

Ms.

A Perley, Martin, 1910-2003.

P451a Added Papers, 1942-1946.

2

German Jewish Prisoners of War.

The Filson Historical Society



"IN THE HEART OF NEW YORK"
Hotel Chesterfield

JUST OFF BROADWAY
130 WEST 49TH STREET

New York

1390 Beacon St
Brookline, Mass
10-6-44

Dear Captain Perley:

I learned that you met Jewish German prisoners of war in your camp. I came over 6 years ago and I am proud to be an American citizen.

I found an old prayer book of the German army (from the last World war,) I suppose you have use of it - to pray with those

14X200

soldier.

I wish you good
Lu Koth

Sincerely yours,

Alfred Kahn.

The Filson Historical Society

Grant Road Chapel
October 10, 1944

Mr. Alfred Kahn
1390 Beacon Street
Brookline, Mass.

Dear Mr. Kahn,

Thank you for your letter of October 6th in which you enclosed an old prayerbook of the German Army.

It so happened that the prisoners in question have been moved to another camp and for the present I have no use for the prayerbook. I did, however, find it interesting, and am keeping it in case there might be some future occasion when I may be able to use it.

It was thoughtful of you to send it in to me.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

009x41

Twenty German Jews Among Nazi Prisoners at Custer

Were Taken from Concentration Camps for Nazi Labor
Battalions and Placed in Army When Germans
Suffered Manpower Shortage in Normandy

The suspicion that the Nazis, in spite of their sadistic anti-Semitism, are using Jews in the armed forces whenever they find need for them was verified at Fort Custer when Chaplain Martin M. Perley was called upon to minister to 20 men among the German prisoners who asked for Jewish prayerbooks.

Jewish members of the Wehrmacht, who were among the Nazis prisoners caught in Normandy, asked for Mezuzahs, Bibles and prayerbooks.

Swoop Up Material

Chaplain Perley said that the men "swooped up the religious materials enthusiastically."

While it sounded incredible to him that there should be Jews among the Nazi soldiers, Rabbi Perley said that he found the Jewish group in a separate compound.

Most of the men were half-Jews and only one among them is a full Jew, Rabbi Perley reports.

Drafted for Nazi Labor

"Some had apparently spent months in German concentration camps but when the manpower shortage in Germany became acute they were drafted into Nazi labor battalions," Chaplain Perley stated. "D-Day found them in Normandy working on fortifications."

"Ministering to German pris-

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The Filson Society

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JEW FROM NAZI ARMY RUSH FOR RELIGIOUS BOOKS

Chi. Tribune
**Captives in U.S. Camp
Ask for Scriptures.**

Fort Custer, Mich., Sept. 25 (AP).—A Jewish army chaplain told how Jewish members of Hitler's army—newly arrived at the Fort Custer prisoner of war camp from Normandy—exercised their newly found freedom by requesting Jewish prayer books and Jewish scriptures even before putting aside their German army uniforms for captive garb.

"The men scooped up the religious materials enthusiastically," said Chaplain Martin M. Perley, "even the non-Jews among them taking copies of the scriptures and prayer books."

"Flabbergasted," Says Chaplain.

Perley said he was flabbergasted when the prison camp director asked him to visit a group of Jewish captives who had just arrived from the battle fields of Normandy.

"Jews in the Nazi army?" he exclaimed. "It sounded incredible. I found the men in a separate compound. There were about 20 in the group and they were still clad in the uniform of the German army. Some of them could speak a little English and I could understand a little German."

"Most of them, I found, were half-Jews, and only one of them was a full Jew."

Drafted Into Labor Corps.

"Some apparently had spent months in German concentration camps, but when the man power shortage in Germany became acute they were drafted into Nazi labor battalions. D-day found them in Normandy working on fortifications."

Camp officials said that when the beachhead was established and the

allies started their advance along the Normandy peninsula, these men were given uniforms, arms, and ammunition and absorbed into the German army. Some had been in the army only eight days before they were captured.

Perley said ministering to German prisoners of war was "the last thing I ever expected to be called upon to do as a Jewish chaplain in the United States army."

ABSORBED BY ARMY

Detroit Free Press
Jews Arrive with German Prisoners
Sept. 24/25

FORT CUSTER — (AP)—Chaplain Martin M. Perley said he was flabbergasted when called upon to minister to a group of German prisoners of war.

"It was the last thing I ever expected to do as a Jewish chaplain in the United States Army," he declared. "Jews in the mighty Nazi army sounded incredible."

* * * *

CHAPLAIN Perley recounts finding the men in a separate compound. "There were about 20 in the group," he said, "Most of them were half-Jews. Some apparently had spent months in concentration camps. When the manpower shortage in Germany became acute they were drafted into Nazi labor battalions."

According to Custer officials when the Allies started advancing on the Norman beachhead, these men were absorbed into the German army. Some had been in only eight days before their capture.

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oners of war was the last thing I ever expected to be called upon to do as a Jewish chaplain in the U. S. army," he added, describing how the men reacted to their newly-found freedom, even though they are considered prisoners of war.

Camp officials stated that when the beachhead was established and the Allies started their advance along the Normandy peninsula, the Jews from the labor battalions were given uniforms, arms and ammunition and were absorbed into the German army. Some had been in the army only eight days when they were captured.

The Detroit News

Jews Among Nazi Captives Give Custer Chaplain a Jolt

FORT CUSTER, Mich., Sept. 23.—A Jewish chaplain told today how Jewish members of Hitler's Wehrmacht—newly arrived at the Fort Custer prisoner of war camp from the beach of Normandy—exercised their newly-found freedom by requesting Jewish prayer books, Jewish scriptures and Mezuzahs even before putting aside their German army uniforms for captive garb.

"The men swooped up the religious materials enthusiastically," Chaplain Martin M. Perley declared, "even the non-Jews among them taking copies of the scriptures and prayer books."

Chaplain Perley said he was "flabbergasted" when he received a call from the director of the prisoner of war camp asking him to visit a group of Jewish captives who had just arrived from the battlefields of Normandy.

"Jews in the mighty Nazi army!" he exclaimed. "It sounded incredible. I found the men in a separate compound. There were about 20 in the group and they were still clad in the uniform of the German army. Some of them could speak a little English and I

could understand a little German. "Most of them, I found, were half-Jews, and only one of them was a full Jew. Some had apparently spent months in German concentration camps but when the manpower shortage in Germany became acute they were drafted into Nazi labor battalions. D-day found them in Normandy working on fortifications."

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CASH IN 48 HOURS

for your home, flat, store, apt., anywhere in Detroit. Over \$9,469,700 sold in 1943. BENJ. RICH, 12545 LINWOOD, Townsend 8-4585.—Adv.

The Jewish News

Friday, September 29, 1944

Twenty German Jews Among Nazi Prisoners at Custer

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Jews in Nazi Army! Captives Here Ask for Scriptures

Fort Custer, Mich., Sept. 25 (AP)—A Jewish Army chaplain told how Jewish members of Hitler's Wehrmacht—newly arrived at the Fort Custer prison-of-war camp from Normandy—exercised their newly-found freedom by requesting Jewish prayer books, Jewish scriptures and mezuzahs even before putting aside their

German Army uniforms for captive garb. "The men scooped up the religious materials enthusiastically," Chaplain Perley declared, "even the non-Jews among them taking copies of the scriptures and prayer books." Perley said he was "flabbergasted" when he received a call from the prison camp director

New York Post

asking him to visit the Jewish captives.

