

Generally speaking, the camp at Münster and the treatment of the prisoners was much better than at Göttingen, but I cannot say why this was so.

With regard to employment at Münster, we were employed in draining the land. After I had been at Münster some time, an attempt was made to force the prisoners to work in the coal mines at Herne. The English soldiers, including myself, refused, and most of the Frenchmen, but the Russian prisoners, who received no parcels of food, were compelled to work in the mines in order to get more food. When we were asked to work in the coal mines we were told what sort of work they required us to do, and we accordingly refused, but I heard afterwards that some of the English and Russian soldiers who had left the camp just before us were not told what work they were going to do until they were actually taken to the coal mines, and I heard that they were beaten with rifles and compelled to work in the mines. The only reason we escaped the same treatment was that we found out before we were taken away from the camp where they were going to take us, and we refused to go.

When we refused to work in the coal mines we were placed in the guard-room for a week and were not allowed to have any of the food that was sent to us from England.

After we refused to work in the coal mines at Münster I was sent with about 30 English prisoners to Witteringen, which was not far away from Münster. We worked there making a canal. Whilst there we lived in a children's asylum. Beds were provided for us, but they were filthy and lousy with vermin. There was only a small yard where we could walk about. The food supplied there was just the same as in camp, and our parcels were sent on to us from Münster. I escaped from Witteringen on March 22nd, 1916.*

Dated the fourth day of May 1916.

VINCENT HOWARD, Private,
Scots Guards.

Vincent Howard appears to me to be a very intelligent man and a reliable witness.

A. P. PERSHOUSE, Examiner,
c/o Hill, Dickinson & Co.,
10, Water Street,
Liverpool.

* For account of escape see Private Beattie, No. 395, and Private Badams, No. 399.

Witteringen.

Name, Rank, No., and Regiment.

Home Address.

Place and Date of Capture.

Nature of Wound, if any.

Thomas, J. W., Lance-Corporal. No. 2642.
8th Durham Light Infantry.

17, Thomas Street, Sacriston, Durham.

St. Julien, 25th April 1915.

Not wounded. My company was in the firing line, and an order was given to retire, but about 30 of us who were on the extreme left never received it. I was helping to bandage the wounded when the Germans came on and took the lot of us prisoners. This was about 9 p.m. At this time I saw a German deliberately shoot at Private Cooper, who had already been taken prisoner and unarmed. The bullet was fortunately turned by a cigarette case in his breast pocket, and so saved his life. An orderly of Captain Johnson, D.L.I., told me that his officer was lying wounded on the ground, and a German soldier went up and bayoneted him. This orderly was a prisoner with me. About this time some of our wounded were in a barn behind our lines, being attended to by Dr. Stenhouse, R.A.M.C., the Germans came up and ordered everyone outside. As they were coming out he and his orderly were fired on with revolvers, and both wounded, but not killed. Dr. Stenhouse, I believe, is now in England, an exchanged prisoner, but the orderly is still in confinement in Germany. His name is Lance-Corporal Fish, R.A.M.C.

We were searched and all valuables taken from us, our shoulder straps cut off, and knives taken. We were marched to a small village behind their trenches; where we arrived about 10 p.m. on the way my great coat was taken away from me. We were searched again here by an officer, and a lot of the men had their

No. 398.

Roulers, April 26-28, 1915.

Journey, April 28-30, 1915.

Münster, Rennbahn, April
30—July 2, 1915.

small books and pay-books taken away. I kept mine, and we then moved on, wounded and all, about 30 of us, all British, to a village about 3 kilometres further on, called, I think, Bas. Here we were put in a church, where we found some more British. Given mattresses to lie on, and spent the night. We had a slice of bread and some coffee. Next morning we were given some more bread and coffee. The wounded were placed in a train, and the rest of us marched off under escort of Uhlans to Roulers, about 8 miles. We passed through small villages on the way and were hissed and hooted at by the inhabitants and soldiers, and photographed several times by German officers. We were unkempt and dirty, and most of us had lost our caps. The guards treated us all right. We got to Roulers at 1 p.m. on the 26th and stayed there till 28th. We were lodged in the attic of a large building, we lay on straw, very crowded. We had two meals a day, consisting of bread and coffee only, insufficient. We were allowed out into the yard three times a day, for five minutes for sanitary purposes, this was the only exercise we got. We were all British. The guards left us alone. On 28th we were marched to the station and hissed at again, and entrained 6.30 p.m. in cattle trucks (closed). We stopped at Courtrai, where we were joined by more prisoners, at 8.30 a.m. 29th. We were given a piece of bread and coffee, and got nothing more till 7 p.m., when we got the same again. We were terribly crowded, very little ventilation, very hot, and given no opportunities for offices of nature. At one place where the train stopped to water the engine, we were terribly hungry and thirsty, and I succeeded in getting a Belgian to try and give me some bread; the guard saw it, took the bread from him and butted him with his rifle. About 6.30 p.m. 29th we got to Cologne, here we were taken out of the train and given a bowl of hot soup—entrained again—and at midnight we were taken out and counted and put back again. We stayed there in the train till 5 a.m. 30th, and found ourselves at Münster. We were taken out and marched off—a party of about 450, British, French and Algerians—to Rennbahn camp, a distance of about 5 miles. This was a very large camp, consisting of four blocks of wooden huts, roads between. It was an old racecourse. I was in a small block about 160 yards square. We were now given more bread and coffee, and good hot shower bath. I should think there were about 20,000 in this camp, and perhaps 1,100 British, who were housed separate from other nationalities. I do not know the name of the Commandant, our room was about 32 yards by 19 yards, and contained 180, a lot of whom were wounded. We had straw mattresses on the ground, two blankets each—there were two stoves, but not needed. We could get shower baths, hot and cold water, and there were places for washing clothes. No soap, except first day one small piece.

