

HQ SOUTHERN COMMAND

SALISBURY 6222 Ext 323

SC 6/59894/474/FR

5 October, 1953

The News Editor,  
The Art Editor.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a nominal roll of the former prisoners of war returning from Korea in the "Empire Orwell".

The normal Press boarding permits will not be valid for this occasion, or for the arrival of the "Dunera" on 16th October.

Passes of admission to Berth 107 on 14th October will be forwarded in the course of a few days to all who have applied for them. Full details of the arrangements made for the Press will be sent out at the same time.

As already stated, Mr. Eric MERRILL, Senior Information Officer, Southern Command, will hold a meeting in the Royal Hotel, Southampton, at 8.30 p.m. on 13th October to supply any last minute information and to deal with queries.

Yours faithfully,

*Eric Merrill*

(ERIC MERRILL).  
Senior Information Officer,  
Southern Command.

HQ SOUTHERN COMMAND,  
SALISBURY 6222 Ext: 323

SC 6/59844/474/A/PR

9 Oct 53

The News Editor,  
The Art Editor.  
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Dear Sir,

Here are the passes you requested to enable your representatives to attend the arrival at Southampton on Wednesday 14 Oct of former British prisoners of war in Korea.

The former prisoners of war, about 150 in number, are returning in the "Empire Orwell". They will be landed by tender at Berth 107 Southampton Docks at 8 a.m. on 14 Oct, and the special trains for the men and their relatives will leave at 9.a.m.

Press facilities will be similar to those arranged for the arrival of the "Asturias", except that there will be only one Press stand and enclosure; there will be only one gangway from the tender to the dock.

Admission to Berth 107 will be by ticket only.

Aboard the "Empire Orwell" is Lieut-Colonel J. P. Carne, DSO, who commanded 1st Bn. The Gloucestershire Regiment at the Imjin battle. As a result of his imprisonment Col. Carne is by no means well, and the doctors will not allow him to be subjected to the ordeal of a mass interview.

Following consultations between the War Office and representatives of the Newspaper Society, the news reels and the B.B.C., it has been agreed that he can be interviewed by representatives of the Press Association, Exchange Telegraph, two nominated still cameramen, one newsreel, B.B.C. and B.B.C. television. The nominated representatives will travel to the "Orwell" by tender early on the morning of 14 Oct 53. Final details of the arrangements will be given by the Senior Information Officer, Southern Command, at his conference on the evening of 13 Oct 53.

Col Carne will then come ashore in the tender with the other former prisoners and there will be further opportunities of photographing him as he goes to his car to leave for home. He will not be available for further interviews.

Following is the breakdown of the ex-prisoners of war on the "Orwell" :-

8H/.....

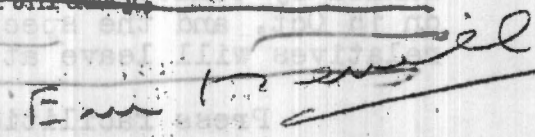
8H	3
RA	11
RNF	7
Warwick	1
Norfolk	1
Devon	1
Leicesters	3
KOSB	2
Glosters	77

DWR	1
Hanps	2
BW	3
RUR	23
R.A.Ch.D	1
RAMC	5
REME	1
APTC	1
ACC	1

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The Senior Information Officer, Southern Command, Mr. Eric Merrill, proposes to hold a Press Conference at the Royal Hotel, Southampton, at 8.30 p.m. on Tuesday 13 Oct, and will then supply any further information required and deal with queries.

~~Yours faithfully,~~



(Eric Merrill),  
Senior Information Officer,  
Southern Command.

of war on the "Oswell" :-  
Following is the program of the ex-prisoners  
interviews.  
of 13 Oct 53.  
arrangements will be given by the Senior Information  
Officer, Southern Command, at his conference on the evening  
on the morning of 14 Oct 53. Final details of the  
representatives will travel to the "Oswell" by London early  
next week, 20.8.53 and 21.8.53 respectively. The nominated  
Exchange Delegate, who nominated still commander, one  
interviewed by representatives of the Press Association,  
and the B.S.C., it has been agreed that he can be  
representative of the Newspaper Society, the news  
Following consultation between the War Office  
of a mass interview.  
Officers will not allow him to be subjected to the ordeal  
of the "Oswell" Col. Camp as by no means well, and the  
as a result of his  
The Gloucestershire  
Lt. Col. J. P. B.



STATEMENT TO THE PRESS MADE BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES  
POWER CLARKE DSO, LATE COMMANDING OFFICER, 1ST BATTALION,  
THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE REGIMENT (28TH/61ST) ON ARRIVAL AT  
SOUTHAMPTON ON 11TH OCTOBER 1953 ON HMT EMPIRE ORWELL.

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A number of statements have been published in the Press about the treatment of prisoners-of-war by the CHINESE; [and I think the general impression which will have been gained from reading those statements is a correct one.] Opinions have also been expressed in the Press relating to the effect which captivity has had upon us; and in this case, I think the impression which has been given is not so accurate.

[I am going to give you my own opinions on these two subjects. Having done so, I shall feel I have made my contribution to the Press, and so if you have any questions to ask I hope you will put them to some of the other officers and men.]