"Jews in the mighty Nazi army?" he exclaimed. "It sounded incredible. I found the men in a separate compound. There were about 20 in the group and they were still clad in the uniform of the Germany army. Some of them could speak a little English and I could understand a little German.

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NAZI ARMY JEWS CAPTIVES

Kalamazoo

Custer Chaplain 'Flabbergasted' When Call Comes to Visit Them

Originally Employed as Workers, They Were Absorbed into Normandy Defense Army.

By CHARLES E. MARENETTE

FORT CUSTER (AP)—A Jewish army chaplain told Monday how Jewish members of Hitler's Wehrmacht — newly arrived at Fort Custer prisoner of war camp from the beach of Normandy — exercised their newly-found freedom by requesting Jewish prayer books, Jewish scriptures and Mezuzahs even before putting aside their German army uniforms for captive garb. "The men scooped up the religious materials enthusiastically," Chaplain Martin M Perley declared, "even the non-Jews among them taking copies of the scriptures and prayer books.

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According to camp officials, when the beachhead was established and the Allies started their advance along the Normandy peninsula, these men were given uniforms, arms and ammunition and absorbed into the Germany army. Some had been in the army only eight days before they were captured.

Chaplain Perley said ministering to German prisoners of war was "the last thing I ever expected to be called upon to do as a Jewish chaplain in the U. S. army."

He recalled the irony of a recent request one of the prisoners made for a Hebrew Bible. The prisoner, a former Calvinist pastor in Germany before his induction into the army, told Chaplain Perley he wished to continue his study of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew, while he was serving as a chaplain to his fellow German prisoners of war.

The Filson Historical Society

ten noch niemals begegnet, weder auf der Treppe noch auf der Strasse. Er geht selten aus, er ist seiner schweren Aufgabe ganz und gar in Anspruch genommen. Es ist nicht leicht, bis zu ihm vorzudringen; man muss Sekretärin und Empfangsdamen an vergitterten Fenstern und mehrere Bureaus passieren. Oft muss ein gewöhnlicher Zivilist drei Wochen lang warten, ehe er den Präsidenten zu sehen bekommt; inzwischen verliert das erbetene Interview seinen Sinn, und der Bittsteller gibt seinen Warteposten auf.

Ich konnte den Präsidenten bei seinen Besuchen in unserer Schule sehen. Es ist ein grosser, stämmiger Mensch mit einem breiten, unerschütterten Gesicht. Er ist immer schwarz gekleidet und trägt eine Brille. Er hat einen durchdringenden aber milden Blick. Ich habe ihn niemals lächeln sehen; aber das ist wohl ganz natürlich angesichts seiner schweren Verantwortung. Jeden Tag mit den Deutschen verhandeln zu müssen und gleichzeitig die Klagen und Vorwürfe einer hungernden, verbitterten, misstrauischen Bevölkerung zu ertragen — diese Aufgabe ist gewiss nicht beidenswert. Ich wundere mich nicht, dass er immer so düster ist.

Jedesmal, wenn Czerniakow unsere Schule besucht, wird er von Ingenieur Jaszunski, dem Direktor des ganzen Gemeinde-Schulwesens, begleitet. Jaszunski ist fast ebenso gross wie Czerniakow, er hat einen Spitzbart und dicke Augenbrauen, die seinem milden Gesicht einen noch mildernden Ausdruck verleihen. Er ist ein Mann grossen Wissens und hat an unserer Arbeit viel Interesse. Sie sehen sich Portraits, Zeichnungen, moderne Beschriftung, Blaupausen für Gebäude und technische Zeichnungen an. Wir haben gar nicht gemerkt, dass wir in kurzer Zeit grosse Fortschritte gemacht haben. Als ich in die Schule kam, wusste ich nicht, wie ich einen Bleistift halten sollte; ich habe in diesen zwei Monaten viel gelernt.

Nazis inspizieren eine Schule

27. April 1941.

Heute haben die Deutschen wieder einmal unsere Schule inspiziert. Seit einiger Zeit kommen sie immer öfter. Sobald ihre grauen Automobile in unserer Strasse erscheinen, und wir durch das Fenster eine

„Deutsche“ Juden als U.S.A.-Kriegsgefangene

Ein Bericht des Chaplain Perley an den "Aufbau"

k. h. Der in Fort Custer, Michigan, stationierte jüdische Feldgeistliche Captain Martin M. Perley wurde kürzlich zu deutschen Kriegsgefangenen im dortigen Kriegsgefangenen-Lager gerufen. Es handelte sich um zwanzig "nichtarische" deutsche Kriegsgefangene, die wenige Tage nach der Invasion in Frankreich von den Amerikanern gefangen genommen wurden und die jetzt in Amerika angekommen sind.

Die "nichtarischen" Kriegsgefangenen waren in einer besonderen Abteilung des Gefangenenlagers untergebracht. Die meisten waren Halbjuden, das heisst ein Elternteil war jüdisch, und nur einer war Volljude. Einige waren in deutschen Konzentrations-Lagern

interniert gewesen, aber als die Nazis Arbeiter brauchten, waren sie in Arbeitsbataillone der Organisation Todt gesteckt worden. Am D-Day arbeiteten sie an Befestigungen in der Normandie. Als die Alliierten immer weiter vordrangen, erhielten sie Uniformen und Waffen und wurden der deutschen Armee einverleibt. Einige der Gefangenen waren nur acht Tage in der Armee, bevor sie gefangen genommen wurden.

In einem Bericht an den "Aufbau" schreibt Chaplain Perley: "Das ist eine Gruppe von deutschen 'Kriegern' in einem amerikanischen Kriegsgefangenenlager, die sich zum ersten Male in Jahren frei fühlten, trotz des Stacheldrahtes um sie herum".

Perley hatte jüdische Gebetbü-

cher, Schriften für amerikanisch-jüdische Soldaten und Mezzuzin mitgebracht, die von den "nichtarischen" Kriegsgefangenen freudig in Empfang genommen wurden. Alle waren sehr begierig, dass der Uebergangsprozess, in dem sie sich befinden, beschleunigt und ihnen schnellstens Arbeit zugewiesen wird.

"Dass ich als amerikanischer Feldgeistlicher einmal deutsche Kriegsgefangene zu betreuen haben würde, hätte ich im Traume nicht erwartet", schloss Chaplain Perley seinen Bericht. "Für mich sind diese Leute, die deutsche Uniformen tragen, ein konkreter und überzeugender Beweis dafür, dass Hitler sein Ende erreicht hat und dass die Tage von Deutschland gezählt sind".

Es ist mein zweiter Frühling im Ghetto. Auf den Gemüswagen sieht man nur schmutzige Kohlrüben und alte Karotten vom vorigen Jahr. Daneben stehen Wagen mit übelriechenden Fischen — winzige Fische, die schon faulen. Ein Pfund kostet ein Zloty. Diese Fischchen sind jetzt das wichtigste Nahrungsmittel im Ghetto, das einzige, dessen unbeschränkter Verkauf die Deutschen gestatten. Allerdings kann man auch Fleisch, Huhn und sogar richtigen Karpfen zum Sabbath kaufen. Man braucht nur in den Bazar in der Leszno-Strasse zu gehen, um alles zu bekommen, was das Herz begehrt. Nur kostet Huhn zwanzig Zloty das Pfund; koscheres Fleisch und Fisch sind noch teurer. Nur die, die eine grosse Barreserve haben, können sich solchen Luxus gestatten, und es gibt nur noch wenige Wohlhabende im Ghetto.

