Battle to Escape from a German Prison Camp," Vance discusses escape, in terms of opportunity, organization, key players, preparation, execution, and reprisals, specifically referring to the escape culture at Stalag Luft III. Vance states that airmen, more than any other servicemen, were the most likely to pursue escape.<sup>67</sup> The importance of escape projects should not be underestimated. Gill suggests that "the best way of channeling energy and forgetting one's woes - or at least pushing them into a corner - was to get involved with the escape organization."<sup>68</sup> Still, it is important to acknowledge Durand's contention that, "[p]erhaps no other camp activity matched sports in stimulating mass participation and widespread interest."<sup>69</sup> Whatever the case, the development and implementation of escape plans focused one's energy and represented a means, although limited, for POWs to continue the war against their enemy. Vance's article also provides a brief history of the development of the several compounds at Stalag Luft III, which is important when trying to understand when specific facilities became available to various POW populations.<sup>70</sup>

Some research has already been published on sport in Axis POW camps. In "Cricket in Stalag 344: Sport in German Prisoner-of-war Camps during World War II," Warwick Franks discusses some general examples of sport in the German and Italian POW camp system, and delves into some specifics about cricket in a number of camps,

concentrating primarily on Stalag 344. Drawing on the experiences of an RAAF (Royal Australian Air Force) Pilot Officer, Franks relays the existence of basketball, quoits, and versions of hockey in an Italian camp at Sulmona, and suggests that Canadian and American servicemen introduced basketball, volleyball, baseball, and softball to Australian POWs.<sup>71</sup> Moreover, Franks mentions the existence of an ice hockey rink and a nine-hole golf course at Stalag Luft III, and a large tank installed for fire fighting water used for swimming races at Stalag 383.<sup>72</sup> The majority of the article concerns the preparations for and the execution of cricket tournaments between POWs representing England, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Of particular interest to this study is a section entitled “The Role of Sport.” Here, Franks suggests that sport played a multifaceted role for POWs, specifically that sport contributed to maintaining physical fitness, escaping boredom, upholding morale, preserving a sense of normality, and camouflaging escape activities.<sup>73</sup> In his analysis, Franks suggests that, “Test matches, Empire Games, athletics contests, a Davis Cup at Stalag Luft 3 all became powerful approximations of an everyday life in peace time where sport was an integral part of the fabric of that life.”<sup>74</sup> It is also suggested that German authorities in many camps tolerated, and, in some cases, encouraged POWs’ organization and participation in sports activities. This observation is inline with the spirit of article 17 as previously mentioned in the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* (Geneva, 1929). Franks concludes that, while something can be learned from the fact that sport existed in POW camps, sport was not a major part of camp existence.<sup>75</sup>

Floris J.G. van der Merwe presents his findings regarding South African



participation in sports in Axis POW camps in “‘For you the war is over!’ Sport amongst South African Prisoners-of-war during World War II.” While he comments on the common hardships that many POWs endured shared, van der Merwe focuses the body of his research on South African POWs’ participation in sport, with most of his comments focused on soccer, rugby, cricket, and boxing.<sup>76</sup> The fact that games could be very competitive and sometimes get out-of-hand is understood; the author writes, “[i]nitially the games were organized on national level [soccer matches, Campo 52 at Chiavari], but the competition was so fierce, that fights broke out on the field as well as amongst the spectators.”<sup>77</sup> van der Merwe also comments on the prominent role of Canadian and American POWs in introducing basketball and volleyball to their South African counterparts.<sup>78</sup> He concludes that sport served many important functions at Italian and German POW camps during the Second World War.<sup>79</sup>

Tim Wolter addresses the availability and prominence of baseball at certain Axis POW camps in *POW Baseball in World War II: The National Pastime Behind Barbed Wire*. While primarily discussing the topic from an American perspective, Wolter successfully evaluates the practice of baseball and softball with chapters dedicated to Stalag Luft I, Stalag Luft III, and Stalag Lufts VI and IV, among other camps. Wolter assures the reader that “[s]ports equipment was widely available” at Stalag Luft I;<sup>80</sup> that Stalag Luft III represented “the absolute pinnacle of POW baseball;<sup>81</sup> and that “[t]he sports program at Stalag Luft VI was highly developed with football, basketball, and softball all being popular.”<sup>82</sup> Moreover, the author dedicates a distinct chapter to Canadian POWs and their softball pursuits. While his research is pervasive, Wolter

admits, “[c]ompared to the huge volume of American POW memoirs, the body of firsthand information recorded by Canadian prisoners is rather small... As a result the picture of Canadians playing ball in the German camps is a fragmentary one.”<sup>83</sup> This contention supports the greater notion that the sporting experience of Canadian POWs still remains to be thoroughly documented.

Tony McCarthy’s *War Games: The Story of Sport in World War Two* represents an informative source, focusing on sport during the Second World War primarily among the British. While he examines domestic professional sport and the participation in sport by various military units on the home and battle fronts, McCarthy dedicates a chapter to sport in Axis-controlled POW camps. He impresses that the levels of POW participation in sport depended on the size and strength of the camp, and whether POWs were recruited for forced labour or not.<sup>84</sup> He comments on the popularity of soccer and the award of prizes for exceptional teams, stating,

Soccer was usually the main sport, whether in 5- or 11-a-side varieties. Where leagues or cups could be established, teams based themselves on British clubs and, by bartering or ‘borrowing’ dyes and blanco, knocked up very presentable reproductions of their team’s actual kit... Competition was intense. Cups, shields and medals, mostly created from old tins, were awarded and treasured.<sup>85</sup>

Aside from other traditional British team sports, including cricket and rugby, McCarthy comments on the popularity of volleyball, basketball, and softball, concluding that “[t]here was a certain amount of cross-fertilization of sports between the Americans and British Empire.”<sup>86</sup> McCarthy also discusses in great detail the existence of golf at Stalag Luft III.<sup>87</sup> *War Games: The Story of Sport in World War Two* presents some interesting

facts on sport in POW camps, but fails to address some key themes pertinent to this study, including sport among Canadians and other Commonwealth servicemen.

In “Recreation Behind Barbed Wire,” Noel Barber discusses the prevalence and impact of recreational endeavors at several Axis POW camps. Most notably, Barber discusses various dramatic societies, musical arrangements, sports practices, and tool construction at several stalags and oflags. While several interesting points are made in regards to the procurement of equipment, the maintenance of fitness levels, and the popularity of ‘international matches,’ the author presents some ambitious statements, including that “there is not a single prison camp in Europe to which sports sets have not been despatched.”<sup>88</sup> Unfortunately, the author fails to reference this assertion to any authoritative source, and thus his contention remains to be validated. While this statement may be true, it is questionable whether *all* camps were actually furnished with sports equipment when this article was originally published with so many POW camps in Europe, and the frequent erection and abandonment of those encampments. For instance, Vulliet asserts “[a]s to *Italy*... no visitation of camps by ‘Y’ representatives was ever permitted, and whatever supplies were allowed to be sent in did not always reach the camps in good condition.”<sup>89</sup>

While primarily a philatelic study, Sherwin Podolsky’s “The Olympic Movement Remembered in Polish Prisoner of War Camps of 1944,” is nevertheless an important source in the study of sport in captivity. Podolsky concentrates his research on the development and circulation of stamps at Oflag IIC, Woldenberg and Oflag IID, Gross Born, commemorating the celebration of ‘Olympic’ Games at these camps. Though the

author neglects to comment on any events or performances, he does mention that POWs at the Woldenberg camp competed for one of six clubs under 'The Federated Military Sports Club.'<sup>90</sup> The existence of this organization infers an advanced level of sports development, beyond that of casual sports participation, in the POW camp environment.

Two unpublished sources also present important material. In "War, Incarceration, Reminiscence: Sport and Olympic Games in Prisoner of War Camps in World War II, 1940-1944," Robert K. Barney and David E. Barney expand on the sporting aspects of Podolsky's topic. The two discuss the 'Olympic' games held at Oflag IIC and Oflag IID in greater depth, and appraise an 'International POW Olympic Games' held at Stalag XIII A at Langwasser as well as a sports meet held at Stalag Luft III.<sup>91</sup> The various events and clubs competing at the games are listed for each camp.

In "The Great Escape: Sport and Recreation at Stalag Luft III - A Case Study," Robert K. Barney and Stephen R. Wenn explore impromptu and organized sport at the Sagan camp. This source is important for several reasons. Firstly, the two uncover the structural organization behind some sports at Sagan, including the role of the 'camp sport officer':

The sport program at Sagan was operated by the camp sport officer. This individual appointed a representative in each prisoner hut. Known as a hut sport officer, this prisoner's job was 'extremely busy and tiring one.' It involved the scheduling and operation of a number of sport programs.<sup>92</sup>

The two discuss the participation in, and subsequent popularity of many sports, including softball, cricket, soccer, ice hockey, and to a lesser extent, rugby, volleyball, boxing, badminton, swimming, horse shoes, gymnastics, bowling, and fencing.<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, a

description of a sports day which was held in May 1944 is included.<sup>94</sup> This paper is one of the only sources reviewed thus far that attributes some of the shipment and delivery of sports equipment to the Knights of Columbus.<sup>95</sup> The two also opine as to the functions sport served at Sagan, concluding that it relieved boredom, maintained physical conditioning, showcased national traditions, and diverted attention away from escape activity.<sup>96</sup>

The sources from this section discuss some camp activities including music, escape, and sport. While the identified articles on sport are fairly detailed, it is hoped that this research endeavor brings a greater level of understanding to the Canadian experience, and to the field of study as a whole.

#### **Section IV: Published Recollections by Ex-POWs**

The following sources are important to this study, as they provide first hand accounts of what life was like in Axis POW camps; these enrich this project by bringing increased passion and emotion to the topic, while enhancing the detail through which camp life can be understood. Still, scholars must interpret these recollections with due diligence. In some cases, these accounts were written and published years, even decades after the Second World War, and the individual's recollections of actual events may have faded with the passing of time. Therefore, an attempt to triangulate these recollections with other reliable sources will be conducted when necessary to establish the validity of important facts.

The following two sources are from Canadian soldiers captured during Operation

‘Jubilee,’ the raid on Dieppe of 19 August 1942. In *Dieppe and Beyond, for a dollar and a half a day*, John Patrick Grogan, a soldier in the Royal Canadian Regiment, focuses on his experiences at Stalag VIII B Lamsdorf, and later at Stalag Luft III Sagan. His recollections of the shackling affair complement Vance’s research; Grogan discusses the inconvenience, hardships, and torments that accompanied the shackling affair, including the need for an individual deemed the ‘sanitator’ to aid shackled prisoners in the latrine.<sup>97</sup> Moreover, Grogan discusses the meagre rations POWs were served at Lamsdorf in the winter of 1942-43, and asserts, “without the Red Cross we might not have survived.”<sup>98</sup>

In *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe: From a Prisoner’s Wartime Log, 1942-1945*, Robert A. Prouse recounts his experiences after being captured at Dieppe. He is effective in expressing an underlying demeanor consuming many POWs; Prouse writes that POWs endured “recurring feelings of depression, loneliness, anxiety, and a fear of what the future held.”<sup>99</sup> Prouse spent time at a number of camps. He recalls Saturday night boxing matches and other ‘entertainments’ at Stalag IX C on the outskirts of Molsdorf and at a newer camp at Muhlhausen.<sup>100</sup> In addition a five-game rugby series between Great Britain and the ‘Dominions’ (New Zealanders, Australians, South Africans, and Canadians) also occurred at Muhlhausen.<sup>101</sup> Prouse’s description of the forced march from Muhlhausen, beginning on 2 April 1944, effectively informs the reader as to the beleaguered states to which POWs had sunk, stomaching starvation diets, recurring exhaustion, diarrhea, and nausea; a spiraling circumstance where guards eventually left behind on the roadways those who were too weak to go on.<sup>102</sup>

More specific to this study are sources written by Canadian airmen who spent the

majority of the war as POWs. In *Spitfire Down: The POW Story*, Brian G. Hodgkinson details his experiences as a POW at the Dulag Luft near Frankfurt, Stalag VIIA Moosburg, and Stalag 383 Hohenfels. Hodgkinson mentions that exercise privileges were suspended when camp authorities suspected the POWs had killed one of the vicious guard dogs used to patrol the camp.<sup>103</sup> This appears to be a common form of camp punishment. While at Stalag 383 (coincidentally one of the same camps discussed by Franks), Hodgkinson mentions the opportunity to participate in judo, wrestling, and boxing classes, and that, “[b]ecause of his [Percy Sekine - former chief judo instructor for the Metropolitan Police in London, England] skill and personality judo became one of the camp’s most popular and respected activities.”<sup>104</sup> Hodgkinson himself became the head of the theatrical program, and opines that the Germans both encouraged and supported the practice, as evidenced by the opening of a second theatre.<sup>105</sup>

*Past Tense: Charlie’s Story* includes Charlie Hobbs’ recollections of his experiences at Stalag Luft I (Barth) and Stalag Luft VI (Heydekrug) during the Second World War. Most pertinent to this study, Hobbs comments on POWs’ participation in a number of sports, specifically noting that at Stalag Luft III,

Soccer was the big sport for us and over half the boys were on one team or another. We had several professional players from the British Isles and several School Boy Internationals. We had representation from each of the four levels of pros. Most Canucks were high on the list of athletics, but not in soccer. I discovered there was a lot more finesse in soccer than meets the eye... Most of us would watch these games for hours. When big name games were being played, even the German officers came over.<sup>106</sup>

Moreover, Hobbs discusses the multifaceted role of the ‘circuit’<sup>107</sup> and the development of various leagues at the two camps.<sup>108</sup>

John R. Harris presents his recollections as a POW at Sagan in *Serving and Surviving: An Airman's Memoirs*. While the book discusses other facets of Harris' employment in the air force, the portion concerning his experiences at Sagan is important on several counts. Harris' insights are at the same time both broad and specific; while discussing a number of camp topics, he brings particulars and details to his narrative. For instance, while characterizing the predominant camp mood at Sagan as 'doom and gloom,' Harris asserts that,

... the causes were not far to seek-viz: overcrowding, shortage of food, the barbed-wire enclosure, under the constant shadow of the watch towers where the guards never stopped surveying our activities, freezing winters followed by roasting summers, primitive bathroom arrangements, frequent power and water outages, scarcity of mail, standing for ages twice daily in the open to be counted, surprise barrack block searches, absence of female company, and the catalogue could go on and on.<sup>109</sup>

Harris makes frequent reference to sport at Stalag Luft III often referring to various ball games, including soccer, rugger, cricket, and softball.<sup>110</sup> In regards to ice hockey at the camp, Harris details the creation of an ice rink, the supply of ice hockey equipment from the YMCA, and the participation in major hockey matches on Sundays.<sup>111</sup>

Having been shot down in a raid over Hamburg on 8 September 1940, Andrew B. Cox spent over four years in captivity at several POW camps.<sup>112</sup> Cox shares his experiences in *Our Spirit Unbroken: Memoirs of a Prisoner of War*. Here, Cox reflects that he was among the first POWs to inhabit Stalag Luft I at Barth, Stalag Luft III at Sagan, and Stalag Luft VI at Heydekrug. Cox believes that,

A type of chivalry existed between the opposing air forces in those early days. During that quiet phase of the war, many Allied aircrew who were shot down and captured over Occupied Europe were shown great



consideration when they were taken to a nearby fighter base.<sup>113</sup>

This consideration could have extended the liberties, including participation in sports, that prisoners were allowed to pursue. At both Stalag Luft I and III, Cox connects the grade of one's diet to participation in sports. Specifically, he remarks that when Red Cross food parcels arrived regularly and were combined with regular German rations, POWs had the energy to participate in soccer games and derivations of football and rugby.<sup>114</sup> Cox also comments on POWs' routine of walking laps, or circuits, around the perimeter of their compound for exercise.<sup>115</sup> Cox's recollections are especially important since this research initiative includes activities at Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI.

John D. Harvie presents his unique and terrifying story in *Missing in Action: An RCAF Navigator's Story*. Harvie, having been captured on 14 July 1944, spent his first month of captivity at a civilian prison in Fresnes, Paris in solitary confinement.<sup>116</sup> Later, he was transferred along with approximately 80 Americans and 90 British airmen to Buchenwald concentration camp, where the only barrack provided was a large piece of hard ground.<sup>117</sup> It is thought that as many as 60,000 people perished there between 1937 and the end of the War.<sup>118</sup> Finally, on 19 October 1944, approximately 150 of the airmen were transferred to Stalag Luft III.<sup>119</sup> Harvie comments on the important role of 'circuit bashing' at Sagan:

I had presumed circuit bashing was only for fresh air and exercise. But, I soon learned, there were even greater benefits. Here in the open a kriegie could isolate himself for a short while from the inevitable irritants of life that develop in crowded quarters. It was the only place in camp where he could stride around and around undisturbed and alone with his thoughts. In privacy he could exorcise bad memories of the war and vent to the four winds his anger and frustration at enforced idleness. Here he could voice

his private thoughts with little fear of being overheard by either friend or foe.<sup>120</sup>

Later, Harvie notes that POWs increased their use of the circuit to improve stamina as a forced march loomed in the new year.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, he remarks on the popularity of the sports field: “We came to the sports field, which was fully utilized each day. At this time of year [October 1944] the soccer season was at its peak. Excuses for a game were endless... English leagues, Scottish leagues, Colonial leagues, Barrack leagues, Compound leagues, and others.”<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, Harvie discusses the prominence of skating and ice hockey at Stalag Luft III in the winter of 1944/45, and the organizations that provided the available equipment.<sup>123</sup>

Ken Rees, a Welshman detained in East and North Compounds at Luft III, presents his story in *Lie in the Dark and Listen: The Remarkable Exploits of a WWII Bomber Pilot and Great Escaper*. An appreciable sportsman and devout escape worker, Rees is a noteworthy character in his own right. What makes his contributions especially important to this study is the fact that each compound also contained Canadians when he was there; in fact, he was quartered with at least two of them in North Compound.<sup>124</sup> Rees shares stories about violent inter-compound rugby contests, diversionary volleyball games, and exciting softball matches.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, Rees describes each compound’s orientation and comments on the state of North Compound’s sports field, originally hindered by a sprinkling of pine trees and a vast number of tree stumps that had to be pulled out by the prisoners before play could begin.<sup>126</sup> But when the stumps were gone, the POWs were well equipped to play a variety of activities. Rees states,

With the help of the Red Cross from various countries we had proper equipment for nearly every sport imaginable, even golf clubs, but without any golf balls which had to be manufactured in camp. We made a pitch for rugby and football, with a rough bare patch for cricket. We also played volleyball and softball, both very popular with the Canadians and Americans. When winter came the Canadians built an ice rink. It was great fun to watch the British trying to play softball and ice hockey, and the North Americans trying to play rugby and cricket. But generally, the standard in all these sports was exceptionally high... The biggest problem with sport was the lack of food. Even on our optimal diet, in the more strenuous sports we could only play fifteen-twenty minutes each way at most.<sup>127</sup>

Rees' input is also important because he describes the general playing season for various sports; for instance, he mentions that softball and cricket were played in the summer, but gave way to soccer and rugby in the fall.<sup>128</sup> Despite his British ancestry and upbringing, Rees was drawn to softball over cricket in the summer months of 1944, claiming that, "I always liked being actively involved, either in the field or screaming abuse at the opposition whilst waiting my turn at bat."<sup>129</sup> Rees' reminiscences are important to this study because he demonstrates the athletic disposition of at least two compounds at Luft III, and the levels of competition to be found there.

Delmar T. Spivey presents his captivity story in *POW Odyssey: Recollections of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III and the Secret German Peace Mission in World War II*. As the ranking American officer at Centre Compound, Colonel Spivey held the position of Senior American Officer (SAO) with all its privileges and authority, between 4 September 1943 and 28 January 1945 (the day the camp was evacuated). Sport's participation, popularity, and impact are discussed among other themes. For instance, Spivey imparts that he eventually made physical activity compulsory among American

servicemen in Centre Compound, imposing a fifteen minute regimen of mandatory calisthenics every morning.<sup>130</sup> Participation in basketball, soccer, touch football, volleyball, ice hockey, ping pong, badminton, fencing, boxing, wrestling, track events, and pounding the 'circuit' are also mentioned.<sup>131</sup> Spivey concludes that, "[o]f all the things which helped return us to our country and homes in healthy physical and mental state, I should say that our freedom to indulge in athletic activities was the most important."<sup>132</sup>

John Viator, a Second World War airmen in the American Service, presents his story in *Time Out: American Airmen at Stalag Luft I*. This source embodies an authoritative recollection of life inside the Barth camp between February 1944 and the camp's liberation in 1945. Viator blends numerous broad themes, such as food and rations, daily routine, camp strength and ranks, and recreation and leisure opportunities, with detailed narratives on his cabin mates, the demeanor of POWs, and escape attempts, to name a few. Viator describes the camp structure comprehensively, including the orientation and history of the various compounds.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, this author's insights supplement Hasselbring's findings in regards to the typical organization of American POWs by detailing the structure at Stalag Luft I, including the roles of each branch of the complementary staff to the SAO, titled S-1, S-2, S-3, and S-4.<sup>134</sup> Furthermore, the existence of sports activities at Stalag Luft I is cemented in some of Viator's recollections:

The British played football and rugby and occasionally cricket. The Americans had baseball equipment as well as footballs and volley balls. There was a ping-pong table in Block 4 but there was a shortage of ping-

pong balls. The British learned baseball and, as a reciprocal gesture, we organized a rugby team. When we were eating and the weather was fine we had Inter-Allied sports jamborees. One of the unexpected reversals of the war occurred when we beat the British at rugby and they promptly turned around and beat us at baseball. The Germans were suspicious of our activities on the sports field since as many as a thousand prisoners might be on the parade ground at once, either as participants or spectators, and they worried about a mass break.<sup>135</sup>

Outdoor sports were not limited to warmer temperatures. He recounts, “[o]n an icy day in February [1945], 500 men formed a bucket brigade relaying countless buckets of water from the latrines to the sports field to set up a skating rink.”<sup>136</sup> Vietor’s account is especially important to this study because of his detailed recollections of Stalag Luft I, including several discussions surrounding sport.

In *The Wooden Horse*, Eric Williams details the famous escape of the same name from Stalag Luft III in this novel based on true events. In reality, Williams was one of the three British officers to escape via this tunnel in October 1943. This escape project involved the construction of a wooden vaulting horse; the horse was brought to the same area of the camp every day, and select POWs performed gymnastic manoeuvres over and around it. Unbeknownst to the German guards, Williams and/or his comrade(s) were underneath the horse, excavating a tunnel. This source is presented as a novel and must be treated with due skepticism. Indeed, as Arthur Marwick warns, “a novel or a poem, if it is a source at all, is a source for the period in which it was written, not for the period about which it was written.”<sup>137</sup> Still, Williams’ book was first published in 1949, just six years after his escape. Furthermore, in the ‘Explanation’ section of this book, Williams infers that whether he wanted to write a non-fiction or not, “Military Intelligence had

decreed that the prison camps were on the secret list.”<sup>138</sup> While the names of characters have been changed and some situations have been fashioned to capitalize on dramatic effect, Williams’ detail concerning the development, construction, and implementation of the wooden horse escape project appears reliable. Indeed, Williams writes, “[t]he horse, the tunnel, the break from the camp, the train journey across enemy territory, the stay in Stettin, our contacts with French workers and the escape from Germany itself were, and are today, vivid in my memory.”<sup>139</sup> Moreover, many of the events presented in *The Wooden Horse* agree with Aidan Crawley’s interpretation of the same escape.<sup>140</sup>

Williams’ narrative is important to this study specifically due to the employment of sport to assist the escape. Williams writes:

While the horse was being built John, with some help from Phil, had been recruiting prisoners for the vaulting. He had made posters which he stuck up around the compound, advertising gym classes to be held every afternoon. Special prisoners were detailed by the Escape Committee to talk to the German guards, remarking on this typically British craze for exercising and telling them, casually, about the vaulting-horse.<sup>141</sup>

Daniel G. Dancocks’ *In Enemy Hands: Canadian Prisoners of War 1939-45*, represents a collection of interviews with ex-POWs and comprehensive research. Topics from both the European and Far Eastern camps are discussed. More specifically, diminishing diets and camp conditions, the importance of the Red Cross parcels, and the daily hardships faced in camp are some of the themes evaluated here. Through his numerous interviews, Dancocks contributes many instances of prisoners’ participation in sports. For instance, as a POW held at Stalag Luft III, Pilot Officer Harold Garland recollects:

After they’d been there for a while, the Americans got permission to come over and have a softball game with the Canadians. All these Americans

had baseball uniforms, all these lovely, white, fitting baseball uniforms. And the Canadians, we were in the clothes we'd slept in for two or three years. And there were some professional baseball players in there, too.<sup>142</sup>

Furthermore, Flight Lieutenant Barry Davidson, another ex-POW from Stalag Luft III, states:

Later, there was another fellow in camp who knew Connie Smyth, and I knew Don MacKay in Calgary. And we [decided to] see if they could send us some equipment to us through the Red Cross. And I wrote to Don and someone else wrote to Connie Smyth. We got enough equipment to make up two pretty good hockey teams. We had guys in there who had played with some of the top pro teams, so we had some real good hockey games. The Germans loved to watch.<sup>143</sup>

Some inferences also relate to the importance of sports participation. For instance, participation on the golf course at Stalag Luft III was taken away from POWs after the wooden horse escape. The Germans suspected that the sand for the bunkers had been procured through tunnelling ventures. Flight Lieutenant Art Crighton reflects, “[a]nd that was like taking candy from a baby, because right from the [SBO] down, golf was the most important thing in that camp. That really broke our hearts.”<sup>144</sup> Overall, this was an important contributor to this study, primarily for the rich content of ex-POWs’ reflections.

The collective volume of information retrieved from all sources under each section established a considerable base from which this study was investigated. Despite the published material surrounding sport in Axis POW camps, there remained a palpable gap in the published literature concerning the sport experiences of POWs, including Canadian POWs, during the Second World War. While Franks opines that “sport was not the totality of camp existence or even a major part of it,”<sup>145</sup> other authors have stressed its

'major part' in the lives of Second World War POWs. Hasselbring states that, "[o]f the organized activities in most camps, participation in a sport was the most popular activity, second only to walking the perimeter;"<sup>146</sup> Vulliet maintains that "[m]ost important... of all non-intellectual activities engaged in all PW camps, was sports and athletics;"<sup>147</sup> Durand submits that "[p]erhaps no other camp activity matched sports in stimulating mass participation and widespread interest;"<sup>148</sup> Spivey asserts that "[o]f all the things which helped return us to our country and homes in healthy physical and mental state, I should say that our freedom to indulge in athletic activities was the most important;"<sup>149</sup> McCarthy contends that, "[i]n some camps, especially the larger permanent ones, sports and games were a central part of life;"<sup>150</sup> and Christiansen concludes that, "I do not think that any activity played a more important role than sports." It is hoped that this study brings some sustainable clarity to the issue.



## Endnotes

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1. Charles G. Roland, *Long Nights Journey into Day: Prisoners of War in Hong King and Japan, 1941-1945* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2001), p. 101.
2. Jonathan F. Vance, *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), p. 6.
3. Ibid., p. 103. The first Canadian POW was Pilot Officer A.B. Thompson of Penetanguishene. Though Canada had yet to officially enter the War, Thompson had joined the RAF in 1937, and was flying a leaflet raid over Germany on 8 September 1939, when he was shot down and captured.
4. Ibid., p. 175.
5. Ibid., pp. 140-142.
6. Oliver Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time: RAF Bomber Command Prisoners-of-War in Germany 1939-1945* (London: Grub Street, 2003), pp. 42-53, 70-83, 98-107.
7. Ibid., pp. 232-442.
8. Andrew S. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich" (PhD dissertation, Temple University, 1990), p. 104.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., pp. 122-123; the Camp Commandant was the head of the camp and coordinated the Lagerführung and the Abwehr; the Lagerführung were responsible for camp management and administration including appells (roll calls); the Abwehr Officers were in charge of preventing escapes, conducting searches, and exposing covert activities. These individuals were typically the agents involved with rough/brutal treatment of prisoners; a Gestapo Agent may have been employed to work with the Abwehr to conduct thorough searches of the camp; the Captain of the Guard commanded sentries manning watchtowers and patrolling the fence. Unlike Lagerführung guards, these servicemen did not mingle with the POWs and were typically more hostile towards prisoners.
11. Ibid., pp. 199-202; the SAO's authority was granted by Congress thus allowing him to issue orders through the ranks; the MOC possessed no authority with the US government, did not usually possess a greater rank than the common POW (usually an NCO), and could therefore only make requests of POWs. Furthermore, the MOC was usually elected among the men.

12. Daniel G. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands: Canadian Prisoners of War 1939-45* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1983), pp. 97-99.
13. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 297.
14. Ibid., p. 263.
15. Ibid., p. 223.
16. Ibid., p. 265.
17. John Nichol and Tony Rennell, *The Last Escape: The Untold Story of Allied Prisoners of War in Germany 1944-45* (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada, Ltd., 2002).
18. S. P. MacKenzie, "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in World War II," *The Journal of Modern History* 66 (September 1994): p. 490. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28199409%2966%3A3%3C487%3ATTOPOW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E>
19. Ibid., p. 491.
20. Anton Gill, *The Great Escape: The Full Dramatic Story with Contributions from Survivors and their Families* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2002), p. 56.
21. Ibid., p. 66.
22. Ibid., p. 66.
23. Ibid., p. 125.
24. Ibid., p. 90.
25. For reference to YMCA and Salvation Army refer to John D. Harvie, *Missing in Action: An RCAF Navigator's Story* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), pp. 172-173; for reference to the Knights of Columbus refer to Robert K. Barney and Stephen R. Wenn, "The Great Escape: Sport and Recreation at Stalag Luft III - A Case Study," p. 5. Unpublished Essay, Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. Abstract for this paper can be found in *North American Society for Sport History Conference Proceedings* (Arizona State University: NASSH, 1988), p. 56; for reference to donations of hockey equipment by Conn Smyth and Don MacKay refer to Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 101-102.
26. Gill, *The Great Escape*, pp. 167-168.
27. Arthur A. Durand, *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), p. 234.

28. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, pp. 247-248.
29. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 57; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247.
30. MacKenzie, "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in World War II," p. 491; however, German officials did not typically afford those rights proscribed by the Geneva Conventions to prisoners from nations who did not ratify or accession the convention.
31. "The state may utilize the labour of prisoners of war according to their rank and aptitude, officers excepted." *Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, 18 October 1907, Diplomatic Conference of the Hague of 1907, sec. I, chap. II, art. 6; "Belligerents may employ as workmen prisoners of war who are physically fit, other than officers and persons of equivalent status, according to their rank and their ability." *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, 27 July 1929, Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1929, pt. I, sec. III, chap. 1, art. 27.
32. *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, 27 July 1929, Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1929.
33. *Convention (IV) respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land and its annex: Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, 18 October 1907, Diplomatic Conference of the Hague of 1907.
34. Jonathan F. Vance, "Canadian Relief Agencies and Prisoners of War, 1935-45," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31 (Summer 1996): p. 2.  
<http://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?index=0&did=10974345&SrchMode=1&sid=1&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1132099402&clientId=241>
35. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 90; Robert A. Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe: From a Prisoner's Wartime Log, 1942-1945* (Toronto: Van Nostrand Reinhold Publishers, 1982), p. 114; Harvie, *Missing in Action*, pp. 172-173; Vance, *Objects of Concern*, pp. 141-142; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, pp. 247-248; Tony McCarthy, *War Games: The Story of Sport in World War Two* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1989), pp. 151-153.
36. Vance, "Canadian Relief Agencies," p. 2.
37. W.W. Foster, Director of Auxiliary Services Brigadier, Department of National Defence (DND), memorandum, "Information relative to Organization of Entertainment and Welfare for the Forces in Canada," 16 October 1939, Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa. See attached circular, "Services In Canada Volunteered By National Organizations Co-Operating with the Department of National Defence," 20 October 1939.

38. Andre Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War* (Geneva: International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations, 1946), p. 9. Copy held at Library and Archives Canada, MG28-I95-275, File 1: "War Services: YMCA Pamphlets."
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 91-95.
43. Chris Christiansen, *Seven Years among Prisoners of War*, trans. and ed. Ida Egede Winther (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1994), p. 6, 7; the first visit was made to a prison camp in France on 15 November 1939, and visits were concluded when the final POW was repatriated at the end of 1948.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
48. Alan M. Hurst, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in World War II* (Toronto: National War Services Committee of The National Council of Young Men's Christian Association of Canada, 1948), p. 202.
49. *Ibid.*
50. *Ibid.*, p. 203.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. Senior Canadian Officer W/Cdr RCAF, C.A. Willis at Stalag Luft I to The Canadian YMCA Overseas, London, 18 May 1944, in Hurst, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in World War II*, p. 355; Senior Canadian Officer Group Captain RCAF, L.E. Neary at Stalag Luft III to the president of The Canadian YMCA, Toronto, 20 November 1944, in Hurst, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in World War II*, p. 356.
54. *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, 27 July 1929, Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1929, pt. III, sec. III, chap. 2, art. 11.

55. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 233-235.
56. Frederick F. Tisdall, "The War: Canadian Red Cross Food Parcels for British Prisoners-of-war in Germany," Originally published in *The Canadian Medical Association Journal* 44 (1941); Frederick F. Tisdall, "Further report on the Canadian Red Cross Food parcels for British Prisoners-of-War," Originally published in *The Canadian Medical Association Journal* 50 (1944). Copies of each article were obtained from the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.
57. Frederick F. Tisdall, et al., "Final report on the Canadian Red Cross Food Parcels for Prisoners-of-War," *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 60 (March 1949): p. 1. Copy obtained from the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
59. Jonathan F. Vance, "Men in Menacles: The Shackling of Prisoners of War, 1942-1943," *The Journal of Military History* 59 (July 1995): p. 485.  
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0899-3718%28199507%2959%3A3%3C483%3AMIMTSO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-7>
60. *Ibid.*, p. 485.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 487.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 497-498.
63. Vance, *Objects of Concern*, p. 283n45. Vance states that, "[f]ewer than a third of the 4128 shackled POWs were Canadian; most were from other parts of the Empire."
64. H. Homer Aschmann, "Kriegie Talk," *American Speech* 23 (Oct. - Dec., 1948): pp. 218-222. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-1283%28194810%2F12%2923%3A3%2F4%3C217%3AKT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G>
65. Gordon Barnes, "Music in a Prisoner-of War Camp," *The Musical Times* 85 (May, 1944): p. 153. <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0027-4666%28194405%2985%3A1215%3C152%3AMIAPC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>
66. For other references to music and musical instruments in POW camps, refer to Brian G. Hodgkinson, *Spitfire Down: The Pow Story*, ed. George E. Condon (Manotick, Ont: Penumbra Press, 2000), p. 196; Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe*, p. 100, 192; Andrew B. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken: Memoirs of a Prisoner of War* (Port Elgin: The Brucedale Press, 1999), p. 55.

