

The Oflag 64 “Parcel Hut”

Under the Geneva Convention of 1929 parcels sent by The International Red Cross, other humanitarian organizations, and friends/ relatives could be received by POWs. Parcels from the Red Cross contained enough rations to sustain a POW for about one week. Many of the Kriegies (POWs) of Oflag 64 credit the addition of those rations to the meager food provided by the Germans as a major contribution to their survival. Within the internal organization of Oflag 64 was a division called the “Parcel Hut” whose responsibility was to receive, inventory and distribute the parcels to each of the Kriegies. Of course the Germans insisted on inspecting each parcel for contraband prior to distribution. As a part of the inspection each can of food was pierced with a nail to ensure the contents were consumed and not hoarded as a preparation for an escape.

The “Parcel Hut” division was headed by Kriegy Tony Lumpkin with help from Kriegies Amon Carter, Jr., Henry Haynes and others. In addition to their accounting for normal parcels, his division was tasked to identify and hide from German inspectors parcels from the secret War Department organization, MIS-X. These “Security Parcels” contained Escape and Evasion supplies such as maps, compasses, currency, etc. to be smuggled into the camp. Oflag 64’s Security Officer would receive secret messages in advance indicating these parcels were on the way and how to recognize them. This could be done via a specific return address on the package, by being addressed to a particular Kriegy or other coding. The Parcel Hut men were very adept at diverting the German inspectors from those parcels and getting them inside the camp. In Tony Lumpkin’s diary he has an entry on April 29, 1944 which says, “Six security parcels came in today, which created quite a hassle in getting them all by the Germans. We were successful and all of them turned over to the security committee.” Although they had some close calls, never did the Germans intercept a single Security Parcel.

A subject for a future post will be the relationship developed with one of the Parcel Hut guards.

www.friendsofotlag64.org for more information

www.szubinpowcamps.org www.otlag64.us



Parcel Hut-1944 l-r: L. Ihrle, T. Lumpkin,
H. Haynes, A. Carter