Die Gemeindegärten sind noch offen. Dort kann man für dreissig Groschen ein Gericht Suppe bekommen, die aus heissem Wasser besteht, auf der eine Kartoffel schwimmt. Die Gemeindeverwaltung hat auch eine Küche für ihre Angestellten, wo man eine Suppe mit

zösischer Seide mit grossen Blumenmustern.

Die elegante Welt trifft sich im Café Sztuka (Sztuka-Kunst) in der Leszno-Strasse, dem beliebten Lokal des Ghetto. An vornehm gedeckten Tischen ergötzt sich die feine Welt des Ghetto zu den Klängen eines ausgezeichneten Orchesters. Genau wie vor dem Krieg schwatzen sie über die letzten Mode. Hier kann man auch die berühmte Sängerin Vera Gran hören, die einen riesigen Erfolg hat. Es gibt noch mehr Cafés in der Leszno-Strasse. Wladislaw Spielman spielt im Café "Pod Fontana". (Unter der Fontäne.)

Im kleinen Ghetto, in der Ogodowa-Strasse, hat sich ein Gartencafé etabliert "Bajka" (Märchen). Die Tische stehen auf der Strasse, es gibt dort ein wenig Gras und zwei Bäume. Das Café steht auf dem Grund eines völlig zerbombten Hauses. Auf einer Seite steht noch eine Mauer mit ausgebrannten Fensteröffnungen. Das ist ein ausgezeichnetes Hintergrund. Daneben liegt der "Strand" — ein kleiner Platz, auf den man Liegestühle gestellt hat. Für zwei Zloty kann man dort den ganzen Tag in der Sonne

von der Luft, die sie jenseits des Ghettos auf den Feldern geatmet haben, aus ihren Rucksäcken gucken rote Radieschen und goldbraune, junge Karotten heraus. Jeder bringt einen Laib frisches Brot mit, das sie von den Bauern bekommen haben. Offiziell ist es verboten, Brot ins Ghetto mitzunehmen, aber in diesem Fall drücken die Deutschen ein Auge zu, weil sie die Arbeitskraft dieser jungen Menschen brauchen.

Toporol versucht, so viel Gemüse wie möglich im Ghetto zu pflanzen. Die ersten auf Ghettogrund gezogenen Radieschen sind auf dem Markt erschienen. Diese lokale Gemüsezucht erleichtert den Verkauf des eingeschmuggelten Grünzeugs. Hier und da sieht man kleine Spinatbündel auf den Karren, und in einigen Schaufenstern hat sogar der vornehme Spargel Einzug gehalten — zu 8 Zloty das Pfund. Auch junge Zwiebeln gibt es, in grosser Menge, zu zwanzig Groschen ein Bündel. Sie werden in Töpfen und Kisten gezogen, auf Dächern, Fensterbrettern und in allen möglichen Ecken und Winkeln.

gesellschaft gegründet haben. Es sind Wagen aus Holz mit Fenstern, und sie sehen wie gewöhnliche Omnibusse aus. Der obere Teil ist gelb gemalt, der untere blau; in der Mitte befindet sich ein weisser Davidsstern mit der Inschrift TKO (polnische Abkürzung für Omnibus-Transportgesellschaft). Auf hohen Rädern fahrend, sieht das ganze Fuhrwerk wie eine riesige gelbblaue Armblinde aus. Der Fahrer und der Kondukteur tragen ganz besonders dunkle Uniformen. Eine Fahrt kostet zwanzig Groschen. Oft hält der Fahrer mittendrin an, um "zu tanken", d. h. die abgemergelte, schwitzende Mähre zu tränken, die kaum imstande ist, den überfüllten Wagen zu ziehen.

Diese Omnibusgesellschaft ist ein Privatunternehmen. Ausser Kohn und Heller gibt es noch eine Anzahl kleiner Aktionäre; man munkelt aber, dass die Hauptaktionäre die Herren der Gestapo sind, die die Erlaubnis zu diesem Unternehmen gaben.

(Autorisierte Übersetzung von Mary Graf. Jede Art von Nachdruck verboten.)

Wiedergutmachung an Juden durch slowakische Partisanen

Eine deutsche Radiomeldung berichtet, dass in den Teilen der Slowakei, die von den Partisanen befreit wurden, "arianisiertes" jüdisches Eigentum an die ursprünglichen Besitzer zurückgegeben worden sei. Auch in Bulgarien soll, wie Aussenminister Staynov des neuen bulgarischen Kabinetts einem Korrespondenten der JTA gegenüber versicherte, den Juden das konfiszierte Eigentum zurückerstattet werden; ausserdem sollen jüdische Schulen unterstützt, und alle jüdisch-sozialen Institutionen wie Krankenhäuser, Altersheime, Waisenhäuser usw. wieder eingerichtet werden.

Das Joint Distribution Committee hat eine Forschungs-Abteilung eingerichtet, die das Material über den Status und die Lebensbedingungen der Juden in den verschiedenen Ländern sammeln und interpretieren soll. Leiter der neuen Abteilung ist der bekannte Sozial-Wirtschaftler Professor Nathan Reich.

Kaufe War Bonds!

P.M. Aug. 21, 1949*

From Ft. Custer, Mich., Chaplain Martin M. Perley writes that he has been assigned to conduct services at the Fort's prisoner of war camp. This is unusual because Chaplain Perley is a Jew, formerly a rabbi of the House of Israel Congregation at Hot Springs, Ark. His services are held in a special compound set aside for "non-Aryan Germans" captured in Normandy. "The first time I had a group of 20 boys," he related. "On subsequent visits, non-Jews welcomed me and reached for the prayer books and Jewish bibles I brought with me."

The Filson Historical Society

New Orleans 15, La.
2936 Octavia St.
October 12, 1944.

Dear Captain Perley,

In the last edition of the newspaper
"Aufbau," (Reconstruction,) I read your report
about your activities, concerning 20 half-jewish
prisoners of war at Fort Custer, Mich.

I am an American citizen of German
origin, mother of 2 sons in our armed forces.
A brother of mine, living now for over 5 years at

141x500

The Filson Historical Society

Brazil, has 2 half-jewish sons, the whereabouts
of one of whom are unknown to him. The name
of the boy is Herbert PLAUT. The chance that he
may be amongst these prisoners, is very slim
but there's always a possibility, and I should
be very grateful to you, if you would let me
know, in case he should happen to be at
Fort Custer.

Very truly,

yours

Ella P. Lemenbaum

GRANT ROAD CHAPEL
31 October 1944

Rabbi Isaac Toubin
CANRA
National Jewish Welfare Board
145 East 32nd Street
New York 16, N.Y.

Dear Isaac,

Where have you been all this time? It was you who culled from my July report the paragraph dealing with the Jewish Prisoners-of-War and sent it to your public relations department. Miss Karpf released the item and it appeared in P.M. last August. She and several other newspapers pressed me for a more detached report, which I wrote and submitted to the War Dept. in Washington D.C. for clearance. The emasculated version was released by the Fort Custer Public Relations Office to the A.P., U.P., and I.N.S., and subsequently appeared in varying forms in practically every newspaper in the country.

Since you apparently did not see the authorized version I enclose a copy herewith.

With all best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

15x200

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145 EAST 32nd STREET
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October 25, 1944

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Chaplain Martin M. Perley
0-511050
Post Chapel
Fort Custer, Michigan

Dear Martin:

Hey, what is the big idea of scooping us! The papers have been full of material about your relations with Jewish-German war prisoners.