67. Jonathan F. Vance, "The War behind the Wire: The Battle to Escape from a German Prison Camp," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28 (Oct., 1993): p. 677.  
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-0094%28199310%2928%3A4%3C675%3ATWBTWT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W>
68. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 57.
69. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247.
70. Vance, "The War behind the Wire," p. 677.
71. Warwick Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344: Sport in Prisoner-of-war Camps during World War II," *Sporting Traditions* 11 (May 1995): p. 82.  
<http://www.aafla.org/SportsLibrary/SportingTraditions/1995/st1102/st1102g.pdf>
72. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
76. Floris J.G. van der Merwe, "'For you the war is over!' Sport amongst South African Prisoners-of-war during World War II" (paper presented at the Australian Society for Sport History Seminar, Queensland, New Zealand, February 1-5, 1999).
77. *Ibid.*
78. *Ibid.*
79. *Ibid.*
80. Tim Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II: The National Pastime Behind Barbed Wire* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002), p. 17.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 24.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
83. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
84. McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 150.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 153.

86. McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 156.
87. *Ibid.*, pp. 157-158.
88. Noel Barber, "Recreation Behind Barbed Wire," *Recreation* 37 (December 1943): p. 505.
89. Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War*, p. 42.
90. Sherwin Podolsky, "The Olympic Movement Remembered in the Polish Prisoner of War Camps of 1944," *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (renamed the *Journal of Olympic History* in 1997) 3 (Spring 1995): p. 14.  
<http://www.aafila.org/SportsLibrary/JOH/JOHv3n2/JOHv3n2d>
91. Robert K. Barney & David E. Barney, "War, Incarceration, Reminiscence: Sport and Olympic Games in Prisoner of War Camps in World War II, 1940-1944." Unpublished Essay, Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. Abstract for this paper can be found in *North American Society for Sport History Conference Proceedings* (Penn State University: NASSH, 1999), pp. 6-7.
92. Barney and Wenn, "The Great Escape: Sport and Recreation at Stalag Luft III," p. 3.
93. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-7.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
96. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
97. John Patrick Grogan, *Dieppe and Beyond, for a dollar and a half a day* (Renfrew: Juniper Books, 1982), p. 28.
98. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
99. Prouse, *Ticket to Hell via Dieppe*, p. 41.
100. *Ibid.*, p. 32, 100.
101. *Ibid.*, p. 108.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 143-144.
103. Hodgkinson, *Spitfire Down*, p. 141.

104. Hodgkinson, *Spitfire Down*, p. 149.
105. Ibid., p. 195, 199.
106. Charlie Hobbs, *Past Tense: Charlie's Story* (Burnstown, Ont: General Store Publishing House, 1994), p. 129.
107. Ibid., pp. 126-127.
108. Ibid., p. 133, 141-142.
109. John R. Harris, *Serving and Surviving: An Airman's Memoirs* (Victoria: First Choice Books, 2004), p. 95.
110. Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 108.
111. Ibid., p. 105, 108.
112. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken*, pp. 21-22.
113. Ibid., p. 4.
114. Ibid., p. 54, 80.
115. Ibid., p. 95; For other remarks on 'circuit bashing'/'pounding the circuit' and the reasons for pursuing this activity, refer to Eric Williams, *The Wooden Horse* (Barnsley, England: Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2005), pp. 18-33; Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 97; Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 129, 178-179.
116. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, pp. 44-53.
117. Ibid., p. 70, 77.
118. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 177-178.
119. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 117-118.
120. Ibid., p. 139.
121. Ibid., p. 182.
122. Ibid., p. 146.
123. Ibid., pp. 172-175.



124. Ken Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen: The Remarkable Exploits of a WWII Bomber Pilot and Great Escaper* (London: Grub Street, 2004), pp. 137-139.
125. *Ibid.*, p. 187, 149, 185.
126. *Ibid.*, p. 130, 141.
127. *Ibid.*, pp. 126-127.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
130. Delmar T. Spivey, *POW Odyssey: Recollections of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III and the Secret German Peace Mission in World War II* (Attleboro, Mass: Colonial Lithograph, Inc., 1984), p. 70.
131. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, pp. 71-72.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
133. John A. Vietor, *Time Out: American Airmen at Stalag Luft I* (Fallbrook, CA: Aero Publishers, Inc., 1951), pp. 62-63.
134. *Ibid.*, p. 104; S-1 was tasked with *Personnel*, including the number of men in camp, their ranks, camp records, etc.; S-2 was tasked with *Intelligence*, including security, trading, and escape; S-3 was tasked with *Operations*, including planning for the mass movement of troops, during a forced march or liberation, under various scenarios; S-4 was tasked with “the equitable issue of Red Cross clothing and food, and the distribution of athletic equipment that arrived.”
135. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
136. *Ibid.*, p. 68.
137. Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd, 1970), p. 138.
138. Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, p. 7.
139. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
140. Aidan Crawley, *Escape from Germany, 1939-45: Methods of escape Used by RAF Airmen during World War II* (London: The Stationery Office, 2001), pp. 176-189.
141. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

142. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 101.
143. *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
144. *Ibid.*, p. 125.
145. Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344," p. 90.
146. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 223.
147. Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War*, p. 30.
148. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247.
149. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72.
150. McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 150.

## Chapter Three

### Methodology

#### Statement of the Problem / Sub-Problem

While much research has focussed on prisoner of war camps in the Second World War, little has been devoted specifically to participation in sport and its existence, accessibility, and organization in these environments. This research initiative supplements contemporary understandings by evaluating the sporting experience of Canadian POWs held captive in three Stalag Luft camps during the Second World War. Moreover, it is hoped that this research initiative elicits further study and analysis into sport under such conditions. The overriding focus of this Master's thesis project is as follows:

What was the sports experience of Canadian prisoners of war (POWs) at Stalag Luft I (Barth), Stalag Luft III (Sagan), and Stalag Luft VI (Heydekrug) during the Second World War?

In an attempt to satisfy this research objective and develop a contextual understanding of the topic area, several sub-questions were addressed. These include:

1. What sports activities were available to Canadian POWs at Stalag Luft I, Stalag Luft III, and Stalag Luft VI?
2. What sports activities did Canadian POWs pursue at these camps?
3. What manner of organization characterized sports activities?
4. Who, or what organizations, supplied the resources for sports activities to Canadian POWs?
5. What purpose did participation in sports activities serve Canadian POWs?

The conclusions gleaned from these sub-questions foster an increased contextual

understanding of the environment within which sport existed in POW camps. Furthermore, informed responses to these questions involve the infusion of a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, including a blend of modern scholarship and the personal insights of ex-POWs. Nancy Struna opines that, in order to produce a successful study, the historian should be well versed in the foundational literature, and must incorporate historical evidence from primary sources.<sup>1</sup> The incorporation of these sources in this study has improved the quality of the findings. By asking the aforementioned research questions of each of the three camps, while utilizing a wide range of pertinent sources to draw conclusions, a greater understanding of sport in Second World War POW camps has been achieved. More specifically, important elements of the Canadian sporting experience at Stalag Luft I, Stalag Luft III, and Stalag Luft VI were investigated to satisfy the main focus of this initiative.

### **Methodological Framework:**

This research initiative is fuelled by the belief that, as Arthur Marwick simply states, “human society *needs* history.”<sup>2</sup> History provides a knowledge of the past; it furnishes a societal identity and establishes a shared memory upon which to base future decisions. The history of sport examines and attempts to explain change, or lack of change, in topics of or relating to sport.<sup>3</sup>

In order to draw credible and reputable conclusions from a study, the researcher must employ an effective methodology to guide the research focus. Therefore, this research initiative’s approach is supported by a strong methodological foundation

employed to determine the existence and role of sports activities as pursued by Canadian POWs at three Stalag Luft camps during the Second World War. This research endeavour is presented through an historical narrative approach. This is not to say that this research is limited to story-telling; rather, while this technique emphasizes a 'story,' Nancy Struna asserts that, in addition to description and explanation, this research design employs levels of synthesis.<sup>4</sup> In regards to this study, information taken from various sources was compared and contrasted, and original conclusions have been developed.

Chapter Four, the findings component of this document, is divided into four sections. The first three sections include a chronological presentation of the sporting practices found at three distinct Luft camps; Stalag Luft I (Barth), Stalag Luft III (Sagan), and Stalag Luft VI (Heydekrug). It is important to note that Canadians were held at each of these establishments. Each camp was selected for this study based on the prominence and accessibility of resources. While each installation was similar in that they were each controlled by the Luftwaffe, the three camps were distinct in other ways. Stalag Luft I (June 1940-May 1945) was the original permanent POW camp assigned to the Luftwaffe; of all of the Stalag Luft camps, the most contemporary literature reviewed was dedicated to Stalag Luft III (March 1942-January 1945), and in regards to sports, this camp appears to have been the best equipped;<sup>5</sup> Stalag Luft VI (June 1943-July 1944) represents one of the last permanent Luft camps to be established and exhibited one of the shortest tenures. While Canadian POWs were typically confined with British and Dominion servicemen, Stalag Luft VI is unique in that a compound with an unusually high percentage of Canadian servicemen was established there, as well as a compound mixing American and

British/Dominion servicemen.<sup>6</sup> The fourth section examines additional important findings that did not suit the camp chronologies.

When incorporating findings of various sources towards an original study, Marwick beseeches the researcher to “treat every fragment of evidence circumspectly; take nothing for granted.”<sup>7</sup> The process of triangulation will be employed to maximize the validity and reliability of the collected data, and elevate confidence in the developed conclusions. Triangulation refers to the cross-referencing of sources in order to establish more accurate results. Jerry Thomas and Jack Nelson state, “[g]enerally, triangulation is valuable because of the increased quality control achieved by combining methods, observers, and data sources.”<sup>8</sup> This study triangulated sources to validate interobserver agreement. The greater the level of agreement, the more confident one can be in the findings. Likewise, the greater the agreement between observers, the greater one’s confidence can be in the internal validity of the study.<sup>9</sup> For this research initiative, critical information drawn from sources such as interviews and photographs have been compared to information gleaned from other sources, including inspection records and POW journals, to substantiate the findings. Thus, an agreement between these sources encourages greater confidence in the consequent findings of this study.<sup>10</sup>

The researcher must be cognizant of his or her contemporary biases; Herbert Butterfield states that, “[i]n reality the historian is in the habit of inserting some of his present-day prejudices into his reconstructions of the past; or unconsciously he sets out the whole issue in terms of some contemporary experience.”<sup>11</sup> It must be admitted that the researcher of this initiative has never been incarcerated in a POW camp and,

moreover, was not alive at the time of this study's focus. Therefore, every effort was made to appreciate the context within which certain actions and comments were made. Struna summarizes the rule of omission, or free editing, inferring that most historical sources, regardless of their form, are not complete accounts of the event in question.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, Ted Palys warns against the naive acceptance of historical evidence as all-encompassing sources applicable to a certain event or time; rather one must consider the biases presented within the source.<sup>13</sup> Again, the incorporation of an array of sources to support or refute certain findings was employed to filter out unreliable findings, and maximize the confidence in the conclusions.

### **Data Sources**

This study combines information from a broad spectrum of sources. Specifically, this research initiative engages both secondary and primary sources. Secondary sources, including journal articles and seminal books, served to develop a foundational understanding of Axis prisoner of war camps from the Second World War and the major events from those camps. Still Marwick asserts, “[a] historical work is deemed scholarly and reliable according to the extent to which it is based on ‘primary’ sources, the basic, raw, imperfect evidence.”<sup>14</sup> Accordingly then, primary sources have been utilized to establish findings central to this research initiative, thus enhancing the quality of this scholarly endeavour. These sources include major international conventions, an array of archival materials, and ex-POWs’ responses to personal semistandardized interviews.

Firstly, an assessment of pertinent articles from *The Hague Conventions* (1899,

1907) and *The Geneva Convention* (1929) is critical to the success of this study. Recall Article 17 under Chapter 4: 'Intellectual and Moral Needs of Prisoners of War,' of the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* (1929) states that "belligerents shall encourage as much as possible the organization of intellectual and sporting pursuits by prisoners of war."<sup>15</sup> If one hopes to appreciate the sporting experience of Canadian POWs abroad, it is first important to realize what rights they were guaranteed, what other aspects were encouraged, and what remained undiscussed.

A search for pertinent archives yielded the following as important sources of documents: Library and Archives Canada, the Canadian Red Cross Society Archives, the Sport in POW Camps Collection at the International Centre for Olympic Studies at the University of Western Ontario, and the personal holdings of Mr. Al Hannah, Mr. Barry Davidson Jr., and Dr. Jonathan Vance. Each of these presented a number of exceptional resources and provided unique information relative to this endeavor.

First and foremost, Library and Archives Canada houses many important documents and resources critical to this study. Worthy of note is the "National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada" Fonds 1856-1984 Collection, which holds a number of files detailing the organization's role during the Second World War. Specific to this study, these include personal communications between key players in the establishment and administration of the WPA, including Mr. Tracy Strong (World Director of the WPA/General Secretary of the World's Committee of the YMCA), Mr. John E. Manley (Executive Director of the WPA), and Mr. Harper Sibley (Chairman of the International Committee of the YMCA). Furthermore, this file contains some of the



WPA's budgetary documents detailing wartime expenditures on sports equipment, among other recreational, intellectual, and spiritual oriented items.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, this collection includes communications between administrators representing various organizations, including the Red Cross and the Department of National War Services (Ottawa), and WPA officials, regarding the provision of sports equipment to POWs.<sup>17</sup> Details concerning the establishment and implementation of the Sports Badge program are also included. This was an initiative developed by the YMCA, whereby POWs exhibiting "some outstanding athletic accomplishment or... a spirit shown which has increased the athletic life of the camp" received a special badge.<sup>18</sup> In addition to the aforementioned collection, Library and Archives Canada houses the Office of the Special Assistant to the Adjutant General Collection, which includes copies of the official inspection reports carried out by delegates from the Protecting Power and Red Cross officials at Stalag Luft I, III, and VI.<sup>19</sup> This assemblage also contains excerpts taken from POWs' letters, recorded by the Directorate of Censorship, some of which include references to sports in camp.<sup>20</sup> The amalgam of these resources contributed to an understanding of the YMCA's role in POW camps, camp growth, and also provided greater insight into sporting activities in the selected prison camps.

The Canadian Red Cross Society (CRCS) Archives possess a number of resources pertinent to that agency's role during the Second World War. More specific to this study, the archive houses documents detailing the actions taken by the CRCS to aid Canadian POWs abroad. These include Tisdall's reports on the food parcel program, numerous flyers, pamphlets, and handouts published by the CRCS including those directed to

relatives and the POWs' next-of-kin, and the CRCS's Annual Reports for the years 1939 through 1945. These resources assisted in developing an understanding of the CRCS's role in bringing relief to POWs, as well as answering the relevant sub-questions previously identified.

The Sport in POW Camps Collection at the International Centre for Olympic Studies at the University of Western Ontario represents another archival outlet which houses some significant documents. This collection includes unpublished research papers on sport at Stalag Luft III and other camps, the source material from these initiatives, an assemblage of photographs related to various sports events within Axis POW camps, and some letters connected to various philanthropic organizations. While all of these sources are important, the unpublished research papers provide some significant conclusions and, while employing a limited number of resources, can be applied to several of the sub-questions engaged in this study.

While it was hoped that the personal holdings of ex-POWs and/or their families would constitute a number of germane contributions to this study, only a few important resources were secured from this domain. Collections could have contained a variety of source material, including wartime logs, diaries, sketches, photographs, poetry, newspaper clippings, and the like. Such resources would allow the researcher to explore what life was like in captivity more intimately. For instance, Mr. Al Hannah was detained at Stalag Luft III during the War. In reviewing his wartime log, a detailed schedule of the 17 June 1944 Stalag Luft III Sports Day was discovered, detailing games officials, events, and times.

Personal semistandardized interviews with ex-POWs were employed to obtain critical insights from their experiences in captivity. Participants included Gilbert ‘Gib’ McElroy, Alvin ‘Al’ Hannah, John Harris, Bernard Reaume, and George McKiel.<sup>21</sup> Conducting interviews in person was the preferred mode of information retrieval, but a telephone interview was utilized in the case of George McKiel due to geographical challenges. While questionnaires can be an effective means of information retrieval, Thomas and Nelson contend that interviews are more adaptable, more versatile, and encourage a greater rate of return.<sup>22</sup> Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. The semistandardized approach permitted the investigation of scheduled topics, while allowing for the use of unscheduled probes following vague or unexpected responses.<sup>23</sup> This approach is especially important when the interviewee imparts some pivotal facts/notions that had not been considered by the researcher previously; when such instances arose, the researcher respectfully encouraged the interviewee to elaborate and discuss the issue further. A pilot interview was conducted, and some modifications were made to improve its quality. In sum, the incorporation of first-hand experience and personal accounts enriched the knowledge ascertained through the review of important international conventions and archival resources.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of this study derived from the means of information retrieval employed, the scope of the sources utilized, and language. Firstly, limitations emerged from the use of interviews. The year 2005 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the

Second World War; likewise, it had been at least 60 years since Canadian Second World War ex-POWs endured captivity abroad. Consequently, their stories and recollections may have blurred with the passing of so much time. At times participants could have presented inaccuracies thus corrupting the validity of the study. Furthermore, one individual may perceive events much differently than another; similarly two ex-POWs recounting their experiences may disclose two very different recollections of the same event. As previously noted, the triangulation of sources minimized such discrepancies. Moreover, it is important to stress that while the interview component of this study is critical to its originality and success, the interviews served to supplement and/or support major conclusions, not solely constitute them.

Accessibility to primary sources presented another limitation. While every effort was made to access ex-POWs and specific archival resources for study, some circumstances beyond the control of the researcher prohibited this.<sup>24</sup> With restrictions on advertising within branches of the Royal Canadian Legion, it was determined that advertising in the *Legion Magazine*, with a circulation of over 320,000, was the best means to recruit subjects.<sup>25</sup> Recruitment ads were published in the September/October and November/December issues. The number of Second World War ex-POWs has significantly diminished due to the passing of time, and, to some extent, participation in this study relied on ex-POWs reading the advertisement and contacting the researcher. Despite initial ambitions, fewer than ten interested parties contacted the researcher, partially accounting for the low number of interviews included within this study.

Regardless of the safeguards employed to maximize the validity of this study,

some limitations remain that cannot be controlled. Under the subheading “Validity Requires Intimacy,” Palys states,

Qualitative researchers believe that understanding people’s perceptions requires getting close to ‘research participants’ or ‘informants’ or ‘collaborators.’ You must spend time with them, get to know them, feel close to them, be able to empathize with their concerns, perhaps even be one of them, if you hope to *truly* understand.<sup>26</sup>

It must be conceded that the researcher is not an ex-POW, nor is the researcher from the same generation as Second World War ex-POWs. While some empathy can be shared through the researcher’s familial connection to the military (father is a Major in the Canadian Army), the researcher could not relate to the scenes of battle and a life in captivity. This reality may have contributed to the challenge of recruiting participants for the study, since there is an inherent difficulty in establishing the acceptance of participants when the researcher may have been considered an ‘outsider.’

Language represented another limitation to this study. First, some problems arose in differentiating between the terms ‘baseball’ and ‘softball,’ and ‘football’ and ‘soccer’ as presented in a number of resources and original documents. When necessary, attempts were made to determine the nationality of the author and thus make subsequent interpretations on what was meant by the comments. For instance, when Arthur A. Durand, an American author, discusses American fliers playing ‘football’ at Luft III’s Centre Compound, it is assumed that those prisoners were playing American football.<sup>27</sup> However when Tony McCarthy, a British author, discusses the football secretary at Luft I, it is assumed he is referring to soccer.<sup>28</sup> In regards to the use of the term ‘baseball,’ it is assumed that the author is actually referring to the more popular softball unless otherwise

stated.<sup>29</sup> Language also represented a second obstacle; while some original documents detailing the structure and function of Stalag Luft camps in German may exist, the researcher was limited to those written in English or translations. It should be understood that this research initiative is not meant to be a complete culmination of all pertinent materials. Rather, this study is intended to establish a firm foundation in the topic under investigation, and provide an appreciable reference for future research initiatives.

### **Delimitations**

This study strictly focuses on sport in the lives of Canadian servicemen held in Axis POW camps during the Second World War, specifically concentrating on sport at Stalag Luft I (Barth), Stalag Luft III (Sagan), and Stalag Luft VI (Heydekrug). A 'sport' is loosely defined here as an active diversion incorporating some system of recognized rules and requiring physical exertion; this study examines participation in a variety of sports including, but not limited to, softball, baseball, cricket, soccer, ice hockey, rugby, American football, volleyball, boxing, badminton, swimming, golf, gymnastics, fencing, and track and field. In addition, participation in 'circuit bashing' or 'pounding the circuit,' or the act walking around the inner perimeter of the camp repetitively, was examined. Although contemporary thinking identifies dance within the realm of sport, it is unlikely that Second World War POWs would have defined it in this way. Thus, it is assumed that POWs did not approach the pursuit of dance in a similar fashion as other sports. As such, dance was not studied in great depth here, although this represents a theme worthy of discourse elsewhere. Moreover, the study of sport in Allied POW camps during the

Second World War, or in camps established during other major conflicts, was not explored.

Research was generally dedicated to the wartime period between 1939 and 1945. However, most research was geared to the period beginning with the inception of Stalag Luft I in the summer of 1940, until German authorities relinquished control of Luft I to Allied prisoners in late April 1945. Canadian servicemen who spent any time in the three Stalag Luft camps mentioned above were sought to participate in interviews for this research initiative. Still, interviews with other willing ex-POWs were pursued when it was likely that those individuals possessed some important insights, or it was thought that their contributions would aid in developing a greater contextual understanding. In addition to the above delimitations, the duration of this initiative posed a challenge. The researcher was limited in that this project was initially scheduled to conclude by the end of May 2006. Consequently, a finite amount of time was available to encounter ex-POWs, develop some level of rapport, garner their participation, and incorporate their insights.

## Endnotes

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1. Nancy L. Struna, "Chapter 11: Historical Research in Physical Activity," in *Research Methods in Physical Activity*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., Jerry R. Thomas and Jack K. Nelson (Windsor: Human Kinetics, 2001), pp. 206-207.
2. Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd, 1970), p. 12.
3. Struna, "Chapter 11," p. 203.
4. Ibid., p. 207.
5. Refer to Arthur A. Durand, *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), pp. 247-248.
6. Tim Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II: The National Pastime Behind Barbed Wire* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002), p. 106; Charlie Hobbs, *Past Tense: Charlie's Story* (Burnstown, Ont: General Store Publishing House, 1994), p. 141.
7. Marwick, *The Nature of History*, p. 141.
8. Thomas and Nelson, *Research Methods*, p. 345.
9. Ibid., p. 339.
10. Sources did not always agree. For instance, on one occasion two seemingly seminal texts contradicted each other. In *Escape from Germany, 1939-45: Methods of Escape Used by RAF Airmen during World War II* (London: The Stationery Office, 2001), Crawley states, "[i]n **November 1943**, the NCOs at Barth, who had increased to **1,200**, were also transferred to Heydekrug..." (p. 31, bold and underline are mine). This value is in-line with Clutton-Brock's contention in *Footprints on the Sands of Time: RAF Bomber Command Prisoners-of-War in Germany 1939-1945* (London: Grub Street, 2003) and the Inspection Reports. However, Crawley later writes, "[i]n October 1942, the camp at Barth was re-opened. Allied airmen were being captured in such numbers that Goering's camp at Sagan was already overflowing and 150 NCOs were sent back to Barth to prepare it to receive new prisoners. By **October 1943**, the two compounds were housing **2,200 NCOs** in very cramped conditions" (p. 63, bold and underline are mine). The two assertions conflict. Perhaps Crawley is referring to Luft III in the second statement. However, the inspection report suggests that Luft III had 4 compounds in late October 1943, with a population of 4,314 prisoners - nearly double the amount suggested. Thus, this interpretation is likely directed to Luft I. It is likely that Crawley simply confuses the months October and November, and further confuses the NCO and officer populations.



Instead it is believed that, as Clutton-Brock argues, most of the 1,200 NCOs at Luft I were transferred to Luft VI sometime in October - not November. After these NCOs had left, a large contingent of British and American officers entered the camp from Italy, not NCOs. Perhaps this is where Crawley's value of 2,200 comes from. It should be noted that the method of triangulation was employed to determine the most likely findings and conclusions.

11. Herbert Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (London, Collins Clear-Type Press, 1951), p. 162.
12. Struna, "Chapter 11," p. 209.
13. Ted Palys, *Research Decisions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company Canada, Ltd., 1997), p. 6.
14. Marwick, *The Nature of History*, p. 131.
15. *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, 27 July 1929, Diplomatic Conference of Geneva of 1929.
16. Library and Archives Canada: MG28-I95, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada Collection, Container 272, File 10: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1940-1942.
17. LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 12: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence and Miscellaneous (1/2), 1940-1942.
18. Tracy Strong to Richard S. Hosking, 16 October 1944, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 273, File 4: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence re: Sports Badge Awards 1944.
19. LAC: RG24-8024, part of the Office of the Special Assistant to the Adjutant General Collection, File 21-0: Stalag Luft I; File 21-1: Stalag Luft 3; File 21-4: Stalag Luft VI.
20. LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1-1: SL3, Censorship.
21. Gib McElroy was detained at Dulag Luft, Stalag Luft VII (Bachau), and Stalag IIIA (Luckenwalde); Bernard Reaume at Dulag Luft (Frankfurt), Stalag Luft VII (Bachau), and Stalag IIIA (Luckenwalde); Al Hannah at a camp in Italy and Stalag Luft III (Sagan); John Harris at Dulag Luft (Frankfurt), Stalag Luft III (Sagan), Marlag und Milag Nord (Westerminke), and a camp at Lubeck; and George McKiel at Dulag Luft (Frankfurt) and Stalag Luft III (Sagan). The interviews with McElroy and Reaume were important in developing a greater understanding of the prison camp environment, but were not specifically cited as they were never sent to the three camps under study. Hannah's interview also contributed to a greater understanding of the POW camp environment and life in general at Luft III. Transcripts of these interviews are housed at the Leddy Library,

University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario.

22. Thomas and Nelson, *Research Method*, p. 274.

23. Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences* (Toronto: Allyn and Bacon, 1989), p. 17.

24. A number of strategies were employed to recruit ex-POWs for this study. At the outset, recruitment posters were to be sent to all of the Royal Canadian Legions in Canada. However, according to Legion policy, this was not allowed. Subsequently, advertisements were posted in the September/October and November/December issues of the Legion Magazine (the first advertisement was free, the second costing the researcher approximately \$1000). Less than ten responses were garnered from this approach, only one of which was specifically applicable to this study and pursued. Veteran Affairs Canada was contacted in hopes of obtaining the contact information of ex-POWs, but the researcher was told this information was not accessible to the public owing to the Privacy Act. The researcher participated in a live interview with Barbara Peacock of CBC Radio Windsor, and, at the conclusion of the interview, the researcher expressed the need for participants in his study and related his contact information - no potential participants contacted the researcher in conjunction with this interview. In addition, the University of Windsor published a story about this research initiative on their website, and another in their alumni magazine. No participants were garnered from the first publication, and, while some individuals contacted the researcher in regards to the second story, none were applicable to this study. Moreover, an administrator from the RCAF Ex-POWs Association was contacted, but the organization had since disbanded and the administrator no longer possessed the contact information of the ex-POWs. The Military Institute of Windsor was contacted, but they did not possess any direct information that would lead to acquiring participants. Furthermore, a recruitment message was posted on the ISHPES (International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport) electronic message board, and still no information leading to the acquisition of participants was acquired from here. In fact, most participants were garnered through word of mouth.

25. The Legion Magazine, "Quick Facts," <http://www.legionmagazine.com/advertise> (accessed 24 October 2005).

26. Palys, *Research Decisions*, p. 19.

27. Arthur A. Durand, *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), pp. 247-248.

28. Tony McCarthy, *War Games: The Story of Sport in World War Two* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1989), p. 153.

29. Softball was much more popular than other forms of baseball, such as hardball. John Harris, a Luft III North Compound ex-POW recalls, “[a]nd it was always softball, we never got playing baseball or hardball as we called it. But I didn’t mind. That was the kind of baseball I had played as a boy;” John Harris (ex-POW at Stalag Luft III), interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006, interview 002, transcript, Leddy Library, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario.

## Chapter Four

### Findings

The following chapter is broken into four sections. Section I is dedicated to Stalag Luft I, Section II to Stalag Luft III, and Section III to Stalag Luft VI. These sections parallel the structural and population growth at Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI to the existence of sporting activities. A fourth section includes some additional important findings.

### Prelude

While the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht's (OKW - German Army High Command) Prisoner of War Office was ultimately responsible for POW welfare, security, and the investigation of escapes, the organization delegated most of its authority to the Luftwaffe, Wehrmacht, and Kriegsmarine.<sup>1</sup> Subsequently, "each military service was responsible for the prisoners of its counterpart service."<sup>2</sup> The first Luftwaffe prison camp was established in November 1939 at Oflag 9A/H, Spangenberg. The first Dulag Luft, or Air Force transit camp, was established in early 1940 at Oberursel.<sup>3</sup> While this facility solidified the Luftwaffe's intent to control air force POWs, these airmen were still, more often than not, sent to permanent stalags and oflags under army control once their interrogation was deemed sufficient.

### Section I: Stalag Luft I, Barth

Stalag Luft I, the first permanent POW camp with a 'Luft' designation, was

established approximately 1.5 kilometres north-west of the town of Barth in Northern Germany in early July 1940 (see Appendix III).<sup>4</sup> The climate was not always conducive to outdoor activities; John Vietor, an American ex-POW presents an authoritative account of life at this camp in his book *Time Out: American Airmen at Stalag Luft I*. As Vietor was shot down over enemy territory and captured in February 1944, his recollections are especially important in developing an astute understanding of life at the camp in the final year of its existence. In regards to the environment within which the camp was set, he writes,

[Stalag Luft I] was situated on a marshy promontory bordering the Hiddensee, a brackish inlet flowing into the Baltic. A mile to the Southeast of us was Barth, a small fishing village, distinguished by the spire of a 13<sup>th</sup> Century Church. Cold, damp fogs rolled in from the Baltic alternating with bleak, chilling winds. During the brief summers it was light until almost midnight and daybreak was early but in the winters it would become dark as early as three o'clock in the afternoon and stay dark until nine the following morning. Tall gloomy pines hedged us in at the north; directly adjoining the camp was a Flak School where German soldiers studied anti-aircraft procedures. Windswept, sandy and desolate, the peninsula was an isolated cul-de-sac of the war.<sup>5</sup>

The camp contained two compounds in its original form; one for officers and one for non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and other ranks (ORs) (see Appendices IV & V). Scant information is known about this camp in its infancy. Clutton-Brock contends that the first non-personal Red Cross Parcels began arriving at the camp in October 1940. In addition, he contends that the winter of 1940/41 was extremely cold, causing several cases of frost-bite among the POWs.<sup>6</sup> Far less has been documented on prisoners' participation in sports during this time. However, Tim Wolter asserts that POWs played soccer at the camp as early as the summer of 1940.<sup>7</sup>

By the spring of 1945, the camp would quarter over 9,000 prisoners.<sup>8</sup> However, Luft I was not composed of nearly so many prisoners at the outset. In his February 1941 report, Dr. Carl Krebs advised that 585 British POWs (a mixture of officers, NCOs, and privates) and 9 French privates inhabited the camp.<sup>9</sup> He also reported that, “[t]he sports grounds were still covered with snow and water. Sports implements were on hand.”<sup>10</sup> Many POWs were limited to their fur-lined flying boots for footwear at this time and the only feasible option available to POWs was to purchase a pair of the wooden-soled shoes native to the area.<sup>11</sup> It is likely that the main sports ground was located outside of the compounds, and could only be accessed with the permission and escort of German representatives.<sup>12</sup> In March 1941, the camp’s population grew to 1,280 officers, 346 NCOs, 90 ORs, and the 9 Frenchmen, with a total of 1,725 POWs.<sup>13</sup> Interestingly, some 50% of the officers were native to the Dominions.<sup>14</sup> The first consequential discussion of sport comes from the War Prisoners’ Aid of the YMCA (WPA). In an article dated 15 March 1941, Gunnar Jansson, a WPA Secretary assigned to German POW camps, commented on the sporting practices of POWs in German camps, stating,

In every camp for officers or for men, there is an hour’s gymnastics every morning... Ball games of various kinds are a favourite occupation in camp. Football is of course the most popular game, but volleyball, handball, basketball are also played. Competitions are arranged between the various barracks, and there is great excitement when it comes to the final. In camps with different nationalities there are international football games. In one camp for airmen, a ‘Spitfire’ team plays against a ‘Hurricane’ team.<sup>15</sup>

While it would be difficult to determine whether or not all of these sports were pursued at Luft I at this time, it is likely that the reference to ‘Spitfire’ and ‘Hurricane’ football

(soccer) teams was from this camp.<sup>16</sup>

Andrew Cox, a Canadian flier and Luft I POW, asserts that he had the energy to play “the odd game of football and rugby” when, for the first time since the camp’s initiation, the Red Cross parcels were distributed at a rate of 1 parcel per week during the 1941 summer.<sup>17</sup> Wolter suggests that, with the camp almost entirely British (and Dominion), the sport of choice during this summer was cricket.<sup>18</sup> One of the first documented cases of sport being employed as a diversion for escape activities at Luft I occurred in the fall of 1941. On 19 October, Flight Lieutenant John ‘Death’ Shore and Pilot Officer B.A. James attempted an escape during an air raid. The tunnel was dug beneath a camp incinerator during a number of ‘football’ matches over the course of several days.<sup>19</sup>

Clutton-Brock describes the winter of 1941-1942 as ‘fiercely cold.’<sup>20</sup> Exactly how frigid the winter was is unclear, but the conditions were cold enough to construct an ice rink between two of the barracks.<sup>21</sup> The WPA became aware of this facility and sent several important shipments of sporting goods from its Geneva Office to Stalag Luft I in January 1942, including dozens of pairs of ice skates.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, it is clear that ice sports were not the only activities on the minds of POWs. In a letter to D.A. Davis of the WPA dated 6 November 1941, Stalag Luft I’s SBO, Wings Commander H.M.A. Day, acknowledged the receipt of 2 YMCA Sports Boxes and a parcel of ping pong balls and deck tennis rings (see Appendix XII, Illustration XXV). The Wing Commander requested that in subsequent shipments indoor games such as chess, draughts, and dominos be replaced with articles for outdoor games, ping pong balls, tennis balls, and

‘football’ repair kits.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to skates, POWs acquired other equipment for ice hockey. In his wartime log, B.A. Davidson included a photograph of a POW playing ice hockey with a stick and gloves atop the caption, “Last Game with N.C.Os. Barth Feb. ‘42” (see Appendix XII, Illustrations XI, XXII-XXIV).<sup>24</sup> In March 1942 a group of officers and NCOs were relocated to Stalag Luft III, a new camp at Sagan.<sup>25</sup> In April, all of the remaining prisoners were sent from Stalag Luft I to III, and Barth’s camp was closed, according to an IRCC report, for much needed repairs.<sup>26</sup>

Stalag Luft I reopened on 15 October 1942 with the arrival of 222 RAF NCOs (including 13 Canadians) from Stalag Luft III, beginning the second phase of the camp’s existence.<sup>27</sup> The camp’s population was almost entirely comprised of British and Dominion air force NCOs until October/November 1943. The 10 November 1942 Inspection Report suggests that the prisoners were grooming an area for playing sports at the time, but the necessary sports equipment was not yet available; nonetheless, the camp spokesman had already sent a “detailed list of articles urgently needed by the prisoners for the organization of various amusements” to officials in Geneva.<sup>28</sup>

On 8 February 1943, camp inspectors found the camp split into 3 compounds, including the old officers’ camp, the old NCOs’ camp, and a third compound comprised of a kitchen barrack, the sports field, and a theatre barrack that was still under construction.<sup>29</sup> The 474 POWs were all British or Dominion (including 63 Canadians), less two Americans; while four POWs were officers, the balance were NCOs.<sup>30</sup> Typically, the prisoners received one Red Cross food parcel every fortnight.<sup>31</sup>



Furthermore, it was noted that, as in the past, the sports field was only accessible with the permission and accompaniment of the Germans. The inspectors noted that,

There is a good sportsfield but situated in the same compound as the kitchen; it means that every time that prisoners want to play, they have to organise a party and be let in the other compound by a guard, the reason being that that special compound has not as strong a wire-fence as the others.<sup>32</sup>

By 7 May 1943, the POW population had grown to 568 British NCOs, including 82 Canadians and only four Americans.<sup>33</sup> While the Russians had already been evacuated from their accommodations in the old NCOs' compound at this point,<sup>34</sup> the facility would not be used to quarter prisoners again until July.<sup>35</sup> The camp inspector, Fred O. Auckenthaler, reported that a second sports field was accessible to the POWs; one was accessible throughout the day, while the second was only open at certain times.<sup>36</sup> Auckenthaler was promised that a stronger fence would be erected around the second field to make it accessible to POWs throughout the day as well.<sup>37</sup>

In a letter dated 22 May 1943, a Stalag Luft I POW stated that he had taken up soccer and that there were a number of softball leagues in existence.<sup>38</sup> In yet another letter dated 3 June 1943, a POW mentioned the existence of a 'football' league in which he was a goal keeper for his block and that he was also playing softball.<sup>39</sup> In the absence of a substantial American presence, Canadians were instrumental in the development and promotion of softball during this phase of the camp; other sports such as basketball, American football, and boxing were also popular.<sup>40</sup>

With increasing demands on space at the camp caused by the escalating number of prisoners, the old NCOs' camp was reopened to house POWs in July 1943.<sup>41</sup> On 10 July

a 'Great International Athletic Meet' was staged, complete with a 17 page program detailing the various track and field events, cricket and rugby matches, and other sporting contests.<sup>42</sup> On 14 July, the IRCC conducted an inspection of the camp and found that the POW population had risen to 931 (including 125 Canadians), all of whom were NCOs except the Doctor and the clergyman.<sup>43</sup> The Inspection Report also states that, "[s]port is particularly well-organized on open spaces of which, there is an adequate number,"<sup>44</sup> but that there was a lack of 'football' bladders thus preventing the POWs from partaking in the 'popular' sport.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, the statistics provided in this report, including a breakdown of population by nationality, do not add up to 931. In fact they only add up to 824, leaving 107 unaccounted for when compared against the reported POW population. The author(s) neglect to mention the presence of any Americans. However, a telegram sent by the IRCC in Geneva to the delegate in London on 30 July lists the presence of 106 Americans in Camp.<sup>46</sup> Therefore it would seem that at some time between the 7 May inspection by the Swiss Inspector and the 14 July IRCC inspection, the American presence at the camp rose by approximately 100 prisoners. Despite the fact that the camp population had sunk slightly to 910 on 27 August, the number of Canadians had risen to 142, and all of the Americans had been removed from the camp.<sup>47</sup> The outdoor facilities for exercising and recreation were deemed 'very good' at this time.<sup>48</sup>

In October 1943, the camp population had risen to approximately 1,200 NCOs, most of whom were reassigned to Stalag Luft VI at Heydekrug later that month.<sup>49</sup> By 23 November, all of Barth's NCOs were sent to Luft VI, and the camp became entirely occupied by British and American officer POWs from Italy, thus marking the beginning

of the third and final phase of the camp's occupation.<sup>50</sup> In December all British and Dominion POWs were transferred to West Compound from South; from this point onwards, South Compound was only occupied by American prisoners.<sup>51</sup> On 13 January 1944, the camp population was comprised of 787 airmen; 507 American officers, and 1 American 'rating' in South Compound, and 164 British officers and 115 NCOs and 'ratings' in West Compound.<sup>52</sup> Both parties were granted free movement between compounds through the day.<sup>53</sup> 34 Canadians were included in the 279 British tally.<sup>54</sup> The camp inspector(s) noted that, "[s]porting activity is at the moment very limited, owing to the lack of gears."<sup>55</sup> In February, North Compound was opened to accommodate the inflating numbers of captured Allied airmen, which included thousands of Americans who would eventually be sent to this facility.<sup>56</sup> Clutton-Brock mentions that in March, "[a] new South-West Compound, built on what had once been the football field... opened for British and American personnel."<sup>57</sup> While the information is presented as though an altogether new compound was established, this contention is not entirely accurate; rather, it is more likely that the South and West Compounds were combined and their boundaries manipulated to include the external sports field that was mentioned in the 8 February 1943 Inspection Report. This reasoning will become clearer as the growth and development of the camp is discussed further.

