

British POWs return home [two pages]

Worthing Gazette, May 30th 1945

Wednesday, May 30, 1945.

REPATRIATES RETURN

Vast Camp For Their Reception And Re-equipment

The vast camp for our returning prisoners of war situated in pleasant and picturesque surroundings on the slopes of the Downs at Sompting is a model of speed and efficiency in everything requiring advice, attention and service from the moment of their arrival to the time of their departure.

Everything that experts can devise for their welfare, convenience and immediate happiness is at hand and every repatriate is welcomed, treated, looked after and sent home within the short space of 36 hours after de-bussing at the camp.

There were over 900 new arrivals, chiefly from Pilsen, when the camp was thrown open for a Press visit on Friday.

On the whole this particular contingent had been fairly well treated as prisoners of war and all were in fairly good health considering all they had gone through, though the effects of malnutrition were noticeable in their thin cheeks and spare frames.

HOME IN TWO HOPS.

Most of them had been captured in Sicily and had first of all been in prisoner of war camps in Italy and sent over the Brenner Pass into Czecho-Slovakia and Austria when that country capitulated.

They had been flown home via Rheims in two hops to an airfield in Sussex and brought on by lorries at all hours of the day and night to Sompting.

Medical inspection came first, and at Sompting Camp the S.M.O. is in command of ten Service doctors who carry out the necessary duties as quickly and kindly as possible.

Gastric trouble is the chief complaint among the repatriated prisoners, but this lot, on the whole, were reported to be surprisingly fit.

They are immediately put on special diet and double rations, eggs, milk and fruit.

Very few of them have really any need of disinfection as the vermin have been mostly exterminated on the other side.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE.

Summed up, the keynote of the camp is service with a smile, quick, expert and efficient.

No one is ever held up and nothing is spared to make the stay of the repatriated prisoners of war bright and brief before they are sent back for rehabilitation.

No matter what their rank all receive the same treatment and details have been worked out to a pin-point.

The main idea is to make them as comfortable as possible in the shortest possible time while the essential work is being completed.

There is no red-tape, only the necessary routine which is necessary to the administration of an efficient system.

Substantial meals, medical supervision and a complete overhaul and refit are the only anxieties of the authorities, and everything is rightfully obviated that might stop the repatriated prisoners of war getting food and rest in order to expedite their going home with a minimum of delay.

There are three camps in all, situated on the rolling Downlands at Sompting, with a capacity of 5,000 each, constituting the biggest P.O.W. Repatriation Centre in England.

Wartime West Sussex 1939 – 1945 POWS AND REFUGEES

Worthing Herald, June 1st 1945



FREE ISSUE of half a pound of chocolate and forty cigarettes is made to each man who passes through Sompting reception camp for repatriated prisoners of war. The Red Cross looks after the distribution.

© Worthing Herald



REPATRIATED PRISONER keeps an anxious eye on the W.V.S. volunteers who are sewing the badges on the new uniform with which he has just been issued at Sompting reception camp. He need not have worried; these women have had a lot of experience. Since the camp opened on May 11, between 8,000 and 9,000 men have passed through.

© Worthing Herald