Can you give us the details and a complete story?

Sincerely,

ISAAC TOUBIN

Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein
Executive Director
Rabbi Isaac Toubin
Assistant Executive Director

The Filson Historical Society



AMERICAN RED CROSS

179th Gen. Hosp.
APO 17173
c/o PM, NY, NY.
1 October 1944

Dear Chaplain Perley,

While passing ^{troopship} the hours
on the deck of this ~~troopship~~ I ran a-
cross the enclosed article in the New
York Daily Mirror of 26 September 1944.

I thought that you might
be interested in it and am enclosing
it for your use.

You may remember me as
one of your congregation of last fall
when I was at Fort Custer.

Please remember me to
Sam Kurzon.

Yours truly,

Jack P. Hamovitz
Jack P. Hamovitz,
Private,
32715815

14X600

GRANT ROAD CHAPEL
31 October 1944

Pvt. Jack Hamovitz
32715815
179th Gen. Hosp.
APO 17173, c/o PM,
New York, N.Y.

Dear Hamovitz,

Thank you for sending me the clipping from the New York Daily Mirror. The item appeared in most newspapers throughout the country, but I hadn't seen this version of it.

I note that since you left Custer you have joined the Medics. If I remember correctly you were an M.P. here.

I hope that you will find your overseas experience interesting and that it won't be long before you will be able to return to this country.

With kindest regards and all best wishes,

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain, Captain

15X500

GRANT ROAD CHAPEL
October 13, 1944

Mr. A. Leon Kubowitzki
World Jewish Congress
1834 Broadway
New York 23, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Kubowitzki,

Thank you for your letter of October 11, and for the caution contained therein.

It so happens that these men have been transferred to another camp for anti-Nazis. I don't think that you need worry about them putting anything over because officially these men are prisoners-of-war. The only special consideration shown them is that they are kept separately from the Nazi prisoners for their own protection.

As prisoners-of-war they are well treated in accordance with the Geneva convention, and while they were at Custer they were not the recipients of any 'outside' charity at the hands of our community.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

15x600

WORLD JEWISH CONGRESS

CONGRES JUIF MONDIAL • CONGRESO JUDIO MUNDIAL

1834 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, 23, N. Y.

LONDON
55 New Cavendish St., W 1

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37 Quai Wilson

BUENOS AIRES
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JERUSALEM
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MONTREAL
1121 St. Catherine St. W

MEXICO CITY
Sonora 1744

CABLES: CONGRESS, NEW YORK
TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 6-1900

October 11, 1944

Chaplain Martin M. Perley
Fort Custer
Michigan

Dear Chaplain Perley:

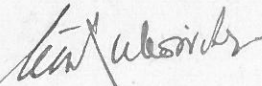
I read in the press the report about some twenty German half-Jewish war prisoners who were captured in Normandy and who asked for Jewish prayer books after their arrival at Fort Custer.

I realize how moving an experience this must have been for you; this story certainly adds another tragic chapter to the tragedy of the Jewish people in Europe.

I consider it my duty, however, to call your attention to the fact that we have reliable reports regarding Nazis who are posing as Jews in many liberated regions in Europe, in order to evade the punishment which they are destined to suffer. I need not stress how dangerous these quislings of a new brand could be in many respects.

Let us hope that those German prisoners who are now under your care are really entitled to be members of our community and to receive the benefit of our charity.

Sincerely yours,


A. Leon Kubowitzki
Head, Rescue Department

ALK:bg

11-5-44

AUFBAU

American Jewish Weekly in German and English
Published by the New World Club, Inc.

•
MANFRED GEORGE, EDITOR

October 5, 1944

Chaplain Martin M. Perley
Grant Road Chapel
Fort Custer, Mich.

Dear Reverend Perley:

Thank you very much for your letter of September 29th. We are sending you herewith a clipping of the article we wrote about the information you were kind enough to let us have.

If you should be in a position to learn more about those prisoners of war, we would appreciate it very much indeed if you could have such information censored and then passed on to us. Anything further you can tell us is of greatest interest.

Again, many thanks.

Yours very truly,



Kurt Hellmer
Assistant Editor

Office: 67 West 44th Street, New York 18, N. Y.

Telephone: VAnDerbilt 6-3168

14200

PBL

Grant Road Chapel
October 3, 1944

Mr. Fred Oswald
815 NW 18th Street
Oklahoma City 6, Okla.

Dear Mr. Oswald,

In reply to your letter of September 30th, the presence of some Jews in Hitler's Wehrmacht is explained simply by the fact that they were forced into service in desperation when Hitler's manpower problem became critical. These men were taken out of concentration camps and first of all placed in labor battalions. When our armies overran Normandy they were put into uniform and incorporated into the German army. Needless to say they surrendered at the first opportunity without putting up any kind of resistance. They certainly had no ^{intention} idea of fighting for Hitler's ideals.

I do not know how many were captured.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

MP/sb

17X600

F R E D O S W A L D
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA
815NW 18th Street

September 30, 1944.

Chaplain Martin M. Perley
Fort Custer, Mich.

Dear Chaplain Perley:

Enclosed article was published in the Oklahoman newspaper "TIMES" of Oklahoma City, Okla. and I would greatly appreciate further information in order to shed some more light on this story.

May I therefore take your time and ask you for an answer of a few questions which seem to me the most important ones in this affair?

1.) How is it possible to see Jewish members in Hitler's Wehrmacht?
As long as the Nazi gang is in power Hitler always denied an active part of any Jew for the so called "great cause" of the German nation.

2.) And if so: Who are those Jews fighting for Hitler's ideals? Where did they come from? How many got captured?

Expressing my sincere thanks, I remain

Very truly yours

Fred Oswald
FRED OSWALD

Encl.: 1 env.
FO/s.

009x4
200
**Captured Jews Ask
For Prayer Books**

FORT CUSTER, Mich., Sept. 25.—
—A Jewish army chaplain told how

Jewish members of Hitler's wehrmacht—newly arrived at Fort Custer prison of war camp from the beach of Normandy—exercised their newly-found freedom by requesting Jewish prayer books, Jewish scriptures and Mezuzahs even before putting aside

their German army uniforms for captive garb.

"The men scooped up the religious materials enthusiastically," Chaplain Martin M. Perley declared, "even the non-Jews among them taking copies of the scriptures and prayer books."

Eric Davison
314 W. 100 St. Apt. 3 FE
New York 25. N.Y.

Answered
Oct. 3, 1944

Dear Rabbi Perley:

Several days ago my mother received a letter from her nephew, who is a lieutenant somewhere in France in which he told her that through his hands went a German-Jewish prisoner of war by the name of Rosenberg who comes from a city called Lehe Germany. We recall distinctly that name as we lived there many years and also knew several families Rosenberg there. —

as I have been reading in yesterday's New York papers that a score of Jewish prisoners of war was sent to Camp Buxton

14800
00954

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Pontiac—
Rabbi Eric Friedland
Saginaw—
John Merdler

THE JEWISH NEWS

A Weekly Review of Jewish Events



2114 PENOBSCOT BLDG.

DETROIT 26, MICHIGAN

Randolph 7956

Sept. 28, 1944

Chaplain Martin M. Perley
Grant Road Chapel 0-511050
Fort Custer, Mich.

Dear Chaplain

On account of Yom Kippur, with our forms closing earlier, I did not receive your copy and photograph time. However, we used the enclosed story.