The 9 March 1944 inspection report notes that the camp population had risen to 1,969 POWs, including 356 British personnel (170 officers, 186 NCOs and soldiers; 39 Canadians) and 1,613 Americans (1,612 Officers, 1 NCO).<sup>58</sup> This report by the ICRC describes the prisoners as being held in one of two camps (presumably compounds), the

Main Camp or the North Camp, noting that each of the two installations had a 'good sportsground.'<sup>59</sup> The report does not characterize the camp as being ill-equipped in regards to sports equipment but states that "[e]verything in connection with sporting activities is well-arranged. The delegates have sent to Geneva a list of sporting equipment and musical instruments required."<sup>60</sup> Still, the inspector(s) conceded that the officers organizing the intellectual and leisure activities for POWs were experiencing great difficulty in doing so owing to the constantly fluctuating camp population.<sup>61</sup> At some point during the spring (likely after the Great Escape) the free movement of POWs between compounds was revoked; however, members of each compounds' representative sports teams continued to travel between compounds for their matches.<sup>62</sup> Vietor reports that it became mandatory for prisoners to stay in their barracks during air raids, and when the camp's air raid sirens were sounded, in April 1944; moreover, he asserts that it became common to expect a daily raid by the USAAF and a nightly raid by the RAF during that year.<sup>63</sup>

Levels of security and discipline rose throughout the Stalag Luft system after the mass escape from Stalag Luft III in March. On 27 April, Stalag Luft I's Commandant, Oberst Scherer issued the following order:

If a prisoner of war crosses the warning wire in front of the compound fences, the guards will at once fire at him with the intention to kill after the first futile challenge. If he touches the main compound fences with his body or any object or if he tries to climb over it or has done so, so that the prisoner of war is already outside the compound fences, the guards will fire at him with the intention to kill him without any challenge. They will stop firing as soon as the prisoner of war comes to a standstill and has raised his hands.<sup>64</sup>

This order could have had mortal ramifications for those POWs who absent-mindedly retrieved balls beyond the warning wire amidst competition. In fact the 18 August 1944 Inspection Report mentions an agreement between the POW representatives and the commandant, Oberst Scherer, was reached, whereby any POW crossing the warning wire to retrieve a ball must first alert guards of their intentions by dawning a white flag; likewise, guards were instructed not to shoot POWs under these circumstances.<sup>65</sup>

On 28 April 1944, the camp population had swelled to 3,463, spread between North Compound, South-West Compound, and another facility known as 'New' Compound.<sup>66</sup> While the camp remained predominantly American, 597 British and Dominion POWs still resided there.<sup>67</sup> The inspector(s) reported that "[s]port equipments and gear have been received... but some more articles are still urgently needed. The sportsfields in the compounds are large enough to allow any kind of outdoor game;" however it was also revealed that, "[s]ince the last visit [13 January 1944] the living conditions in general have completely changed for the worse."<sup>68</sup> The fact that the camp had adequate sports grounds at this time is confirmed by a letter from the Senior Canadian Officer at Barth, Wing Commander C.A. Willis, to YMCA representatives on 29 April. In his letter, Willis mentions the existence of two softball diamonds on one field and that the "other fields accommodate rugger, soccer, and baseball alternately."<sup>69</sup> As previously mentioned, escape attempts sometimes employed sport in some capacity, usually as either a diversion or a mode of camouflage. On 22 May, Group Captain N.W.D. Marwood-Elton DFC (the camp's SBO) and Second Lieutenant J. Helland of the RCAF attempted an escape through the fence using wire cutters made from hockey

skates.<sup>70</sup>

The D-Day invasions, involving the Allied breach of occupied 'Fortress Europa' via a series of naval and airborne operations at Normandy, began on 6 June 1944. Generally, the conditions in German POW camps began to deteriorate at this time as a result of the increased destruction of German transportation lines by the Allies.<sup>71</sup> On 30 June 1944 it was reported that 84 Canadian POWs inhabited Stalag Luft I (44 officers and 40 ORs).<sup>72</sup>

Despite frequent escape attempts and subsequent punishments from the Germans, the commandant was sometimes willing to grant POWs certain liberties. Vietor reports that the Germans twice granted some POWs permission to go swimming beyond the bounds of the camp during the summer of 1944, so long as they signed paroles against escaping before their departure.<sup>73</sup> By 18 August, the camp population had risen to 4,088 including 3,414 Americans and 674 British.<sup>74</sup> Tents had been erected between the barracks in all three compounds, including some on the sportsground at South-West Compound, to accommodate the excessive numbers.<sup>75</sup> Owing to their particularly compromised conditions, POWs from South-West Compound were granted access to a number of facilities in New Compound, including the sports field; however, POWs from North Compound could visit other compounds only on the occasion of inter-compound sporting events or for performances in the theatre.<sup>76</sup> The 18 August report is unclear as to whether fans were permitted to follow their teams to other compounds to watch the events. In regards to his experience at Stalag Luft III, George McKiel asserts that fans were not allowed to follow their teams.<sup>77</sup> While approximately 10% of inhabitants in

North Compound and New Compound were housed in tents (168/1,554 and 108/1,042 respectively), over 26% of the POWs in South-West Compound were quartered in tents (364/1,384).<sup>78</sup> The camp inspectors concluded that, “[d]ue to the overcrowding of this Stalag and the continuous arrival of new prisoners of war, the material conditions are not good, especially with regard to the latrines, washing facilities, recreation and exercise etc.”<sup>79</sup>

While it appears that the living conditions in camp were declining owing in part to the camp’s continual intake of prisoners, Red Cross inspectors submitted a peculiar report after their visit on 25 September. Despite the growth of the camp’s population to 4,475 POWs, an increase of some 400 prisoners since mid-August, the inspector(s) submitted that “[t]here is a sufficient number of sportsgrounds,” and that “[t]he camp may be considered good... The morale of the camp is excellent.”<sup>80</sup> This is especially surprising since the new compound that was supposed to open on 1 September to alleviate the bursting population was not in fact opened until 1 October, just less than a week *after* this inspection.

As mentioned, a new compound, designated North 2, was opened on 1 October 1944.<sup>81</sup> Despite the overcrowding, it is clear that POWs still managed to engage in various sporting activities. On 23 October 1944, Flight Officer J.B. Findlay, suffering from an ulcer, wrote his father in Ontario saying, “I shall have to have my stomach operated on when I get back. I won’t be able to do much hard work as it is. Football is the big game here now. I’d like to get into it but Doc. says no.”<sup>82</sup> North 3, the fifth and final compound constructed at Luft I, was opened, while not fully complete, in late

November 1944.<sup>83</sup> By the end of that month the camp's Canadian contingent included 127 RCAF officers, 13 RCAF ORS, and 1 army OR.<sup>84</sup> By 13 December, West Compound (and presumably South Compound) was combined with New Compound, thus constituting what was to become known as the Main Compound.<sup>85</sup> Henceforth, Stalag Luft I consisted of four compounds; Main, North 1, North 2, and North 3. The camp population had increased to 5,294 at this time, including 897 British and Dominion servicemen who all resided in the Main Compound, less 7 who were quartered elsewhere.<sup>86</sup> In regards to sports and recreation at this time, the inspector(s) stated that,

Outdoor recreation is hampered through lack of sufficient sportsground. Only in the main-compound a full-size football pitch is available. Teams, but no spectators, from other compounds are allowed to go there. Skating-rinks in the main-compound and the North-compound I are under construction.<sup>87</sup>

Despite the limited physical areas in which sport could be played, Wolter suggests that “[s]ports equipment was widely available,” and that even POWs in the disadvantaged compounds were able to play ‘ball’ by improvising with the spaces they had.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to the creeping demise of conditions inside German prison camps after the D-Day invasion, further shortcomings were endured after Germany's failed last-ditch offensive known as ‘The Battle of the Bulge’ (16-27 December 1944); thousands of POWs faced extended forced marches, meager rations, inhospitable accommodations, and subsequent poor health.<sup>89</sup> At Stalag Luft I, these shortcomings materialized in the form of the withdrawal of Red Cross food parcel distribution from January until late April 1945.<sup>90</sup> In fact, Vietor admits that he didn't even possess the energy to walk laps around the sports field during the winter of 1945.<sup>91</sup> Still, he asserts that POWs received a shipment



of ice skates from the YMCA in February, and developed a skating rink via the implement of a 'bucket brigade.'<sup>92</sup> The camp's complement continued to balloon into the new year. During the 22 February visit by the ICRC, it was noted that the camp held 8,346 prisoners, including 1,144 British and Dominions of whom 260 were Canadian.<sup>93</sup> Despite shortages in food and the advancing Allied forces on both fronts, POWs in North 2 and likely other compounds were able to start up baseball teams and leagues in conjunction with an early thaw in April 1945.<sup>94</sup> By this time, the camp's population was growing immensely. John Nichol and Tony Rennell argue that Luft I accommodated some 6,000 air force POWs in late 1944, but had swollen over the new year to include more than 9,000 POWs by the spring of 1945.<sup>95</sup> News that the Russian forces were fast approaching the camp emboldened camp leaders:

The Senior American Officer, Colonel H. Zemke, told the German commandant that he had a trained 'fighting force' who would resist any attempt to move them, and that, though his men could arm themselves only with knives and clubs, there were thousands of them against the hundreds of guards and in the end they would prevail.<sup>96</sup>

Despite receiving orders to march the POWs farther into Germany, the commandant handed over control of the camp to the Senior Allied officers and vacated the camp with his troops. Ken Blyth, a former POW at Stalag Luft I recalls,

At approximately 1:00 a.m. on April 30, 1945, the Camp Kommandant, Oberst von Warnstedt, informed U.S. Army Air Force Colonel Hubert Zemke and Royal Air Force Group Captain Cecil Weir, the two senior Allied officers, that the Germans were evacuating the camp, leaving the Allied officers in charge.<sup>97</sup>

Vietor estimates that each compound contained approximately 2,500 POWs at the end of the war, and of them, some 1,500 were RAF and Dominion fliers housed in the old South

Compound.<sup>98</sup>

In addition to the aforementioned chronology, some summary points on sport at this camp are worthy of note. In regards to sport, Victor states,

The British played football and rugby and occasionally cricket. The Americans had baseball equipment as well as footballs and volley balls. There was a ping-pong table in Block 4 but there was a shortage of ping-pong balls. The British learned baseball and, as a reciprocal gesture, we organized a rugby team. When we were eating and the weather was fine we had Inter-Allied sports jamborees. One of the unexpected reversals of the war occurred when we beat the British at rugby and they promptly turned around and beat us at baseball. The Germans were suspicious of our activities on the sports field since as many as a thousand prisoners might be on the parade ground at once, either as participants or spectators, and they worried about a mass break.<sup>99</sup>

Victor also mentions the existence of a staff that worked under the SAO, known as S-4, which “was concerned with the equitable issue of Red Cross clothing and food, and the distribution of athletic equipment.”<sup>100</sup> Evidence of the organization of sport is present from British parties as well. In a discussion about British POWs at Stalag Luft I, Tony McCarthy highlights the role of Albert Collyer as the chief administrator for camp ‘football,’ organizing 5 soccer leagues, each with 12 teams; in addition Collyer organized “exhibition matches on Sundays involving men who had played professional British soccer, or other big matches such as Officers v NCOs or Pilots v Air Gunners.”<sup>101</sup> Charlie Hobbs, a Canadian NCO likely detained at Stalag Luft I during its second phase (October 1942-October/November 1943), discusses Canadian participation. He asserts that over half of ‘the boys’ played on some level of soccer team, and, while typically proficient in athletics, they did not fare as well in soccer as compared to British participants.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, he contends that,

Basketball was a tremendously popular sport in Barth, and we had several leagues going at any one time. A game that always drew a crowd was the Canadians vs. the Poles and Czechs. The 'Canadian' name covered Americans as well if they were wearing R.C.A.F. insignia. My height left me about two feet short of being a super star, so they made me a referee for the second league, but it was exhausting work.<sup>103</sup>

While much has been documented here on some of the traditional sports, little has been said about 'pounding the circuit.' Vietor mentions perambulating around the field routinely.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, Charlie Hobbs recalls in his memoirs,

I have not yet mentioned the 'circuit,' the social hub of the P.O.W. camp. The circuit was a well-worn path in the playing field compound, or centre compound. It circled the football field just inside the warning wire. All important conversations would start on the circuit, as it was the only place with total verbal privacy. Escape plans or upcoming divorces were all grist for the circuit mill. Some nice summer evenings, there were hundreds of Kriegies on the circuit going round and round, or sitting a little farther into watch the soccer game in progress. Above all, the circuit was where rumours started and, in the world of the hopeful, this made up a big part of our daily life.<sup>105</sup>

The existence of sporting activities at Stalag Luft I is clear. While the camp weathered periods of reconstruction and rapid expansion, and three separate, and very different cohorts of POWs, it would seem that sport existed at the camp throughout. While POWs' participation in sports was heavily dependent on the season and the availability of space and resources, it would seem that POWs consistently participated in sporting activities regardless of the conditions.

## **Section II: Stalag Luft III, Sagan**

Stalag Luft III opened in the spring of 1942 to accommodate the escalating number of Allied airmen falling into German control. Constructed as a state-of-the-art

Luftwaffe camp fully equipped with sensors buried beneath the ground to detect tunnelling, Stalag Luft III was designed to hold even the most escape-savvy POWs.<sup>106</sup> Over the course of its existence, this camp became the largest prison camp for Commonwealth and American aircrew of the War (see Appendices VI & VII).<sup>107</sup> In fact, the Luft III complex enclosed 59 acres in its final form.<sup>108</sup> With regard to sporting activities, Stalag Luft III, at times, was characterized as having the best facilities of all German camps.<sup>109</sup> Indeed, Wolter asserts, “[o]ther camps may have had to make do with improvised equipment, but Stalag Luft III was the administrative and postal headquarters for the luft stalags, and supplies usually arrived on schedule.”<sup>110</sup>

Located some 150 kilometres south-east of Berlin, Stalag Luft III was built in the confines of the dense pine forest just south of Sagan, a small town of the Silesian hinterlands (see Appendix III).<sup>111</sup> In a description of the camp environment, Clutton-Brock purports that “[n]o grass grew on the thin covering of topsoil, dry in summer and muddy in winter, and dominating the horizon whatever the season and whatever the direction was a vast forest of pines and firs stretching as far as the eye could see.”<sup>112</sup> Vance notes that, “[i]n its original form, it consisted of two separate compounds, one for officers (later known as East Compound) and one for NCOs (later known as Centre Compound).”<sup>113</sup> The camp officially opened with the arrival of approximately 100 officers from Stalag Luft I on 21 March 1942.<sup>114</sup> While the lodgings were ready for inhabitants, the camp was still riddled with tree stumps and pine needles in April.<sup>115</sup> During April and May, RAF officers and NCOs were sent to Stalag Luft III from camps all across Germany.<sup>116</sup> As a member of the cohort of Allied POWs to arrive during these

months, Andrew Cox suggests, “[w]hen we first arrived at Sagan we went to work pulling up some of the tree stumps to clear a space for a playing field and parade ground, which was also used for roll call twice each day.”<sup>117</sup>

Despite lacking fully developed sports areas, POWs expressed an interest in playing sports early on. Cox contends that he played a game of soccer and rugby every week until his departure to Stalag Luft VI in June 1943.<sup>118</sup> In addition to these activities, Wolter asserts that it was in fact the Canadians, not the Americans, who provided the principal impetus in establishing softball at Stalag Luft III in 1942 (see Appendix XII, Illustration VI).<sup>119</sup> This contention becomes clearer when one considers that in mid-August 1942, only 2 of the 2,499 POWs were Americans, and the SBO, Wing Commander H.M.A. Day, had requested an order of baseball/softball equipment three months earlier on 13 May 1942.<sup>120</sup> Since neither softball nor other forms of baseball were native to the British and other Commonwealth airmen, it is likely that this order was made on behalf of the Canadian contingent at camp. Overall, the sports environment at Stalag Luft III was becoming elaborate by the summer of 1942; during an inspection of the camp on 13 August, Gabriel Naville and Dr. Hans Wehrle of the Protecting Power noted that there were good sport and games facilities in the officers’ compound and a similar situation could be found in the NCOs’ camp, except that they had a much larger football field than the officers.<sup>121</sup>

The weather was cold enough in the winter of 1942/43 for POWs to create the camp’s first ice rink. Anton Gill suggests that enough skates were secured through the Red Cross to provide each prisoner with 30 minutes of skating per day, and that ice

hockey matches were played.<sup>122</sup> By 9 December, the camp's population had decreased slightly to 2,263 airmen, including an increase of Americans to 84.<sup>123</sup> Camp inspectors concluded that "[e]ntertainments and sports are all well organised in this camp."<sup>124</sup>

According to the 22 February 1943 Inspection Report the camp population had risen slightly to 2,310, including 82 Americans and 191 Canadians.<sup>125</sup> The inspectors reported that, "[w]here sports are concerned, this camp is the best equipped in Germany, and almost all games are played,"<sup>126</sup> and that some of the NCOs and soldiers were preparing the sports fields.<sup>127</sup> Moreover, the report called for materials to maintain the existing equipment, including oil for the cricket bats, and ointment for the gloves.<sup>128</sup>

As the snow and ice gave way to warmer temperatures, the camp's sports program was acclimatised to the weather. In the spring of 1943 American and Canadian servicemen established softball leagues in the two compounds, culminating in an inter-compound all-star game (see Appendix XII, Illustration VIII).<sup>129</sup> During a visit on 22/23 March, inspectors Gabrielle Naville and Dr. Aloys Schniepar calculated that 2,369 POWs inhabited Luft III; the American contingent was reduced by one to 81 while the Canadian strength rose to 199.<sup>130</sup> It was determined that recreation and exercise at the camp were very well organised, and that representatives from the YMCA visited the camp regularly.<sup>131</sup> A new section of the camp designated 'North Compound' was opened in early April to immediately accommodate between 850 and 1,000 POWs from East Compound, who were being transferred to make room for some 250 airmen from Oflag XXIB, Schubin.<sup>132</sup> Ken Rees recalls moving into North Compound from East on 1 April, and finding the new facility complete except for the sports field which still exhibited

some scattered pine trees and many stumps.<sup>133</sup> In regards to prepping the field for sports, Rees asserts that, “before it could be put to use, those of us interested in sport spent many back-breaking weeks clearing it of dozens of tree stumps before we could get on with any playing.”<sup>134</sup> Among the huts used to house the prisoners, the commandant allowed an entire hut to be used for recreational purposes, under the auspices of the SBO.<sup>135</sup> By 5 May, POWs were participating in baseball (softball) and other sports as well.<sup>136</sup> In addition, there was an East Compound vs. North Compound rugby match during this month that was ‘very physical’ (see Appendix XII, Illustration IV).<sup>137</sup> In a letter submitted to the Canadian Prisoners of War Relatives’ Association (CPOWRA), one POW reveals, “[t]here is a reservoir which we use as a swimming pool. We play baseball, soccer, cricket, volley ball and deck tennis.”<sup>138</sup>

By the summer of 1943, sports and athletics were in ‘full swing.’ Tony McCarthy asserts that three ‘more’ golf clubs arrived in camp during the summer, and golf was played from 8:30 a.m. until dusk, daily.<sup>139</sup> It would seem that golf was an important part of life in the East Compound. At one point during the Compound’s existence, it was reported that over 300 POWs were on a waiting list to play a round of golf!<sup>140</sup> The existence of this sport deserves further discussion. Durand mentions the existence of several golf courses at Stalag Luft III.<sup>141</sup> Early on, balls were typically made from carved spheres of pine, string, and elastoplast.<sup>142</sup> As time passed, POWs became more resourceful and developed new, more accurate balls to employ on the course. Some of these new balls incorporated tobacco pouches, air cushions, and pieces of rubber from gym shoes forming the core, and covered with a piece of leather tightly sewn around it.<sup>143</sup>

Other balls were made by winding thin shreds of rubber (sliced from the soles of gym shoes with a razor) around a marble until it was the approximate size of a golf ball; then a piece of leather from the tongue of an old shoe was cut in a shape similar to a baseball covering, and then sewed tightly over the rubber and marble core.<sup>144</sup> McCarthy argues that, as time passed, the greens, or 'browns' as they were called, became very impressive playing surfaces, especially with the hours of maintenance work devoted by the head greenkeeper.<sup>145</sup> In addition, McCarthy contends that there were sometimes exhibition matches, employing actual golf balls, played by the camp's top players complete with a gallery able to accommodate several hundred onlookers.<sup>146</sup> Cliff Irwin has fond memories of the camp golf course, recalling, "I had a hole-in-one one day. The only time I ever did."<sup>147</sup>

During a 6/7 July inspection, Gabriel Naville of the Protecting Power noted that the camp's population had risen slightly to 2,484, including 597 Americans.<sup>148</sup> He also imparted the Commandant's intention to operate each compound independently of each other as autonomous facilities when the new, all American, South Compound opened.<sup>149</sup> Just days after Naville's tour of Luft III, one POW wrote,

Soft ball is going full swing these days. We have a league with about thirty teams. The English and Dominions who are new to the game, have taken to it like ducks to water and of course our East vs West Canada games are very popular.<sup>150</sup>

On 8 July, preparations for the famous wooden horse escape, conceived by Eric Williams, began in East Compound (see Appendix XII, Illustrations XVIII-XXI). In the same compound, a track meet was staged with various events including the 100 yards, 220



yards, 440 yards, 880 yards, 1 mile, cricket ball throw, discus, weight (11 lb. shot put), high jump, and long jump on 26 July.<sup>151</sup> It is likely a POW was referring to this affair when he wrote on 27 July, “[w]e have just finished an international track meet in which Canada placed first. We Canucks are, in consequence, doing a little strutting.”<sup>152</sup> During an inspection by delegates from the International Red Cross on 26 July, it was determined that the camp population had dipped to 2,163, including 281 Canadians spread among the three compounds.<sup>153</sup> Furthermore, the inspectors purported that the Middle, or Center, Compound was chiefly for men unfit for service, and that in light of recent escape attempts, discipline had been elevated, and the cessation of inter-compound sports activities had been imposed.<sup>154</sup> Despite this, sports activities continued within the compounds; for instance, in a letter addressed on 26 August, one POW mentioned that he was playing rugby.<sup>155</sup> Rees asserts that, “[w]ith summer almost over, cricket and softball gave way to soccer and rugby.”<sup>156</sup>

The orientation of Stalag Luft III’s compounds were rearranged in the first week of September 1943. 700-800 Americans were moved out of North Compound and reassigned to Center Compound on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month; a week later, South Compound was opened and occupied by most of the remaining Americans from North Compound, a number from Center Compound, and a group recently arrived from Italy.<sup>157</sup> Each compound harbored its own unique features and structures; while similar in some ways, no two compounds were exactly alike. For instance, while its barracks were similar, the new South Compound had a sports field one-third the size of that found in North Compound.

Delmar T. Spivey became the SAO in Center Compound on 4 September. He was an important figure in the promotion of sporting activities, and will be discussed in more depth as the chapter progresses. By 30 September, the Canadian population at Stalag Luft III included 199 RCAF officers, 23 RCAF ORs, 1 army officer, and 1 army OR.<sup>158</sup> In a letter dated 3 October 1943, a POW mentioned that the softball season had come to a close but that 'football' was beginning.<sup>159</sup> In another letter dated 14 October, a POW wrote, "[w]e now have a rugger league in full swing, in addition to the others. The only drawback being the extreme dustiness of the field. Nevertheless, we manage to enjoy ourselves."<sup>160</sup> Despite the conditions, sports events and programs were popular through the fall.

By the inspection of 25/26 October, the camp was beginning to resemble its final form. With a total prisoner population of 4,314, East and North Compounds were totally British, Center and South Compounds were primarily American, and all four facilities were self-contained and completely separate.<sup>161</sup> While sports such as basketball, volleyball, and badminton could be pursued, South Compound's sports field was too small to host any sports requiring a large space; there was adequate territory within the confines of this facility, but it still needed to be levelled by the POWs.<sup>162</sup> Subsequently, the commandant granted permission for South Compound's inhabitants to regularly use the North Compound's facilities until the issue was rectified.<sup>163</sup> Just a few days after this inspection, the wooden horse escape was executed by Eric Williams, Oliver Philpot, and Michael Codner from East Compound, after three and a half months of clandestine digging and diversionary gymnastics. Having dug a tunnel beneath a portable vaulting

horse constructed from Red Cross crates, Williams, Philpot, and Codner (who had been a gunner in the Royal Artillery) escaped from the camp on the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup>/30<sup>th</sup> of October; each fled successfully to Sweden.<sup>164</sup> While the escapers were all British, a Canadian, Dallas Laskey, invested a great deal of time performing gymnastic manoeuvres over the wooden horse while the others dug beneath it.<sup>165</sup> Once the camp authorities uncovered the escape, the ramifications were swift. Among other punishments, the golf course was dismantled and playing golf was prohibited. The German authorities suspected the bunkers were used as a deposit for excavated dirt from the tunnel. Art Crighton recalls, “[a]nd that was like taking candy from a baby, because right from the [SBO] down, golf was the most important thing in that camp. That really broke our hearts.”<sup>166</sup>

The winter of 1943/44 was very mild, and POWs found it hard to establish and maintain any ice surfaces.<sup>167</sup> Despite the weather, some prisoners harbored high hopes for pursuing various outdoor sports activities. In correspondences submitted to the CPOWRA and published in their News Sheet, POWs wrote the following in letters dated between 19 November 1943 and 10 January 1944:

“We are busy at work constructing a skating rink. It will be 160 x 90, the largest yet. There are lots of skates and hockey sticks, thanks principally, I believe, to the C.P.O.W.R.A., so we are hoping for some intercompound games.”

“Yesterday I played a game of football... I am looking forward to the hockey season and hope my skates arrive in time.”

“... we are making a hockey rink and are flooding it by bucket brigade. We have a good number of the champion variety of skaters and hope to have lots of fun.” (see Appendix XII, Illustration IX)

“The Canadians among us got up a couple of football teams, soccer that is... We don’t get much strenuous exercise as a rule. Our hockey rink will soon be good enough for skating, so that will be pleasant exercise.”

“We started skating today and it was lovely.”

“... been snowing, plenty of snow fights and fixing rinks for skating. Red cross sent lots of skates.”

“We have not had any skating yet, beginning to wonder if those skates will ever be used. Most of our exercise these days consists of walking around in the mud and slush and jumping over puddles.”<sup>168</sup>

While any ice surfaces created during this season may have existed only briefly, they did allow for some sports and exercise. George Sweanor, a former ex-POW confined in North Compound, remembers the existence of a large ice surface in December 1943 and receiving sufficient skates to equip ‘a few’ hockey teams from the Canadian YMCA (see Appendix XII, Illustration XIII). In addition, Sweanor asserts that the Germans became avid fans of the games, but would collect the skates after matches and store them to avoid any subversive activity POWs might pursue with the blades.<sup>169</sup> It would seem the Germans were fans of some of the sporting events, especially hockey. John Harris, a former POW at North Compound, recalls that the commandant and some other German officers sometimes attended the major hockey matches, such as Fighters vs. Bombers, East vs. West (Canada), Ontario vs. Other Provinces, which were typically played on Sundays.<sup>170</sup> Furthermore, Durand claims that von Lindeiner, Stalag Luft III’s Commandant until the Great Escape, often attended matches, expressing his amusement and applause by striking his cane against his leather boot (see Appendix XII, Illustration XXVI).<sup>171</sup> In fact, Harris remembers the Commandant and a few German officers

frequenting some of the more prodigious matches alongside the SBO and his companions in a special area.<sup>172</sup>

Early in the new year, Stalag Luft III added another compound to its character; in early January 1944, a compound was established with some 500 RAF POWs from East and Center Compounds, approximately 5 miles west of the main camp at a former German training facility at Belaria.<sup>173</sup> Meanwhile, the Canadian population at Stalag Luft III had risen to 315 (269 RCAF officers, 44 RCAF ORs, 1 army Officer, and 1 army OR) by 31 January 1944.<sup>174</sup> From the 22-24 February Inspection Report, one can more fully appreciate the camp's organizational divisions by nationality and compound. East Compound was entirely British (732), Center Compound was entirely American except for 2 British (889), North Compound was all British (1,421), South Compound was all American except for 13 British (1,196), and the Belaria Compound was all British (533), with a total population of 4,784 (the remaining numbers were confined to the vorlagers).<sup>175</sup> In regards to recreation and exercise, the inspector(s) remarked that the camp was "still highly developed; this is one of the best camps in that respect with large sportsfields and excellent theatres inside the compounds."<sup>176</sup> Shortly thereafter, Stalag Luft III's sixth and final compound, the West Compound, opened in March to cope with the large number of American airmen being captured, and would become the largest of all the compounds at Sagan (see Appendix XII, Illustration VII).<sup>177</sup> It is also noteworthy that there was an appreciable increase in the number of Canadian airmen being captured and sent to German POW camps in March during the strategic bomber offensive against Germany.<sup>178</sup>

Gill suggests that over 600 POWs were involved in planning and organizing the mass break from North Compound, later known as the Great Escape. On the evening 24 March, 76 Allied airmen climbed down the tunnel entrance in Hut 104 and rolled down the tunnel, known as Harry, via a rope-and-trolley system that used rope 'borrowed' from the camp's boxing ring.<sup>179</sup> While Roger Bushell, head of the escape organization dubbed *X-Committee* and the mastermind behind the escape, and other organizers had hoped to spring upwards of 200 fliers that night, the tunnel's exit was discovered before the 77<sup>th</sup> man could flee into the pine forest.<sup>180</sup> Prior to the escape on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Bushell played rugby among other activities to distract himself from the upcoming break (see Appendix XII, Illustration XXVII).<sup>181</sup> 50 of those who escaped that night, including six Canadians, were killed by members of the German military after their capture, an action that had been ordered by Hitler himself.<sup>182</sup> It was reported by Swiss delegates that the camp commandant, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Lindeiner-Wildau, an individual who had maintained a respectful and often cordial relationship with the camp's senior Allied officers, suffered a heart attack when he discovered the escape and the extent of its success.<sup>183</sup> However, Ken Rees, a North Compound POW involved in the Great Escape, asserts that von Lindeiner was actually arrested by German authorities and removed from the camp after the break.<sup>184</sup> Chris Christiansen, the WPA secretary, reports that von Lindeiner was in fact reassigned to the northern front in France and captured by British forces; Christiansen knew this because he met von Lindeiner at a prison camp near the English-Scottish border in spring 1947.<sup>185</sup> Regardless, von Lindeiner was replaced by a harsher Oberst Braune.<sup>186</sup>

Immediately after the Great Escape, the inter-compound sports matches were once again halted.<sup>187</sup> Still, participation in sports continued within the compounds. In fact, with an increased clamp-down on escape activities, Wolter suggests that POWs' participation in sporting activities actually rose.<sup>188</sup> In a letter dated 7 April, one POW mentioned that the favourable weather had sparked his hopes of playing a lot of baseball, cricket, soccer, and rugger and doing some work on the horizontal bar.<sup>189</sup> The beginning of baseball season in Center Compound began on 15 April; the three leagues had access to the Compound's two diamonds.<sup>190</sup> In a letter dated 16 April that was submitted to the CPOWRA, there is mention of some POWs participating in a basketball league with teams organized by room.<sup>191</sup> The next day, another camp inspection was conducted by the Swiss and lasted until the 18<sup>th</sup>. The camp quartered 5,229 POWs.<sup>192</sup> Despite 'opening' during the preceding month, the inspector(s) found the West Compound still uninhabited.<sup>193</sup> In addition, it was noted that the "[f]acilities for sports are still excellent in all compounds with the exception, perhaps, of the East, where the sport'ss ground is not as extensive as in the other compounds."<sup>194</sup>

The notion that sports continued to thrive after the Great Escape is reinforced by the following excerpts from POWs' letters, dated between 19 April and 3 June 1944, and published by the CPOWRA in their News Sheet:

"I am almost too worn out to write this Sunday. After Church, which comes first, we opened the Baseball Season officially with an All-Star game that lasted twelve innings. The best I could rate was to manage the losing team, and we lost two to one. Just like the Big Time with the Band and of course, the Colonel threw in the first ball. My voice is nearly gone, but those games come few and far between. Our barracks' team is quite good too."