The sanitary arrangements were not bad, but too near the sleeping quarters. A trough with seats, pumped out occasionally. There was a hospital for the sick. I was never in it. It was not big enough for size of camp. The wounded could get dressed there, but had to come back to their quarters.

Food.—Early morning coffee and bread one loaf between 10 men. War bread consisting mostly of potatoes, crust like leather, inside like putty. At 12 soup very thin, mostly water, and soup again 7 p.m. with an extra such as meat, sausage, cheese, or raw salt herring. We had to subsist on this till we got our parcels from home and then we practically lived on them. The German food was quite insufficient and we got terribly weak on it. There was a canteen, where sugar, chocolate, cigarettes and soap, but no food could be bought, but we had no money. The parcels arrived quickly and in good condition.

We had plenty of facilities for exercise for those who were not too weak, football and base ball, &c. No cricket. Indoors we could play cards, sing songs and eat. We could smoke practically anywhere. We had a special hut where religious services were held and conducted by an English prisoner. Once when I was at Münster a Church of England clergyman came from Berlin and conducted a service.

At Münster we were not supplied with any clothing except forage caps. We did not require it and never asked for it. There was no epidemic. We were inoculated at least five times against cholera and typhoid and also vaccinated; no ill effects. We were allowed to write one postcard a week and two letters a month. The letters and parcels were received regularly—the latter were opened in our presence—only letters and newspapers taken out. The general treatment was humane, I saw no cruelty. There was no difference made between the nationalities except that the Russians were treated worst. The regulations of the camp were posted up in all languages. Punishments consisted of solitary confinement. I did not see the American Ambassador while I was at Münster, but he came to Ruhlrot just before I left, and we had an opportunity of speaking to him and telling him everything not in the presence of the German officials, but he did not give us any encouragement about the long hours and nature of the work.

Dortmund, July 2—15,
1915.

After the first week parties of different strength were drafted off to different places for work. We were always told before starting that it was to be agricultural work, but, as a rule, it was coke yards and coal mines. On 2nd July, I with a party of 200 started off by rail for work. We were told it was to be agricultural, but in three hours we found ourselves at Dortmund. Here we marched through the streets and were hooted at on the way to a large building divided up into sections. We had hammocks, and were comfortable—not overcrowded—good ventilation and sanitary arrangements quite satisfactory. Plenty of soup—bread as usual—in fact food about the same as Münster only more of it. The work consisted of hauling trucks, &c., in the coke yards. We were at it from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with half hour for breakfast, one hour for dinner, and quarter hour at 4 p.m. for coffee. Pay varied from 4*d.* to 8*d.* a day. We were in charge of a foreman who kept us going by pointing a loaded revolver at us—and of sentries with loaded rifles. We were divided up into squads under our own N.C.O.'s who had to work too.

Münster, July 15—17, 1915.