I would like to hold the photograph for a little while and to use it with a biographical sketch of yourself and a brief article. Please think of something newsy and send it along.

Best wishes for a Happy Year.

Sincerely,

Philip Slomovitz

The Filson Historical Society

175x600

Grant Road Chapel
September 29, 1944

Mrs. Hannah Palmboum
2842 Parkwood Avenue
Baltimore 17, Maryland

Dear Mrs. Palmboum,

Since the report of the presence of Jews and half-Jews among the German prisoners-of-war at Fort Custer was released to the newspapers these men have been transferred to another camp.

For any possible information regarding your nephew I would suggest you communicate with the Prisoner-of-War Information Bureau of the Provost Marshal General's Office, Washington, D.C. This bureau has a complete list of all German prisoners-of-war in this country.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

14200

Chaplain Martin M. Seley
 Fort Custer - Mich.

Dear Sir:

We have just read in the news papers of the Jews among the War Prisoners interned at your camp - and since I have a nephew who is half-Jewish who when last heard of in Germany had been removed from an internment camp - naturally I was concerned when I read this news.

Among these men perhaps are some who might enlighten us on others of our faith and I would like to ask you if it is within your power to do so, to let me

know if one named Helmuth Stiefel ^(my nephew) may have been among your group. His home was in Wauen-in-Vogtland, Saxony.

Since this is the first news of any Jews in the German forces I am greatly concerned as it may mean a possibility of hearing the fate of my only remaining relatives. I will greatly appreciate your reply, and any information you can give me.

Sincerely

Mrs. Hannah Palmbaum
 2842 Parkwood ave
 Baltimore - 17 - Md

ARMY SERVICE FORCES
SIXTH SERVICE COMMAND
FORT CUSTER, MICHIGAN

29 September 1944

Mrs. Hertha Osborne
2700 Marion Avenue
New York 58, N.Y.

Dear Mrs. Osborne,

Replying to your letter of September 26th I have checked with the officials at the Prisoner-of-War Camp at Fort Custer, and find that they do not have any prisoner by the name of Berthold Schwarz.

If you have not yet done so I would suggest that you write to the Provost Marshall General's Office in Washington D. C. ATTENTION Prisoner-of-War Information Bureau. This office has the complete record of all the German prisoners-of-war in the country, and if your brother has been brought here they will be able to give you the information.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

17X500

2700 Marion Avenue
New York 58, N. Y.
September 26, 1944

Dear Chaplain Perley:

This evening I read the attached article in the New York Post and wish to appeal to you for any possible aid you may be able to give me.

About 5 years ago my sister and I came from Vienna, leaving our parents and younger brother behind.

Since war with Germany was declared, we naturally have had no word from our family.

Several weeks ago while glancing through "Look Magazine", dated August 22, 1944, I came across a picture taken of German prisoners captured in Normandy on June 16, which I am enclosing. I am positive the prisoner to which the arrow points is my brother. It was also recognized by my sister and many old friends who are now in the United States

His name is Berthold Schwarz. Born May 4, 1924 in Vienna. He is a Czechoslovakian citizen and as far as I know that was his last residence.

I have inquired at the War Dept. and was informed that it may be him but up to the time I wrote them he had not arrived in the U. S.

I note in the Post's article that the boys you talk about are newly arrived prisoners of war from Normandy and I cannot help hoping that he may be one of them or that you can aid me in my search for him.

I have written to my husband who is a Sgt. in the U. S. Army Air Forces stationed in England to try to inquire at the Prison Camps there but have received no word from him as yet.

I wish to thank you in advance for any help you may be able to offer me.

With best wishes for a happy and victorious New Year.

Sincerely yours,
(Mrs) Bertha Osborne

*P.M.G. Office
Attn. P.W. Officer
Prof. Bureau
Wash.*

00941

AUFBAU

American Jewish Weekly in German and English
Published by the New World Club, Inc.

MANFRED GEORGE, EDITOR

September 27, 1944

Rabbi Martin M. Perley
Fort Custer, Mich.

Dear Reverend Perley:

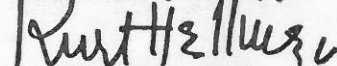
We learn from an Associated Press news that you are taking care of the spiritual needs of 20 German prisoners of war, so-called "Mischlinge".

We would greatly appreciate it if you could let us have some details about the group. Frankly, we were amazed to read about this as "Mischlinge" in most instances were baptized when born and brought up as Catholics or Protestants rather than in the Jewish faith.

Anyway, we would very much like to publish a story about this, and any information about the individual fates of these people etc. you can give us will be welcomed.

Thank you very much.

Yours very truly,



Kurt Hellmer
Assistant Editor

Office: 67 West 44th Street, New York 18, N. Y.

Telephone: VAnderson 6-3168

11x1200

Grant Road Chapel
September 29, 1944

Mr. Kurt Hellmer
Assistant Manager, the AUFBAU
67 W. 44th Street
New York 18, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Hellmer,

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of Sept. 26th, regarding the German Prisoners-of-war that I have been visiting at our Prisoner-of-War Camp here.

With the exception of one prisoner who was a full Jew the others had one Jewish parent and were apparently not raised as Jews.

I regret that War Department policy does not permit me to divulge further details of these men beyond the officially approved statement which I enclose. I do not think that this adds very much to the Associated Press release which you have already seen.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

009X41

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September 25, 1944

Chaplain Perley
Fort Custer, Michigan

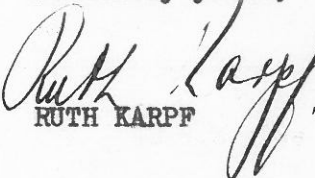
Dear Chaplain Perley:

Thank you very much for sending us the report on your work with the German prisoners of war. In view of the fact that the army's going to release it to the wire services, we won't do anything about it ourselves, but as the story will get into the press in any case, we are just as happy.

Thanks a lot for going to the trouble and for writing the report.

If you're ever in New York, perhaps you can give me a ring and tell me some more.

Sincerely yours,


RUTH KARPF

RK:PG

14x600

Grant Road Chapel
September 25, 1944

Mr. Philip Slomovitz
Editor, The Jewish News
2114 Penobscot Bldg.
Detroit 26, Michigan

Dear Mr. Slomowitz,

In accordance with the request contained in your letter of Sept. 24th, I enclose herewith the complete text of my statement regarding my visits to the German prisoner-of-war Camp as approved by the Public Relations Office for release. This is all that I am permitted to reveal at this time of my experiences.

I also enclose a photograph of myself as requested by you.

With all best wishes for the New Year,

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

17x200

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THE JEWISH NEWS

A Weekly Review of Jewish Events



2114 PENOBSCOT BLDG.

DETROIT 26, MICHIGAN

Randolph 7956

Sept. 24, 1944

Chaplain Martin M. Perley

Fort Custer, Mich.

Dear Chaplain

In our next issue, we'll carry a story on the 20 Jews among the German prisoners.

If you have additional material, or desire to write an exclusive statement for us, I shall be glad to receive it as speedily as possible--with your photograph.

Whenever you have material of general interest to our readers, please send it along.

All good wishes on the New Year.

Sincerely,

Philip Slomovitz

The Filson Historical Society

11111

Grant Road Chapel
September 25, 1944

Mr. Oscar Levy
2073 Pingree
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Mr. Levy,

In reply to your letter of September 24th, I regret to inform you that the prisoners referred to in the newspaper report have recently been transferred to another camp, and I am therefore unable to question them regarding any possible information of your brother.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

009X41

Osca Levy
2073 Pingree
Detroit 6. Mich.