“[having spent some time in hospital for treatment on his feet for frostbite] ... I have been boxing again and am also on one of the baseball teams. So I’m getting quite fit again.”

“Basketball is the main sport these days. Softball starts on May 1<sup>st</sup> with a few exhibition games by the Canucks.”

“We have started playing softball already, but it has been raining for the last couple of days and slowed things up a bit.”

“When you send the sports parcel, put in some golf balls, also running shoes and pants and all other things like that... We play quite a lot of sports, so send a few sports clothes too, jacket etc.”

“The softball is just starting. We have two leagues, a major and a minor. The major league is all Canuck. I play in the major league, why I don’t know. I guess Kriegy Camp is the only place I’d be allowed to play in any league at all.”

“The weather is warm as I am outside playing softball, running and doing some bar work.”<sup>195</sup>

From these accounts, it is clear that an array of sports, including softball and/or baseball, basketball, golf, running, and the high bar, were played through the spring. While some returned to cricket that season, Rees, a Welshman in North Compound, preferred softball and boxing (see Appendix XII, Illustration V). He writes, “I discovered a real enjoyment of softball, and I always liked being actively involved, either in the field or screaming abuse at the opposition whilst waiting my turn at bat.”<sup>196</sup> While the sports environment may have been prosperous in April and May of 1944, the D-Day invasions, beginning 6 June, and the subsequent destruction of German supply lines, threatened to stifle Luft III’s adequate supply of materials. However, as one of the largest air force camps of the time (recall, Stalag Luft I housed 3,463 POWs on 28 April, whereas Stalag Luft III housed 5,229 POWs on 17/18 April), and as the “administrative and postal headquarters for the



luft stalags,” it was unlikely that this camp would be the first to suffer the consequences.<sup>197</sup>

On 17 June 1944, the occupants of North Compound staged an International Sports Meet including the following events: 100 yards (orderlies), 100 yards (open), putting the shot, hop, step and jump, 880 yards open, 4 / 110 yards relay, throwing the cricket ball, throwing the American football, 220 yards open, 440 yards open, long jump, throwing the discus, one mile open, 100 yards over 35, and a medley relay (see Appendix XII, Illustrations XIV-XVII).<sup>198</sup> Wing Commander ‘Hetty’ Hyde, the compound’s sports officer, was the chief organizer of the event and one of the three judges for the Meet (see Appendix XII, Illustration XXVI).<sup>199</sup> Among other officials, Group Captain Larry E. Wray of the RCAF acted as the Assistant Referee for the Meet.<sup>200</sup> On a side note, George McKiel recalls that Wray was very active in sport at the camp and that Wray actually participated in some of the sports himself.<sup>201</sup> Moreover, Harold Garland, another Luft III POW, recalls Larry Wray acting as home base umpire in an inter-compound softball game between the Canadians and Americans.<sup>202</sup> In regards to the Sports Meet, one of the letters published in the CPOWRA News Sheet, dated 15 June, reveals that POWs had been training during the week prior to the Meet and had been holding elimination heats; moreover, the author of the letter opined that the Canadians had a good team and were hoping to win the event.<sup>203</sup> McKiel recalls, “those [track and field meets] were sort of a highlight where the guys would just actually train assiduously for a couple of weeks in preparation for one of these things.”<sup>204</sup> In a published letter dated 23 June, one POW reflected, “[w]e had a big sports day last week, Canada doing very well by coming second

in a field of five, Great Britain winning.<sup>205</sup> Throwing the American football and throwing the cricket ball events were won by Canadians.<sup>206</sup> Don Edy, another POW at North Compound recalls that, “[a]ll in all it was one of the best days in the camp,” comparing the Meet to a ‘baby Olympics.’<sup>207</sup>

The weather was very favourable in and around camp at the end of June. In a 23 June letter, one POW, likely of North Compound stated, “[w]eather fine here now, every one getting beautifully tanned - all over!... Had my first swim in prison, even though it was in the fire pool. It was a wonderful feeling.”<sup>208</sup> It is hard to say the extent to which POWs pursued swimming in the camp (see Appendix XII, Illustration II). While Vietor recalls the Germans twice granting POWs permission to go swimming beyond the barbed wire boundaries at Barth, there is neither mention of POWs travelling outside the camp confines to swim, nor even any mention of adequate swimming holes near Luft III in any of the sources reviewed.<sup>209</sup> When asked about whether POWs ever swam in the fire pool, John Harris remarked, “I don’t think so. They used to make some model boats and sail them in it.”<sup>210</sup> However, Don Edy recalled that one summer (likely 1944, though possibly 1943) the Germans allowed the POWs to drain the fire pool and clean it out with soap, brushes, shovels, and scrapers with the intention of using it as a swimming pool. He asserts,

When it was filled again it made a wonderful swimming pool. The first couple of days the water was too cold and only a few hardy characters went in. After that it was good and we swam a lot for over a week. By that time the water began to get a bit dirty and one by one the swimmers dropped out until no more would swim in it. After that we didn’t get around to cleaning it again.<sup>211</sup>

While some may have been swimming in the pool for a short time, many others were partaking in the baseball and/or softball leagues. During the summer of 1944, Wolter calculates that upwards of 200 baseball teams were active through Luft III's six compounds, involving the participation of some 2,000 POWs.<sup>212</sup> He concludes that Stalag Luft III represented "the absolute pinnacle of POW baseball."<sup>213</sup> In a letter dated 12 July, a POW states that he played a game of soccer, which was very popular with the English, and that the Canadians typically spent their time playing basketball and softball. Moreover, he mentions that on the first of July, Canadians formed East and West teams and played basketball and softball matches, the West winning both contests.<sup>214</sup>

During an inspection conducted 17 July 1944, the Swiss delegate(s) noted that there were 3,204 inhabitants in the three British compounds (North, East, and Belaria), and that the compounds were in complete isolation of each other.<sup>215</sup> It was also noted that von Lindeiner's replacement, Oberst Braune, had maintained the policy against inter-compound sports that had been enacted after the Great Escape.<sup>216</sup> Conflicting letters describing the sports environment at the camp in April have been reviewed. Excerpts from two letters collected by Canadian censors refer to very different circumstances; in one letter dated 8 August 1944, Allan Hugh Schofield, a Luft III POW, stated, "I cannot give you any news of our sports life as we lost our equipment. Possibly the Y.M.C.A. representative who visited us a few days ago will send us new things."<sup>217</sup> However, another letter dated 24 August from R.V. Smyth to his parents includes this excerpt; "[w]e play lots of games. We don't have to work. Golf, softball, basketball, boxing, weight lifting and swimming are most popular... these chaps are in such good shape, I

was a little ashamed of my soft muscles and white skin.”<sup>218</sup> The reason for the disparity between these comments remains unknown. Perhaps Schofield was among a new cohort of prisoners arriving at the camp, and the sports equipment from their previous accommodation was either left behind or lost.

By the end of August 1944 the Canadian population at the camp had increased to 537, including 445 RCAF Officers, 91 RCAF ORs, and 1 Army OR.<sup>219</sup> Participation in a variety of sports continued into September. J. Meek mentioned that POWs were still playing baseball, football, and cricket among other sports in a 10 September letter home to his parents.<sup>220</sup> Later that month, Henry Söderberg, a WPA field Secretary, visited Stalag Luft III on the 27<sup>th</sup> through the 30<sup>th</sup>, noting that a ‘Y’ storeroom had been established to supply the camp’s six compounds with recreational supplies (see Appendix XII, Illustrations XXVIII & XXIX). In addition, Söderberg revealed that, “a temporary shortage caused by transportation difficulties has made it necessary to rotate equipment between the compounds.”<sup>221</sup> George McKiel recalls,

Oh they [materials for sports and recreational pursuits] got scarce too. They got scarce. We weren’t able to buy anymore because the communications had broken down to such an extent with the heavy bombings... So the supplies actually dried up...<sup>222</sup>

In conjunction with the shortages, Wolter claims that interest in softball and baseball had diminished in September 1944.<sup>223</sup> In response, he states that some of Luft III’s athletic organizers held a meeting to discuss the decreased interest in sports on 1 October.<sup>224</sup>

In a letter home to his mother addressed on 3 October 1944, D.H. Balchin wrote, “[w]e are okay here except the weather has clamped down and is pretty wet and

miserable... It has become impossible for outdoor sports so we keep ourselves occupied indoors.”<sup>225</sup> It would appear that participation in outdoor activities was not subdued for long. In a letter dated 9 October and published by the CPOWRA, a POW wrote, “[w]e are busy with lectures & soccer but don’t do too much running around as we are on half parcels [Red Cross food parcels] and don’t have too much energy to spare.”<sup>226</sup> The amount of food one received definitely impacted on one’s participation in sport. Rees states, “[t]he biggest problem with sport was the lack of food. Even on our optimal diet, in the more strenuous sports we could only play fifteen-twenty minutes each way at most.”<sup>227</sup> However, Rees also states,

We also had started up the rugby again before the ground got too frozen. The Big Match that October was North Compound v. East Compound, East Compound being allowed to come to our compound on parole. I have to say that this was one of the hardest games of rugby I have ever played, which we won, but only just. Towards the end of the match I was taken off the field with a dislocated elbow. It hurt like hell, but was useful, since it got me a few days in the camp hospital where the food was much better.<sup>228</sup>

The sports fields at Luft III were never in the greatest of shape. Having recently arrived at East Compound, John Harvie noticed that the sports ground was “almost pure sand” and, having scanned the premises, could not see any grass or hard-packed dirt on 22 October 1944.<sup>229</sup> Later that month, Harvie recalls,

We [Harvie and a comrade named ‘Tut’] came to the sports field, which was fully utilized each day. At this time of year the soccer season was at its peak. Excuses for a game were endless... English leagues, Scottish leagues, Colonial leagues, Barrack leagues, Compound leagues, and others.<sup>230</sup>

In fact, Harold Atkin wrote that there were, “[p]lenty of sports and good entertainment,”

in a letter dated 24 October.<sup>231</sup> Despite an absence after the wooden horse escape, golf returned to the East Compound's sports routine. One day in late October, Harvie discovered golf's existence first-hand when he heard someone yell 'Fore!' and a small ball landed beside him while walking the circuit; he later found out that the clubs and balls were forged and constructed by the POWs themselves.<sup>232</sup> Golf was among other outdoor sports played in November; Harvie recalls his room was scheduled to play soccer against another room from his hut in mid-November.<sup>233</sup>

As with the wooden horse escape, some POWs in East Compound continued to employ sport as a diversion for clandestine escape work. One day in November, an unscheduled appel, or roll call, was ordered by German authorities whilst 2 POWs were underground, labouring on an unfinished tunnel out of camp. To extract the two without alerting the Germans, a group of English prisoners quickly struck up a game of rugby, and "[d]uring a wild scrum above the tunnel entrance, the two tunnellers surfaced;" their work remained undetected, and the tunnellers joined the ranks for roll-call unexposed.<sup>234</sup>

On 30 November 1944, the Canadian population of POWs had dipped slightly since the last report in August to 528 (491 RCAF officers, 36 RCAF ORs, and 1 Army representative).<sup>235</sup> Despite a long absence since the end of March, inter-compound sporting events at Center Compound resumed in the winter of 1944; Center Compound's hockey team was permitted to play the teams from West and South.<sup>236</sup> In addition to the outdoor facilities found at these three compounds, East Compound had created an ice rink sometime in December before Christmas 1944. Harvie recalls, "[a]fter days of carrying jugs of water from the nearby washhouse, the ice was pronounced ready," and, "[s]kating

was so popular that schedules were drawn up in order to distribute the ice time fairly” (see Appendix XII, Illustration IX).<sup>237</sup> Don Edy contends that multiple ice rinks were created in the North Compound, some designed for skating and others for ice hockey, and were formed via a similar arrangement as in East Compound.<sup>238</sup> Harvie recalls an entertaining exhibition ice hockey game on Christmas Day between the English and Scottish, and he asserts that it was representatives of those two nations who did the most to maintain the rink in East Compound (see Appendix XII, Illustrations X & XII).<sup>239</sup> This match is somewhat reminiscent of a cricket contest staged between the Canadians and Americans in North Compound some time earlier. In regards to this contest, Les Keatley, former sports writer for North Compound’s paper *Scangriff*, humorously opined that, “to have witnessed that is a treasure as the funniest, craziest match in history.”<sup>240</sup> In fact, the cross-fertilization of sports was an important feature of the sporting culture at the Sagan camp. John Harris recalls,

As most of the lads were British, much time was devoted to their games - i.e. soccer, rigger, and cricket and so I had ample time to try my hand at all of them - and must admit I enjoyed these experiences immensely.<sup>241</sup>

While Canadians were trying new sports, British POWs found typically North American sports, such as softball, quite appealing. Keatley asserts, “[s]oftball after a very short time captured the hearts of sport fans, who searched for a faster game than cricket.”<sup>242</sup> Moreover, Floris van der Merwe asserts that Canadian and American POWs introduced volleyball to South African POWs in many camps where these nations coexisted.<sup>243</sup> Furthermore, Franks contends that the North American servicemen introduced basketball, volleyball, baseball, and softball to Australian prisoners in prison camps.<sup>244</sup> McCarthy, a

British author, concludes, “[s]ome team games flourished in the camps which were scarcely familiar at home, such as volleyball, basketball and softball.”<sup>245</sup>

A number of excerpts from POWs’ letters published in the CPOWRA News Sheet describe the scene at Luft III in late December:

“The German papers came out with a met. forecast a few weeks ago, predicting the coldest winter in the last century, and it seems to be coming true. A good point about it, however, is that it guarantees a certain amount of skating and hockey, something that was altogether missing last winter, which was rather mild. There aren’t many skates around, and they are mostly the clamp-on type, but I’ve been out a few times already.”

“We are having a cold season but it is excellent for ice skating - already we are well under way and have opened the season with two good games. Our equipment is good thanks to Can. Rel. Ass’n.”

“We have had some cold weather lately, and we were able to have an exhibition hockey match on Christmas Day. We were all able to get a turn at skating also. There was also an England vs. Scotland soccer game... I have been out skating the last four or five days. A hockey schedule is being drawn up and I am looking forward to a few games. I have been giving skating lessons to the others in our room, who are all English, with the exception of one.”

“Suppose to be the coldest winter in 100 years so we have made a good hockey rink and three other surfaces for skating. We opened on the 24<sup>th</sup> with East vs. West Canada game, I played and we won 4-0. I wished I had known we would be here this winter I’d have asked for my skates. We have about 350 for 2,000 men. Clamp on skates!!! A few private jobs, but we manage.”

“We are having cold weather here and the skating is really good. B. et I are on the same hockey team and the games are a riot. I’m one of the stronger players so you can guess the standard of the team.”<sup>246</sup>

The opportunity to skate and play ice hockey was clearly more prevalent during the winter of 1944/45 than it had been a year earlier, though this would be short-lived.

Whether they realized it or not, the POWs’ time at Stalag Luft III was quickly coming to



an end.

Many POWs sensed that they would be marched out of Sagan and taken to more secure camps closer to the German heartland at some point in the new year. In East Compound, a number of POWs heard a BBC broadcast on 12 January 1945 announcing a Russian winter offensive directed towards Poland.<sup>247</sup> Such news would have spread fast through the camp. In response to this news, Harvie notes that,

Activity on the circuit increased tenfold as everyone worked to get in shape. Some bashed the circuit to check the durability of their homemade packs and the weight they could carry. Others walked with loads on their backs simply to improve their stamina.<sup>248</sup>

As January unfolded, many POWs felt that they would be marched out of camp soon. Nevertheless, individuals played sports up until their departure at the end of January. John Harris recalls, "I think the day the camp was broken up... I'd been skating and playing in a make-up game of hockey with some of the lads from our barrack block."<sup>249</sup>

Nichol and Rennell assert,

For all the expectation, when the moment came it was a surprise. The temperature had dipped even further and the snow was falling heavily on the night of 27 January 1945 as guards rushed from hut to hut. '*Raus! Raus!*' The Russian advance had been quicker than anyone could have anticipated.<sup>250</sup>

In some cases, POWs had just thirty minutes to ready themselves for the excursion and were only permitted to take what they could carry.<sup>251</sup> The camp's entire complement of some 12,000 POWs (less a few hundred who were too sick to move) was evacuated over the course of just 5 hours, destined for camps at Moosburg, Langwasser-Nürnberg, Luckenwalde, and Westertimke.<sup>252</sup> This exodus from Sagan was part of a greater German

scheme to concentrate Allied POWs in three pockets, specifically in northern, central, and southern Germany.<sup>253</sup> The camp that had existed as the largest air force prison camp in German control and the postal and administrative headquarters for all Luftwaffe prison camps for the better part of three years, laid empty and abandoned. Stalag Luft III was shut down.

Many individuals contributed to the sports setting at Luft III. However, there were a few who stood out among the rest. As mentioned earlier, Delmar T. Spivey was a substantial contributor to the success of sports in Center Compound. Spivey became the SAO of Center Compound on 4 September 1943 and would remain that Compound's senior officer until the camp's evacuation at the end of January 1945. He appreciated the importance of sport as a medium to maintain one's health while in captivity. In fact he states, "[o]f all the things which helped return us to our country and homes in healthy physical and mental state, I should say that our freedom to indulge in athletic activities was the most important."<sup>254</sup> Spivey made physical activity mandatory among American servicemen inhabiting the compound; if at first an individual was hesitant, he would order him into participation. He recalls that, "everyone found himself taking fifteen minutes of calisthenics each morning and walking or playing some kind of game almost daily."<sup>255</sup> This compound's large playing field accommodated a softball league that incorporated at least 25 teams, each of which played two or three times per week in the summer.<sup>256</sup> In addition to the existence of ping pong, badminton, fencing, boxing, wrestling, and track and field events, he notes,

As fall drew on, basketball, soccer, touch football, and volleyball took

over without any abatement of energetic activity. A workshop repaired equipment until it was disintegrated. Also, a very careful running inventory of all equipment, kept in the stockroom located in one end of the big outdoor latrine, was maintained. We had more skates and ice hockey sticks than a large university!<sup>257</sup>

Adding to Spivey's insights, Hasselbring asserts,

In Stalag Luft 3's Center Compound, approximately forty softball teams made constant use of its two diamonds. To the prisoners' delight, the two teams dressed in baseball uniforms for special Sunday games. Twenty-five basketball teams competed on the compound's one court. Eleven teams formed for the Intra-Compound Relays held on a 1,080 yard track. The four volleyball courts were always in use. The eight soccer teams played until the end of the spring. Swimming in West Compound's six-foot-deep fire pool during the summer soon ended after the water became polluted and vermin-infested. Boxing, fencing, and body-building classes always attracted prisoners. Outfitted with four balls and a set of clubs, the POWs set up a six-hole golf course. The prisoners said it had greens, traps, and bunkers, but all these surfaces were sand.<sup>258</sup>

It is hard to pinpoint exactly when all of the aforementioned sporting facilities were available, and the activities were pursued. Still, it is likely that Spivey's comments regarding ice hockey and winter sports were construed more so from the 1944/45 winter season than that of 1943/44 because of the weather conditions.

Sporting activities were practised at Stalag Luft III from the first months of its operation to the last days of its existence. These played an appreciable role in the day-to-day regimen of hundreds of POWs. Canadians found themselves amidst familiar and not so familiar activities. Paul Ramage, a former POW at North Compound, concludes that the sports schedule was a diverse one, "with the Brits strong in sports such as cricket, rigger and soccer, and the Canadians in softball and volleyball. The other nations concentrated on their national sports, and everyone had a go at track and field."<sup>259</sup>

Perhaps Durand describes the circumstances best:

The sports the prisoners engaged in varied with the season. Among the British and Commonwealth troops, cricket, rugby, and soccer were popular. The Americans preferred softball and football. In the winter, ice-skating and hockey attracted much attention, though the winter of 1943-1944 was so mild that maintaining a rink was difficult... In addition to these major sports, there were volleyball and basketball, track events, and boxing, wrestling, weight lifting, and fencing. And there were, in fact, several golf courses laid out in the sand between the barracks... When good weather prevailed, scheduled games kept the sports fields busy from morning until dark. Each of the compounds had highly organized clubs and divided the players into leagues for the major sports, each barracks supplying one or more teams.<sup>260</sup>

Clearly, a Luft III POW with an interest in sports had many opportunities to participate in a variety of activities; from hockey to high bar and soccer to softball, POWs confined in Stalag Luft III had an array of sporting activities to help fill their time.

### **Section III: Stalag Luft VI, Heydekrug**

By 1943, the number of British and American airmen 'falling' into German control was increasing considerably. Contributing to this influx was a significant increase of Canadians entering Germany prison camps in March 1943 during a phase in the strategic bomber offensive against Germany that yielded especially high losses in aircraft and men.<sup>261</sup> Subsequently, a number of camps were restructured and expanded, while some new camps were established to detain the increasing population of Allied POWs. In late spring 1943, there was an immediate need to house some 2,000 Allied POW fliers somewhere.<sup>262</sup> Founded in June 1943, "[c]lose to the Lithuanian border in the East Prussian wilds of the Memel peninsula, Heydekrug [Stalag Luft VI] would prove to be

the most northerly and most easterly of all camps of all three British Services” (see Appendix III).<sup>263</sup> Unlike other facilities that were built specifically to accommodate POWs, Stalag Luft VI was established in the confines of an old military camp, some three miles south-east of Heydekrug’s train station (see Appendices VIII and IX).<sup>264</sup> The climate was not always inviting. In regards to the weather, it was reported that, “[t]he climate is hard; the summers are short and very hot, the winters long and cold.”<sup>265</sup>

The first POWs to occupy the camp arrived on 10 June 1943; the vast majority were British NCOs from Stalag Luft III.<sup>266</sup> Despite leaving behind well established sports and entertainment facilities at Luft III, some POWs were hopeful for their new camp. In a letter addressed on 27 June 1943, a POW wrote, “[a]rrived at this camp about a fortnight ago... We had built quite a fine theatre at the other camp, sports field, etc. These things will take some time to make here but plans are already under way and our hosts are co-operative.” On 1 August 1943, Fred O. Auckenthaler inspected Luft VI on behalf of the Swiss. He determined that the camp population included 2,008 British RAF POWs and that there were in fact four huts accommodating POWs with one other used as the camp’s kitchen.<sup>267</sup> 217 of these servicemen were Canadian.<sup>268</sup> Auckenthaler reported that despite the POWs’ recent efforts towards building an entertainments hut, an order arrived from German authorities with the intent to enlarge the camp, which would have the new hut serving as a kitchen for the new section.<sup>269</sup> Moreover, the order dictated that all future labour must be directed towards building the second part of the camp.<sup>270</sup> Auckenthaler observed that the POWs had no sports field, that “there is no possibility for entertainments or real outside sports,” and that “[t]he lack of facilities for recreation and

sports influences very strongly the P.O.W. whose physical and mental health are affected.”<sup>271</sup>

This sentiment was reasserted in a camp report submitted by the Camp Leader, Sergeant A.G. Deans, on 13 August 1943. He wrote, “We are badly off for sports here as space is very limited.”<sup>272</sup> However, Deans affirmed that the POWs were making do with the resources and space available; softball and cricket were being played, including a cricket Test Match between England and Australia.<sup>273</sup> While the POWs were able to bring some of the sports equipment from Luft III, these resources were running low, especially with the influx of prisoners at the camp. Still Deans was hopeful for new materials as the camp had already been visited by a YMCA Secretary, and as he suggested, “the Y.M.C.A. has done great things for us in the past.”<sup>274</sup> In a letter dated August 1943, a POW mentioned that softball was the “big game” that year, and that Canadians were coaching British and Australian teams.<sup>275</sup> In addition, he states that,

The Canadians still continue to receive large quantities of parcels and sports equipment from Canada, which causes some jealousy in different quarters, but we have a fairly good name for letting everyone use our stuff.<sup>276</sup>

In addition to softball and cricket, other sports were played. In a 24 October 1943 letter, one POW mentioned participating in a basketball game.<sup>277</sup> Soccer, and possibly ice hockey and skating, were also pursued.

The camp still included 4 large stone barracks and two smaller wooden barracks with a total capacity to hold 2,200 men on 14 September 1943.<sup>278</sup> The camp’s population had risen slightly to include 2,041 POWs, all of whom were NCOs (except 45 private

soldiers); 221 Canadians were among the inhabitants.<sup>279</sup> Inspectors reaffirmed that “[t]he prisoners have no sports-ground,” and that the only available spaces for sporting activities could be found in the areas between the huts (20 x 30 metres), but they were often used for other activities, such as drying laundry.<sup>280</sup> In a letter to the High Commissioner for Canada in London dated 17 September, Sergeant J. Reid Gordon, a Luft VI POW, mentioned that the camp’s population of Canadians had increased to 234, and that a Canadian Committee had been organized.<sup>281</sup>

At some point in late October, 1,200 NCOs, including an assortment of British and Dominion airmen, arrived from Stalag Luft I and were assigned to the K Lager.<sup>282</sup> In addition to the 24 October letter, a second communication of 29 October included in the CPOWRA News Sheet, includes the excerpt, “I’m still learning Spanish and teaching French and apart from a game or two of football or rugby it’s about all I do.”<sup>283</sup> By November, a combination of overcrowding and inadequate facilities stifled the prisoners’ daily routine. With the addition of the Luft I NCOs, the camp’s population hovered around 3,000 POWs.<sup>284</sup> To make matters worse, there had been several shooting incidents, most of which arose when POWs crossed the warning wire to retrieve soccer balls and the like.<sup>285</sup>

For those officials responsible for the POW agenda in Great Britain, the injustices suffered at Stalag Luft VI would not be tolerated for long without recourse. On 3 November the War Office (Directorate of Prisoners of War) sent a memo to the Foreign Office (Prisoners of War Department) stating the following,

In view of the conditions existing, and of the approach of winter, His

Majesty's Government take the gravest view of the situation at this Camp, and request the Protecting Power to demand from the German Government, in the most emphatic manner, immediate redress regarding these complaints [which included the failure to provide facilities for sport - a breach of Article 17 of the Convention].<sup>286</sup>

On 28 November, Swiss delegates visited Luft VI. The camp, holding 2,916 POWs (including 353 Canadians) possessed only part of a useable sports field and it was concluded that a project to finish the field could not be completed until the spring, thereby limiting the space available for both indoor and outdoor exercise until that time.<sup>287</sup> The camp had grown with the construction of two more barracks, each with the capacity to hold 450 POWs.<sup>288</sup> The inspector(s) stressed that "the continuous lack of indoor recreation and sports facilities is creating low spirits among the prisoners of war. In fact, an increase of mental instability has been noticed with older prisoners."<sup>289</sup>

As limited as the circumstances may have been, some POWs continued to play what sports they could. On 12 November, one hopeful POW wrote, "[i]f we can get an adequate water supply we should have a couple outdoor skating rinks, as we have several hundred clamp-on skates and a few dozen hockey sticks."<sup>290</sup> While many prisoners were apt to try sports that were indigenous to foreign nations, at least one Canadian refused to have a go at the wickets; in a letter dated 28 December 1943, one POW wrote, "[h]ave not taken up cricket, and have hopes things will not last that long."<sup>291</sup> Should this POW have preferred ice hockey, he might have been impressed with the receipt of a shipment from the CPOWRA via the Swedish YMCA in January 1944, including a typewriter, 25 pairs of skates, 50 sticks, 6 pucks, and 10 rolls of tape.<sup>292</sup>

On 31 January 1944, 254 Canadians inhabited Stalag Luft VI, including 27 RCAF



officers, 223 RCAF ORs, and 4 Canadian Army ORs.<sup>293</sup> Within a month the Canadian community increased to 313 with the addition of 3 RCAF officers and 56 RCAF ORs.<sup>294</sup> In February American POWs began arriving in appreciable numbers in February for the first time.<sup>295</sup> In less than a month, the American contingent surpassed Canadian numbers. During the 10 March inspection, it was noted that the camp included 413 Canadian and 1,280 Americans prisoners.<sup>296</sup> With the addition of a new compound for the Americans, the inspector(s) found the camp divided into four equal-sized, non-communicating sections, including one for the British, one for the Americans, one integrated section, and one for a yet-to-be levelled area intended to be a sports field (see Appendix IX).<sup>297</sup> The inspector(s) reported that the camp contained 10 stone brick barracks, and 12 wooden huts.<sup>298</sup> As in the inspections of the past, the only practical space existing for sport and recreation was between the barracks. Unfortunately, even those open spaces were soon to be filled with tents for some 3,000 POWs expected to transfer to Luft VI in the near future.<sup>299</sup> The inspector(s) concluded that “[t]he situation with regard to recreation space, both indoor and outdoor, is extremely bad” and that, “with the ever increasing difficulties in recreational organization, it is feared that the material limitations will some day show their effects on the health of the prisoners of war.”<sup>300</sup> In fact the miserable conditions did have a considerable, and sometimes fatal, impact on many POWs. Gordon Harrison, an ex-POW at Luft VI recalls,

We had fellas run at the wire. Just give up and actually commit suicide by climbing the wire, and the guards would shoot them. Some people couldn't take it. A lot of the fellas that couldn't take it weren't the active types, they just sat and brooded and thought about these things, and finally they just gave up.<sup>301</sup>

The lack of sports facilities and pursuits, among other deficiencies, took its toll as the inspectors had predicted. Hasselbring maintains that morale improved the more POWs were able to venture outside to engage in sports and other activities procured by the YMCA.<sup>302</sup>

Issues of overcrowding worsened as the weeks passed by. During an inspection of the camp conducted by the ICRC in May, the delegate(s) calculated that the camp had swelled to 6,089 POWs (474 Canadians), with 90 stone hutments and 14 wooden structures.<sup>303</sup> Despite the compromised and declining circumstances encountered during the last visit by the Swiss, and the addition of over 1,000 POWs since then, the inspector(s) stated that, “[r]ecreation, pay, discipline, no complaints.”<sup>304</sup> As mentioned in prior sections, the D-Day invasions beginning at Normandy on 6 June 1944, eventually crippled German supply and transportation lines. In addition to already minimal recreation and leisure opportunities, one POW wrote of a devastating occurrence that struck the camp in a letter dated 19 June; “[o]ur theatre here burned down a few days ago, so we won’t see a show for a while. I still have softball, basketball etc., to keep me busy and in fairly good shape.”<sup>305</sup>

Despite the deficient conditions, sports activities were modified to fit the abbreviated spaces available. Charlie Hobbs recalls the existence of two soccer leagues with the senior league exhibiting an impressive calibre of play.<sup>306</sup> Furthermore, Hobbs asserts that there was some very good basketball played as well.<sup>307</sup> POWs continued participating in what sporting activities they could until the day they were evacuated from the camp. Nichol and Rennell note that,

On 13 July, with just a few hours' warning, the German commandant gave the order that the camp was to be evacuated. The urgency was such that a needle cricket match between an England XI and an Australian XI on the hard-baked earth of A compound had to be abandoned with just a few overs to go. No details were given of where they were going or how long they would be on the road. Each man would be allowed to take only what he could carry.<sup>308</sup>

By the summer of 1944, the camp had grown to quarter some 10,000 POWs.<sup>309</sup> While the Americans withdrew from the camp on the night of 13 July, the British began marching out the next day, section by section, in a departure that lasted a few days.<sup>310</sup>

The structural orientation of this camp is somewhat confusing. Recall that Cox remembers the camp having two large compounds and one smaller one (of which he provides no name or label). Wolter supports this notion, arguing that there was one American compound, one British compound, and one integrated.<sup>311</sup> Still, one must recall that American airmen did not enter the prison population until February 1944.<sup>312</sup> In contrast to Cox's reflections, Charlie Hobbs, another Luft VI POW, remembers there being two lagers at the camp, designated 'A' and 'K,' and that 'K' Lager was, for all intents and purposes, a Canadian lager.<sup>313</sup> While supporting Cox's contentions, Wolter also agrees with Hobbs that the British compound was referred to as the Canadian compound because of the large number of Canadians there.<sup>314</sup> However, upon reviewing the inspection reports, it becomes clear that the Canadians were always a minority compared to the rest of the British contingent and, later, the American contingent. In addition to these somewhat conflicting interpretations of the camp's arrangement, a memo from the War Office in London to a Lt. Easdale, would suggest that Stalag Luft VI had been redesignated Stalag Luft III, Lager A by January 1944.<sup>315</sup> A possible

explanation for some of the confusion could be that Cox and Hobbs are reflecting on the camp's orientation at different times (see Appendix IX).

To determine the exact layout of this camp during periods of frequent structural growth and accelerated change is beyond the scope of this study. What is important to note are the facts that will satisfy the research questions that direct this initiative. Therefore, the various sporting activities that POWs pursued should be the prime focus. While sporting activities were pursued by prisoners at Luft VI during their imprisonment, the equipment and facilities were more limited than those found at Lufts I and III. However, amidst issues of overpopulation and compromised space, prisoners participated in several sports.

