

Canadian prisoners of war totaled 1,901 at February 29, 1945. This figure includes 628 officers and 1,273 men. They are reported to be held in 25 German camps. In Italian camps (many of these have been closed, and figures are not up-to-date yet) and Hungarian camp and an unknown number of camps in the Pacific. In the Pacific area there are camps in Japan, Singapore, Formosa, Borneo, Java, Philippines, Hong Kong and others in German areas. No further details are available because of failure of notification by Japan.

In addition to the prisoners of war in enemy hands, there are a certain number of Canadian servicemen interned in neutral countries.

Distributed by their particular service, there are in Europe 1,901 prisoners of war from the army, 1,194 from the air force, 129 merchant seamen and seven from the navy. In the Far East, army prisoners total 1,525, air force 23, merchant seamen 16, and navy two. Total army prisoners are 3,230; air force, 1,217; merchant seamen, 145; navy nine.

Although Japan was a signatory to the convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war concluded at Geneva on July 27, 1929, the convention was not ratified by Japan. However, at the commencement of hostilities the Japanese government signified its intention of abiding by the provisions of the convention. This it has failed to do in many important respects. Knowledge of German camps is much more detailed, and therefore most of the descriptions of camps which follow refer exclusively to those controlled by the Reich.

The convention provides that "the detaining power is required to provide for the maintenance of prisoners of war in the same way as soon as possible after their capture, prisoners shall be evacuated to camps sufficiently removed from the fighting zone for them to be out of danger. The prisoner may at any time be sent to an area where he would be exposed to the line of the fighting zone... Their dwellings and food rations shall be equivalent in quantity and quality to that of the detaining power."

The German maintain transit camps, known as Stalags, where captured men are first taken. Canadians have been reported in three of these. Prisoners are then sorted out by service and by rank and sent to appropriate camps. Other ranks of the army go to a Stalag; army officers to an Oflag. There is also a camp for naval men and merchant seamen in which prisoners are reported; it is called Marlag. One Oflag, Oflag 4C, has been set apart by the Germans for officers who have been reported their attempts to escape. A civilian camp is known as an ILAG.

Attached to the Stalags are the work camps or Kommandos. These work camps may be anywhere within 100 miles of the main Stalag, and there are sometimes as many as 400 Kommandos attached to one Stalag.

Each Stalag has a hospital or infirmary, and most of them have a lazaret or hospital. Stalag 9C, one of the largest, has five different lazarets attached to it.

Prisoners are authorized by the international convention to appoint from their own number a representative, acceptable to the camp authorities, to act as spokesman to the military authorities and the United Kingdom prisoners call these representatives "their men of confidence", and the Canadians have adopted the same title. The man of confidence is the leader and spokesman for the other prisoners.