Sept. 24 - 1944.

Chaplain Martin W. Perley

Camp Custer.

Dear Sir!

Through an article in The Detroit News I have learned, that you met several German Jews at Fort Custer as prisoners of war.

I am born in Germany and have still a brother there. In December 1937 he had to leave Germany and went to Amsterdam, Holland. Through Red Cross messages we heard, that he and his wife, whom he married in 1942, were transported to Germany for labor.

I was wondering of somebody of this Jewish men probably met him in a camp, and if you would be so kind to find out. It would make me and my mother who is living with me very happy, just to know, that he is

still a liv.

His name is Kurt Levy, born in Offenbach
am Main, Germany Dec. 8-1908. His wife's
name is Liesel.

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely

Oscar Levy

The Filson Historical Society

A JEWISH CHAPLAIN'S VISIT TO A GERMAN PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP

By

CHAPLAIN MARTIN M. PERLEY, FORT CUSTER, MICHIGAN

The last thing that I ever expected to be called upon to do as a Jewish Chaplain in the United States Army was to minister to German prisoners-of-war. I smiled ironically when a request came to me to furnish a Hebrew Bible for one of the prisoners who had been a Calvinist pastor in Germany before his induction into the German Army. I complied with this request from the man who felt that he should continue his study of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew while he was serving as a chaplain to his fellow German prisoners-of-war. But when, a few weeks later, I received a call from the Director of the POW Camp, asking me to come down to visit a group of Jewish prisoners-of-war who had just been brought here from the battlefields of Normandy, I was flabbergasted. Jews in the "mighty" Nazi army! It sounded incredible. It was therefore with intense interest that I gathered up some Jewish prayerbooks, GI Jewish Scriptures, and mezuzahs, and hastened down to the Camp.

I found the men in a separate compound. There were about twenty men in the group and they were still clad in the uniform of the German army, since their prisoner-of-war clothing had not yet been issued to them. Some of them could speak a little English, and I could understand a little German.

Most of them, I found, were half-Jews, and only one of them was a full-Jew. Some of them had apparently spent months in German concentration camps, but when the manpower shortage in Germany became acute they were drafted into Nazi labor battalions. D-Day found them in Normandy

14X2000

working on fortifications. According to camp officials, when the beachhead was established and the Americans started their advance along the Normandy peninsula, these men in the labor battalions were given uniforms, arms and ammunition and absorbed into the German army. Some of these men had been in the army for only eight days before they were captured.

Here was a group of German "warriors" in an American prison camp, feeling free for the first time in years, despite the barbed wire enclosure which surrounded them.

The men scooped up enthusiastically the religious materials that I had brought with me, even the non-Jews among them taking copies of the Jewish Scriptures and prayerbooks.

All of them were anxious to get their processing completed and to be assigned some work. To me, these men, wearing German uniforms, were concrete and convincing evidence that Hitler had reached the end of his rope, and that Germany's days were numbered.

HEADQUARTERS
ARMY SERVICE FORCES TRAINING CENTER
Sixth Service Command
Fort Custer, Michigan

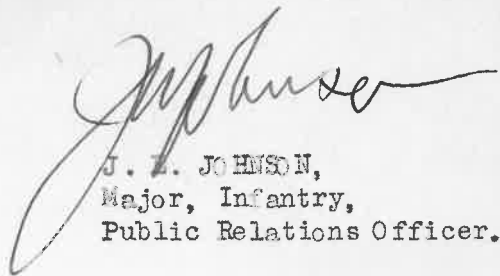
22 September 1944

SUBJECT: The article "A Jewish Chaplain's Visit to a German Prisoner of War Camp".

TO : Chaplain Martin M. Perley, Fort Custer, Michigan.

1. Inclosed is amended copy of article "A Jewish Chaplain's Visit to a German Prisoner of War Camp" submitted by you for review prior to release to the Jewish Welfare Board, Associated Press, United Press, and International News Service.
2. Original copy of your article as submitted to this office was returned with the notation "no objection to publication as amended".
3. The Public Relations Office, Fort Custer will arrange for a simultaneous release of this article to the Associated Press, United Press and International News Service and local newspapers. A copy of the article also will be sent to the Jewish Welfare Board.

For the Commanding Officer:



J. E. JOHNSON,
Major, Infantry,
Public Relations Officer.

1 Incl.
Incl. 1 - Amended copy of article.

009x44

HEADQUARTERS
ARMY SERVICE FORCES TRAINING CENTER
Sixth Service Command
Fort Custer, Michigan

22 September 1944

SUBJECT: The article "A Jewish Chaplain's Visit to a German Prisoner of War Camp".

TO : Chaplain Martin M. Perley, Fort Custer, Michigan.

1. Inclosed is amended copy of article "A Jewish Chaplain's Visit to a German Prisoner of War Camp" submitted by you for review prior to release to the Jewish Welfare Board, Associated Press, United Press, and International News Service.

2. Original copy of your article as submitted to this office was returned with the notation "no objection to publication as amended".

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For the Commanding Officers:

J. E. JOHNSON,
Major, Infantry,
Public Relations Officer.

1 Incl.
Incl. 1 - Amended copy of article.

14x200

September 22, 1944

Miss Ruth Karpf
Public Relations Dept.
National Jewish Welfare Board
145 East 32nd Street
New York 16, New York

Dear Miss. Karpf,

I have just received a call from the Public Relations Officer telling me that my article on the non-Aryan German prisoners-of-war has been cleared by Washington "with amendments".

I have not seen the amended article, and don't know to what extent it has been emasculated. It was only about a thousand words to start with.

The Public Relations Officer tells me that he is sending you this article with permission to release it. I don't know if it still has any news value for you. Apparently the Public Relations Officer is releasing the article to A.P., U.P., and I.N.S. How widely it will be used I, of course, do not know.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

009x41

A JEWISH CHAPLAIN'S VISIT TO A GERMAN PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP

By

CHAPLAIN MARTIN M. PERLEY, FORT CUSTER, MICHIGAN

The last thing that I ever expected to be called upon to do as a Jewish Chaplain in the United States Army was to minister to German prisoners-of-war. I smiled ironically when a request came to me to furnish a Hebrew Bible for one of the prisoners who had been a Calvinist pastor in Germany before his induction into the German army. I complied with this request from the man who felt that he should continue his study of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew while he was serving as a chaplain to his fellow German prisoners-of-war. But when, a few weeks later, I received a call from the Director of the POW Camp, asking me to come down to visit a group of Jewish prisoners-of-war who had just been brought here from the battlefields of Normandy, I was flabbergasted. Jews in the "mighty" Nazi army! It sounded incredible. It was therefore with intense interest that I gathered up some Jewish prayerbooks, Old Jewish Scriptures, and mezuzahs, and hastened down to the Camp.

I found the men in a separate compound, segregated from the Nazi prisoners for their own protection. There were about twenty men in the group and they were still clad in the uniform of the German army, since their prisoner-of-war clothing had not yet been issued to them. Some of them could speak a little English, and I can understand a little German, so the stage was set for an interesting "bull session".