#### **Section IV: Additional Findings**

Regardless of the camp or compound, 'pounding the circuit' or 'circuit bashing,' kriegie expressions for walking laps of the compound perimeter, was a defining element of the POW existence (see Appendix XII, Illustration III). This was an activity employed to satisfy various different motives. Spivey comments on the importance and multifaceted nature of walking the circuit, specifically referring the Center Compound, Stalag Luft III,

Then there was walking, walking, walking, around and around the perimeter of the compound. Just before leaving Sagan in 1945, I carefully figured out the number of miles I had walked in these shoes. They had been round the compound over 2,000 times for a total distance of well in excess of 1,200 miles... The 'circuit' as we called the path around the compound, was pounded all day long in all kinds of weather by almost everyone. It was the place where one could get away from the noise and

confusion of the barracks and where he could think. It was here that most of the escape work was planned and where some 'top secret' conversations took place.<sup>316</sup>

In fact, Roger Bushell conducted many individual meetings with fellow *X-Committee* members on walks around North Compound's perimeter before the Great Escape.<sup>317</sup> Don Edy focuses on the physical benefits when he writes that "[p]ounding the circuit should be classified as a sport as it was the quickest and easiest way of getting some exercise."<sup>318</sup> Still, it is clear that there was much more to these walks than simply exercise. Harvie expands on the importance of the circuit at Luft III's East Compound, asserting that,

I had presumed circuit bashing was only for fresh air and exercise. But, I soon learned, there were even greater benefits. Here in the open a kriegie could isolate himself for a short while from the inevitable irritants of life that develop in crowded quarters. It was the only place in camp where he could stride around and around undisturbed and alone with his thoughts. In privacy he could exorcise bad memories of the war and vent to the four winds his anger and frustration at enforced idleness. Here he could voice his private thoughts with little fear of being overheard by either friend or foe.<sup>319</sup>

While walking the circuit, it had become standard for the POWs to walk in the same direction.<sup>320</sup> George McKiel recalls that at certain times, there were literally hundreds of POWs circling around the North Compound perimeter at Luft III.<sup>321</sup> Similar arguments can be taken from other camps as well. In regards to Stalag Luft I, Charlie Hobbs recalls,

I have not yet mentioned the 'circuit,' the social hub of the P.O.W. camp. The circuit was a well-worn path in the playing field compound, or centre compound. It circled the football field just inside the warning wire. All important conversations would start on the circuit, as it was the only place with total verbal privacy. Escape plans or upcoming divorces were all grist for the circuit mill. Some nice summer evenings, there were hundreds of Kriegies on the circuit going round and round, or sitting a little farther into watch the soccer game in progress. Above all, the circuit was where rumours started and, in the world of the hopeful, this made up a

big part of our daily life.<sup>322</sup>

Stalag Luft VI was no different to the other camps in this regard. Still, walking laps in the bitter cold was less appealing to some than others. While in captivity at Stalag Luft VI, Andrew Cox recalls,

It was quite a contrast to compare the two camps on a cold winter's day. In the British compound hundreds of men could be seen walking around the camp, beating a path in the snow, their breath forming a misty cloud around their heads as they stepped out vigorously to get the benefit of some exercise. In the American compound the only noticeable movement was the smoke curling lazily from the chimneys; not one footprint could be seen in the snow.<sup>323</sup>

Perhaps Hasselbring describes the role and importance of the circuit best,

No matter how many organized activities were provided, circling the perimeter was the universally favorite activity in all camps, surpassing even sports and card playing in popularity. Walking provided some POWs a medium between the monotony of activities and a dearth of thoughts. Bounding from step to step, dodging people, and overstepping stones joggled a prisoners thoughts, never allowing too many to link up, and kept the forces of self-pity and despair divided. He kept walking, moving forward, leaving his present behind, looking only ahead.

With its long straightaways, four corners, and everyone walking in the same direction, the perimeter, in any season, was the camp's town square on a summer evening. It was the place to meet people, chat with acquaintances and friends, and pick up the latest rumor. The daily walk served as a comfortable habit that cut through some of the uncertainty that plagued the prisoners' lives. It passed the time, relieved panicky feelings of claustrophobia, and expended tension. It also worked the prisoners' muscles and kept them fit.<sup>324</sup>

Some important facets of the sports theme existed beyond the confines of the prison camp. Specifically, the roles and impact of the major aid societies assisting POWs must be discussed. Despite receiving support from other organizations, the War Prisoners' Aid of the YMCA (WPA) was the cardinal organization in the domain of

POWs and goods associated with sport. The organization was originally formed as an off-shoot of the World's Committee of the YMCA at the outbreak of hostilities; belligerent nations that held or were likely to hold POWs were immediately extended the services of this society.<sup>325</sup> By the cessation of hostilities, the WPA had been granted visitation and supply privileges by 33 countries.<sup>326</sup> While for some the lines of responsibility between the WPA and the ICRC were blurred, Andre Vulliet asserts,

At the beginning of the war friendly relations were established in Geneva between the respective headquarters of the two organizations [the War Prisoners' Aid of the YMCA and the International Red Cross] and, although no agreement was ever concluded restricting the program of work of either organization, it has been felt all along that the International Red Cross was chiefly responsible for collecting all information regarding prisoners and organizing in Geneva the central agency, through which such information is transmitted to PWs [POWs] and their relatives, for carrying the PW mail, for distributing all material sent in by National Red Cross Societies to their respective nationals held prisoners in enemy countries, for making certain the material, physical and sanitary conditions in PW camps currently conformed with the provisions of the Geneva Convention.

War Prisoners Aid of the Y.M.C.A. is not and never tried to be an inspecting semi-official body. As it was authorized to work with prisoners of war by courtesy of the governments concerned and for a specific purpose, it directed all its means to helping the millions behind barbed wire in keeping mentally and spiritually as fit as conditions permitted. Through its visiting secretaries throughout the world it found itself dealing chiefly in morale matters, ascertaining and meeting the needs of the prisoners along religious, educational and recreational lines.<sup>327</sup>

However in the early stages of the War, there was some confusion as to each society's role and agenda, and an underlying public belief that the Red Cross possessed the sole authority to service POWs. On 23 April 1942 Harper Sibley, chairman of the International Committee of YMCAs wrote a letter to Norman Davis, Chairman of the

American Red Cross addressing the issue.<sup>328</sup> Sibley highlighted the role of the WPA, as already accepted by a number of prominent countries, abbreviating its role as to meet the recreational, educational, and spiritual needs of the prisoners. In addition, Sibley reminded Davis of a letter sent to John R. Mott, Chairman of the WPA Committee, from Max Huber, President of the International Red Cross, where Mott is reported to have written,

to commend the achievements of the Y.M.C.A. in connection with recreational, intellectual and spiritual welfare of prisoners of war of every nationality and creed, and to reaffirm that these functions are in no way conflicting with the work of the International Red Cross Committee.<sup>329</sup>

Sibley subsequently stated, “[w]e understand that in its service to prisoners of war, the American Red Cross does not contemplate entering the recreational, educational and spiritual field.”<sup>330</sup> He applauded the great work done by the American Red Cross, and requested that Davis respond to his letter acknowledging the distinct roles of the two organizations, so that copies of the correspondence could be sent to representatives of each organization to dispel any confusion among the public.<sup>331</sup> Davis responded on 6 May 1942. He defined the multiple roles and responsibilities of the American Red Cross. In regards to the role of the YMCA, Davis wrote,

... the American Red Cross, because of its relationship to the armed forces in time of war, will of course render such additional aid to prisoners of war as our Government may request. We do not contemplate, however, the solicitation of funds or materials from the American public for the purpose of providing supplies or services of recreational, intellectual, or spiritual welfare to prisoners of war.<sup>332</sup>

Thus, the YMCA and WPA secured pre-eminent control over the recreational, intellectual, and spiritual wants and needs of POWs. Other smaller organizations, such as



the national prisoners of war relatives' associations, the Knights of Columbus, and the Salvation Army may have contributed to furnishing POWs with sports materials and equipment to a lesser extent, but this was typically done on a smaller scale, and sometimes purchases were actually made through the WPA. For instance, the CPOWRA sent 25 pairs of skates, 50 sticks, 6 pucks, and 10 rolls of tape to Stalag Luft VI in January 1944 via the Swedish YMCA.<sup>333</sup>

Typically only three external organizations were granted access to visit POWs by belligerents on both sides of the War. These included agents of the Protecting Power, delegates from the International Red Cross, and Secretaries from the WPA.<sup>334</sup> The WPA employed field operatives, or Secretaries, to visit the camps to determine camp's condition. In fact, reports from various nations suggested that the Secretaries' visits were the most important service rendered by the WPA.<sup>335</sup> It would seem this notion was no more legitimate than at Stalag Luft III. Hasselbring reports that,

The monotony of camp life in Stalag Luft 3 was broken up by visits from the YMCA secretary, Henry Söderberg. The prisoners would approach Söderberg as if he were a department store Santa Claus, one by one telling him what they wanted... When the shipment arrived it was like Christmas for the prisoners: pianos and papers, books and balls, pencils and ping pong paddles, a whole barracks for the theater, and music and makeup! These gifts relieved the awful monotony of camp life and chased away deadly melancholy.<sup>336</sup>

The inaugural official visit by the first employed YMCA delegate occurred on 15 November 1939 at a prison camp near Orléans, France.<sup>337</sup> Visits continued for nearly a decade, until the last prisoner was repatriated at the end of 1948.<sup>338</sup> The Secretaries were typically civilians from neutral territories.<sup>339</sup> As previously mentioned, Vulliet asserts

that the number of Secretaries who visited the camps grew from 15 in 1940 to between 150 and 175 at the time Vulliet wrote his document (published 1946).<sup>340</sup> Despite the numerous camps in Germany, just eight Secretaries and two part-time Secretaries were assigned to camps in this country; nevertheless, over 2,500 visits were made to the German facilities during the War.<sup>341</sup> In all, WPA Secretaries made approximately 40,000 visits to POW or civilian internment camps from the beginning of the War until the end of 1945.<sup>342</sup> While the WPA was concerned with panoptic themes of recreation, education, and religion, Secretaries often involved themselves with a number of topics at the camps, including spiritual and religious activity, education and intellectual diversion, musical activity, art and handicraft, theatricals and movies, gardening and landscaping, camp newspapers and radios, indoor games, sports and athletics, and special and individual requests.<sup>343</sup> Vulliet argues that “[m]ost important, of course of all non-intellectual activities engaged in all PW camps, was sports and athletics. It appealed to nearly all youth and was found indispensable at all ages to lessen the bad effects of seclusion.”<sup>344</sup>

The YMCA shipped 300,000 pieces of athletic equipment to Allied POWs in Europe, along with tens of thousands of musical instruments, records, books, etc. from the start of 1943 until the following August.<sup>345</sup> Among other articles, the WPA shipped 23,433 softballs, 10,794 pairs of boxing gloves, 4,990 soccer balls, and 14,697 dozen ping pong balls to camps across Europe from their Geneva office in 1944 alone.<sup>346</sup> See Appendix X for a list of the sports goods sent to Stalag Luft III by the WPA from the March 1942 to 31 October 1944.

The WPA's Sports Badge Awards represented another significant facet of the POW camp sporting experience (see Appendix XI). Vulliet reveals that a large number of 'special badges' were donated to the YMCA by the Swedish Sports Association to distribute among POWs who promoted "a certain standard in athletic and sports efficiency."<sup>347</sup> It is thought that these were the badges distributed by the YMCA as their Sports Badge Awards. In a 16 October 1944 letter to Mr. Richard S. Hosking, General Secretary of the Canadian YMCA, Tracy Strong, General Secretary of the World's Alliance of YMCAs, described what the sports badge awards were and appended a copy of a cable listing Canadian recipients of the awards.<sup>348</sup> In his letter, Strong writes,

In case your Council decides to write the relatives these facts might be included. First, that the sports badge is given out on the basis of about 20 to 1000 men. Second, that they are only awarded because of some outstanding athletic accomplishment or because of a spirit shown which has increased the athletic life of the camp. Third, although they are very simple and something that the ordinary man might not greatly appreciate for their intrinsic value, the men in the camps seem pleased because of the recognition.<sup>349</sup>

Included in the copy of the cable are the names of 11 POWs from Luft III and 12 POWs from Luft VI who were awarded the badges.<sup>350</sup> Canadian authorities decided swiftly to send letters of recognition to the families of the Canadian Award winners. The letters, dated 1 November 1944, were signed by Hosking himself.<sup>351</sup>

In sum, the sports environment at these three camps was a multifaceted theme. While each camp was altogether unique, the three shared some similarities in regards to sports practices and the supply of equipment. The following chapter establishes some sustainable conclusions on the issue.

## Endnotes

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1. Andrew S. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich" (PhD dissertation, Temple University, 1990), p. 104.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 81.
4. Oliver Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time: RAF Bomber Command Prisoners-of-War in Germany 1939-1945* (London: Grub Street, 2003), p. 42.
5. John A. Vietor, *Time Out: American Airmen at Stalag Luft I* (Fallbrook, CA: Aero Publishers, Inc., 1951), p. 62.
6. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 44.
7. Tim Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II: The National Pastime Behind Barbed Wire* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002), p. 18.
8. John Nichol and Tony Rennell, *The Last Escape: The Untold Story of Allied Prisoners of War in Germany 1944-45* (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada, Ltd., 2002), p. 225.
9. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, Dr. Carl Krebs, February 1941, p. 20, Library and Archives Canada: RG24-8024, part of the Office of the Special Assistant to the Adjutant General Collection, File 21-0: Stalag Luft I; it is important to note that in many of the Inspection Reports, the Dominion servicemen, including Canadians, were classified as British and lumped in with the British tallies.
10. Ibid, p. 22.
11. Ibid.
12. Arthur A. Durand states "Camp conditions as a whole seem to have been adequate at Barth from the time Wings arrived until the prisoners moved in April, 1942... A large sports field located outside the compound provided some relief from the routine when German escorts were available." Harry M. A. 'Wings' Day, was sent to Barth having been recaptured from an escape at Dulag Luft in June 1941 and left in April 1942. Since there is no mention of the construction of a field following the winter of 1940/41, it is not unreasonable to suspect that this facility had been in existence since the summer of 1940. Quote from Arthur A. Durand, *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), p. 84.

13. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, Dr. Vance B. Murray, March 1941, p. 42, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0: Stalag Luft I.

14. The term 'Dominions' refers to the self-governing Dominions of Great Britain; namely Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa.

15. Gunnar Jansson, "Sport Behind Barbed Wire," War Prisoners' Aid of the World's Committee of Y.M.C.A.s, 15 March 1941, p. 2, LAC: MG28-I95, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada Collection, Container 272, File 11: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1940-1941.

16. Stalag Luft I was the only major permanent Luftwaffe camp in existence in March 1941; aside from the Dulag Lufts, the next major permanent camp to be opened was Stalag Luft III in the Spring of 1942 (Clutton-Brock notes that Stalag Luft II at Lodz only operated from June-July 1941, in *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, Appendix III, p. 449).

17. Andrew B. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken: Memoirs of a Prisoner of War* (Port Elgin: The Bruce Dale Press, 1999), p. 54; Clutton-Brock supports this contention by reaffirming that the number of Red Cross parcels in stock was never enough to supply each prisoner with one parcel per week until May/June 1941, Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 44.

18. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 18.

19. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 46; Gill asserts that this escape took place in October 1942 in *The Great Escape: The Full Dramatic Story with Contributions from Survivors and their Families* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2002), p. 47.

20. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 46.

21. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 84.

22. "Despatches made to Germany From Geneva," WPA, January 1942, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 12: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1940-1942.

23. Wing Commander H.M.A. Day (SBO Stalag Luft I) to Dr. D.A. Davis (of the WPA), 6 November 1941, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 12.

24. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), p. 28, plate, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.

25. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 47.

26. Cox contends that all prisoners at Stalag Luft I were reassigned to Stalag Luft III in April 1942, in *Our Spirit Unbroken*, p. 69; this is partially supported by the 10 November 1942 Inspection Report which states that the camp was abandoned in April 1942; Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the IRCC, 10 November 1942, p. 4, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
27. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the IRCC, 10 November 1942, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0; thus it is likely that the 'officials in Geneva' refers to representatives of the International Red Cross.
28. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the IRCC, 10 November 1942, p. 3, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
29. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, Gabriel Naville and Dr. Aloys Schnieper of the Protecting Power, 8 February 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0. LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
30. Ibid.; the term 'fortnight' refers to a two week period.
31. Ibid., p. 3.
32. Ibid., p. 3.
33. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, Fred O. Auckenthaler of the Swiss, 7 May 1943, p. 1, 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
34. Ibid., p. 1.
35. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 48.
36. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, Fred O. Auckenthaler of the Swiss, 7 May 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
37. Ibid.
38. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 23, October 1943, p. 22, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario; The Canadian Prisoner of War Relatives' Association (CPOWRA) published a news booklet on a monthly basis during the War. This included editorials, updates, and stories geared to updating the families of Canadian POWs detained overseas. A recurring part of this publication was a letters section including excerpts of letters that individuals had received from POWs overseas, and then contributed to the CPOWRA. It can be assumed that most readers and contributors were Canadian, since this was a Canadian Association and a Canadian publication. Therefore it can also be assumed that at least many of these letters were from Canadian POWs in Germany.

39. CPOWRA News Sheet, No. 23, October 1943, p. 22, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
40. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 18.
41. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 48.
42. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 21.
43. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the IRCC, 14 July 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
44. Ibid., p. 3.
45. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the IRCC, 14 July 1943, p. 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
46. IRCC in Geneva to Delegate in London, telegram, 30 July 1943, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
47. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, Fred O. Auckenthaler of the Swiss, 27 August 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
48. Ibid., p. 3.
49. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 49.
50. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 13 January 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
51. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 50.
52. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 13 January 1944, pp. 1-2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
53. Ibid., p. 1.
54. Ibid., p. 2.
55. Ibid., p. 4.
56. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 50.
57. Ibid.

58. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the ICRC, 9 March 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
59. Ibid., p. 2.
60. Ibid., p. 5.
61. Ibid., p. 7.
62. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, pp. 16-17; recall, the Great Escape involved the escape of 76 POWs from Stalag Luft III's North Compound on 24 March 1944.
63. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 136.
64. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 28 April 1944, p. 10, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
65. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 18 August 1944, p. 5, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
66. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 28 April 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
67. Ibid., p. 3.
68. Ibid., p. 6, 11.
69. Wing Commander C.A. Willis to YMCA Representatives, 29 April 1944, in Alan M. Hurst, *The Canadian Y.M.C.A. in World War II* (Toronto: National War Services Committee of The National Council of Young Men's Christian Association of Canada, 1948), pp. 355-356.
70. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 51.
71. Daniel G. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands: Canadian Prisoners of War 1939-45* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1983), pp. 152-153.
72. Summary by the Office of the Special Assistant to the Adjutant General (SAAG), 25 July 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
73. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 68; in this instance, it is thought that the prisoners signed documents on their honour as officers promising that they would not try to escape during their time outside the camp's boundaries.
74. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 18 August 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.



75. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 18 August 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
76. Ibid., p. 1, 4.
77. George McKiel (ex-POW at Stalag Luft III), interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006, interview 005, transcript, Leddy Library, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario.
78. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 18 August 1944, p. 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
79. Ibid., p. 5.
80. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the ICRC, 25 September 1944, p. 4, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
81. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 13 December 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
82. Flying Officer J.B. Findlay to his father, excerpt, 23 October 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1-1: SL3, Censorship.
83. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 13 December 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0; the inspector(s) reported that North III was opened, "only about three weeks ago."
84. Summary by the Office of the SAAG, 18 December 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
85. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 13 December 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.
86. Ibid., p. 2.
87. Ibid., p. 6.
88. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 17.
89. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 187-188.
90. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 126, 128.
91. Ibid., p. 146.
92. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 68; Vietor asserts that the POWs began crafting an ice rink after the prisoners were caught converting the skates into escape materials. Once this plan was

foiled, German authorities confiscated the skates and only returned them for recreation purposes on a parole basis.

93. Inspection Summary: Stalag Luft I, the ICRC, 22 February 1945, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0.

94. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 22.

95. Nichol and Rennell, *The Last Escape*, p. 225.

96. Ibid.

97. Kenneth K. Blyth, *Cradle Crew: Royal Canadian Air Force, World War II* (Manhattan, Kan: Sunflower University Press, 1997), p. 163.

98. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 63; when Vietor uses the term 'the end of the War,' it is assumed that he is referring to the day in which the camp was turned over to the Senior Allied Officers in the camp at the end of April 1945.

99. Ibid., p. 67.

100. Ibid., p. 104.

101. Tony McCarthy, *War Games: The Story of Sport in World War Two* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1989), p. 153.

102. Charlie Hobbs, *Past Tense: Charlie's Story* (Burnstown, Ont: General Store Publishing House, 1994), p. 129.

103. Ibid., pp. 132-133.

104. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 150.

105. Hobbs, *Past Tense*, p. 126.

106. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 70.

107. Brereton Greenhous et al., *The Crucible of War, 1939-1945: The Official History of The Royal Canadian Air Force Volume III* (Canada: Co-published by University of Toronto Press Inc. in cooperation with the Department of National Defence and the Canada Communication Group - Publishing, Supply and Services Canada, 1994), p. 777.

108. Ken Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen: The Remarkable Exploits of a WWII Bomber Pilot and Great Escaper* (London: Grub Street, 2004), p. 120.

109. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the IRCC, 22 February 1943, p. 5, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1: Stalag Luft 3; Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 22-24 February 1944, p. 7, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1; Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 31.
110. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 31.
111. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 70.
112. Ibid.
113. Jonathan F. Vance, "The War behind the Wire: The Battle to Escape from a German Prison Camp," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28 (Oct., 1993): p. 677.  
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-0094%28199310%2928%3A4%3C675%3ATWBTWT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-W>
114. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 70.
115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken*, p. 84.
118. Ibid., p. 80.
119. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 27.
120. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, Gabriel Naville and Dr. Hans Wehrle, 13 August 1942, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1; letter Day to Davis, copy of a letter, 6 November 1941, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 12.
121. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, Gabriel Naville and Dr. Hans Wehrle, 13 August 1942, p. 6, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1; 'the Protecting Power' was a neutral nation that was enlisted by a belligerent country to ensure that their servicemen in enemy hands were treated according to the Geneva Convention. Representative from the Protecting Power were granted access to prison camps to inspect the conditions of the camps. The Protecting Power could then submit reports to countries on the condition of their prisoners abroad. If shortcomings were observed, belligerent nations could make official protests through the Protecting Power. Examples of countries employed as Protecting Powers include the U.S.A. (before they joined the side of the Allies in the War), Switzerland, and Argentina.
122. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 90.
123. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, Gabriel Naville and Dr. K. Schaeffeler of the Protecting Power, 9 December 1942, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.

124. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, Gabriel Naville and Dr. K. Schaeffeler of the Protecting Power, 9 December 1942, p. 9, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
125. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the IRCC, 22 February 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
126. Ibid., p. 5.
127. Ibid., p. 6.
128. Ibid., p. 5.
129. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 28.
130. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the IRCC, 22/23 March 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
131. Ibid., p. 5.
132. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 70; Clutton Brock asserts that on 1 April between 850 and 1000 airmen (including some 300 Americans) moved into the new North Compound from East Compound to make room for the arrival of the 250 airmen from Schubin. Vance agrees that this compound was opened in the Spring of 1943 in, "The War behind the Wire," p. 677. Still, for Clutton-Brock's argument to be true, some 250 American officers would have to have been moved into East Compound between the 22/23 March inspection and 1 April, since there were only 57 American officers present during the 22/23 inspection. Even if the American NCOs (24) of the 22/23 March report inhabited the Officers' Compound (East) with the American officers, over 200 Americans would have had to move into the camp during the week prior to the New Compound reassignment. While this may have happened, it is more likely that these statistics are not entirely accurate.
133. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 130.
134. Ibid., p. 141.
135. Ibid., p. 142.
136. CPOWRA News Sheet, No. 23, October 1943, p. 22, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
137. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 142.
138. CPOWRA News Sheet, No. 23, October 1943, p. 24, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.

139. McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 157.
140. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 248.
141. Ibid.
142. McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 157.
143. Ibid., p. 158.
144. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Flight Lieutenant Cliff Irwin), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 102.
145. McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 158.
146. Ibid.
147. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Flight Lieutenant Cliff Irwin), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 102.
148. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, Gabriel Naville of the Protecting Power, 6/7 July 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1; Naville refers to the three compounds as East, Center, and West, the latter of which housing most of the 449 Americans. When one considers the April 1943 move of approximately 300 Americans to North Compound, it is likely that Naville is actually referring to the North Compound when he mentions West in this report.
149. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, Gabriel Naville of the Protecting Power, 6/7 July 1943, p. 6, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1; It is unlikely that the South Compound opened until 1 September 1943.
150. CPOWRA News Sheet, No. 23, October 1943, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
151. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 249.
152. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 23, October 1943, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
153. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the IRCC, 26 July 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
154. Ibid., p. 4.
155. CRPOWA News Sheet, no. 26, January 1944, p. 21, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.

156. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 165.
157. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 73.
158. Summary of Reports prior to September 7 1943, likely authored by the Office of the SAAG, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
159. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 26, January 1944, p. 21, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
160. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
161. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 25/26 October 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1 LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
162. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
163. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
164. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, pp. 73-74.
165. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, pp. 122-123.
166. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Flight Lieutenant Art Crighton), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 125.
167. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 247.
168. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 29, April 1944, pp. 21-23, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 30, May 1944, pp. 21-22, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London Ontario; recall, while these excerpts are presented in chronological order, they may not represent the same compounds, while it is most likely they are coming from East and North Compounds as this is where most of the British and Dominion airmen were assigned at this time.
169. George Sweanor, *It's All Pensionable Time: 25 Years in the Royal Canadian Air Force* (Port Hope, Ont: Gesnor Publications, 1981), p. 160.
170. John R. Harris, *Serving and Surviving: An Airman's Memoirs* (Victoria: First Choice Books, 2004), p. 105.
171. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 248.
172. John Harris (ex-POW at Stalag Luft III), interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006, interview 002, transcript, Leddy Library, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario; in addition Charlie Hobbs recalls that the Germans would also watch major soccer

matches as well in Hobbs, *Past Tense*, p. 129.

173. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 75.

174. Summary by the Office of the SAAG, 7 February 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.

175. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 22-24 February 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1; East Compound, Center Compound, and their vorlager was referred to as the East Section; North Compound, South Compound, and their vorlager was referred to as the West Section.

176. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 22-24 February 1944, p. 7, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.

177. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 75; despite Clutton-Brock's assertion, Swiss inspectors found the West Compound empty on their 17/18 April 1944 inspection, and inferred that it had yet to be permanently inhabited prior to the time, Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17/18 April 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.

178. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 52.

179. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 174.

180. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 76.

181. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 150.

182. S. P. MacKenzie, "The Treatment of Prisoners of War in World War II," *The Journal of Modern History* 66 (September 1994): p. 494.  
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0022-2801%28199409%2966%3A3%3C487%3ATTOPOW%3E2.0.CO%3B2-E>

183. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17/18 April 1944, p. 7, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.

184. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 182.

185. Chris Christiansen, *Seven Years among Prisoners of War*, trans. and ed. Ida Egede Winther (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1994), p. 58.

186. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17 July 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.

187. Delmar T. Spivey, *POW Odyssey: Recollections of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III and the Secret German Peace Mission in World War II* (Attleboro, Mass: Colonial Lithograph, Inc., 1984), p. 72; Spivey's contention is supported by the 17/18 April Inspection Report which states that, "[s]ince the mass-escape no inter-compound sports have been allowed," Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17/18 April 1944, p. 4, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
188. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 25.
189. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 34, September 1944, p. 28, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
190. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 29.
191. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 34, September 1944, p. 28, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
192. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17/18 April 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
193. Ibid.
194. Ibid., p. 4.
195. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 34, September 1944, pp. 26- 28, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 36, November 1944, p. 27, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance; recall, while these excerpts are presented in chronological order, they may not represent the same compounds. However, it is most likely that they are coming from East, North, or Belaria Compounds as this is where most of the British and Doinion airmen were assigned at this time.
196. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 185.
197. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 31.
198. Al Hannah, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d.), p. 123, in the possession of Mr. Al Hannah; Hannah's log book has a copy of the sports meet's schedule attached to page 123.
199. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 187; Al Hannah, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d.), p. 123.
200. Al Hannah, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d.), p. 123.
201. George McKiel, interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006.



202. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Pilot Officer Harold Garland), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 101.
203. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 36, November 1944, pp. 27- 28, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
204. George McKiel, interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006.
205. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 34, September 1944, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
206. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 187.
207. Don Edy, *Goon in the Block* (unpublished , 1961), p. 232, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.
208. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 34, September 1944, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
209. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 68; in fact one POW at Luft I reported, "Once a week now we go down to the beach for a swim, it is really good too" in a letter received 2 October 1944, CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 36, November 1944, p. 26, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
210. John Harris, interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006.
211. Edy, *Goon in the Block*, p. 231, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario.
212. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 24.
213. Ibid.
214. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 36, November 1944, p. 28, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
215. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17 July 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
216. Ibid.
217. LAC Allan Hugh Schofield to friends, excerpt, 8 August 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1-1: SL3, Censorship.

218. Flying Officer R.V. Smyth to his parents, excerpt, 24 August 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1-1: SL3, Censorship.
219. Summary by the Office of the SAAG, 21 September 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
220. Flying Officer J. Meek to his parents, excerpt, 10 September 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1-1: SL3, Censorship.
221. *War Prisoners Aid News* (U.S.A.), vol. 1, no. 6, October 1944: p. 1, LAC: MG28-195, Container 273, File 3: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence & Reports 1943-1945.
222. George McKiel, interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006.
223. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 35.
224. Ibid.
225. Sergeant D.H. Balchin to his mother, excerpt, 3 October 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1-1: SL3, Censorship.
226. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 41, April 1945, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
227. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 127.
228. Ibid., p. 187.
229. John D. Harvie, *Missing in Action: An RCAF Navigator's Story* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), p. 136.
230. Ibid., p. 146.
231. Flight Sergeant Harold Atkin to his wife, excerpt, 24 October 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1-1: SL3, Censorship.
232. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 150.
233. Ibid., p. 164.
234. Ibid., p. 159.
235. Summary by the Office of the SAAG, 16 December 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
236. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72.

237. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 172, 173.
238. Edy, *Goon in the Block*, p. 230, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario.
239. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 175.
240. Les Keatley, "Sagan Sports Parade," in *Spotlight on Sagan*, Mark Winston, ed., (London, n.d.), p. 27, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.
241. Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 108.
242. Keatley, "Sagan Sports Parade," p. 27, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario.
243. Floris J.G. van der Merwe, "'For you the war is over!' Sport amongst South African Prisoners-of-war during World War II" (paper presented at the Australian Society for Sport History Seminar, Queensland, New Zealand, February 1-5, 1999).
244. Warwick Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344: Sport in Prisoner-of-war Camps during World War II," *Sporting Traditions* 11 (May 1995): p. 82.  
<http://www.aafla.org/SportsLibrary/SportingTraditions/1995/st1102/st1102g.pdf>
245. McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 156.
246. CRPOWA News Sheet, no. 42, May 1945, pp. 24-26, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
247. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 179.
248. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
249. John Harris, interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006.
250. Nichol and Rennel, *The Last Escape*, p. 67.
251. *Ibid.*
252. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 83.
253. Jonathan F. Vance, *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), p. 175.
254. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72.

255. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 70.
256. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
257. *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
258. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," pp. 224-225.
259. Paul Ramage, *Prison Can Be Fun* (Private, 1979), p. 64, in the possession Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
260. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, pp. 247-248.
261. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 52.
262. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 98.
263. *Ibid.*
264. *Ibid.*
265. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft VI, the ICRC, 14 September 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4: Stalag Luft VI.
266. *Ibid.*
267. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft VI, Fred O. Auckenthaler of the Swiss, 1 August 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4; recall, thousands of Canadians flew with RAF units, and subsequently may have been included in this tally. Still, it is important to realize that some Canadians also flew in a Canadian Group at this time. Dancocks writes, "Canadians made a major contribution to the bomber offensive against Germany. January 1, 1943, saw the formation of Six Group, with eleven RCAF bomber squadrons under Canadian command. Six Group was not autonomous; it operated as part of the Royal Air Force. And Thousands of Canadians continued to fly with RAF squadrons, as they would throughout the war." Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 53.
268. Summary by the Office of the SAAG, 12 January 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4. LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
269. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft VI, Fred O. Auckenthaler of the Swiss, 1 August 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
270. *Ibid.*
271. *Ibid.*, p. 1, 2, 3.

272. Report of the Camp Leader: Stalag Luft VI, A.G. Deans, POW and Camp Leader, 13 August 1943, p. 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
273. Ibid.
274. Ibid.
275. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 26, January 1944, p. 23, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
276. Ibid.
277. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 29, April 1944, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
278. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft VI, the ICRS, 14 September 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
279. Ibid.
280. Ibid., p. 5.
281. Sergeant J. Reid (RCAF POW) to Lieutenant Colonel D.C. Unwin Simson (Office of the High Commissioner for Canada, London), 17 September 1943, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
282. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 100.
283. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 29, April 1944, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
284. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 100.
285. Ibid.
286. The War Office (Directorate of Prisoners of War) to the Foreign Office (Prisoners of War Department), memo, 3 November 1943, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
287. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft VI, the Swiss, 28 November 1943, p. 1, 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
288. Ibid., p. 1.
289. Ibid., p. 4.

290. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 29, April 1944, pp. 25-26, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
291. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 30, May 1944, p. 20, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
292. "Consignment Arrives at Stalag Luft 6," CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 29, April 1944, p. 2, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
293. Summary by the Office of the SAAG, 2 February 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
294. Summary by the Office of the SAAG, 14 March 1944, p. 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
295. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 37.
296. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft VI, the Swiss, 10 March 1944, p. 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
297. Ibid., p. 1.
298. Ibid.
299. Ibid.
300. Ibid, p. 4, 6.
301. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Sergeant Gordon Harrison), *In Enemy Hands*, p. 100.
302. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 223.
303. Inspection Summary: Stalag Luft VI, the ICRC, 3 May 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
304. Ibid.
305. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 36, November 1944, p. 29, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
306. Hobbs, *Past Tense*, pp. 141-142.
307. Ibid.
308. Nichol and Rennell, *The Last Escape*, p. 18.

309. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 38.
310. Nichol and Rennell, *The Last Escape*, pp. 18-19.
311. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 37.
312. Ibid.
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315. The War Office (London) to Lieutenant Easdale, memo, January 1944, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
316. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, pp. 72.
317. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 97.
318. Edy, *Goon in the Block*, p. 229, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario.
319. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 139.
320. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 244.
321. George McKiel, interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006.
322. Hobbs, *Past Tense*, p. 126.
323. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken*, p. 95.
324. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 243, 244.
325. Andre Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War* (Geneva: International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations, 1946), p. 9, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 275, File 1: War Services: YMCA Pamphlets.
326. Ibid., p. 11; most notably, Soviet Russia and Italy rejected most of the WPA's efforts.
327. Ibid., pp. 11-12.
328. "Exchange of Correspondence: Norman H. Davis, Harper Sibley," Sibley to Davis, 23 April 1942, p. 1, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 10: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1940-1942.