We had to work every other Sunday 24 hours, 6 a.m. to 6 a.m. Monday morning. After we had been a week at Dortmund we came to the conclusion we were working for the Germans and helping to prolong the war by working the coke. And so about 50 of us decided to strike and we refused to work any more and were sent back to Münster on about 15th July. We were put in a separate hut and were tried along with Corporal J. Wilson, D.L.I., by court-martial; the trial lasted till the 17th; they came to the conclusion that Corporal Wilson was the ringleader. On 17th we were all sent to Vogelsang along with Frenchmen, which was a working camp; here we were quartered in a barn, and were pretty comfortable; accommodation, sanitary and washing arrangements all right. Work varied; it was more or less agricultural, all in the open; 8 hours a day, 7—11, 2—6; pay, 30 pf. a day; treatment by the guards, &c., quite all right. Corporal Wilson was there about a week, when he was sent for and returned to Münster, where he had to undergo solitary confinement in a military prison until 19th February 1916, when he was tried again and given 14 days strict arrest. On this day we were also sent to Münster for trial along with Wilson and got 14 days too, and were sent straight back to Vogelsang, and were set to work as usual. Here we stayed till Shrove Tuesday, 7th March, when we were told we were for another working camp. We were entrained that morning about 10, went through Münster, and about 4 p.m. we found ourselves at Ruhlrot on the Rhine left bank. This we discovered was a mining party. We were about 200 only, 12 British and the rest French. This was a large camp; there were 700 Russians already there.

Vogelsang, July 17, 1915—
February 19, 1916.

Münster, February 19, 1916.
Vogelsang, February 19—
March 7, 1916.

Ruhlrot, March 7—April 16,
1916.

Accommodation very good. New brick buildings, proper iron bedsteads, straw mattresses, new blankets. Washing and sanitary arrangements very good. Food very bad and scarce. I noticed a great difference now in the food supplied. We asked what kind of work we were to do here, and when we found we were to work down in the coal mines we all (the 200) flatly refused to do so. The next morning, 8th March, at 4 a.m., we were turned out into the barrack square, and forced to stand to attention from then till 10 p.m., without

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speaking or moving, or food or water the whole time. It was raining most of the time, and it was very cold, and our overcoats had been taken from us. At 10 we were put in an empty barrack room, given half a bowl of soup and half slice bread, and made to lie on the bare floor as we were, in our wet clothes, and the windows opened. At 4 a.m. 9th, we were roused and turned out into the square again, and exactly the same treatment meted out, except that those of us British who had Cardigan waistcoats and gloves had them taken away. This went on every day for five days till night of 12th. We were then in a terribly weak state, and were told that if we did not go down the mines other means would be found to make us; if we did we would be given a paper stating that we were forced to do so, so we at last decided to go down the mines, but they never gave us the paper. We had to work eight hours a day, and got 50 pf. a day pay. We slept in the barrack room. We had to spend 35 pf. at the canteen a day in soap to clean ourselves. Some of our fellows were in a camp not far off, and had refused the same as us; and I heard in a letter from one of them that they treated them in exactly the same way, except that instead of being put in a cold room at night they nearly roasted them in a hot room over the coke ovens. They had to give way in the end the same way.

Escape, April 16, 1916.

We went on at this work till the 16th April, when I managed to effect my escape in the following manner in company with four Frenchmen. We cut a hole through the wall of the barrack room—which we had watched by the other prisoners—watched our opportunity and got through this, which was then closed up by the other prisoners; this was 10 p.m. We worked our way through the barbed wire outside, without being discovered, and steered a course N.W. by a compass which I had been able to smuggle in from Münster, through a friend of mine employed in the post office there. He concealed it in a loaf of bread which had been consigned to me from Switzerland. I also had a small map. We had a good supply of food, biscuits and chocolate, which we had been saving up for some time. We travelled all that night, concealed ourselves next morning, 17th, in a wood, spent the day there. That night marched due west, spent day of 18th in a wood. Marched again that night, and during that night succeeded in reaching the frontier, which we crossed without difficulty. In fact we didn't know we were crossing it till we got to the river Meuse; when we got there we knew we were in Holland, and made our way to a village where we were most hospitably received, and assisted by the authorities and conducted to Rotterdam, where we reported to the British Consul and our troubles were over. I attribute our success to the fact that we never spoke to a soul the whole time, and whenever we saw anyone we hid and kept out of sight.

B. L. ANSTRUTHER,
9.5.16.

I consider this witness most reliable, and not inclined to exaggerate at all.

No. 399.

Name, Rank, No., and Regiment.

Home Address.

Place and Date of Capture.

Nature of Wound, if any.

Badams, James, Private, No. 8321. Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 1st Battalion.
191, Rolfe Street, Smethwick, Birmingham (formerly lived in Canada, where he worked as a farmer).
Ypres, 21st October 1914.

On the 21st October, at about 4 p.m., I was captured at Ypres in company with one officer and 20 men of my own battalion, and one officer of the Royal Warwicks Regiment.

We were conducted through the German lines, and while on our way five of our number were killed; one of them, who was immediately in front of me, was lit upon the head with a rifle butt; another was shot in the leg, and I attempted to go to his assistance, but was compelled to march on. The remaining three were shot, but inasmuch as they marched behind me I did not actually witness what was being done. These outrages were committed without any apparent reason, and I am unable to ascribe them to anything other than the brutality of the enemy soldiers and their

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