They gathered around me, sitting on the army cots in the barracks, and one of them, acting as spokesman, began their story, or stories. Most of them, I found, were half-Jews, and only one of them was a full-Jew. Some of them had spent months in German concentration camps, but

1-12-50

when the manpower shortage in Germany became acute they were drafted into Nazi labor battalions. D-Day found them in Normandy working on fortifications. When the beachhead was established and the Americans started their advance along the Normandy peninsula, these men in the labor battalions were given uniforms, arms and ammunition and absorbed into the German army. Some of these men had been in the army for only eight days before they were captured. Obviously they had no desire to fight for Hitler and "der Vaterland" and their one objective was to surrender as soon as possible.

It was amusing to listen to one of the prisoners describe how he and a group of others waited impatiently in Cherbourg for two days for the arrival of American troops. They found themselves a safe shelter, prepared a white flag, and waited. It seemed as though the Americans would never get there. On the second day, when a group of fleeing Germans wanted to join them in the shelter, these men refused to let them in until they had deposited their arms outside. Finally they heard American voices, and joyfully they ran out waving their white flag and giving themselves up. It now became apparent to me that stories of American soldiers capturing large groups of Germans single-handed were not so fantastic after all.

Here was a group of German "warriors" in an American prison camp, feeling free for the first time in years, despite the barbed wire enclosure which surrounded them. The one burning question on the lips of all of them was - "Is there any chance of our remaining in this country when the war is over?" They don't ever want to return to Germany.

Some of them didn't even want to be considered prisoners-of-war. One of them declared that he hadn't even been sworn into the German army. I explained to them that under the circumstances they were better off as prisoners-of-war with a protected status, than as enemy aliens or stateless

15X200

refugees. They seemed to feel much better after my assurances.

They were all, of course, convinced that Germany was thoroughly beaten and could only hold out for a few more months. One of them said that the greatest terror gripping the German people was an invasion of German soil by an avenging Russian army, and he was convinced that the "western wall" would be opened to allow the Anglo-American forces to reach Berlin first.

The men scooped up enthusiastically the religious materials that I had brought with me, even the non-Jews among them taking copies of the Jewish Scriptures and prayerbooks.

All of them were anxious to get their processing completed and to be assigned some work so that they might make some contribution toward the defeat of the country which had persecuted them, but which, in its dark hour had forced them into uniform expecting them to fight to protect the system which they hated. To me, these men, wearing German uniforms, were concrete and convincing evidence that Hitler had reached the end of his rope, and that Germany's days were numbered.

August 28, 1944

Miss Ruth Karpf
Public Relations Department
National Jewish Welfare Board
145 East 32nd Street
New York 16, New York

Dear Miss Karpf,

Following your suggestion in your letter of August 24th, I have written a short report of my visit to the "non-Aryan" German Prisoners-of-War. I am submitting it to the Public Relations Officer at Fort Custer with the request that he forward it to Washington D. C. for clearance.

I hope that this ^{story} will be cleared before it loses its news value.

Incidentally, I received a telegram the other day from the editor of THE DAY asking me to write an article on the subject. I told him that if such an article were written by me and cleared by the War Department it would be released through your office.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

15X200

NATIONAL JEWISH WELFARE BOARD

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF YMHA's, YWHA's and JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTERS
MEMBER OF THE UNITED SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS, INC. (U. S. O.)

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145 EAST 32nd STREET
NEW YORK, 16, N. Y.
LExington 2-4949

August 24, 1944

Chaplain Martin M. Perley
O-511050
Office of the Chaplain
Grant Road Chapel
Fort Custer, Michigan

Dear Chaplain Perley:

It looks like our letters crossed each other.

Colonel Allen, the Public Relations Officer here whom I wrote you about, is the Washington representative in New York. If there is anything that he feels is above his competence he forwards it to Washington, so I think it will be okay for you to send me your stuff. Or would you rather have me obtain permission from the War Department first and forward it to you? I imagine that would be a little difficult since they cannot very well pass on anything they have not seen, *Or* have you put in for Washington clearance yourself?

I am still very interested in the story so keep me posted, will you please?

Sincerely yours,

Ruth Karpf
RUTH KARPF
Public Relations Department

RK:hs

14X600

August 25, 1944

Mr. William Edlin
Editor, The Day
188 East Broadway
New York, New York

Dear Mr. Edlin,

This will acknowledge receipt of your telegram requesting an article on Jewish soldiers amongst German prisoners.

I regret that because of military restrictions the Public Relations Officer at Fort Custer is unable to clear any such article.

If at any future date such clearance can be obtained I have promised to send a comprehensive report to the Public Relations Department of the National Jewish Welfare Board which will release it.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

14x600

WESTERN UNION

1201

(50)

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

SYMBOLS

- DL=Day Letter
- NL=Night Letter
- LC=Deferred Cable
- NLT=Cable Night Letter
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C166 NL=NEWYORK NY 24

1944 AUG 24 PM 5 51

CHAPLAIN MARTIN M PERLEY=

0-511050 POST CHAPEL FT CUSTER MICH=

CAN YOU POSSIBLY SEND US ARTICLE ON JEWISH SOLDIERS AMONGST GERMAN PRISONERS 1500 TO 2500 WORDS ENGLISH OR YIDDISH=

WILLIAM EDLIN EDITOR THE DAY.

By 9/22

Telephone No. *64*
 Phonad *clk*
 Time *9472*
 By *y* To Be *f*

1500 2500.

20 2/14/

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE

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145 EAST 32nd STREET
NEW YORK, 16, N. Y.
LExington 2-4949

August 22, 1944

Chaplain Martin M. Perley
0-511050
Office of the Chaplain
Grant Road Chapel
Fort Custer, Michigan

Dear Chaplain Perley:

Thank you very much for replying so promptly to my letter.

I am writing now to tell you that you don't have to worry about the Public Relations Department at all. We clear everything that goes out from this office through Colonel Allen of the Army Public Relations Office here. It will be perfectly all right, therefore, for you to submit your report directly to us.

I thought you might like to know, also, that we released a short news story based on the excerpts of your last letter which PM carried on August 21. Our Yiddish department also sent out a story yesterday.

As you see, there is real first class news value in your experience with the war prisoners and we are very anxiously waiting for more.

Cordially yours,

Ruth Karff
RUTH KARFF
Public Relations Department

RK:hs

147200

Grant Road Chapel
August 22, 1944

Miss Ruth Karpf
Public Relations Department
National Jewish Welfare Board
145 East 32nd Street
New York 16, N.Y.

Dear Miss Karpf,

With further reference to your request that I send you a comprehensive report of my activities with Jewish and Half Jewish German Prisoners-of-War, I regret to inform you that the Public Relations Officer at Fort Custer cannot give clearance to any such report. Special permission would have to be obtained from the War Department.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

18 August 1944

Miss Ruth Karpf
Public Relations Department
National Jewish Welfare Board
45 East 32nd Street
New York 16, New York

Dear Miss Karpf,

I have your letter of August 16th in which you suggested that I send you a comprehensive report of my visits to the Jewish and Half Jewish German Prisoners of War. I shall be glad to comply with your suggestion provided I can get clearance with the Public Relations Department on this Post.

I shall try to write such a report next week and submit it to the Public Relations Officer, and if it is cleared I shall send it on to you.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

14X300

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145 EAST 32nd STREET
NEW YORK, 16, N. Y.
LExington 2-4949

August 16, 1944

Chaplain Martin N. Perley
Fort Custer, Michigan

Dear Chaplain Perley:

Somebody sent down to this office an extract of one of your letters in which you report on your visits to the Jewish and half-Jewish German prisoners of war.