There were two principle groups of BRITISH prisoners: those of the ROYAL ULSTER RIFLES captured early in January 1951; and those of my own Regiment, captured in April of the same year. It was not only due to their having been captured in midwinter that the RIFLES Group had the tougher time. In the early part of the war, the enemy organisation provided only the bare necessities of life for the prisoners, and this included food to which many found it difficult to accustom themselves, and which, in any case, lacked the nourishment necessary to maintain complete health. Soon after the GLOUCESTERS Group eventually reached the Prison Camps in the extreme NORTH of the country, conditions started to improve slowly, but in the following months many of us showed the first signs of beri-beri or had other ailments due to vitamin deficiency. Under such conditions, life and health are not wholly dependent on food, shelter, and clothing; and it is to their own resolution and optimism that some of the credit must be given for the fact that few BRITISH soldiers died in captivity.

By the following winter, (1951/52), ~~the~~ ~~we~~ ~~were~~ warmly clad and the food had improved, although it could not be compared to a normal BRITISH diet. Housing was crowded and, of course, comforts and amenities were generally non-existent. Conditions in the Camps continued to improve slowly and rather spasmodically until we were released, and by that time they could be considered reasonable.

[One is justified in believing that the efforts made by the CHINESE to

improve the lot of their prisoners - and there is no doubt that they did make such an effort - was not entirely ~~for humanitarian~~ reasons. It was in accordance with their "Lenient Policy", the policy governing the treatment of prisoners, and this had a definite political motive. ] The technique appears to be an endeavour to impress the victim by the "leniency" with which he is treated, in the hope that he will the more readily absorb the teachings of his benefactors. The argument supporting this is that we (the prisoners), having taken part in what was termed an "unjust war of aggression", were thus war-criminals; but under the "Lenient Policy", account was taken of the fact that we had been deceived by our Capitalist Government, that we were only tools of the "war-mongers", and thus might be re-educated. Fortunately, although perhaps entirely owing to fear of the opinion of the outside world, the enjoyment of the "Lenient Policy" did not depend upon the acceptance of this argument, or on the success of the education programme, otherwise most of us would now be in a bad way. However, the benefits were not such as to impress anyone unduly who felt that he had, at least, the right to retain life and health.

The re-education was carried-out by means of lectures and discussions, but the "Study Programme", as it was called, was abandoned in the SPRING of 1952. The reason for abandoning this method of indoctrination was, perhaps, because the lectures aroused a lot of hostility and thus defeated their object. Perhaps it was thought that the removal of this irritation might create favourable conditions for the acceptance of the more insidious teachings of the various books, papers, and magazines which were provided. ]

From our first arrival in a fixed camp, the ranks had been separated: officers and warrant-officers in one compound; colour-serjeants and serjeants in another; thus the corporals and privates were deprived of the leadership and advice to which they were accustomed - but they were not without their own leadership. Many NCOs and men with strong characters came to the fore and provided leadership, exposing the inaccuracies in the Communist propoganda, and presenting our own, more rational opinions. The majority

As with every other aspect of Prison Camp life, discipline was influenced by politics. Any prisoner who might be expected to influence his friends was liable to be convicted of some offence, and his punishment successfully removed his reactionary influence for a lengthy period.

endear the system to any BRITON. ] [ The thought or fear of such punishment undoubtedly  
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provided indirect pressure on some prisoners, and this was unquestionably part of the systematic attempt to obtain converts to Communism, or, less ambitiously, to sow ~~little seeds~~ of doubt, envy, and disloyalty which might later produce red flowers.

The best that can be said for the CHINESE is that most of us were released in very fair health, but the experience of having been under a system governed by political prejudice and expediency, not inhibited by laws and regulations as we know them, has left most of us with little liking for our captors.

As regards the effect which this treatment has had on us: I know that there have been some men converted to Communism. There are also some who are far more anti-Communist than they were before. The majority are, of course, somewhere between these two categories. It has been suggested that these men are confused in their minds about politics, and an impression is given that thereby they are in some way different to other men. Although I have made no direct enquiry as to their political opinions, I think that impression is incorrect: to my mind, the vast majority of the men appear to have been affected very little by their captivity. They are just the same good lot of fellows they have always been; and I am quite certain that their families will agree with me that there is nothing strange about them either politically or otherwise.

This brings me to other reports which have given the impression of indiscipline at ports of call on the way home. I will say nothing about these reports except that I believe them to be greatly exaggerated accounts, of isolated incidents. Thus any deductions which may have been made from them are probably wrong in any case, and certainly should not be applied to the majority. There is a pleasanter side to the picture. At ADEN, all ex-prisoners-of-war passing through were splendidly entertained by the civilians and R.I.F. The members of the Committee who organised this hospitality told me how much they had enjoyed seeing and entertaining the men, and how appreciative the men had been of the kindness shown to them. I was left with no doubt as to the impression which the men of ALL ships carrying home prisoners had made on the people of ADEN; their company had been enjoyed and their hosts felt that their gratitude was well worth the trouble and expense of entertaining them.

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Similarly, at BRITANNIA Camp, the Release Centre; at BCFK in JAPAN; and at the other ports of call on the way home, there were always those who had happy stories to tell of the visits of our men.

From the moment we were released, the splendid moment when we found ourselves again under BRITISH control, the arrangements for our reception and repatriation have been first-rate, and the kindness we have received has been immeasurable. I do not know how the men on the other ships have fared, but we in the EMPIRE ORWELL consider ourselves lucky; it has been a happy voyage and that is not only because we were travelling in the right direction.

Many of us would have preferred a speedier return home, but this short interval between release and homecoming has been good for us; we are the better prepared to take up the responsibilities, as well as the joys, of our home life. Already, our captivity is losing its importance; it is fading into the past; we now look forward to a far brighter future.

When all is said and done, perhaps the majority of men will agree with my summing up of the results of the experience;

I have gained an added pride in being BRITISH, and I have lost a little weight !