

Capt. Wallace - PWGO  
lead----POWS

File

FOR STARS AND STRIPES

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1--The House Military Affairs Committee has sent investigators into 25 prisoner of war camps and Italian Service Unit installations in the United States but found no evidence of prisoner coddling, the committee reported to Congress yesterday.

"The provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1929 are obviously being carried out to the letter and it is well indeed that such is the case, since the slightest deviation therefore on our part would instantly result in more than retaliatory measures on the part of our enemies against American prisoners of war in their hands," the report read.

"Such a contingency must not be overlooked for a single instance," it added.

The investigators found the prisoners comfortably housed and fed in accordance with the Geneva Convention, but it found no evidence to substantiate the numerous rumors of soft and favorable treatment that caused the committee to undertake its inquiry.

On the contrary, the investigators found that the prisoners were hard at work and that if they didn't work, they were placed on a bread and water diet in accordance with the War Department's "no work, no eat" policy.

At Stockton Ordnance Depot, Stockton, Calif., the committee found that 500 prisoners once had gone on strike as a result of dissatisfaction among 183 German non-commissioned officers who resented a longer work day being put into effect.

Commanding Officer immediately placed them under arrest and put them  
and-water diet for seven days," the House committee report stated.  
removed all food from the kitchen. The 183 non-commissioned officers  
in transferred elsewhere. The prisoners promptly requested another  
to work and they have not caused any trouble since. ~~Committee investi-~~  
The committee found that in numerous localities where labor shortages  
ted important crops would have been lost had not prisoner of war labor  
on thrown into the emergency. ~~Inspection of a hospital or a prison camp.~~

At Stockton, Calif., the committee reported that prisoners pick an  
average of 700 tons of tomatoes daily during season and that without their  
labor thousands of tons of tomatoes would have been lost. ~~in order to~~  
~~state~~ "It has been stated authoritatively that had it not been for the work  
of German prisoners, one-third of the pea crop, one-third of the bean crop and  
one-fourth of the tomato crop in the State of Delaware would have gone to  
waste," the committee report states.

The committee quoted War Department figures to show that 74,000 prisoners  
working on private contract had "earned" approximately \$4,000,000 for the  
treasury of the United States during October 1944, bring <sup>vs</sup> the total amount  
earned for the treasury to date to \$16,000,000.

The report explains that this is possible because the War Department  
requires a private contractor to pay the same amount per unit of prisoner-of-  
war labor that he would pay for civilian labor.

"The prisoners, however, do not receive this money," the report states.

"It is deposited in the Treasury and the prisoners are paid only their regular  
working wage of 80 cents a day." Prisoners who do not work are allowed 10 cents  
a day, ~~it was explained.~~ <sup>what</sup> This is no more than necessary to furnish razor,  
soap, and other toilet articles, *it was explained.*

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In submitting their "no-coddling" report, the committee emphasized that it is the first result of a "survey of the situation from every angle, especially first-hand observation, on the part of its accredited and trained agents."

At this point it seems appropriate to point out that committee investigators do not base their conclusions entirely upon what is told them by officers at an army post, nor do they accept as conclusive evidence all they observe while making a physical inspection of a hospital or a prison camp," the report stated. "Various residents in the vicinity of the post--such as business men, merchants, mechanics, civic officials, judges, clergymen, farmers, even tavern keepers and housewives--are interviewed in order to obtain a cross section of local opinion."

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