We, in the Public Relations Department, think there is a first-rate story in this. We would be very grateful if you could write us as comprehensive a report as you have time to write on your visits to these men. Their individual stories, who they are, and how they came to be in the Nazi army, what fighting they went through, how they were treated, how they were taken prisoner, etc. will be of great value to us.

We are looking forward to your report with much anticipation.

Sincerely yours,

RUTH KARPf
Public Relations Dept.

RK:PG

1-1X600

September 10, 1943

Dear Chaplain Martin Perley,

I received a letter from you June 2, 1943 telling me that my son Bill Stogel came in for a chat with you. I don't know what he really spoke with you, but I think that something must have bothered him. Now I would like to ask a favor of you. You see I received from the War Department a letter and they informed me that my son William is absent from camp since June 15, 1943. He was home for a whole month, he told me that he had a furlough and after he told me he is going back to camp but it looks like he did not get there. I wrote to the commanding officer and gave him all the information I had. Then I received a letter from the girl he was here with, telling me that they came to camp in plenty of time and that Bill can't write to me because he burned his hands and they are in bandages but that he is right beside her. There was no return address, but the Post mark was from "Shelby, Michigan. So I sent another letter to the Commanding officer telling him about it, and I begged him to let me know Where Bill is but I did not receive any answer from them. My husband is very sick from worrying about Bill and for me it goes without saying how I feel. Please maybe you can find out something about him and let me know. The woman he was here with has a mother in Lansing, Michigan. And the woman herself said that she was working in a defense plant in Kalamazoo Michigan. I wish you could inquire and let me know anything of his whereabouts. I thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. E.H. Stogel
650 Fox St.
Bronx, N.Y. #55

P.S.

We just received another letter from this woman and she says in the letter that she is visiting some friends.

Here is her address-

Mrs. Wilma (Billie) De Shong
1109 Prospect St. Lansing, Michigan.
c/o Miller.

Dear Chaplain,

I may be mistaken but I kind of have a hunch that she might be a spy and I hope that the F.B.I. would investigate and find out something about her.

15200

September 11, 1943

Mrs. E.H. Stogel
650 Fox St.
Bronx,
New York 5 5

Dear Mrs. Stogel;

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of Sept. 10th. I am turning it over to the Provost Marshal, who is in the best position to investigate the information contained therein.

As soon as we can find out something about your son, I will let you know.

Sincerely yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain

4x600

June 21, 1944

Rabbi Philip S. Bernstein
National Jewish Welfare Board
145 E. 32nd Street
New York, 16, N. Y.

Dear Phil,

I have a rather strange request to make, but I know that by now the J.W.B. has reached the stage where nothing surprises it.

Here at Fort Custer we have a large German Prisoner-Of-War Camp, and to minister to the religious needs of these German prisoners there are two German clergymen who themselves are Prisoners of War - one was a Catholic Priest, the other a Protestant Pastor before they were inducted into the Sanitary Corps of the German Army.

The Protestant Minister has requested a Hebrew Bible, since he does not wish to grow rusty in his knowledge of the Hebrew version of the Old Testament

I wonder if you could send me a Hebrew Bible for him. I can then present it to him with the inscription, "Presented by the Jewish Welfare Board through Rabbi Martin M. Perley." This should make a very "interesting" edition to this Nazi Prisoner-Of-War Camp.

I hope I shall be seeing you in Cincinnati this week-end. With kindest regards and all best wishes,

Cordially yours,

Martin M. Perley
Chaplain, Captain

P.S. It strikes me that perhaps the J.W.B. does not have any provisions for catering to the needs of Nazi Prisoners. I am sure that you are resourceful enough to find some solution to this dilemma.

Mrs. Lillian Klauber
11, Hillside Ave
New York City 34

Army Service Forces
Sixth Service Command
Fort Custer, Michigan

October 15th, 1944

Dear Chaplain Perley,

In reference to an article in the "Aufbau" and "New York Post", about a few German non-Christian prisoners of war interned in Fort Custer, I take the liberty to state a few facts about my brother, who might be one of the prisoners, and hope you will be able to help me identifying him.-

A few weeks ago, I coincidentally happened to look through "Look-Magazine", the August 22nd issue, when I seemed to have discovered my brother on the enclosed clipping (marked with the X). According to my immediate inquiries, I was able to find out that those boys were captured on June 16th, 44, on the Normandy beachhead. "News Photo" made the picture. After having communicated the Provost Marshal office in Washington DC, I received the information that my brother at that time wasn't listed in any camp in the States. His name is Berthold Schwarz, born May 4th, 1924, in Vienna (Austria) and lived in Czechoslovakia since 1938. Is Czechoslovakian citizen, as both my parents were born in Czechoslovakia. My mother was Christian before her marriage, but according to the German racial laws, my brother was full Jewish. Nevertheless he might have been forced by the Germans before the induction into the army, to adopt my mother's maiden-name, which was Mueller. I have not seen my brother for 6 years, and had no contact with him ever since we entered the war, but with the snapshot of his which was made in 1937, if I remember correctly, I am quite convinced that the boy on the "Look" picture is the same boy.-

I want to thank you very much in advance for your help in this matter, and hoping to hear from you very soon,
very truly,

yours

Lillian Klauber

Enclosure : Clipping from "Look-Magazine", and snapshot.
I would appreciate if both clipping and snapshot could be returned to me.

14X600
209X41

Irony of War

Though Confined in Stockade at Fort Custer, German Jews Felt Freer than in Many Years

Fort Custer
News

By Chaplain (Capt.) Martin Perley

The last thing that I ever expected to be called upon to do as a Jewish Chaplain in the United States Army was to minister to German prisoners-of-war. I smiled ironically when a request came to me to furnish a Hebrew Bible for one of the prisoners who had been a Calvinist pastor in Germany before his induction into the German Army. I complied with this request from the man who felt that he should continue his study of the Old Testament in the original Hebrew while he was serving as a chaplain to his fellow German prisoners-of-war. But when, a few weeks later, I received a call from the director of the POW camp, asking me to come down to visit a group of Jewish prisoners-of-war who had just been brought here from the battlefields of Normandy, I was flabbergasted. Jews in the "mighty" Nazi army! It sounded incredible. It was therefore with intense interest that I gathered up some Jewish prayerbooks, GI Jewish Scriptures, and mezuzahs, and hastened down to the camp.

I found the men in a separate compound. There were about 20 men in the group and they were still clad in the uniform of the



Chaplain Martin M. Perley

German army, since their prisoner-of-war clothing had not yet been issued to them. Some of them could speak a little English, and I could understand a little German.

Most of them, I found were half-Jews, and only one of them was a full-Jew. Some of them had apparently spent months in German

concentration camps, but when the manpower shortage in Germany became acute they were drafted into Nazi labor battalions. D-Day found them in Normandy working on fortifications. According to camp officials, when the beachhead was established and the Americans started their advance along the Normandy peninsula, these men in the labor battalions were given uniforms, arms and ammunition and absorbed into the German army. Some of these men had been in the army for only eight days before they were captured.

Here was a group of German "warriors" in an American prison camp, feeling free for the first time in years, despite the barbed wire enclosure which surrounded them.

The men scooped up enthusiastically the religious materials that I had brought with me, even the non-Jews among them taking copies of the Jewish Scriptures and prayerbooks.

All of them were anxious to get their processing completed and to be assigned some work. To me, these men wearing German uniforms were concrete and convincing evidence that Hitler had reached the end of his rope, and that Germany's days were numbered.

147X41

The Filson