329. "Exchange of Correspondence: Norman H. Davis, Harper Sibley," Sibley to Davis, 23 April 1942, p. 2, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 10.
330. Ibid.
331. Ibid.
332. "Exchange of Correspondence: Norman H. Davis, Harper Sibley," Davis to Sibley, 6 May 1942, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 10.
333. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 30, May 1944, p. 20, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
334. WPA. *Y.M.C.A. service to Prisoners of War* (New York: WPA Committee, April 1942), p. 2, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 10.
335. Ibid.
336. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 265.
337. Christiansen, *Seven Years among Prisoners of War*, p. 6.
338. Ibid., p. 7.
339. Vulliet, *The YMCA and Prisoners of War*, p. 15, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 275, File 1.
340. Ibid.
341. Ibid., p. 16.
342. Ibid.
343. Ibid.
344. Ibid., p. 30.
345. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 237.
346. Vulliet, *The YMCA and Prisoners of War*, p. 70, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 275, File 1.
347. Ibid., p. 9.
348. Tracy Strong to Richard S. Hosking, 16 October 1944, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 273, File 4: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence re: Sports Badge Awards 1944.



349. Tracy Strong to Richard S. Hosking, 16 October 1944, p. 1, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 273, File 4.

350. Tracy Strong to Richard S. Hosking, 16 October 1944, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 273, File 4.

351. Copies of the letters sent to the family members of the Sports Badge Award recipients are stored at LAC: MG28-I95, Container 273, File 4.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusions

Despite the distinct difference between POW camps and concentration camps of the Second World War, it is not uncommon for some people to confuse the two.<sup>1</sup> Of course the two were very different. Concentration camp inmates, usually individuals characterized as some form of social or political undesirable, endured horrific conditions and inhumane atrocities, often leading to fatal consequences.<sup>2</sup> Prisoners of war, on the other hand, were guaranteed a set of defined rights under the *Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War* (1929) from proscribing nations, and were housed in camps where belligerent authorities essentially did their best to meet the defined standards. Among other important entitlements, Articles 13 and 17 of the Convention assured POWs some form of exercise facilities and the promotion of organized sporting pursuits.

Of all the prisoner of war camps under the Luftwaffe's control, Stalag Luft I, Barth, was the first and longest standing. The camp confined thousands of Allied prisoners from early July 1940 until the beginning of May 1945. The sporting activities pursued at this camp depended on the season, the availability of resources, space, and food, the nationality of prisoners, and levels of German allowance. Despite these variables, sport appears to have been a constant fixture of the camp's routine. The camp's history can be categorized into three periods of existence, each exhibiting unique features and characteristics that influenced the sporting practices of the camp.

During the first phase (July 1940-March/April 1942) of Luft I's existence, relief

agencies did not possess the handsome stockpiles of equipment and resources, or the transportation channels that they did in later years. Subsequently, the material resources to participate in sport were sometimes lacking, especially during its initial year of operation. Still, prisoners were able to use what resources they had and those that they had received to play soccer, rugby, cricket, ice hockey, deck tennis, and table tennis, and prisoners perambulated around the compound's perimeter routinely. Also worthy of note, the camp was largely devoid of American fliers during this time, so their influence on the sporting regimen, if any, was negligible.

In March and April of 1942 all of Luft I's POWs were transferred to Stalag Luft III, and the camp was closed until October for repairs, reorganization, and expansion. In the second phase (October 1942-October 1943), the prisoners, uninhibited by the cramped conditions and lack of space that later typified Luft I, were able to participate in a variety of sports activities. Despite an initial lack of supplies, prisoners acquired or devised the resources to pursue soccer, rugby, softball, basketball, American football, cricket, boxing, and track and field events. The camp perimeter was also used as a means to achieve numerous ends, not least of which was exercise. Moreover, if the camp received any shipments from the YMCA that year, which it likely did, deck tennis rings, ping pong supplies, tennis balls and other supplies would have been on hand for prisoners' use as well. While the camp was occupied by British and Dominion POWs throughout, the short-lived presence of American fliers undoubtedly influenced the sporting schedule.

Stalag Luft I's third and final phase (October/November 1943-April/May 1945) can be characterized as a period of rapid expansion and overcrowding. Initial shortages

of equipment and the loss of adequate space in 1944, and increasingly in 1945, impaired the prisoners' opportunity to engage in sports. It is probable that most of the athletic supplies were taken from the camp to Heydekrug with the NCOs in October 1943, as WPA secretaries did their best to make sure that the existing athletic equipment was forwarded to prisoners' intended destinations.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the officers entering this camp had come from camps in Italy where the YMCA was not allowed to make visits and supplies were not accepted.<sup>4</sup> However, POWs were still able to engage in softball, rugby, soccer, baseball, swimming, ice skating, American football, volleyball, cricket, table tennis, and Inter-Allied sports jamborees. Despite hindrances such as the erection of tents on South-West Compound's (where the British and Canadians were quartered) sports field in August 1944, the increase of the camp's population from approximately 5,200 to over 9,000 between December 1944 and April 1945, and the occasional withdrawal of Red Cross food parcels, prisoners continued to play sports, and modified their games when they had to.

Within months of its inception in March 1942, Stalag Luft III, Sagan quickly surpassed the size and population of Luft I and remained the largest prison camp for Commonwealth and American aircrew of the war.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, as the administrative and postal headquarters of all Stalag Luft camps, Luft III was in a sense the Luftwaffe's flagship prison camp. As such, this facility maintained an impressive sporting and athletic portfolio until its closure in January 1945. On multiple occasions, camp inspectors characterized the camp as having some of the best sports facilities of any prison camps in Germany.<sup>6</sup> However, various factors, similar to those experienced at

Luft I, contributed to periods of heightened and diminished levels of participation. Luft III's existence can be broken down into three separate phases.

During the first phase (March 1942-March 1943), Stalag Luft III maintained a somewhat consistent structure and population. The camp was composed of two compounds, each with its own sports field, and maintained a population that hovered around 2,500 from the summer of 1942 until March 1943. Moreover, the camp was primarily comprised of British and Dominion airmen, while only 80 or so Americans resided there between December and March. Baseball, cricket, soccer and rugby were played, and prisoners constructed an ice rink for skating and ice hockey during the winter. In December, inspectors representing the Protecting Power asserted that sports activities were well organized at the camp.<sup>7</sup> During a February inspection by the IRCC, it was stated that, “[w]here sports are concerned, this camp is the best equipped in Germany, and almost all games are played.”<sup>8</sup>

The second phase (April 1943-March 1944) was characterized by growth, expansion, and segregation. During this period, four new compounds were opened to accommodate the swelling population. These included North Compound (est. April 1943), South Compound (est. September 1943), Belaria Compound (est. January 1944), and West Compound (est. March 1944). North, East, and Belaria Compounds were, for the most part, entirely British, while South, Centre, and West Compounds were primarily American. With the opening of South Compound, all compounds became autonomous and separate, and the travel between compounds was limited primarily to sports teams and commanding officers. Despite the hardships endured in trying to equip a constantly

growing population with sports materials, this was an industrious period on the sports fields. Intercompound contests across several sports drew the interest of thousands, and leagues and pick-up matches were frequent among POWs within the compounds. International track meets and all-star games were also very popular. Sporting activities including softball, rugby, swimming, soccer, cricket, volleyball, deck tennis, golf, gymnastics, calisthenics, fencing, track and field, versions of American football, table tennis, basketball, badminton, boxing, skating, and ice hockey transpired. In addition, the prisoners regularly pounded the perimeter.

The third and final phase of Luft III's existence (March 1944-January 1945) was marked by crowding and isolation. The camp's population more than doubled between April 1944 and 27 January 1945, the day of the camp's final evacuation.<sup>9</sup> The Great Escape of 24 March 1944 had a profound effect on camp life. While intercompound sports matches had been a regular and entertaining fixture of the camp's activities, these events were terminated by order of the German authorities after the Great Escape.<sup>10</sup> While this policy lasted until at least July, intercompound contests were again played in October 1944 and later that winter.<sup>11</sup> Despite this lull, participation in sports within the compounds thrived. In fact, participation levels may have increased with the Germans all the more sensitive to escape activity.<sup>12</sup> Among other highlights, North Compound staged an International Sports Meet during the summer, incorporating some 15 events. In addition, leagues were devised for several sports, and often times multiple leagues were organized for popular sports, such as soccer or softball. One must also consider that starting in October, prisoners were supplied with only half of the regular Red Cross food

parcels to supplement the meagre German ration. Even so, between March 1944 and January 1945 prisoners pursued baseball, cricket, soccer, rugby, gymnastics such as bar work, calisthenics, boxing, basketball, softball, volleyball, American football, touch football, running, track and field, golf, weightlifting, table tennis, swimming, skating, ice hockey, and frequent walking around the compounds' perimeters.

When uninhibited by problems associated with space, food, and supply shortages, Stalag Lufts I and III often exhibited numerous sporting practices along with the participation of hundreds, if not thousands of prisoners. Unfortunately for those prisoners held at Stalag Luft VI, Heydekrug, the camp was essentially plagued by overcrowding and a lack of adequate space from its inception, and the pursuit of sporting practices was compromised. This prison camp's short history (June 1943-July 1944) was characterized by rapid structural and population growth and a lack of space and resources. Despite confining a consistent number of prisoners in the early months of its operation, Luft VI endured rapid influxes of POWs between September 1943 and July 1944; during this time the camp's population swelled from 2,041 to over 10,000.<sup>13</sup> It is also important to note that the camp remained almost entirely British/Dominion until the inaugural arrival of a considerable American contingent in February 1944.<sup>14</sup> Despite never having access to a proper sports field and possessing minimal sports equipment from the beginning, prisoners were able to participate in legitimate, but more often modified versions of cricket, softball, soccer, rugby, and basketball, and they walked the circuit. In addition to regular matches, international contests were played and some leagues were devised by prisoners. It is unclear if prisoners ever developed an ice rink and played ice hockey;

nevertheless, it is clear that the equipment was on hand should they have established a playing surface in the mild winter of 1943/44.<sup>15</sup>

The sporting activities available to prisoners at these three camps were extensive. However, one must address this conclusion with diligence and caution. Arthur Durand briefly addresses this issue in *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story*, as does Jonathan Vance in *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century*,<sup>16</sup> in making such a determination, it must be acknowledged that the playing surfaces and spaces for these activities were often in dreadful condition. For instance, while most of the trees had been removed from Luft III's compounds before they were opened, the sports fields were often riddled with tree stumps and pine needles that remained from the freshly cut dense Silesian forest.<sup>17</sup> Once the POWs had removed these obstacles (which took considerable time and effort), a crude and often barren playing surface typically remained. John Harvie recalls that the field at Luft III's East Compound, one of the most lucrative facilities for sport, was covered almost entirely by pure sand with no grass or even any hard packed dirt to be seen.<sup>18</sup> In dry weather, the fields could become dusty and even hinder play.<sup>19</sup> Cricket matches at Luft VI were played on 'hard-baked earth.'<sup>20</sup> In those camps where space was limited, prisoners often had to modify their games to fit the area. For instance, despite the fact that they lacked large, appropriate-sized fields, POWs in Barth's South, North 2, and North 3 Compounds still played baseball/softball in the smaller spaces available. In addition, prisoners at Luft VI were forced to play most of their sports in the limited areas between barracks, leading one prisoner to report that "the windows of our billets have suffered."<sup>21</sup> Moreover, if POWs ever swam within the



confines of the prison camp, it was done so within the large tank for the fire water, and could only be used for short periods before the water became decrepit and unusable.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps the greatest misconceptions arise from Stalag Luft III's infamous 'golf courses.' Various authors and ex-POWs agree that golf was played at Luft III. From the evidence collected here, it would seem that if nowhere else, the game was played in East Compound.<sup>23</sup> Initially prisoners used an old woman's club with crude self-made balls, shooting for trees and/or posts around the compound to hole-out.<sup>24</sup> Some extra clubs were procured, while others were constructed by the prisoners themselves; moreover, ball-making evolved.<sup>25</sup> The 'course' also improved to include makeshift bunkers, traps, and greens (or 'browns' as they were referred to).<sup>26</sup> Still the course was always set on the dusty, sandy grounds of Luft III, and the 'courses' often ran haphazardly through other sports fields and facilities. Moreover, Williams suggests that non-participants frequently kicked up the dirt from the greens as they walked by.<sup>27</sup> One cannot even begin to compare the quality of these playing surfaces to those that the prisoners used back home. Still, these men endured the environment and did the best they could with what they had.

When evaluating these conditions, one should also consider the limited supplies with which the prisoners were able to pursue their games. While organizations such as the WPA strove to supply prisoners with as much sports equipment and facilities as they could, uncontrollable circumstances periodically compromised their efforts. For instance, in August 1944 Henry Söderberg, a WPA secretary, revealed that the POWs in Luft III's six compounds were forced to rotate and share the camp's recreational supplies because of "a temporary shortage caused by transportation difficulties."<sup>28</sup> To lessen the effects of

such shortages, repair shops were established in many compounds to mend and restore damaged sporting goods. Delmar Spivey recalls that at Luft III's Centre Compound, "[a] workshop repaired equipment until it was disintegrated."<sup>29</sup> A similar facility was developed at Luft I.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, POWs adapted to shortages by constructing their own gear. From golf balls to volleyball nets, prisoners became resourceful and honed their skills at crafting desired materials.<sup>31</sup> As George McKiel recalls, "POW life... was a compromise, you were always innovating. Basically there was some equipment and it was equipment which was hard to come by."<sup>32</sup> And in some instances where POWs neither received nor could construct the appropriate materials, they made do with what they had. In regards to the July 1944 International Sports Meet, one POW wrote, "[t]he track conditions aren't too good and the boys have no spikes, consequently the times aren't too good but the competition is very keen."<sup>33</sup>

One should also consider the intensity of sport played in these camps. While Ken Rees asserts that the calibre of rugby played at Luft III was very high, he concedes that "[t]he biggest problem with sport was the lack of food. Even on our optimal diet, in the more strenuous sports we could only play fifteen-twenty minutes each way at most."<sup>34</sup> While it was the International Red Cross' intention to supply POWs with one food parcel per week, extenuating circumstances did not always allow this to occur. Subsequently, prisoners did not always possess the necessary energy to participate in various sports for extended periods. Indeed, Andrew Cox recalls that he was only able to play a game of 'football' and rugby at Barth once the Red Cross parcels began to arrive at a rate of one per week.<sup>35</sup> However, this is not to say that prisoners were not competitive. In some

cases, such an assumption could not be farther from the truth. Often times, various leagues were developed to accommodate the different skill levels of players. The senior or 'major' leagues could be extremely emulous. In fact, Spivey remembers many fist fights breaking out at Luft III's Centre Compound over some intense softball games.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, some of the soccer and hockey leagues included professional players.<sup>37</sup> The intensity of contests rose even more when matches were played between different nations or compounds. Ken Rees actually dislocated his elbow while playing a hard fought rugby match between Luft III's East and North Compounds in October 1944; he recalls, "I have to say that this was one of the hardest games of rugby I have ever played."<sup>38</sup> Indeed, Don Edy recalls, "[t]hey played Rugger and Soccer as though the Championship of England was at stake."<sup>39</sup> One should keep in mind that prisoners' Red Cross food parcel rations had been halved at Luft III in October 1944. In addition to these sorts of matches, prisoners competed intensely in national and international contests, such as the International Sports Meets of Lufts I and III. While the glory of winning was a reward in and of itself, POWs sometimes found themselves competing for material gain; in the summer of 1944, 62 D-bars (chocolate), 61 packs of American cigarettes, and two cigars were collected on behalf of the baseball champions of Luft III's West Compound.<sup>40</sup>

For their part, Canadians were detained in all three Luft camps during their existence. However, Canadians were almost always grouped with the British contingent along with other Dominion airmen and typically quartered separately from the American population. After December 1943, Luft I's British contingent was transferred to the West Compound, where they likely remained for the duration of their time there. However,

this compound was combined with South Compound in March 1944, and then New Compound in December 1944, each of which housed American troops. In this circumstance, it is likely that prisoners participated in sporting activities with both the British and American groups; prisoners fraternized with their own countrymen and foreign prisoners alike. In fact, McKiel asserts that he played most of his sports with the New Zealanders he was billeted with at Luft III.<sup>41</sup> At the Sagan camp, the segregation of nations was obvious; in its final form, North, East, and Belaria Compounds were almost entirely British/Dominion, and Centre, South, and West Compounds were almost entirely American. Even in the case of intercompound matches, it was rare to have American squads compete against the British/Dominion ones.<sup>42</sup> Segregation and integration at once characterized Luft VI's arrangement. After American airmen began arriving in appreciable numbers in February 1944, one compound was assigned to Americans, one compound was assigned to British/Dominions, and the third was integrated. Thus, there was the opportunity for Canadian prisoners to intermingle with British, Dominion, and American airmen.

Canadians prisoners were *exposed* to all of the sports at the three camps under study, given their cohabitation with British and Dominion fliers, and their disposition towards North American sporting activities. Furthermore, Canadians seemingly participated in all of these activities as well. The only one that they likely did not was the daily calisthenic regimen pursued at Luft III's Centre Compound which had been ordered and enforced by that Compound's SAO, Delmar Spivey, since there were only a handful of British airmen there. Nevertheless, one should recall Gunnar Jansson's opinion that in

early 1941, all Allied prisoners in German camps participated in gymnastic exercises every morning for an hour.<sup>43</sup> It is understood that the majority of Canadian prisoners, and for that matter the rest of the British/Dominion contingent, preferred softball to any other form of baseball; at Luft III's North Compound, only softball was played, not hardball.<sup>44</sup>

Canadians participated in softball, cricket, swimming, golf, volleyball, basketball, boxing, soccer, rugby, versions of American football, various gymnastics, boxing, fencing, track and field events, badminton, deck tennis, table tennis, ice skating, ice hockey, running, and circuit bashing at some or all of the camps. Of these sports, Canadian prisoners doubtlessly played cricket, softball, soccer, rugby, and basketball at all three camps. However, it should be noted that Canadians participated in some activities much more than others. Despite some nations having a natural predisposition towards certain activities, there was a cross-fertilization of sporting practices among POWs. Canadians played cricket, Americans played rugby, South Africans played volleyball, Australians played basketball, Englishmen played softball, and Scotsmen played ice hockey. At Luft III, some Canadians staged a cricket match against an American squad; in the wintertime, an English team played the Scottish at ice hockey.<sup>45</sup> Prisoners were introduced to new sports and had, perhaps for the first time, the opportunity, resources, and proper instruction to play them. In the early years of the War Canadians sports participation evolved within a typically British regimen, especially in the absence of American fliers. Recall John Harris' statement, "[a]s most of the lads were British, much time was devoted to their games - i.e. soccer, rugger, and cricket and so I had ample time to try my hand at all of them - and must admit I enjoyed these

experiences immensely.”<sup>46</sup> Despite their participation in these foreign activities, it would seem the Canadians were not always up to par with their British and Dominion counterparts. Charlie Hobbs reflects, “[m]ost Canucks were high on the list of athletics, but not in soccer.”<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, Canadians proved adept at some features of these games. Perhaps deriving from their softball play, Canadians at Luft III’s North Compound were revered for their fielding and throwing ability. Canadians were valued on the cricket grounds for their speed at retrieving balls and throwing them to the wicket keeper quickly.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the Canadians won the cricket ball throwing and American Football throwing contests at the compound’s International Sports Meet in the summer of 1944.<sup>49</sup> Still not all Canadians were so eager to play these traditionally foreign sports; one POW at Luft VI reported, “[h]ave not taken up cricket, and have hopes things will not last that long.”<sup>50</sup>

In the wintertime and when the weather was cold enough to maintain an ice surface, Canadians skated and played a lot of ice hockey. Matches between East vs. West Canada and Ontario vs. the other provinces were very popular among spectators.<sup>51</sup> When weather allowed, prisoners formed ‘bucket brigades’ and flooded the sports fields or areas between the barracks with water to develop skating surfaces. Sometimes a number of rinks existed in the same compound to accommodate free skating and ice hockey alike.<sup>52</sup> Canadians were also major organizers of and participants in softball. Tim Wolter’s suggestion that baseball represented Canada’s second national pastime in regards to sports at these camps is supported here.<sup>53</sup> Numerous excerpts from letters recorded in the CPOWRA’s News Sheet include prisoners relating their participation in various softball

matches and leagues. It is probable that Canadians began playing softball and organized a league at Luft I before the first major contingent of Americans arrived at the camp.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, Canadians likely provided the major impetus for softball in Luft III's British/Dominion dominated compounds. There is an appreciable amount of evidence to suggest that many British and Dominion airmen developed an active liking towards softball; for some, even greater than their native cricket.<sup>55</sup> At Luft VI, Canadians coached Australian and English squads.<sup>56</sup> Canadian and American servicemen throughout the prison camp system are also credited with introducing South Africans to volleyball and basketball, and Australians to basketball, volleyball, baseball, and softball.<sup>57</sup> Basketball matches between the Canadians and the Czechs and Poles were very popular among spectators at Barth.<sup>58</sup> Clearly, Canadians brought much to the table in terms of their sporting habits and, at the same time, discovered new activities in which they became active participants.

The organization of sporting activities within these three camps is a multifaceted theme. At their lowest level of organization, sports existed on a pick-up/haphazard level.<sup>59</sup> The more popular activities, typically the traditional team sports, were often divided into different leagues, usually separated by skill level (major/senior leagues, minor leagues),<sup>60</sup> accommodation (huts, rooms),<sup>61</sup> or nationality (English league, Scottish league, etc.).<sup>62</sup> Sometimes all-star games or exhibition games between top teams, usually saved for Sundays, ensued.<sup>63</sup> Playoffs often followed league play, and victors were liable to receive various prizes for their accomplishments.<sup>64</sup> Occasionally, International Sports Meets and/or international contests that pitted representatives from two nations against

each other were organized.<sup>65</sup> Even larger, intercompound matches between the compounds' best players were sometimes arranged.<sup>66</sup> Regardless of the level of play, the sports field was often in use from early in the morning until nightfall.<sup>67</sup>

At certain times of the year, multiple sports were played at various levels, all of which shared communal playing areas. Therefore it was necessary to employ certain individuals to organize all of these activities and harmonize the various league schedules. The distribution of sports materials also had to be conducted. Each compound's SAO at Luft I commanded a customary staff which included, among others, a section specifically dedicated to the distribution of athletic equipment.<sup>68</sup> Sporting goods were often stored in 'recreation huts' under the auspices of the senior Allied officer, or in various confined spaces by the Germans.<sup>69</sup> There was likely a 'Recreation Chairman,' or the like, active at each of the three camps who was in charge of promoting sports activity and organizing leagues.<sup>70</sup> One of these was Wing Commander 'Hetty' Hyde at Luft III's North Compound who was deemed the facility's sports officer; among his other duties, Hyde organized the North Compound's International Sports Meet of 17 June 1944 (see Appendix XII, Illustration XXVI).<sup>71</sup> As the head sports officer, Hyde also appointed subordinates to help administer the sports program.<sup>72</sup> For some sports, especially those with multiple leagues such as soccer and softball, it was often necessary to appoint a convenor to set schedules and organize other matches.<sup>73</sup> In addition to the efforts of sports leaders and the various convenors, the senior Allied officers played a large role in the success of the sports programs. In fact, George McKiel recalls that the senior officers at Luft III's North compound, including Canadian Larry Wray, were very committed to



the sports program.<sup>74</sup> In addition, senior officers often participated in league play with other prisoners.<sup>75</sup>

The question remains, who, or what organizations, supplied the resources for sports activities to Canadian POWs? The answer is not a simple one. As discussed in Chapter 4, the WPA was distinguished from the International Red Cross as having the exclusive responsibility to provide for the wants and needs of prisoners of war in the recreational, intellectual, and spiritual domains. Still, many prisoners recollect that the Red Cross was the prime supplier of their sports equipment.<sup>76</sup> Confusion may have arisen from the fact that almost all of the WPA's shipments were transported by the ICRC over land and sea, owing to its superior transportation network.<sup>77</sup> However, it must be acknowledged that some national Red Cross organizations, such as the British Red Cross, did send sports equipment to prisoners.<sup>78</sup>

Neither the registered next-of-kin nor relatives nor friends were permitted to send sports equipment to prisoners via personal parcels.<sup>79</sup> In fact, the next-of-kin was the only individual allowed to send 'personal parcels,' and they could only be mailed once every three months after 1941.<sup>80</sup> Despite these restrictions, prisoners were permitted to receive three types of packages, including food parcels, clothing and medical comforts from the Red Cross, Next-of-Kin Quarterly Parcels, and gift parcels from permit-holding businesses.<sup>81</sup> By March 1941, special permits were issued by the Chief Postal Censor, Department of National War Services, in Ottawa to businesses allowing them to take orders from friends and families of prisoners, and ship packages containing sports equipment to prisoners in captivity.<sup>82</sup> While the registered next-of-kin parcels could only

be sent by that one person and only once every three months, the gift parcels could be sent by virtually anyone and at an unlimited rate.<sup>83</sup> In a supplemental leaflet issued in January 1944, the Postmaster General endorsed the interpretation of sports equipment to include,

items essential to sports, such as baseballs, softballs, pucks, skates, pads, tennis balls, etc. The inclusion of *sportswear* is restricted, however, to gym shorts, running shoes, sweatshirts, bathing suits or trunks, and sport stockings (long). NO OTHER ARTICLES OF CLOTHING WILL BE ALLOWED.<sup>84</sup>

The T. Eaton Company, Limited was one of the companies possessing the special permits to package and ship gift parcels of sports equipment to prisoners.<sup>85</sup> In addition to these sources, other philanthropic organizations such as the Salvation Army, the Knights of Columbus, and national relatives' associations such as the CPOWRA sometimes sent sporting materials to prisoners abroad. However, some of these shipments were admittedly made through the WPA.<sup>86</sup> In addition to receiving materials from extrinsic suppliers, prisoners became increasingly resourceful and often procured their own materials. For instance, the prisoners' development of golf balls is well documented.

Stalag Lufts I and III, and to a lesser extent Stalag Luft VI, exhibited a medley of pursuits that supplemented and nourished POWs' well-being. Among those pursuits, sport was one of the most popular, if not the most popular activity that Canadian prisoners participated in. In sports participation, prisoners could maintain and improve their fitness and physical prowess. Recall that Luft III POWs constantly pounded the circuit to prepare themselves for the forced march out of camp once they learned of their imminent departure.<sup>87</sup> However, one's fitness was not the only motivating factor in such pursuits. Sports relieved the boredom induced from the monotony that characterized the

prisoner's existence in captivity. Sport was a medium where prisoners could escape their detestable realities and revisit feelings of excitement, achievement, and satisfaction. In fact, Roger Bushell participated in rugby matches in the weeks preceding the Great Escape as a way to distract himself from the mass break.<sup>88</sup> In solitary activities such as swimming and circuit bashing, prisoners could escape the cramped confines of their quarters and enjoy the privacy and contemplation such activities afforded them. Recall, oftentimes prisoners did not choose their roommates, and as John Harris politely reflects, "they're not always the sort of people you would pick for your close associates if it was up to you."<sup>89</sup> Moreover, the sports field was a place where prisoners could acceptably release their built up anxiety and frustrations.

Some camp authorities, Allied and to a lesser extent German, harnessed and promoted sport as a means to improve or maintain prisoners' morale.<sup>90</sup> Sport, as Franks concludes, also acted as a means to establish some normalcy among servicemen who were used to playing certain sports or watching them back home.<sup>91</sup> In fact, sport represented a significant component of military culture at this time, and airmen were likely members of various inter-unit and/or inter-base squads before their capture. Sport was important for spectators; exhibition matches, league playoffs, international matches and events, and intercompound contests drew large crowds of spectators and supporters. In fact, Spivey recalls some English airmen perching themselves atop their huts in East Compound to take in some American baseball matches in Centre Compound.<sup>92</sup> For spectators, these matches were a source of entertainment and excitement. Moreover, as Barney and Wenn correctly suggest, sport provided a means for prisoners hailing from

various places around the globe to showcase national traditions.<sup>93</sup> Even still, sport transcended national boundaries; English fliers played ice hockey, Welshmen played softball, Canadians played cricket. The prison camps fostered an environment where sporting traditions were shared across nationalities. In addition, league play allowed prisoners to meet and interact with other airmen from across their compound that they may have never met otherwise. Thus, sport simultaneously distinguished and unified pockets of prisoners. Participation in sporting activities was also employed as a means to divert German attention away from clandestine escape work, or in the case of the wooden horse escape, to conceal it. Multiple escape attempts have been documented where sports equipment was employed as escape tools,<sup>94</sup> and others where sport was used to aid prisoners in the midst of escaping.<sup>95</sup> The reasons to participate in sporting activities in these three prison camps were numerous. Perhaps more than any other activity, the pursuit of sports had a profound and multifaceted effect on prisoners, and allowed them to achieve numerous positive ends.

Sport was a central part of prisoners' lives at Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI. These activities, perhaps more than any other, attracted the participation and interest of POWs. In addition to sport, other leisure and recreational activities served to occupy prisoners. Drawing on his experiences at Stalag 383, Brian Hodgkinson suggests that one of the best means that prisoners had to fill the monotony of life in captivity was the theatre, staging a new show every 21 days.<sup>96</sup> Plays ran long enough for every prisoner in the camp/compound to see it once. Consequently, theatrical performances could only be enjoyed by prisoners roughly twice a month (except for the minority, such as

Hodgkinson, who were involved with the production of the plays). Escape was another major pursuit that some prisoners became involved with. As previously noted, Gill suggests that many prisoners were involved in the escape culture at Luft III, and that “[t]he best way to keep to focus one’s energy and escape the monotony of life was to join the escape efforts.”<sup>97</sup> However, the popularity of this work should be interpreted circumspectly. The majority of Gill’s work surrounds the Great Escape from North Compound at Luft III, and his findings are not necessarily indicative of the five other compounds at the camp. In fact, Crawley reports, “[o]nly a small percentage of prisoners of war ever make persistent attempts to escape; sooner or later the majority accept captivity and try to endure it with as much cheerfulness as possible.”<sup>98</sup>

Aside from food, recreation and leisure pursuits appear to have been the main supplement that allowed prisoners to outlast their prison experience. Of these, sport was the most important. Where other activities were sporadic, involved smaller numbers of prisoners, or yielded fewer benefits, numerous forms of sporting activities were available to most prisoners almost everyday. Recall Spivey’s assertion that “[o]f all the things which helped return us to our country and homes in healthy physical and mental state, I should say that our freedom to indulge in athletic activities was the most important.”<sup>99</sup>

### **Final Thoughts**

Life inside German prison camps was rarely enjoyable. The monotony of life combined with feelings of loneliness, hopelessness, melancholy, and seemingly perpetual confinement was enough to reduce some prisoners to a state of inconsolable despair.

Those who could not find some form of solace were most susceptible to episodes of depression, and in some cases, suicide. Nevertheless, there were activities that served to alleviate despair, divert attention, and provide departures from an otherwise monotonous existence. Some gardened, attended lectures, and/or enjoyed orchestral performances and theatrical productions; others developed tools, read books, gambled and/or maintained a diary... still, many spent their time playing sports. The sports environment was active, constant, and deliberate; the experience was monumental in many regards. In response to Franks' assertion that "sport was not the totality of camp existence or even a major part of it,"<sup>100</sup> it is agreed that sport did not encapsulate the sum of an admittedly diverse camp life. There were numerous issues, such as German discipline, diet, and escape, which contributed to a complicated and multifaceted prison camp experience. However, sport was a substantial and meaningful part of daily life at Stalag Lufts I, III, and VI; in fact, it was more than major, it was crucial. Presumably sport played a similar role at many other camps like these three Luft camps. It is hoped that this study has brought some sustainable clarity to the issue, and has, in some small part, contributed to a greater understanding of the Second World War POW camp experience and Canadian sport history.

### **Future Research**

Throughout the process of investigating this topic, several areas have presented themselves that deserve further research. For instance, an examination of other German camps could reaffirm the role and importance of sport in the prison camp system as a

whole. In addition, some other related questions deserve detailed exploration.

Specifically, were the same opportunities available to prisoners under the German army's and/or navy's control? Was there a significant difference in the sports experience among prisoners at oflags and stalags? Were prisoners in Allied camps exposed to the same sporting experience? While it is understood that the opportunity to pursue sports in Japanese prison camps was very limited, evidence suggests that prisoners participated in some sporting activities early in their captivity.<sup>101</sup> While it is unlikely that prisoners employed sport as a means to distract their captors from escape attempts at the Japanese camps, it is thought that sport still served as a means to escape feelings of loneliness, frustration, and depression and as a means to maintain some form of normality amidst an anomalous existence. However, these notions remain to be supported. The premise of this study could also be applied to other major conflicts such as the First World War or the Korean War. Floris van der Merwe has already conducted substantive research on the South African experience in the Boer War, but there remains a vast amount of research to be done among other populations in other conflicts.<sup>102</sup>

From the outset it was thought that sport was shared among various nationalities at some level. It is clear that sport transcended national boundaries and represented a major component of the dialogue between prisoners from Great Britain, the Dominions, and the United States of America. The impact that this cross-fertilization of sport had after the war remains to be studied. Specifically, did prisoners continue to play foreign sports they had learned in camp when they returned home? What, if any, was the impact on their native country?

It is hoped that this study is employed as a basis for other research initiatives, possibly in an attempt to answer some of the aforementioned questions that remain. There is also a chance that this study may be referred to in future conflicts and the establishment of prison camps by belligerents. Overall, it is the hope of the researcher that these findings would serve to benefit both captors and captives to achieve a more amicable existence in the prison environment; specifically, that the development and pursuit of sports by prisoners be understood as a positive strategy for occupying POWs as well as maintaining their physical and mental health, among other benefits.

Research in this area will not be conducted without its share of limitations in the future. While the archives employed here provided numerous critical documents and artifacts, the interviews with ex-POWs did much to enrich this study and convey the gravity of the POW existence to this 25 year old researcher. The sad reality is that tomorrow there will be fewer ex-POWs on this earth than there are today. These men represent an irreplaceable asset to studies similar to this, and should be sought for their insights before the opportunity has passed.



## Endnotes

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1. Chris Christiansen, *Seven Years among Prisoners of War*, trans. and ed. Ida Egede Winther (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1994), p. 16.
2. There has been extensive research conducted on multiple topics surrounding Second World War concentration camps. Refer to Anne Applebaum, *Gulag: A History* (New York: Doubleday Publishing, 2003); Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson History, 2000); while likely more difficult to obtain, the following represents an equally informative source; Barbara Distel and Ruth Jakusch, eds., *Concentration Camp Dachau, 1933-1945* (Brussels, Belgium: Comité International de Dachau, 1978).
3. WPA. *Y.M.C.A. service to Prisoners of War* (New York: WPA Committee, April 1942), p. 3, LAC: MG28-I95, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada Collection, Container 272, File 10: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1940-1942.
4. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, the Swiss, 13 January 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0; Andre Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War* (Geneva: International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations, 1946), p. 42, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 275, File 1: War Services: YMCA Pamphlets.
5. Brereton Greenhous et al., *The Crucible of War, 1939-1945: The Official History of The Royal Canadian Air Force Volume III* (Canada: Co-published by University of Toronto Press Inc. in cooperation with the Department of National Defence and the Canada Communication Group - Publishing, Supply and Services Canada, 1994), p. 777.
6. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the IRCC, 22 February 1943, p. 5, LAC: RG24-8024, part of the Office of the Special Assistant to the Adjutant General Collection, File 21-1: Stalag Luft 3; Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 22-24 February 1944, p. 7, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
7. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, Gabriel Naville and Dr. K. Schaeffeler of the Protecting Power, 9 December 1942, p. 9, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
8. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the IRCC, 22 February 1943, p. 5, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
9. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17/18 April 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1; Oliver Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time: RAF Bomber Command Prisoners-of-War in Germany 1939-1945* (London: Grub Street, 2003), p. 83.

10. Delmar T. Spivey, *POW Odyssey: Recollections of Center Compound, Stalag Luft III and the Secret German Peace Mission in World War II* (Attleboro, Mass: Colonial Lithograph, Inc., 1984), p. 72; Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17/18 April 1944, p. 4, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1; Inspection Report: Stalag Luft III, the Swiss, 17 July 1944, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-1.
11. Ken Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen: The Remarkable Exploits of a WWII Bomber Pilot and Great Escaper* (London:Grub Street, 2004), p. 187; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72.
12. Tim Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II: The National Pastime Behind Barbed Wire* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2002), p. 25.
13. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft VI, the ICRS, 14 September 1943, p. 1, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4; Stalag Luft VI; Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 38.
14. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 37.
15. "Consignment Arrives at Stalag Luft 6," CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 29, April 1944, p. 2, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario
16. Durand states, "A Red Cross bulletin published monthly for the benefit of next of kin printed pictures of one or two swimming pools, and the public assumed that every camp had one. The bulletin sought to allay the fears most families had and tried to highlight the most positive aspects of life in captivity. And finally, most people did not understand that prisoners often boosted their own morale by pretending their makeshift facilities were in fact the real thing. Thus a small and sometimes dirty fire-pool became a swimming pool, and a twisted patch in the sand became a nine-hole golf course" in Arthur A. Durand, *Stalag Luft III: The Secret Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), p. 247. Moreover, Vance states, "As appealing as this sounded, it should not be imagined that captivity was anything but unpleasant, for such amenities only served to help POWs make the best of a bad situation. The prison camps themselves were usually either mediievally uncomfortable or monotonously similar" in Jonathan F. Vance, *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), p. 142.
17. Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 70; Andrew B. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken: Memoirs of a Prisoner of War* (Port Elgin: The Brucedale Press, 1999), p. 84; Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 129; John R. Harris, *Serving and Surviving: An Airman's Memoirs* (Victoria: First Choice Books, 2004), p. 108.
18. John D. Harvie, *Missing in Action: An RCAF Navigator's Story* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), p. 136.

19. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 26, January 1944, p. 22, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
20. John Nichol and Tony Rennell, *The Last Escape: The Untold Story of Allied Prisoners of War in Germany 1944-45* (Toronto: Penguin Books Canada, Ltd., 2002), p. 18.
21. Inspection Report: Stalag Luft VI, the ICRS, 14 September 1943, p. 5, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4; Report of the Camp Leader: Stalag Luft VI, A.G. Deans, POW and Camp Leader, 13 August 1943, p. 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-4.
22. Don Edy, *Goon in the Block* (unpublished, 1961), p. 231, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 34, September 1944, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; Andrew S. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich" (PhD dissertation, Temple University, 1990), p. 225.
23. While several authors including Vance, Durand, Hasselbring, and McCarthy acknowledge the existence of golf at Luft III, they do not suggest the specific compound(s) where it was pursued. However, Eric Williams and John Harvie discuss seeing the sport being played at East Compound. Moreover, Dancocks' interview with Art Crighton supports the existence of a golf course in East Compound.
24. Tony McCarthy, *War Games: The Story of Sport in World War Two* (London: Queen Anne Press, 1989), p. 157.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 157, 158; Eric Williams, *The Wooden Horse* (Barnsley, England: Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2005), p. 33; Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 150.
26. Hasselbring, "American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich," p. 225.
27. Williams, *The Wooden Horse*, p. 33.
28. *War Prisoners Aid News* (U.S.A.), vol. 1, no. 6, October 1944: p. 1, LAC: MG28-195, Container 273, File 3: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence & Reports 1943-1945.
29. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71.
30. McCarthy, *War Games*, pp. 152-153.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 152, 158.
32. George McKiel (ex-POW at Stalag Luft III), interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006, interview 005, transcript, Leddy Library, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario.

33. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 36, November 1944, p. 27, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
34. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 127.
35. Cox, *Our Spirit Unbroken*, p. 54.
36. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71.
37. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 23, October 1943, p. 22, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; Daniel G. Dancocks, (includes an interview with Flight Lieutenant Barry Davidson), *In Enemy Hands: Canadian Prisoners of War 1939-45* (Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd., 1983), pp. 101-102.
38. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 187.
39. Edy, *Goon in the Block*, p. 230, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario.
40. Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 248.
41. George McKiel, interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006.
42. Spivey recalls the Centre Compound's hockey team playing those in West and South Compounds in the winter of 1944/45 in *POW Odyssey*, p. 72; Rees refers to rugby matches between North and East Compounds in *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 142, 187; references to competitions between British/Dominion and American prisoners are few, however Harold Garland discusses a softball match between Canadian and American prisoners where the Americans received special permission to enter the compound for the contest in Daniel G. Dancocks, *In Enemy Hands*, p. 101; furthermore, John Viotor recalls American and British airmen competing in baseball and rugby in his published recollection *Time Out: American Airmen at Stalag Luft I* (Fallbrook, CA: Aero Publishers, Inc., 1951), pp. 66-67.
43. Gunnar Jansson, "Sport Behind Barbed Wire," War Prisoners' Aid of the World's Committee of Y.M.C.A.s, 15 March 1941, p. 2, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 272, File 11: War Prisoners' Aid: Correspondence and Miscellaneous, 1940-1941.
44. John Harris (ex-POW at Stalag Luft III), interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006, interview 002, transcript, Leddy Library, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario.
45. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 175; Les Keatley, "Sagan Sports Parade," in *Spotlight on Sagan*, Mark Winston, ed., (London, n.d.), p. 27, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

46. Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 108.
47. Charlie Hobbs, *Past Tense: Charlie's Story* (Burnstown, Ont: General Store Publishing House, 1994), p. 129.
48. John Harris, interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006.
49. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 187.
50. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 30, May 1944, p. 20, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
51. Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 105.
52. Edy, *Goon in the Block*, p. 230, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario.
53. Wolter, *POW Baseball in World War II*, p. 106.
54. In an excerpt from a letter dated 22 May 1943, a POW states that he plays in a softball league. Recall that on 7 May, there were 82 Canadians and 4 Americans at Barth, and by 14 July 1943, a larger contingent of Americans had moved in, totalling just over 100. Consider also that the old NCOs compound was not opened until July 1943 to accommodate, "the arrival of American personnel and... further purges from Dulag Luft." Therefore, it is not unreasonable to assume that the softball leagues began before the American contingent arrived, and that in fact, the Canadians established softball at Luft I during this phase. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 23, October 1943, p. 22, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; Inspection Report: Stalag Luft I, Fred O. Auckenthaler of the Swiss, 7 May 1943, p. 2, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0; IRCC in Geneva to Delegate in London, telegram, 30 July 1943, LAC: RG24-8024, File 21-0; Clutton-Brock, *Footprints on the Sands of Time*, p. 48.
55. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 185; Harris, *Serving and Surviving*, p. 108; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 26, January 1944, p. 23, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; Keatley, "Sagan Sports Parade," p. 27, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario; Edy, *Goon in the Block*, p. 229, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario.
56. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 26, January 1944, p. 23, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
57. Floris J.G. van der Merwe, "'For you the war is over!' Sport amongst South African Prisoners-of-war during World War II" (paper presented at the Australian Society for Sport History Seminar, Queensland, New Zealand, February 1-5, 1999); Warwick Franks,

“Cricket in Stalag 344: Sport in Prisoner-of-war Camps during World War II,” *Sporting Traditions* 11 (May 1995): p. 82.

<http://www.aafla.org/SportsLibrary/SportingTraditions/1995/st1102/st1102g.pdf>

58. Charlie Hobbs notes that the Canadian squads included American players if they wore RCAF insignia; Hobbs, *Past Tense*, pp. 132-133.

59. John Harris, interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006.

60. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 34, September 1944, p. 26, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.

61. John Harris, interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006; George McKiel, interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006.

62. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 146.

63. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 34, September 1944, p. 27, 28, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 42, May 1945, pp. 25-26, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; Hasselbring, “American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich,” p. 224; McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 153.

64. McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 153; Durand, *Stalag Luft III*, p. 248.

65. Al Hannah, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d.), p. 123, in the possession of Mr. Al Hannah; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 23, October 1943, p. 25, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 36, November 1944, pp. 27-28, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; Edy, *Goon in the Block*, p. 230, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario; Nichol and Rennell, *The Last Escape*, p. 18.

66. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 142, 187; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 28, March 1944, p. 27, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.

67. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 146.

68. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 104.

69. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 142; George Sweanor, *It's All Pensionable Time: 25 Years in the Royal Canadian Air Force* (Port Hope, Ont: Gesnor Publications, 1981), p. 160.

70. Hasselbring, “American Prisoners of war in the Third Reich,” p. 223.

71. Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 187.

72. Keatley, "Sagan Sports Parade," p. 25, copy held in the Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, UWO, London, Ontario.
73. Spivey credits three men for guiding the 25 team softball league at Luft III's Centre Compound. McCarthy asserts that Albert Collyer was the 'football secretary' at Luft I and organized the 12 team soccer league and various exhibition matches; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71; McCarthy, *War Games*, p. 153.
74. George McKiel, interview by Brad Davison, March 15, 2006.
75. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71.
76. Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 66-67; CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 30, May 1944, p. 21, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario; Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen*, p. 126.
77. Vulliet, *The YMCA and Prisoners of War*, p. 84, LAC: MG28-I95, Container 275, File 1.
78. McCarthy, *War Games*, pp. 151-152.
79. *Regulations Governing the Forwarding of Parcels to Prisoners of War Interned Abroad*, (Canada: The T. Eaton Co. Limited, n.d.), p. 8, copy held at the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.
80. Post Office Department of Canada. *Regulations concerning Communication With Prisoners of War Interned Abroad* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, March 1941), pp. 4-5, copy held at the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.
81. Hon. William P. Mulock, Postmaster General, *Revised Regulations Governing Communication with Prisoners of War in Enemy, Enemy Occupied or Neutral Countries* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, May 1943), p. 6, copy held at the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.
82. Post Office Department of Canada. *Regulations concerning Communication With Prisoners of War Interned Abroad* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, March 1941), p. 7, copy held at the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.
83. Hon. William P. Mulock, Postmaster General, *Revised Regulations Governing Communication with Prisoners of War in Enemy, Enemy Occupied or Neutral Countries* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, May 1943), p. 12, copy held at the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.

84. Hon. William P. Mulock, Postmaster General, *Supplementary Leaflet to Revised Regulations Governing Communication with prisoners of War in Enemy Occupied or Neutral Countries* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, January 1944), p. 4, copy held at the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.
85. *Regulations Governing the Forwarding of Parcels to Prisoners of War Interned Abroad*, (Canada: The T. Eaton Co. Limited, n.d.), p. 12, copy held at the Canadian Red Cross Society Collection, Canadian Red Cross Society National Office, Ottawa.
86. CPOWRA News Sheet, no. 30, May 1944, p. 20, in the possession of Dr. J. Vance, UWO, London, Ontario.
87. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, pp. 181-182.
88. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 150.
89. John Harris, interview by Brad Davison, February 1, 2006.
90. Christiansen asserts that many camp commandants recognized the benefits of sport and made attempts to acquire equipment for the prisoners use. In addition, Spivey asserts that the German commandant at Luft III, likely von Lindeiner, encouraged prisoners' participation in sport and attended matches. Christiansen, *Seven Years among Prisoners of War*, p. 50; Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, pp. 70-71.
91. Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344," pp. 88-89.
92. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 71.
93. Robert K. Barney and Stephen R. Wenn, "The Great Escape: Sport and Recreation at Stalag Luft III - A Case Study," p. 7. Unpublished Essay, Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario. Abstract for this paper can be found in *North American Society for Sport History Conference Proceedings* (Arizona State University: NASSH, 1988), p. 56.
94. Anton Gill asserts that rope from North Compound's boxing ring was used in the Great Escape tunnel, and John Vietor recalls the conversion of ice skates into various weapons and wire-cutters. Gill, *The Great Escape*, p. 174; Vietor, *Time Out*, p. 68.
95. John Harvie recalls two prisoners being quickly excavated from a tunnel they had been tunnelling when a surprise roll-call had been ordered. Prisoners were able to extract the two by organizing an impromptu game of rugby and holding a scrum over the tunnel entrance so the two could rejoin their ranks undetected. Harvie, *Missing in Action*, p. 159.



96. Brian G. Hodgkinson, *Spitfire Down: The Pow Story*, ed. George E. Condon (Manotick, Ont: Penumbra Press, 2000), pp. 148-149, 195.
97. Anton Gill, *The Great Escape: The Full Dramatic Story with Contributions from Survivors and their Families* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2002), p. 57.
98. Aidan Crawley, *Escape from Germany, 1939-45: Methods of escape Used by RAF Airmen during World War II* (London: The Stationery Office, 2001), p. 1.
99. Spivey, *POW Odyssey*, p. 72.
100. Franks, "Cricket in Stalag 344," p. 90.
101. Charles G. Roland, *Long Nights Journey into Day: Prisoners of War in Hong King and Japan, 1941-1945* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2001), p. 101.
102. Floris J.G. van der Merwe, "Rugby in the Prisoner-of-War Camps during the Anglo Boer War, 1899-1902" (paper presented at "Football and Identities: An International Conference encompassing research on all football codes," University of Queensland, Australia, March 21-23, 1997); Floris J.G. van der Merwe, "Sport as a means of Securing Sanity and Health in Prisoner-of-War Camps during the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)" (paper presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> International ISHPES Congress, Lyon, France, July 16-22, 1997); Floris J.G. van der Merwe, "Decisive Factors Influencing the Occurrence of Sport and Games in the Concentration Camps during the Andlo-Boer War, 1899-1902" (paper presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> ISHPES Congress, Cologne, Germany, September 7-11, 2005).

## APPENDIX I

### International Conferences and Conventions Important to the Treatment of Prisoners of War During the Second World War<sup>1</sup>

\* The following is a list of the conventions listed in the Final Acts of each Conference.

\*\* Certain annexes were added later and were not listed in the Final Acts of the Conferences.

#### A. the International Peace Conference. The Hague, 29 July 1899.

Convention (I) for the peaceful adjustment of international differences.

Convention (II) regarding the laws and customs of war on land.

Convention (III) for the adaptation to maritime warfare of the principles of the Geneva Convention of 22 August 1864.

Declarations (IV):

(IV, 1) To prohibit the launching of projectiles and explosives from balloons or by other similar new methods.

(IV, 2) To prohibit the use of projectiles, the only object of which is the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gases.

(IV, 3) To prohibit the use of bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body, such as bullets with a hard envelope, of which the envelope does not entirely cover the core or is pierced with incisions.

#### B. the Second Peace Conference. The Hague, 18 October 1907.

Convention (I) for the pacific settlement of international disputes.

Convention (II) respecting the limitation of the employment of force for the recovery of contract debts.

Convention (III) relative to the opening of hostilities.

Convention (IV) respecting the laws and customs of war on land.

Convention (V) respecting the rights and duties of neutral powers and persons in case of war on land.

Convention (VI) relative to the status of enemy merchant ships at the outbreak of hostilities.

Convention (VII) relative to the conversion of merchant ships into warships.

Convention (VIII) relative to the laying of automatic submarine contact mines.

Convention (IX) respecting bombardment by naval forces in time of war.

Convention (X) for the adaptation to naval war of the principles of the Geneva Convention.

Convention (XI) relative to certain restrictions with regard to the exercise of the right of capture in naval war.

Convention (XII) relative to the creation of an International Prize Court.  
Convention (XIII) concerning the rights and duties of neutral Powers in naval war.  
Declaration (XIV) prohibiting the discharge of projectiles and explosives from balloons.

C. the Diplomatic Conference. Geneva, 27 July 1929.

The Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick  
in Armies in the Field.

The Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.

### **Note**

1. For the full text of each convention, and information regarding attendance, implications, and lists of those who signed, ratified and/or accessioned these conventions, refer to the *International Humanitarian Law - Treaties & Documents* section of the International Committee of the Red Cross website at <http://www.cicr.org/ihl.nsf/INTRO?OpenView>

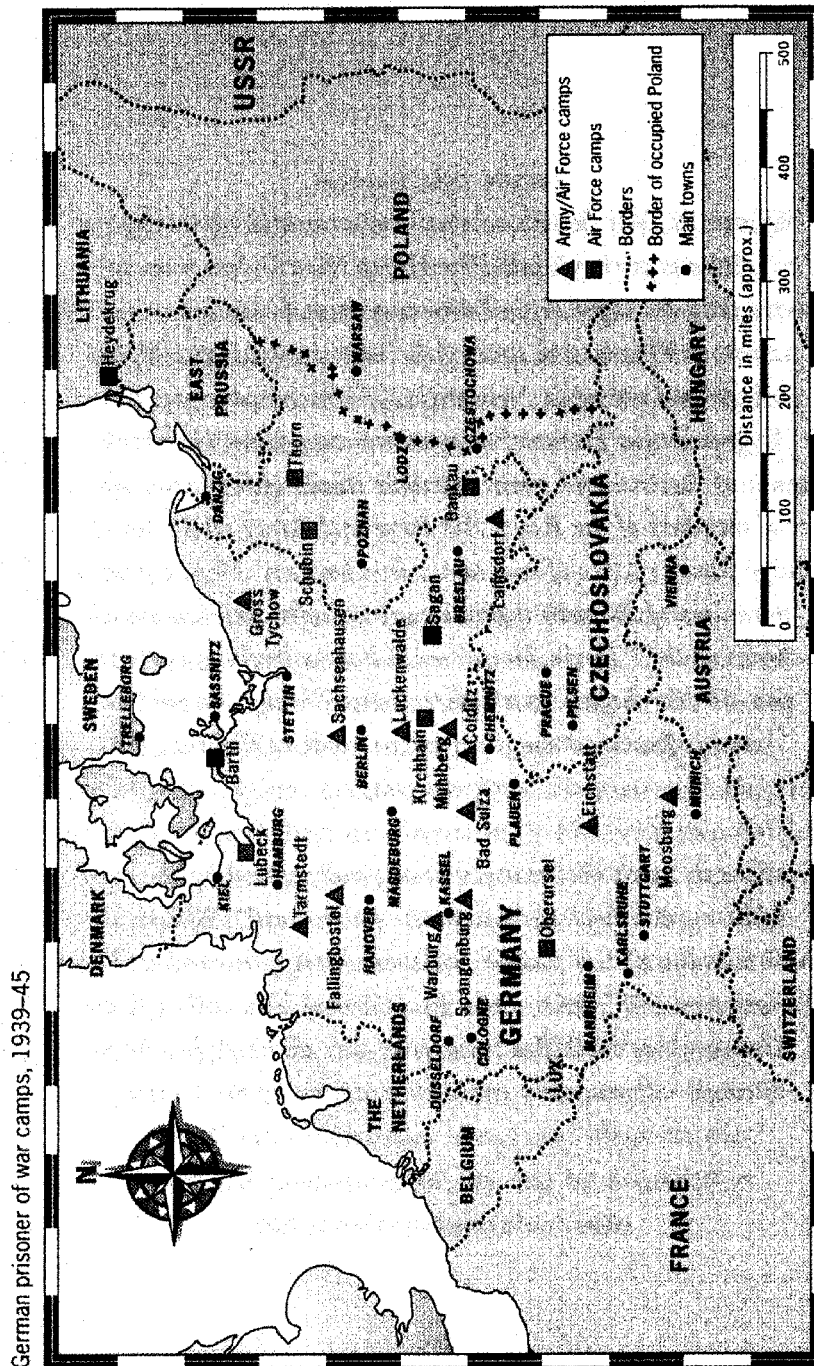
## APPENDIX II

**Comparative Military Ranks of the Second World War**  
**(In descending order of authority)**

<i>Royal Air Force</i>	<i>German Luftwaffe</i>
Marshal of the RAF	Reichsmarschall
	Generalfeldmarschall
Air Chief Marshal	Generaloberst
Air Marshal	General der Flieger
Air Vice-Marshal	Generalleutnant
Air Commodore	Generalmajor
Group Captain	Oberst
Wing Commander	Oberstleutnant
Squadron Leader	Major
Flight Lieutenant	Hauptmann
Flying Officer	Oberleutnant
Pilot Officer	Leutnant
Warrant Officer I & II	Stabsfeldwebel
	Hauptfeldwebel
	Oberfeldwebel
	Feldwebel
	Unterfeldwebel
Sergeant	Unteroffizier

APPENDIX III

Locations of Camps Relevant to this Study<sup>1</sup>



German prisoner of war camps, 1939-45

Note

1. Adapted from Aidan Crawley, *Escape from Germany, 1939-45: Methods of Escape Used by RAF Airmen during World War II* (London: The Stationery Office, 2001), p. viii.

APPENDIX IV<sup>1</sup>Structural/Population/Sporting Chronology of Stalag Luft I, Barth*Structural / Population*

- July 1940**                   • Camp opens, includes two compounds, 1 for officers, 1 for NCOs and ORs.
  
- Winter 1940/41**           • Winter extremely cold.
  
- February 1941**           • 585 British POWs, 9 French Privates.
  
- March 1941**               • 1,725 British POWs, 50% are of the Dominions, no Americans.
  
- Summer 1941**           • Red Cross parcels distributed at a rate of 1 per week for the first time.
  
- Winter 1941/42**          • Winter 'fiercely' cold.
  
- March/April 1942**       • All POWs transferred to Luft III, camp closed for 'repairs.'
  
- October 1942**           • Camp reopens with the arrival of 222 RAF NCOs (13 Canadians) from Luft III.  
                                   • Camp is almost entirely British/Dominion until October/November 1943.
  
- February 1943**           • 3 compounds: old officers' camp, old NCOs' camp, kitchen/sports field/theatre camp.  
                                   • 474 POWs (63 Canadians, 2 Americans) in old officers' camp, Russians (not included in 474 tally) in old NCOs' camp.
  
- May 1943**                 • 568 POWs (82 Canadians, 4 Americans); Russians have been evacuated, old NCOs' camp vacant.
  
- July 1943**                • Old NCOs' camp reopened; total of 931 POWs (125 Canadians, 106 Americans).
  
- August 1943**            • 910 POWs (142 Canadians), Americans have been removed from camp.
  
- October 1943**           • 1,200 POWs, almost all NCOs, in camp; most are reassigned to Luft VI.

- November 1943**
  - by the 23<sup>rd</sup>, all POWs in camp were reassigned to Luft VI; camp now occupied by British and American Officer POWs from Italy.
- December 1943**
  - All British and Dominion POWs transferred to West Compound from South Compound.
  - South Compound occupied by Americans only.
- January 1944**
  - 787 POWs; 508 Americans in South Compound, 279 British (34 Canadians) in West Compound.
  - Free Movement between compounds.
- February 1944**
  - North Compound opened.
- March 1944**
  - 1,969 POWs; 356 British (39 Canadians) and 1,613 Americans.
  - South-West or Main Compound is formed, ie. South and West Compounds are combined.
- Spring 1944**
  - (likely after the Great Escape, Luft III, 24 March 1944) Free movement between compounds is revoked.
- April 1944**
  - Prisoners must stay in barracks when air raid sirens are sounded; during the next year, air raids occurred almost daily during the day and night.
  - Commandant issues order allowing guards to shoot to kill those who cross the warning wire.
  - By the end of the month, 3,463 POWs (597 British) are spread between 3 compounds, ie. South-West, North, and 'New' Compounds.
  - Living conditions have 'completely changed for the worse.'
- 6 June 1944**
  - D-Day Invasions begin at Normandy.
- June 1944**
  - 84 Canadians in camp.
- August 1944**
  - 4,088 POWs (674 British, 3414 Americans).
  - Tents have been erected between barracks in all 3 compounds, and also on the sports field in South-West.
  - An agreement is reached by the mid-month between POWs and German authorities regarding retrieving balls beyond the warning wire without being shot at.
- September 1944**
  - 4,475 POWs.

- October 1944**
  - North 2 Compound opened.
- November 1944**
  - North 3 Compound is opened.
  - 127 Canadians in the entire camp.
- December 1944**
  - South-West Compound is combined with New Compound, and is henceforth referred to as the Main Compound.
  - 5,294 POWs in the entire camp (897 British, all of which are in Main Compound, less 7 who are elsewhere).
- 16-27 Dec. 1944**
  - German final offensive 'The Battle of the Bulge' is staged and fails.
  - Thousands of POWs face extended forced marches, meagre rations, inhospitable accommodations, and subsequent poor health.
- January 1945**
  - Red Cross food parcel distribution ceases; resumes in April.
- February 1945**
  - 8,346 POWs (1,144 British of whom 260 were Canadian).
- April 1945**
  - Over 9,000 POWs.
- 30 April 1945**
  - The commandant, Oberst von Warnstedt, informs the Senior Allied Officers that the Germans are withdrawing from the camp and leaving the Allied officers in charge.
- 
- Sport***
- Summer 1940**
  - POWs play soccer.
- February 1941**
  - Sports ground located outside of camp confines, ie. need German permission and accompaniment to use the field.
  - Sports ground covered by snow and water but sports implements are on hand.
  - Many POWs still wearing fur-lined boots.
- Summer 1941**
  - POWs play 'football,' rugby; sport of choice was cricket.
- Winter 1941/42**
  - Existence of an ice rink; POWs play ice hockey.
  - Deck tennis rings were on-hand.



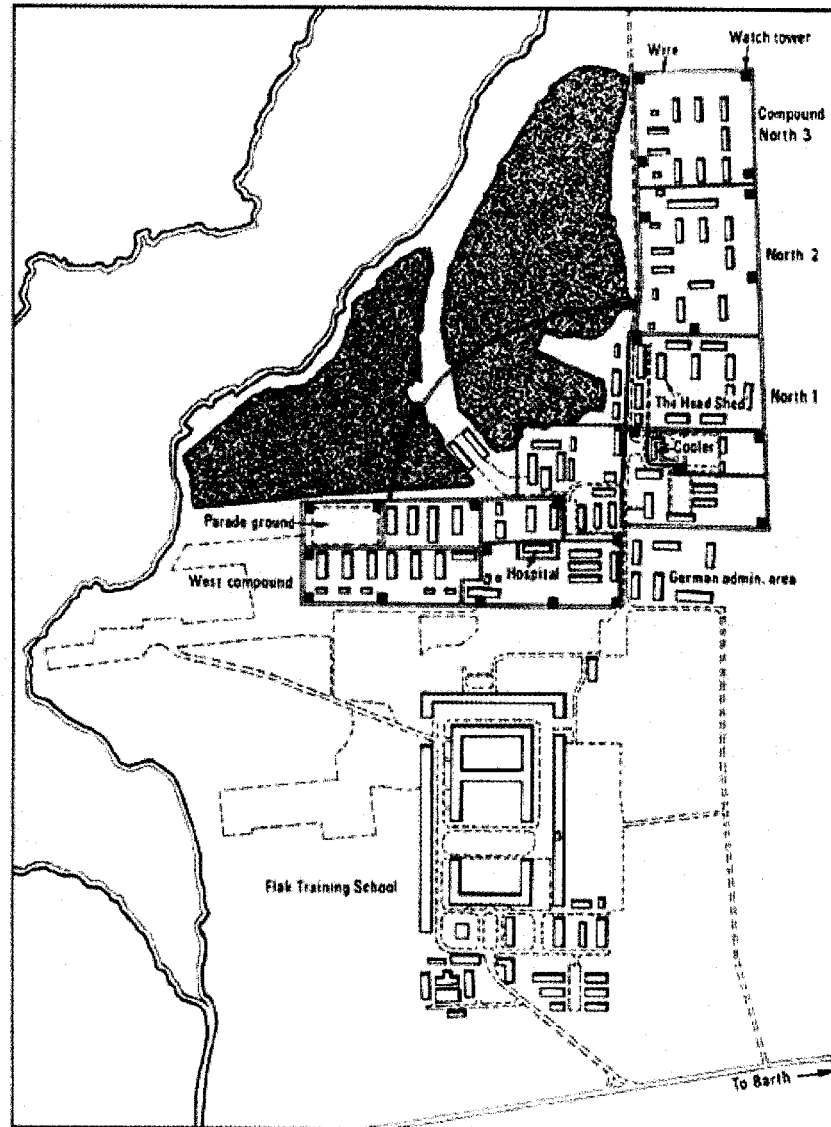
- January 1942**
  - WPA ships sporting goods to camp, including dozens of pairs of ice skates.
- November 1942**
  - POWs are grooming an area for sports.
  - All necessary sports equipment is not yet available.
- February 1942**
  - POWs only have access to sports field with German permission and accompaniment.
- May 1943**
  - Inspector finds second sports field accessible to POWs; one field is always accessible, one only with permission and accompaniment.
  - POWs play soccer and there are softball leagues.
- June 1943**
  - Existence of a soccer league, and softball.
- Summer 1943**
  - Softball, basketball, American football, and boxing are popular among Canadians and Americans.
- 10 July 1943**
  - 'Great International Athletic Meet:' includes various track and field events, cricket and rugby matches, and other contests.
- July 1943**
  - 'Sport is particularly well organized.'
  - Lack of soccer ball bladders is preventing more participation in the sport.
- August 1943**
  - Exercising and recreation deemed 'very good.'
- January 1944**
  - Sports activity limited owing to 'lack of gears.'
- March 1944**
  - 'Everything in connection with sporting activities is well-arranged.'
  - Some difficulties organizing activities owing to a constantly fluctuating population.
- Spring 1944**
  - (likely after the Great Escape, Luft III, 24 March 1944) Free movement between compounds is revoked; however, representative sports teams still play in various compounds.
- April 1944**
  - Sports equipment has been received.
  - The sports fields in all compounds are large enough for 'any kind of outdoor game.'

- Senior Canadian officer reports the existence of 2 softball diamonds and other fields for rugger, soccer, and baseball alternately.
- August 1944**
- POWs in South-West Compound can use sports field in North Compound since theirs' is partially filled with tents.
  - Material conditions for recreation and exercise are not good.
- October 1944**
- 'Football' is popular.
- December 1944**
- Main Compound has the only full sized sports field available. Representative compound sports teams can play there.
  - Otherwise, outdoor activities in camp are extremely compromised.
  - Sports equipment is still widely available, and some games are pursued in the limited spaces.
  - Ice rinks at Main and North 1 Compounds are under construction.
- February 1945**
- A shipment of ice skates arrives at camp from the YMCA.
- April 1945**
- Baseball teams and leagues are formed in North 2 Compound, and likely other compounds as well.

**Note**

1. This Appendix was constructed by the author utilizing a collection of journal articles, scholarly books, ex-POWs' published recollections, inspection reports, and letters.

## APPENDIX V

Stalag Luft I, Barth<sup>1</sup>

Annotated plan of Stalag Luft I as of January 1945.

Note

1. Mary Smith and Barbara Freer, "Blueprint Drawing of Stalag Luft I," map, World War II - Prisoners of War - Stalag Luft I: A collection of stories, photos, art and information on Stalag Luft, <http://www.merkki.com/images/layout.jpg> (accessed April 20, 2006).

## APPENDIX VI

Structural/Population/Sporting Chronology of Stalag Luft III, Sagan*Structural / Population*

- March 1942**
  - 100 officers from Luft I are the first POWs to arrive in camp.
- April/May 1942**
  - RAF officer and NCO POWs arrive from all around Germany.
  - The camp includes two separate compounds: 1 for officers (later East) and 1 for NCOs (later Centre). The football field is larger in the Officers Compound.
  - The camp was still riddled with tree stumps and pine needles in April; POWs go to work removing these from the sports field right away.
- August 1942**
  - 2,499 POWs (Canadian tally unknown, 2 Americans).
- December 1942**
  - 2,263 POWs (Canadian tally unknown, 84 Americans).
- February 1943**
  - 2,310 POWs (191 Canadians, 82 Americans).
- March 1943**
  - 2,369 POWs (199 Canadians, 81 Americans).
- April 1943**
  - North Compound is opened. This compound is complete except for the existence of some pine trees and many stumps on the sports field.
  - Between 850 and 1,000 POWs are transferred to North from East Compound.
  - A number of POWs start removing the stumps from the sports field at North Compound.
- Early July 1943**
  - 2,484 POWs (Canadian tally unknown, 597 Americans).
  - Commandant announces plans to make each compound autonomous when South Compound is opened.
- Late July 1943**
  - 2,163 POWs (281 Canadians spread among the three compounds).
- September 1943**
  - 700-800 Americans move into Centre Compound from North.
  - Later, South Compound was opened and occupied by most of North Compound's remaining American contingent.

- South Compound's sports field was one third the size of the one in North.

**Late September 1943** • 199 Canadian POWs.

**Late October 1943** • 4,314 POWs.  
 • East and North Compounds are totally British; Centre and South Compounds are primarily American; all four compounds are self-contained and completely separate.

**Winter 1943/44** • Temperature was mild.

**January 1944** • Belaria Compound is established some 5 miles west of the main camp with approximately 500 RAF POWs from East and Centre Compounds.  
 • By the end of the month, there were 315 Canadians at Luft III.

**February 1944** • 4,784 POWs; 732 British in East, 889 Americans in Centre (less 2 British), 1,421 British in North, 1,196 Americans in South (less 13 British), 533 British at Belaria, and the remaining numbers are in the vorlagers.

**March 1944** • West Compound opens.  
 • The Great Escape occurred on the evening of the 24<sup>th</sup>.

**April 1944** • 5,229 POWs.  
 • Despite its opening, inspectors found West Compound still uninhabited by the 18<sup>th</sup>.

**6 June 1944** • D-Day Invasions begin at Normandy.

**July 1944** • 3,204 British POWs in North, East, and Belaria Compounds.  
 • Compounds are still in complete isolation of each other.

**August 1944** • By the end of the month, the Canadian population includes 537 POWs.

**October 1944** • POWs are on 'half parcel' rations until their departure in January.

**November 1944** • On the 30<sup>th</sup>, there are 528 Canadians in camp.

**Winter 1944/45** • Extremely cold weather.

- 27 January 1945**
- Almost all of the camp's compliment of 12,000 POWs were evacuated over the course of 5 hours, and directed towards various camps across Germany.

### *Sport*

- May 1942**
- Wing Commander Day, the camp's SBO, requests baseball and softball equipment from the WPA.
- Summer 1942**
- Baseball is played.
- August 1942**
- Both the Officers' Compound and the NCOs' Compound possess good sports facilities, but the NCOs' possess a larger 'football' field than the officers.
- Winter 1942/43**
- The camp's first ice rink is created; there were enough skates for each prisoner to skate for 30 minutes per day, and ice hockey matches were played.
- December 1942**
- The 'sports are well organized.'
- February 1943**
- 'Where sports are concerned, this camp is the best equipped in Germany, and almost all games are played.'
  - NCOs are grooming their sports field.
- Spring 1943**
- Canadians and Americans organize softball leagues in both compounds, eventually culminating in an intercompound all-star game. Rugby and soccer were likely played year round.
- April 1943**
- When British POWs move to the new North Compound, the commandant approves the allocation of a hut for recreational purposes.
- May 1943**
- Baseball (softball) was played.
  - East Compound vs. North Compound rugby match is staged.
  - Swimming, soccer, cricket, volleyball, and deck tennis are pursued.
- Summer 1943**
- Three 'more' golf clubs arrive in camp. Golf was played 8:30 am until dusk (likely in East Compound).

- July 1943**
- Softball league with at least 30 teams; English and other Dominions enjoy it; East vs. West Canada games are very popular.
  - Preparations for the wooden horse escape begin in East Compound.
  - East compound hosts an athletic meet with the following events: 100 yards, 220 yards, 440 yards, 880 yards, 1 mile, cricket ball throw, discus, weight (11 lb. shot put), high jump, and long jump. Canadians finish in first place.
  - In late July, inter-compound sports matches were ceased by German authorities in response to escape attempts.
- August 1943**
- POWs play rugby.
- Summer/Fall 1943**
- ‘With summer almost over, cricket and softball gave way to soccer and rugby.’
- September 1943**
- While the new South Compound can accommodate sports such as basketball, volleyball, and badminton, its field is not large enough for games requiring more space. The space is available, but the field has yet to be levelled. Therefore, prisoners from South Compound can utilize the field in North Compound until the situation is remedied.
- October 1943**
- Softball season comes to a close.
  - ‘Football’ is beginning.
  - Rugger league is established.
- 29/30 October 1943**
- The wooden horse escape is hatched; punishments were imposed once the escape was discovered by the Germans, including the dismantling of the golf course at East Compound.
- Winter 1943/44**
- With such mild weather, POWs find it hard to maintain ice surfaces.
- November 1943**
- POWs try to make an ice rink. Skates and hockey sticks are available.
  - ‘Football’ is still being played.
- December 1943**
- POWs are still trying to establish an ice rink.

- Some skating was done in the middle of the month. Possibly some ice hockey matches were played in North Compound; the skates and equipment were collected by the Germans, who had become avid fans, after the matches and stored.
  - Canadians still play soccer.
- January 1944**
- A lot of time is spent maintaining the ice rinks.
  - Some POWs have yet to ice skate this season.
  - A great deal of time is spent walking the circuit amidst muddy and slushy conditions.
- February 1944**
- In regards to sports: 'still highly developed; this is one of the best camps in that respect with large sports fields and excellent theatres inside the compounds.'
- March 1944**
- With the discovery of the Great Escape, German officials cancelled all inter-compound sports matches; boxing existed at the camp.
  - It is suggested that with less efforts geared towards escape, POWs spent more time pursuing sports activities.
- April 1944**
- Opportunities existed to play baseball, cricket, soccer, rugger and some gymnastics.
  - Baseball season began at Centre Compound on the 15<sup>th</sup>; in one compound baseball season begins with an all-star game.
  - All sports facilities are good, except for East Compound's sports ground which is not as 'extensive' as other compounds.
  - Some POWs box and basketball is popular.
- May 1944**
- In one Compound (likely East or North), there is a major and a minor league for softball of which the major is primarily composed of Canadians.
- June 1944**
- Some POWs play softball, run, and pursue 'some bar work.'
  - On 17 June, North Compound stages an International Sports Meet including the following events: 100 yards (orderlies), 100 yards (open), putting the shot, hop, step and jump, 880 yards open, 4 / 110 yards relay, throwing the cricket ball, throwing the American football, 220 yards open, 440 yards open, long jump, throwing the discus, one mile open, 100 yards over 35, and a medley relay. While the Canadian team had hoped to win, they finished second behind Great Britain. Still the Canadians won the throwing the American football and throwing the cricket ball



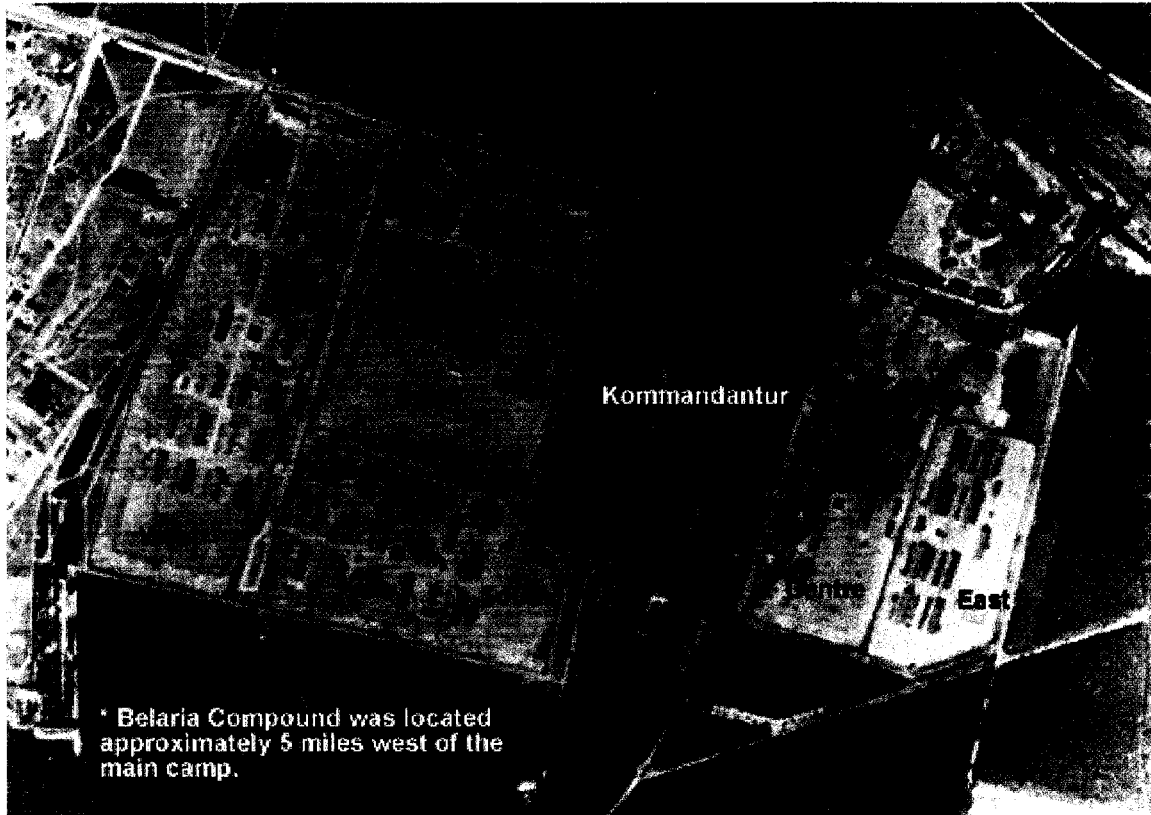
- events.
  - Some POWs are swimming in the fire pool.
- July 1944**
- While soccer is popular, the Canadians typically play basketball and softball.
  - On the first of July Canadians played East vs. West matches in basketball and softball. The West won both.
  - The new commandant, Oberst Braune, continued the policy that banned intercompound games.
- August 1944**
- Conflicting reports: one POW reports that all of the sports equipment was lost; another prisoner reports that activities including golf, softball, basketball, boxing, weightlifting, and swimming are most popular.
- Summer 1944**
- Softball is played in North Compound; Wolter suggests that upwards of 200 baseball teams were active in Luft III's six compounds, including the participation of some 2,000 POWs.
- September 1944**
- POWs still played baseball, 'football,' and cricket.
  - By this time a 'Y' storeroom had been established to supply the six compounds. Temporary shortage of supplies caused by transportation difficulties has forced the rotation of equipment between compounds.
  - The interest in softball and baseball dwindled during this month.
- October 1944**
- Bad weather made outdoor sports impossible to pursue at the beginning of the month.
  - Later, soccer is played.
  - There is an intercompound rugby match between North and East Compound at North Compound; North won.
  - In East Compound, the sports field is fully utilized every day with soccer season at its peak. Moreover, golf had resumed in East Compound by this time.
- November 1944**
- Soccer is still played in East Compound.
- Winter 1944**
- Centre Compound's ice hockey team was permitted to play against teams from West and South.
  - East Compound created an ice rink before Christmas, and skating was very popular.
  - Multiple ice rinks were created in North Compound.

- December 1944**
- Exhibition ice hockey match is played Christmas day between English and Scottish prisoners in East Compound.
  - Despite the very cold weather, some POWs are still playing soccer.
  - There was an East vs. West Canada ice hockey game in one compound.
- January 1945**
- POWs continue to play sports. On the day of the camp's evacuation, some North Compound POWs had been playing ice hockey.

**Note**

1. This Appendix was constructed by the author utilizing a collection of journal articles, scholarly books, ex-POWs' published recollections, inspection reports, and letters.

## APPENDIX VII

Stalag Luft III, Sagan<sup>1</sup>Note

1. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), plate, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison; this photograph was modified from the one found in Mr. Davidson's log.

APPENDIX VIII<sup>1</sup>Structural/Population/Sporting Chronology of Stalag Luft VI, Heydekrug*Structural / Population*

- June 1943**
  - Luft VI opened at Heydekrug in an old military camp with the arrival of NCOs from Luft III.
  
- August 1943**
  - 2,008 POWs, all British (217 Canadians).
  - The camp is composed of four huts for accommodations, one for the kitchen.
  
- September 1943**
  - 2,041 POWs (221 Canadians); later in the month the Canadian population grew to 234.
  
- Late October 1943**
  - Some 1,200 British and Dominion NCOs arrive from Luft I. The camp's population hovers around 3,000.
  
- Late November 1943**
  - 2,916 POWs (353 Canadians).
  - Two more barracks, with capacity to hold 450 POWs each, have been constructed.
  
- Late January 1944**
  - 254 Canadian POWs.
  
- February 1944**
  - 313 Canadian POWs.
  - Americans start arriving in appreciable numbers.
  
- March 1944**
  - 4,858 POWs; 413 Canadian POWs, 1,280 American POWs.
  - A new compound has been opened for the Americans. The camp has been split into four equal sized zones: 1 British, 1 American, 1 integrated, and 1 dedicated to a sports field, though the ground had yet to be levelled.
  - Camp includes 10 stone barracks and 12 wooden huts.
  
- May 1944**
  - 6,089 POWs (474 Canadians).
  - Camp includes 90 stone hutments and 14 wooden structures.
  
- 13 July 1944**
  - Some 10,000 POWs.
  - The order to evacuate the camp was given to prisoners on this day. The Americans withdrew that evening and the British were evacuated over the course of the following days.

*Sport*

- June 1943**
  - Plans to groom a sports field are under way.
- August 1943**
  - There is no sports field and little space to play sports; ‘no possibility for entertainments or real outside sports.’
  - POWs manage to play cricket, including a Test Match between POWs representing England and Australia.
  - Softball was popular and Canadians helped coach British and Australian squads.
- September 1943**
  - Still no sports ground; minimal space for outdoor recreation and sport.
- October 1943**
  - ‘Football’ and rugby are played.
- November 1943**
  - Some shooting incidents where POWs were shot at when they crossed the warning wire to retrieve balls.
  - There is hope among POWs that a number of ice rinks will be constructed; several hundred clamp on skates and a few dozen hockey sticks are already on hand.
  - In late November, there exists a part of a useable sports field, but it could not be finished until the spring.
- January 1943**
  - CPOWRA shipment of 25 pairs of skates, 50 sticks, 6 pucks, and 10 rolls of tape arrive at camp.
- March 1943**
  - The only practical space for outdoor sports exists between the barracks; however, tents will be erected in this area soon.
  - ‘The situation with regard to recreation space, both indoor and outdoor, is extremely bad.’
- June 1944**
  - Canadian POWs play, among other activities, softball and basketball.
- 13 July 1944**
  - When the order to evacuate was issued, English and Australian squads were playing cricket in A Compound.

Note

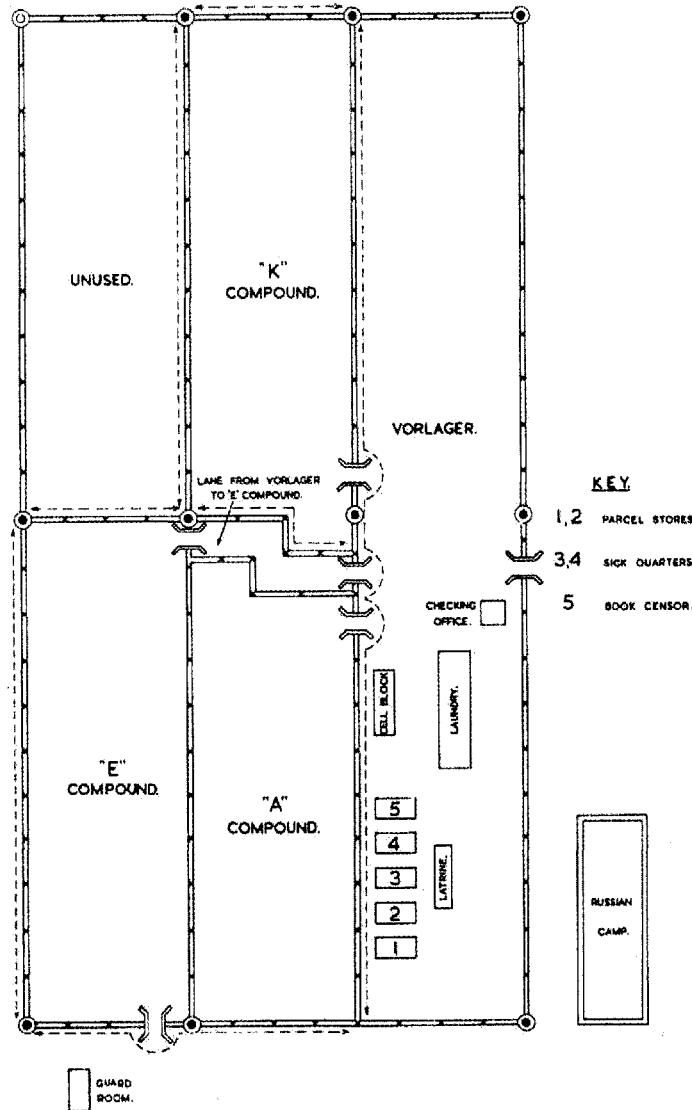
1. This Appendix was constructed by the author utilizing a collection of journal articles, scholarly books, ex-POWs’ published recollections, inspection reports, and letters.

## APPENDIX IX

Stalag Luft VI, Heydekrug<sup>1</sup>

## LEGEND

- ⊙ Sentry Tower With Machine Gun And Searchlight.
- × Boundary Light ( At Intervals Of 40 Yards ).
- ⊙ Unused Sentry Tower. ) ( Double Gate With Sentry.
- - - Sentry's Beat. = Double Barbed Wire Fence.

Note

1. Aidan M. Crawley, *Escape from Germany: The Methods of Escape Used by RAF Airmen during the Second World War* (London: The Stationery Office, 1985), p. 276A, map.

## APPENDIX X

**Sports related supplies sent to Stalag Luft III from the WPA,  
March 1942 to 31 October 1944<sup>1</sup>**


softballs - 1049	ground hockey sticks - 24
softball bats - 267	ground hockey balls - 5
baseballs - 32	prs. Boxing gloves - 320
baseball bats - 36	horseshoe games - 13
catcher masks - 58	shorts - 132
chest protectors - 4	shirts - 72
gloves - 39	prs. Track shoes - 48
mitts - 6	prs. Gym shoes - 1200
baseball mitts, gloves, masks, protectors - 48	shot puts - 2
baseball shirts - 56	whistle - 1
baseball pants - 56	exercisers - 62
baseball caps - 56	skipping ropes - 60
American footballs - 52	badminton rackets - 36
soccer balls - 44	badminton nets - 10
basketballs - 25	badminton shuttlecocks - 204
punchballs - 9	ping pong complete - 36
volleyballs - 52	ping pong nets and posts - 84
volleyball nets - 54	ping pong bats - 86
various balls - 260	ping pong balls - 1668
bladders - 260	sets basketball goals - 4
repair kits - 46	various ice hockey equipment
valves - 34	
pumps - 16	
tennis balls - 344	
deck tennis rings - 49	
deck tennis nets - 9	
discuses - 3	

**Note**

1. Andre Vulliet, *The Y.M.C.A. and Prisoners of War* (Geneva: International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations, 1946), adapted from Appendix No. 1: "LISTS OF SUPPLIES SENT, THROUGH OCTOBER 31, 1944, TO TWO U.S. CAMPS IN GERMANY BY THE GENEVA AND STOCKHOLM OFFICES", p. 91, 93, 94. Copy held at LAC: MG28-I95-275, File 1: "War Services: YMCA Pamphlets."

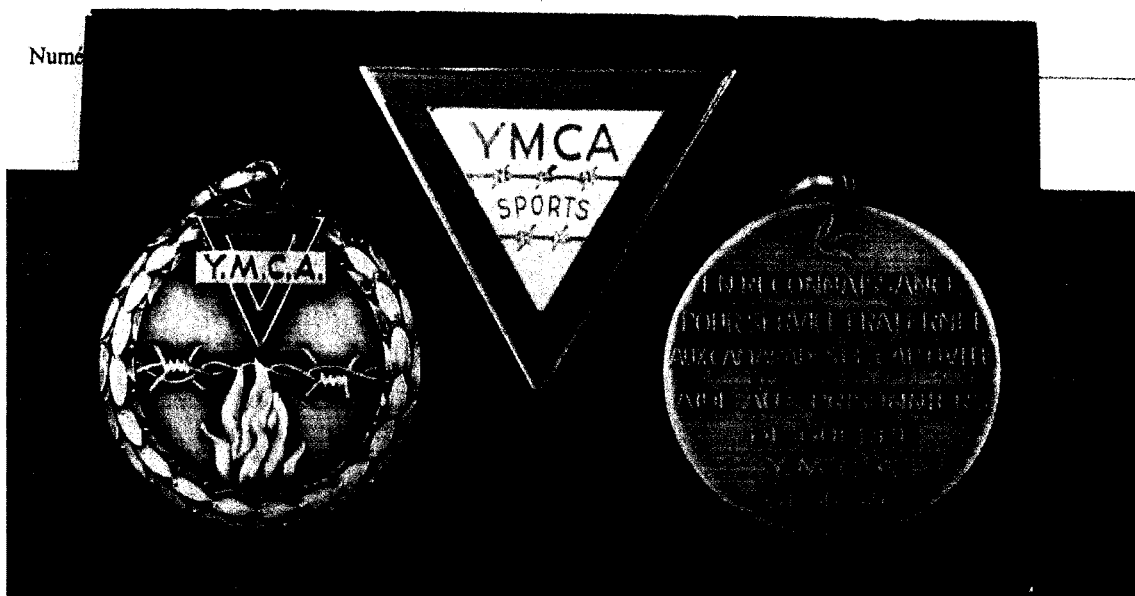
## APPENDIX XI

The YMCA Sports Badge Award<sup>1</sup>

 Library and Archives Canada  
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Reference number: MG I95 273 , FILE 2

**Note**

1. Library and Archives Canada: MG28-I95, National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations of Canada Collection, Container 273, File 2: War Prisoners' Aid, Correspondence, 1946-1950, plate.



## APPENDIX XII

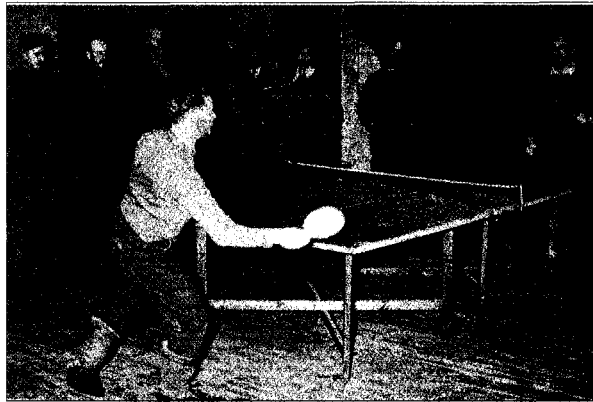
Assorted Photographs and Depictions of Sporting Activities

Illustration I: The first Canadian Second World War POW, A.B. Thompson, shown here playing ping pong at Oflag 9A/H.<sup>1</sup>



Illustration II: POWs use the fire pool as a swimming pool at Luft III's East Camp in 1942. Observe the planks used as a diving board on the right.<sup>2</sup>

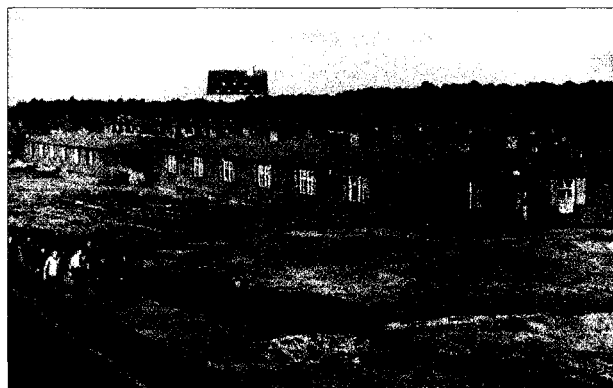


Illustration III: Prisoners pound the circuit at Luft III.<sup>3</sup>



Illustration IV: A muddy rugby contest at Luft III.<sup>4</sup>



Illustration V: Two prisoners compete in a boxing match in front of other prisoners at Stalag Luft I.<sup>5</sup>



Illustration VI: A prisoner takes a swing at Luft III's East Compound.<sup>6</sup>

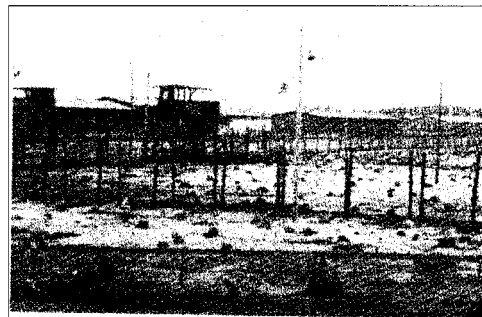


Illustration VII: Luft III's West Compound under construction. Observe the trees stumps.<sup>7</sup>

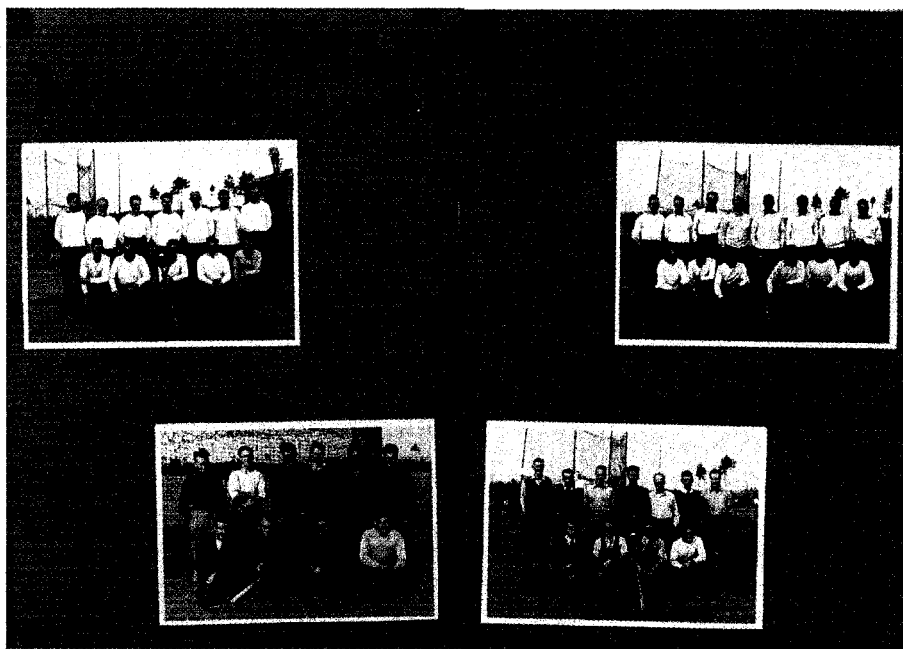


Illustration VIII: Pages from Davidson's Log reveal the establishment of baseball teams and leagues at Stalag Luft III.<sup>8</sup>



Illustration IX: (Left) Drawing from Davidson's Log illustrating the development of an ice surface via buckets of water, and how fragile the surfaces could be, especially with the mild temperatures in the winter of 1943/44.<sup>9</sup>

Illustration X: (Right) Drawing from Davidson's Log advertising an exhibition hockey match. Notice how the uniforms resemble those employed in the photograph on the next page. Actual uniforms were reserved for the major exhibition matches.<sup>10</sup>



Illustration XI: "Last game with N.C.Os. Barth Feb. '42."<sup>11</sup>

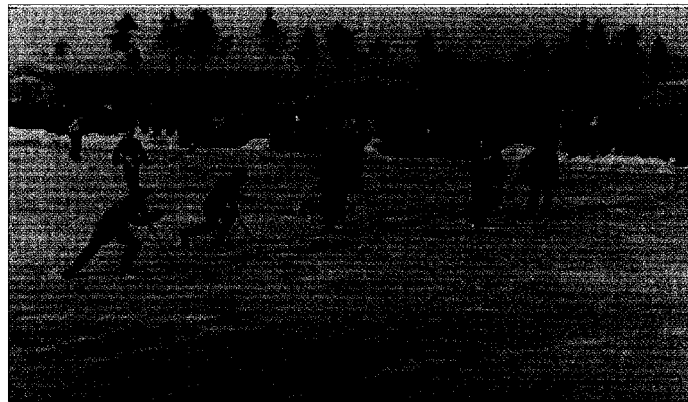


Illustration XII: Prisoners partake in an exhibition match.<sup>12</sup>



Illustration XIII: Prisoners pose for a team picture.<sup>13</sup>



Illustration XIV



Illustration XV



Illustration XVI

Illustrations XIV, XV, XVI: Prisoners participating in various track and field events during International Athletic Meets.<sup>14</sup>



Illustration XVII: Officers keep track of the standings during a sports day at Stalag Luft III.<sup>15</sup>

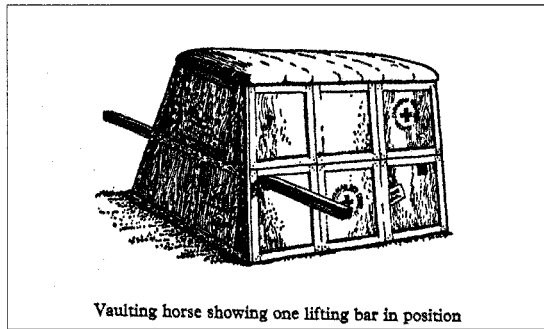


Illustration XVIII

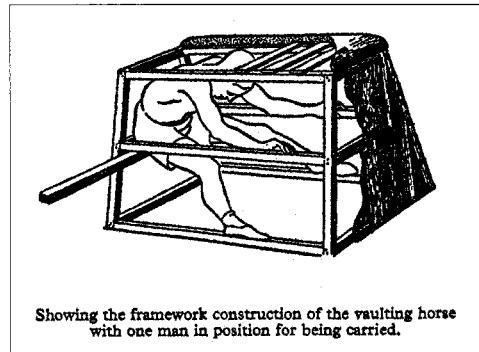


Illustration XIX

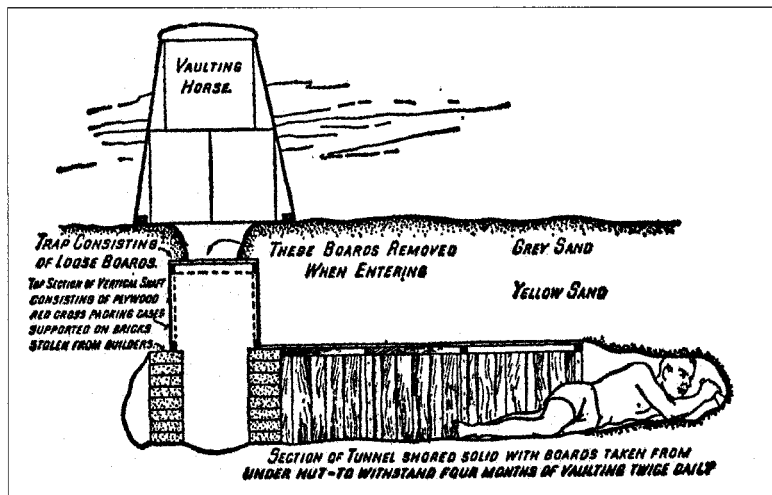


Illustration XX

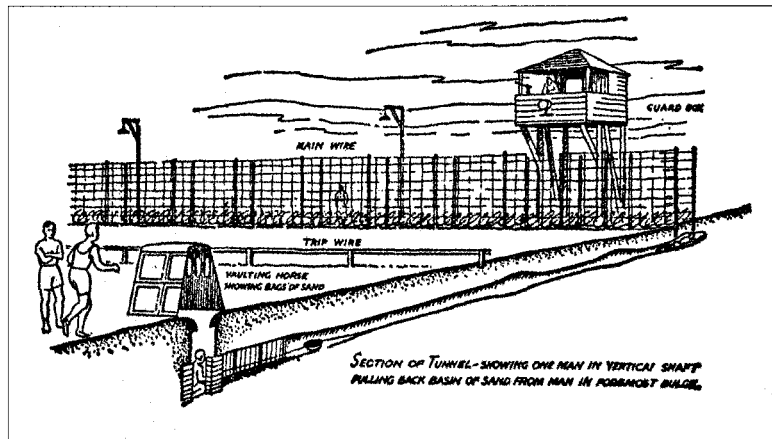


Illustration XXI

Illustrations XVIII, XIX, XX, XXI: These drawings illustrate the vaulting horse that was constructed at Stalag Luft III's East Compound and employed for the purposes of escape. Illustrations XX and XXI show how the Wooden Horse tunnel was oriented and constructed.<sup>16</sup>

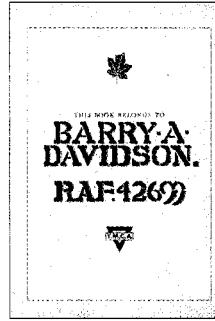


Illustration XXII



Illustration XXIII

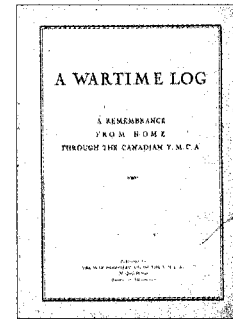


Illustration XXIV

Illustrations XXII, XXIII, XXIV: Barry Davidson was highly involved in sports at Stalag Luft III and received a Sports Badge Award from the YMCA for his efforts. Illustrations XXII and XXIV are pages from his wartime log.<sup>17</sup>

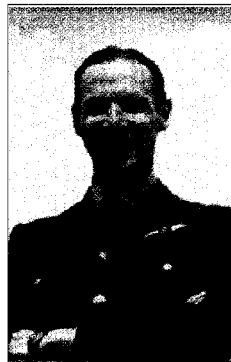
Illustration XXV: Wing Commander H.M.A. 'Wings' Day.<sup>18</sup>

Illustration XXVI: A Group of Officers at Schubin. Wing Commander 'Hetty' Hyde is second from the left; Wing Commander Day is third from the left.<sup>19</sup>



Illustration XXVI: Friedrich von Lindeiner-Wildau.<sup>20</sup>



Illustration XXVII: Roger Bushell.<sup>21</sup>



Illustration XXVIII: Henry Söderberg.<sup>22</sup>



Illustration XXIX: Henry Soderberg in discussion with an Allied prisoner.<sup>23</sup>



## Notes

1. Jonathan F. Vance, *Objects of Concern: Canadian Prisoners of War Through the Twentieth Century* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1994), p. 104, plate.
2. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), p. 4, plate, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
3. Anton Gill, *The Great Escape: The Full Dramatic Story with Contributions from Survivors and their Families* (London: Headline Book Publishing, 2002), between pp. 78-79, plate.
4. Ken Rees, *Lie in the Dark and Listen: The Remarkable Exploits of a WWII Bomber Pilot and Great Escaper* (London: Grub Street, 2004), between pp. 127-128, plate.
5. Ronald H. Bailey, *Prisoners of War*, ed. Charles Osborne and Sheldon Cotler (Chicago: Time Life Books Inc., 1981), p. 65, plate.
6. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), p. 4, plate, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
7. Jerry Sage, *Sage* (Wayne, Pennsylvania: Miles Standish Press, Inc., 1985), between pp 230-231, plate.
8. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), page number unknown, plate, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
9. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), p. 76, drawing, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
10. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), p. 58, drawing, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
11. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), p. 28, plate, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
12. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), page number unknown, plate, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
13. Plate, Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.
14. Plates, Sport in POW Camps Collection, International Centre for Olympic Studies, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

15. Mark Hickman, "Stalag Luft III," plate, Prisoner of War, [http://www.pegasus-one.org/pow/SL3/PicSL\\_3\\_Sports1.htm](http://www.pegasus-one.org/pow/SL3/PicSL_3_Sports1.htm) (accessed April 20, 2006).
16. Eric Williams, *The Wooden Horse* (Barnsley, England: Pen and Sword Books Ltd., 2005), p. 52, 58, 60, 84, diagrams.
17. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), page numbers unknown, plates, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
18. Barry A. Davidson, *A Wartime Log* (unpublished diary, n.d), p. 30, plate, digital version in the possession of Brad Davison.
19. Sydney Smith, *'Wings' Day* (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1970), between pp. 144-145, plate.
20. The Air Force Humanities Institute, "Colonel Friedrich Wilhelm von Lindeiner," plate, The Story of Stalag Luft III, <http://www.afhi.org/museum/stalag/germans.html> (accessed April 20, 2006).
21. Gill, *The Great Escape*, between pp. 78-79, plate.
22. The Air Force Humanities Institute, "Photo of Henry Soderberg," plate, The Story of Stalag Luft III, <http://www.afhi.org/museum/stalag/ymca.html> (accessed April 20, 2006).
23. The Air Force Humanities Institute, "Henry Söderberg interviewing an Allied POW," plate, The Story of Stalag Luft III, <http://www.afhi.org/museum/stalag/ymca.html> (accessed April 20, 2006).

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Brad Davison was born in 1981 in Oromocto, New Brunswick. He graduated from St. Peter Catholic High School, Orleans, Ontario in 2000. From there he went on to Wilfrid Laurier University where he obtained an Honour's BA in Kinesiology and Physical Education with a General Major in History. He is currently a candidate for the Master's Degree in Human Kinetics at the University of Windsor and will graduate in the Spring 2006. Brad received funding for this Master's study from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in the form of a \$17,500 Master's Scholarship. He presented some of his findings in a presentation entitled, "Forechecking in Captivity: Sport in the Lives of Canadian POWs at Stalag Luft III during the Second World War," at the North American Society for Sport History's 34<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference at Glenwood Springs, Colorado in May 2006.